

Bilateral Talks 30.9.96.

15.41 p.m.

Secretary of State - Very dangerous position. Very disappointing that you rejected our paper. It is the best shot to meet your concerns especially continuity and the need for activity.

David Trimble MP - No assurance that anything would be done.

Secretary of State - No intent to buy decommissioning.

David Trimble MP - You have created a mechanism to buy it.

Secretary of State - Key is that we must have a process that is widely acceptable. Your paper is not going to get acceptability.

David Trimble MP - Very little is actually up front.

Reg. Empey - If this goes - Sub Committee is that SDLP/Irish will determine how much we get.

Sufficient consensus means that their support is necessary. Not fair on SDLP, and reality is that nothing will come of it. Decommissioning will be a second centre of gravity. There is not the remotest possibility of a regime coming out. They will determine whatever scheme. They have to approve any scheme - very difficult for them to do. It is not fair to attempt to get this sorted out by placing ourselves in their hands.

Secretary of State - We cannot face decommissioning. - you are saying that there has to be physical decommissioning - a movement from Mitchell.

David Trimble MP - I am shocked that you feel nothing can be done without co-operation of Sinn Fein.

We insist upon decommissioning.

We are staying with legislation and Mitchell in as much as Sinn Fein can join process.

Secretary of State - This is a moving back from Mitchell

Ken Maginnis MP - We have not moved from Mitchell. We adopted Washington 3. Then we adopted Mitchell. We have looked at "early decommissioning". Sinn Fein came in to process, into Plenary without decommissioning. To move there must be the initial tranche.

Do you in fact believe Sinn Fein are likely to come in and if so, what are the parameters.

Do you actually believe that they are going to decommission. If no, is there any purpose in a decommissioning process.

Secretary of State - No indication of unequivocal reformation of 1994 ceasefire. We hope that this process is better if all parties are represented on a proper basis. Not likely. Unless Sinn Fein are prepared to comply regarding decommissioning, then they cannot get further. On proper terms this process should succeed.

Ken Maginnis MP - You have said that we are correct to expect a tranche.

Secretary of State - Their purpose is to get into process if there is a ceasefire. We know both Governments accept Mitchell. We cannot expect SDLP/Irish agreement for decommissioning for movement.

Our position is perfectly clear since 24 January. We read Mitchell and believed it possible to envisage parallel progress. All this has to go to Plenary.

Reg. Empey - Try and see the impossibility of getting anything agreed through the mechanism.

Secretary of State - I accept your concerns.

David Trimble MP - 2 Veto's - Irish and SDLP.

Secretary of State - I accept sufficient consensus applies but look at the review process.

David Trimble MP - There is no safeguard.

Secretary of State - If they are seen not to be complying we could all see.

David Trimble MP - If there was a cut-off date there would be an argument.

Reg. Empey - Since Mitchell the Sinn Fein has broken down. Mitchell accepted that these people were serious.

Let us suppose your Constituents were being swept into bags, on Tuesday's ceasefire, would these boys be in the room?

Secretary of State - I have to say they would.

First there has to be an unequivocal restoration. This has to be looked at in the light of events on the ground. We have to find a way forward. If there is obstruction by Irish/Sinn Fein the plug will be pulled.

Ken Maginnis MP - We will be blamed.

Secretary of State - We would not accept obstruction of the type envisaged.

David Trimble MP - There already has been that obstruction. We have gone backwards.

Ken Maginnis MP - After Tim Dolton and Nora Owen saying they could meet our conditions, we found they wouldn't. Why? Difference between justice and OFA.

I felt there was a withdrawal.

Question of Chairman designate of Committee.

Secretary of State - There is a conflict between departments there. You cannot accept that they have been destructive lately.

Ken Maginnis MP - Neither David Trimble nor I accepted a Committee.

David Trimble MP - We stressed at every meeting we were opposed to letting this get into Committee.

Secretary of State - It was a great shame you have gone public. We will now have to show DUP paper.

David Trimble MP - All of this is inconclusive to keeping this afloat. The only way is to put this into Plenary. A general short statement - over position is based on Mitchell.

Reg. Empey - We want you to see this through our eyes. None of the fundamental issues in your letter - cannot be dealt with now.

Secretary of State - No decommissioning unless an agreed basis SDLP/Irish will not agree to core committee.

David Trimble MP - Take page 3 and ask Irish why they cannot deliver.

Secretary of State - (iv) 5. Ceasefire go to purgatory. What about logistics.

David Trimble MP - Mutuality. When IRA are due to decommission loyalists will have to - Loyalists have gone through "purgatory".

3 strands with loyalists participating because they have gone through the Opening Plenary.

Ken Maginnis - This is a matter of negotiating between Governments and Trilaterals. I am not willing to see the matter get off the hook. Decommissioning rests with the two Governments. To tell us we are going to be relegated to Plenary. I don't think we are interested in Plenary.

16.20 pm.

I am saying we are in process, there has been bad faith. We have to overcome that. This is our fight with you and the Irish.

David Trimble MP - If we go into Plenary things will not progress. We are querying the ability of Plenary.

Secretary of State - I would have preferred trilaterals progress. If no agreement I would rather have this thrashed out in Plenary.

Reg. Empey - It would make more sense if we could agree the bones.

Secretary of State - You went public.

David Trimble MP - In light of leaks and Prime Minister's interview made it essential for us to go public.

Secretary of State - If you regard yourselves in negotiations that is a little more hopeful.

See the Irish - I don't like being Post Man Pat.

Reg Empey - The Loyalists see themselves as having played the game. If IRA appear, are Loyalists and IRA denied = ?

They have a problem. They are under pressure. The ground has moved.

What could ease this, is looking at the entering criteria.

Unequivocal - What is that?

Secretary of State - Bruce Morrison used dependable - a good word which conveys what we mean.

Look at paragraph 4 of your document.

David Trimble MP - Not unusual for use of cautious language.

Secretary of State - That language feed Irish fear of racket.

David Trimble MP - I don't like giving blank cheques.

H M G - Paragraph 4 commitments refer to Governments.

David Trimble MP - Future date etc. will be determined by participants. The language of 4, comes from reading documents from here.

Ken Maginnis MP - We are experts now in Irish wordsmitting.

Secretary of State - You regard yourselves in negotiations. Irish assume this is your last word.

Meeting ended 16.35 p.m.