

# Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

## PRESS RELEASE

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### STATEMENT FROM UUP TALKS DELEGATION

The UUP made it clear last week that the joint document presented by HMG and the Irish Government was unacceptable to us in its present form. The authors have offered no significant change, and the vote today is the result of their intransigence.

The British and Irish Governments insist that they fully support the Mitchell Report. Para 34 of that report suggests a compromise on decommissioning; i.e. that instead of disarming before or after negotiations, decommissioning should occur during Talks.

HMG insists that it wishes this to happen, and that its paper would achieve this outcome. They know that this is not the case. **That is why today they voted *against* our amendment to their document that disarmament must take place during the negotiations.**

The Irish Government makes no secret of the fact that if the paper had been changed to conform to the Mitchell compromise, there would have been no IRA ceasefire.

The letter of 9 July to Sinn Fein and later comments by Mr Burke provide confirmation of this.

**The Ulster Unionist Party charges that HMG has abandoned the Mitchell compromise position on parallel decommissioning to appease the demands of Sinn Fein/IRA. Even when asked by us to support our proposal that the IRA ceasefire should be universal, complete and permanent, it refused.**

The Talks remain stalled on the question of decommissioning since this has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the participants. We view this issue as a test of SF/IRA sincerity and as a test of their commitment to exclusively peaceful means as outlined in the Mitchell principles. The UUP welcomes any respite from terrorism, even if it is tactical. Our objective is to see successful negotiations conducted in a peaceful environment which will bring peace and stability to our Province. But, we demand that all participants come to the table armed only with their mandates.

The effect of accepting the document presented to us by HMG and Dublin would be to force us to negotiate with a gun to our heads.

Disarmament is a central confidence building measure within the Talks. It must occur during them for a successful outcome to this process. **We therefore appeal again to the Prime Minister to rethink his position on this document. He has time to do so.**

If SF/IRA is really serious, why don't they indicate that the war is over? Why don't they indicate, that regardless of the outcome of the negotiations, never again will violence or the threat of violence be used to achieve their political aims?

Such actions would be in line with paragraph 10 of the Downing Street declaration. **But here again, the authors of that document, namely HMG and the Irish Government, have run away from their own policy, and no longer require participants in the Talks to be fully committed to exclusively peaceful means and demonstrate their commitment to the democratic process before being admitted.**



## THE WAY AHEAD

The past few days have been difficult for our Party. We have faced a situation which has been engineered by the New Irish Government and Sinn Fein/IRA, with the intent of forcing us out of Talks. The Unionist people of Northern Ireland want strong leadership and we are continuing to provide it.

**We continue to discharge our primary duty, which is to defend and strengthen the Union, acting in the best interests of everyone in Northern Ireland.**

Regardless of the future for this particular process, **the UUP will not permit the political aspirations of the greater number in this community to be marginalised by any terrorist grouping.**

Dressed in their Armani suits, the soundbite experts from SF/IRA may feel some temporary euphoria from the success of their latest stunt. But already they are conceding that whatever the format, whether they participate or not, **the eventual outcome will remain a partitionist settlement on this island.** As we welcome any cessation of violence from the IRA, so too do we welcome the acceptance by the Sinn Fein leadership, demonstrated by their entering into this process, that it is for the people of Northern Ireland to determine the future of Northern Ireland - not Sinn Fein.

David Trimble's task in the next few months will be arduous. However, it will be as naught compared to the task of Adams and his cohorts when they have to tell the families of dead hungerstrikers or dead 'volunteers' or those who have spent the best part of their lives in the Maze prison or on the run, that the 'long war' of the past 30 years has only yielded a few cross border committees.

**Whatever agreement is reached during this process, at the end of the day, the Union will still stand. The consent principle Sinn Fein rejected in Dublin in 1995, is the one upon which this process is based. It will be interesting to see whether Sinn Fein really can sign up to an agreement which like disarmament will be seen by many Republicans as a betrayal of their cause.**

Sinn Fein knows that they have lost the fundamental battle over the issue of consent. Nationalist Ireland, the Americans and the EU all accept the consent principle, which is enshrined in international law.

No democratic Government dares tamper with this principle. There will be no cavalry riding over the hill to rescue Sinn Fein from the 'awful reality' that the European Union has successfully smothered territorial disputes within its borders and will not give any support to constitutional change brought about by terrorism.

The reality is that the evil and vile terrorist campaign waged by the IRA has probably held back co-operation on this island which might have occurred in any event. While the IRA remains a most effective killing machine, the pro Union community in Ulster has not been intimidated nor had its resolve to maintain the Union weakened. That community will not support any 'transitional' arrangements either, so there is no escape hatch for Sinn Fein there.

The 'long war' has been a terrible mistake by republicans, generating hatred and mistrust that will last for generations. The failure of successive British Governments to confront this assault has merely prolonged the suffering.

The UUP will proceed at once with our consultation exercise to examine the best way ahead for our Province. We will not be frog-marched into Talks held under conditions of blackmail nor excluded from a major say in Northern Ireland's future. **We will ensure that the views of the people are heard and heeded in any proposed settlement.**

We remain deeply concerned at the ongoing clandestine discussions between SF/IRA and HMG. Our Party was misled in Parliament on 30th June and the Irish Government continues to have an unhealthy influence on the policies of Her Majesty's Government.

**We will require full disclosure of all undertakings/assurances both verbal and in writing that have been given to Sinn Fein IRA.** Failure to reveal these undertakings will confirm Unionists suspicions that unacceptable outcomes for this process have been predetermined.

ENDS