

# Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

4 December 1996

## Letters to the Editor, Newsletter

From : **Rt Hon John D. Taylor, Deputy Leader UUP**

Dear Sir

Mr Robert McCartney's letter (Dec 4) lets 'the cat out of the bag'. He does not require the total decommissioning of all IRA arms before Sinn Fein enter the Three-stranded Talks. It is now clear that Mr McCartney is in full agreement with the Ulster Unionist Party about the conditions of access of Sinn Fein into the three-stranded Talks. Our correspondence has been useful in establishing this Unionist accord.

Where Mr McCartney still differs from the UUP is that, whilst the IRA continue to retain all their arms, he requires the Loyalist paramilitaries 'to hand over a significant amount of clean weaponry' before the UDP and PUP can enter the Three-stranded Talks. In contrast the UUP recognises that the Loyalist paramilitary ceasefire has held firm for 2 years and, in recognition of this, our Party position is, as stated by the Officers of the Party on 28 September 1996, that the three-stranded negotiations could be commenced with the present Parties to the Talks - that includes the UDP and PUP without any unilateral decommissioning by the Loyalist paramilitaries. Thereafter, if Sinn Fein wish to enter the Talks, there must be mutual decommissioning by both Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries as recommended by Senator Mitchell and agreed by the UUP.

To expel the UDP and PUP from the Talks Process unless there is a 'handing over of a significant amount of weaponry by the Loyalist paramilitaries' as required by Mr McCartney, would be a backward step and in my opinion, could result in a return of Loyalist paramilitary activity. No-one in their right senses should promote this scenario.

Sincerely



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