



BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

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FROM THE AMBASSADOR

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Permanent Under-Secretary of State  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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25 January 1989

*My dear Patrick,*

HENRY CATTO

1. We have heard here that the British press, and in particular The Independent, are beginning to investigate the Cattos' qualifications more thoroughly, and this prompts me to write to you with my first impressions of them. Henry Catto is coming to lunch with me on 31 January and frankly I would have preferred to wait until then, but I will write again after that event if it affects the judgement or information in this letter.

2. It so happens that we saw quite a lot of Catto during the various Inauguration celebrations, and we met her at a brunch given by ABC News on the Saturday following the Inauguration. Inevitably, however, my impressions are as yet somewhat superficial.

? 3. A very important plus for the Cattos is that the President and Mrs Bush really seem to like them and to have complete confidence in their suitability. As you know, the President wrote to the Prime Minister to give her the background to his choice, and he telephoned personally to me to tell me about Henry Catto. He spoke genuinely, warmly and enthusiastically. On another occasion, Barbara Bush told me how much she liked them and that she believed they would be excellent in London. She said that Jessica Catto was a splendid person. Barbara Bush is pretty outspoken when talking privately and I said that I knew Mrs Catto's brother, Lieutenant Governor Hobby of Texas, since he had flown us down in his private plane to have dinner with Mrs Lyndon Johnson when we were visiting Austin.

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/4. The views



4. The views expressed by President and Mrs Bush are also endorsed by those of our Washington friends who know the Catto's well. There seems to be genuine approval and enthusiasm for the appointment. All have said that the Catto's are very nice and that they will do excellently in London.

5. As regards Catto himself, he is good looking and extrovert. He looks the part, has an air of self-confidence, and is something of a showman. At the Inauguration Parade he wore a huge Texan Stetson hat, and his Texan boots have been commented on in the Style Section of the Washington Post. My impression, however, is that his showmanship is somewhat more contrived than the totally natural ebullience of Charlie Price. Catto is, on the surface, a more sophisticated character than Charlie but may be, I suspect, somewhat less genuine in his warmth and enthusiasm.

6. I would expect him to be competent and well able to carry out instructions but, in tune with the comments from Jim Bottomley and Peter Ramsbottom, I suspect he is lighter weight than Charlie Price and less of a self-starter. Being, however, as close to President Bush as Charlie Price has been to President Reagan, he will, I would judge, be active and effective when necessary; and he has from his past career experience of operating both within the State Department and as Spokesman at the Pentagon.

7. Jessica Catto is an attractive woman,

In contrast to their husbands, however, she may be more natural and less studied than Carol was. Jenny and I did not think that she was bubbling over with enthusiasm about the appointment, although she said the right things. She did not attend the Inauguration Parade because, as Henry Catto told me, she literally cannot stand the cold.

This is perhaps not a very good augury for surviving the cold and damp of the English climate.

8. Jessica Catto obviously has extensive business interests largely I believe in the real estate field, as well as journalism. She is not coming to lunch at the end of the month because she has to be in Denver, Colorado, sorting out her business activities, and the word here is that she may well come and go a good deal from London. Again as a very superficial impression, I think that she may be less whole-heartedly dedicated to the job than Carol Price.

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/ 9. I understand



9. I understand that the Catts intend to take up the appointment in April subject, of course, to confirmation by the Senate, but there should be no difficulty about that.

10. I may get more out of Henry Catto on 31 January, and if so will send you a further report.

*Yours ever*

*Anthony*

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Anthony Acland

*Carbone Bell, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was enthusiastic, particularly about Jessica Catto, when I saw him last night.*