



Press Centre, 51/55 Falls Road, Belfast  
Tel: 230261 Fax: 231723  
Preas Oifig, 51/55 Bóthar na  
bhFál, Béal Feirste  
Teil: 230261 Facs: 231723

## ● The Minimum Requirements for Nationalists- Adams

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams MP speaking at a press conference in Belfast this morning restated Sinn Féin's commitment to its republican goals and objectives. Mr Adams said:

"I would like to welcome you all here this morning. As you know our party was excluded, expelled from the talks. At that time I asked for a meeting with the Taoiseach and with the British Prime Minister. Within a short period of time Sinn Féin's senior negotiating team met the Taoiseach. It was a useful discussion. I also met the Taoiseach for a separate engagement and we were both pleased to have the opportunity to express our concerns.

Mr. Blair has agreed to meet Sinn Féin. As soon as that meeting takes place and we have had the opportunity to express our concerns also to Mr. Blair then Sinn Féin will be in a position to judge how and when we re-enter the talks process.

4 Other political leaders have said we should be in the talks process this morning. They underestimate the difficulties caused by our expulsion and the erosion of confidence in the conduct of the process.

Sinn Féin has to and will manage these difficulties but we will do so on our terms and not on an agenda set by the head of the RUC.

For those republicans and nationalists who are concerned that the



republican analysis will go by default, let me say once again that the Sinn Féin leadership and party is totally committed to pursuing our objectives and our peace strategy. We will both promote the republican agenda and defend our mandate in the positive and constructive way that has marked our contribution to the search for a lasting peace.

The discussion paper 'A Bridge to the Future' covers a number of critical areas at this time in the peace process.

In the first instance it sets out Sinn Féin's goals as an Irish republican party. Our political objective is a united Ireland free of British interference. Everything we do is intended to advance that entirely legitimate and realisable goal. We see a 32 county republic as the best way to eradicate the range of political, social, economic and other inequalities which effect the people of this island. We want to see the end of the union.

British government policy and unionism is opposed to this objective. No party other than Sinn Fein has a strategy to achieve this. So, this objective is unlikely to be achieve by May. Indeed even if everyone was agreed on it, it would take longer than that to sort everything out. Therefore the struggle for this entirely legitimate, democratic and desirable objective will continue beyond May.

In this context 'A Bridge to the Future' also identifies the central importance which Irish nationalists place on an alliance between Irish political parties and opinion, pursuing the objectives which look to the interests and the well being of the Irish nation. And which seek to normalise the relationships between the people of Ireland and the people of Britain.

Nationalists are very conscious of the fact that all experience to date shows that a shared understanding and common positions between nationalists on the most advanced positions possible is needed to further the search for a democratic peace settlement.

I also sought to set out what we, I believe, are the absolute minimum requirements for nationalists from any agreement.

7-02  
Whatever agreement is produced by this talks process it will be judged on whether it effectively tackles and removes the causes of conflict, and whether it moves us all, as part of a rolling process, or on a transitional basis, towards Irish unity and independence.



Specifically this means fundamental constitutional and political change, a demilitarisation of the situation, including the release of all political prisoners, and the immediate implementation of the equality agenda. Without equality there can be no agreement.

These matters should be seen as a package and not taken individually or as a separate from the whole. Nationalists want a comprehensive inroot and branch approach.

7-52  
Any kind of new Stormont or any effort to underpin partition is unacceptable.

8-00  
Mr. Trimble has dismissed these propositions. He is making a huge mistake if he thinks that any nationalist party can sign up to any agreement which does not go as far as the fundamental changes which are required for a democratic settlement. These changes may fall short at this time, as I acknowledge, of Sinn Féin's objectives. We will continue to pursue these objectives and I am confident that they will be achieved. But Mr. Trimble is deluding himself if he does not understand the sea change within nationalism over the last thirty years.

This paper constitutes a significant political initiative. I would appeal to people to read it in full. It is offered as a substantive contribution to the search for a democratic agreement."