



ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY

PRESS RELEASE

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Trimble seeks clarification from PM

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, David Trimble has identified areas of the Joint Paper of 25 June which require further clarification. In summary the issues are :

Sinn Fein/IRA

- When must Sinn Fein/IRA respond to the Joint Paper ? Have their actions since the Aide Memoire was presented to them on 13 June not been sufficient response ?
- Will HMG demand a genuinely complete, permanent ending of violence from the Republican Movement ?
- Is any new ceasefire from Sinn Fein/IRA really going to be tested for a six week period ? The Aide Memoire seems to allow Republican negotiators access to the process immediately after a cease-fire with a fully equipped suite of offices and access to Ministers, Chairmen and others parties as currently enjoyed by the existing participants.
- Will HMG confirm that Sinn Fein will not be allowed to pretend to detach itself from the IRA once admitted into the process ? Upon entry to the Talks will Sinn Fein be committing itself to secure IRA disarmament ? Will assurances that in the event of IRA violence that Sinn Fein will be excluded from the Talks be adhered to?
- Can HMG give an assurance that there will be no more meetings or other contact with Sinn Fein/IRA either at official or ministerial level in the light of recent murders and murderous attacks ?

Disarmament

- Will HMG confirm that the Joint Paper cannot be used to block the actual handover of terrorist weapons by merely offering talks about decommissioning ? Does the parallel process on offer mean that total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations represented at the Talks will be reality by the end of the negotiations in May 1998 ?
- Does the proposed Decommissioning Sub-Committee have any function with regard to the decommissioning process i.e. can it be used by those who do not want to see actual parallel decommissioning to block terrorist disarmament ?

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- Does the Joint Paper mean that delay in actual disarmament is unavoidable ? Will the proposed Commission be made operational immediately and will it be in a position to receive terrorist arms upon the launch of the "Three Strands" ? Will HMG consult with ourselves with regard to the identity of Commissioners ?
- When will the Statutory Instrument establishing the Commission be made ? When will the Orders be made to give effect to any disarmament schemes ? Can we be assured that the Government of the Irish Republic will not use parliamentary devices to delay the implementation of any decommissioning schemes in that country ?
- There is a timetable for the Talks; will there be a timetable for decommissioning ? Can there be an actual parallel disarmament process without a decommissioning timetable ?
- Has HMG received a specific assurance from the Government of the Irish Republic that it is resolutely committed to the total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations concurrent with the political process ?

The Government said in its paper :-

Para 1 "[We] are resolutely committed to the total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations";

and,

Para 4 (e) "[This should involve] adequate mechanisms to ensure that the modalities of decommissioning envisaged in the Report can be implemented as needed and that no delay or obstacle is caused by any lack of Government preparation or provision in this respect."

We call upon Mr Blair to answer the above questions and to prove to us that the mechanisms proposed will achieve the total disarmament of terrorist groups without delay or obstruction.

(Ends.)