

# **Dermot Nally Papers**

**UCDA P254/52**

Reaction of Northern Ireland Parties to Six Principles  
and Brussels Joint Statement

1. Reaction of UUP

- \* Mr. Molyneaux, when asked on Thursday last if the Six Principles as outlined by the Tánaiste would persuade him to rejoin the three-strand talks, said: 'Absolutely not'.
- \* Following the issue of the Brussels joint statement, he back-tracked somewhat by saying he would reserve comment on both the Tánaiste's speech and the statement until he had 'a chance to study what was said'.
- \* The Rev. Martin Smyth said on Friday last: 'I believe there are those who are prepared to go down a purposeful road. We didn't run away from the table in the past. We will not be running away this time either'.
- \* By Saturday night however he had changed track, apparently fuelled by a report that the two Governments envisaged a double referendum, North and South, to endorse agreed changes in the North-South relationship. He said that this was 'an attempt ... to suck Northern Ireland into a continual argument as to whether we should be part of the Republic of Ireland, which the people of Northern Ireland have voted successively not to be'. The right to self-determination was for Northern Ireland alone, he said, and the involvement of others would be 'blurring the issue'.
- \* Ken Maginnis responded that the Principles dealing with unionist consent contained 'ambiguous wording' and thus the Tánaiste 'cannot make the unacceptable attractive'. They contain, he said, 'the same double-speak as Article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement'.
- \* David Trimble said: 'The most important thing in the Joint Statement was that the two Governments made clear that there was no question of adopting or endorsing the Hume/Adams talks'. He also said that he was 'not satisfied' that the Irish Government would approach future meetings 'in good faith'. He did however concede that the Taoiseach/Major joint statement contained 'some positive elements'.



- \* John Taylor described the Six Principles as 'the usual Irish blarney'.

- \* The UUP general secretary, Jim Wilson, said of the Tánaiste's speech in the Dáil that 'unionists will not have anything to do with a plan that contains any element of the Hume/Adams proposals' and that 'the only way forward is for the SDLP to concentrate on the Secretary of State's talks between the constitutional parties'.

## 2. DUP reaction

- \* The Rev. Ian Paisley's initial reaction to the Six Principles was that they are probably 'a summary of the Hume/Adams paper'.

- \* On Sunday (31 October) he was even more blunt: 'No more talks, no more blarney. Get rid of your claim to Northern Ireland. That would take away the legitimacy which the IRA has'.

- \* On Wednesday last (27 October), the DUP Deputy Leader, Peter Robinson, described the Six Principles as 'the handiwork of the IRA and SDLP - the product of the Hume/Adams talks'.

- \* Following the Taoiseach's meeting with John Major, Mr. Robinson said that 'the Provos' demands, embodied in the Spring six-point plan for a united Ireland, are being pushed as an Anglo-Irish Agreement Mark 2. The sickening spectacle of Mr. Major applauding this treachery should be a warning signal for every unionist'.

## 3. SDLP Reaction

- \* John Hume said on Saturday (30 October) that although his dialogue with Gerry Adams had been suspended, it was not ended and he intended meeting him again.

- \* Hume endorsed the Six Principles which, he said, if 'read carefully by Mr. Adams and his supporters, they will agree that the door is really open for a total cessation of violence'. Hume subsequently welcomed the Brussels joint statement and hoped both Governments were committed to 'a genuine peace process'. But he added: 'I find it difficult to take that they have simply dismissed my dialogue in the way they did'.

- \* He would now expect 'an immediate invitation from the Prime Minister' with a view to seeking a 'clarification' of the two Governments' response to the report on his dialogue with Gerry Adams.
- \* In the House of Commons on Monday (1 November), John Hume asked the British Prime Minister why he 'rejected' his proposal before talking to him about them.
- \* Mr. Major responded that he would be happy to meet with Hume and also the leaders of the other constitutional parties. He added: 'I did have to make a judgement as to whether I thought the proposals reached by you at this time, in the fashion you proposed them, would actually lead to progress and to a settlement. I reached the conclusion, after having been informed of them by the Taoiseach ... that it was not the right way to proceed' principally because they would not command consent.
- \* The Prime Minister said that in the event of a resumption of the three-strand talks, the British Government would table their own proposals which would give 'focus and direction' to the talks though these would not constitute a blueprint for a settlement.
- \* Seamus Mallon said on Friday, 29 October: 'John Hume should continue to explore any chance of a cessation of violence. I want a declaration of intent from the IRA and that can only be given through the silence of their guns and bombs'.
- \* He said on 'Questions and Answers' on Monday (1 November) that in view of Mr. Major's rejection of the Hume/Adams initiative, he hoped that the two Governments would come up later this month with firm proposals for peace.
- \* He added that the SDLP would consider publishing the Hume/Adams proposals later unless the two Governments came up with something better.



- \* He also said if a joint British/Irish plan for peace is 'as capable of bringing peace as is the Hume/Adams document, then I will say to John Hume and Gerry Adams, look, it doesn't matter who writes it, it doesn't matter who proposes it if the essence of it is there - take it and run with it'.

4. Sinn Féin Reaction

- \* In his first response to the Six Principles and the Joint Statement, Gerry Adams said that he would 'need to be persuaded' that the substantive Hume/Adams proposals 'were not dismissed in a perfunctory manner'.

- \* When asked if a place at the negotiating table in exchange for a cessation of violence would be a sufficient package to take to the IRA, Adams replied: 'It does not appear to me that it would be the case. That is why we need clarification'.

- \* Adams subsequently issued a full statement on Monday, 1 November. The key elements are:

- The Taoiseach/Major joint statement 'clearly rejects the process outlined by John Hume and I, yet it offers no obvious alternative';
- The British Prime Minister 'is not interested in developing a real peace process at this time'. Therefore, there is 'an onerous responsibility' on the Taoiseach 'to focus the attention of the British Government on its responsibility to play a leading role in removing the cause of conflict and division in Ireland';
- Sinn Féin is 'firmly committed to the search for peace' and any proposals put forward by the Taoiseach 'will be given a fair hearing by republicans';
- Until Sinn Féin 'are persuaded that there is an alternative process', Mr. Adams will remain 'fully committed' to pursuing the Hume/Adams process because it contains 'the substantive issues and the dynamic required to advance all parties to the conflict towards a meaningful peace process'.

- \* Speaking in Dublin on Saturday (30 November), the Sinn Féin national chairman, Tom Hartley, said: 'I would be disappointed if the British rejected the Irish peace initiative and the Dublin Government acquiesced in that rejection'. He said that the Unionists had 'no right to veto a united Ireland' and that 'complete demilitarisation of the conflict ... was far away'.
- \* It has been reported in the weekend's press that prominent Sinn Féin members in Belfast believe that the Brussels joint statement will be almost impossible to sell to hardline republicans and the IRA.
- 4. Alliance Party Reaction  
The Alliance Party chairman, Dr. Philip McGarry, welcomed the six-point plan in which, he said, the principle of consent of the people of Northern Ireland was clearly recognised.