

11/7/97

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 they been given until 4 August to call a ceasefire ? Have their actions since the Aide Memoire was presented to them not been sufficient response ?
- Will HMG demand a genuinely complete and permanent ending of violence from Republicans ?
- 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 cosmetically remove 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 IRA violence during the Talks lead to Sinn Fein exclusion ?
- Can HMG give assurance that there will be no more meetings with Sinn Fein/IRA either at official or ministerial level in light of recent murders and murderous attacks ?

Decommissioning

- 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 ?

- Does the Joint Paper mean that delay in actual decommissioning 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 decommissioning 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 their 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 ?
- Are both HMG and the government of the Irish Republic resolutely committed to the total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations ?