

- KEN MAGINNIS

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TO THOSE WHO
ATTENDED MEETING

PROXIMITY TALKS

MEETING WITH IRISH GOVERNMENT 19.30-22.00 (11/03/96)

UUP - David Trimble MP, John Taylor MP, Ken Maginnis MP, Jim Wilson, David Kerr.

Irish Government - John Bruton, Dick Spring, P de Rossa (other senior ministers)

JB - Sinn Fein need to be managed very carefully

DT - We need to look at the question of how the agenda is defined Re Strands 1&2

Wishes to see no Eire involvement in NI internal affairs

Hopes matters will be different this time around (re 1992 talks)

Wants Mitchell to be addressed as early as possible

If necessary proceed with negotiations without SF if there is no ceasefire.

JB - Re Decommissioning - Believes it will be difficult to get SF to comply or agree to it

KM - Re Dublin Forum - SF would not sign up to it regarding decommissioning

- What will the Irish Government therefore do to counter the threat?

JB - "The Irish Government has done all it can"

DS - We need to address the process

JT - But we need the decommissioning issue addressed straight away at 'all party talks'

JB - Irish Government has been looking at legislation to deal with decommissioning Re an amnesty for weapons

DT - We need a legal basis for decommissioning verification

Without this, the process will be seriously flawed

JB - Has no objection to such legislation

However, he believes it will delay the process

Republicans may feel trapped by such a step

JT - The more you say this, the more you are alienating and ignoring the Northern people.

JB - "The decommissioning legislation will kick in once all party talks begin"

DS - Is decommissioning the first issue to be addressed ?

JT - Yes

DS - feels there are a number of serious problems regarding the process of parallel decommissioning

DT - To have agreement on this, you must have agreement on the principles and on the timing

We are not going to allow SF to sneak past decommissioning

We will proceed if necessary without any paramilitary political representatives into negotiations

KM - We have come from the position of a commitment to total decommissioning before talks, to accepting Mitchell.
But we need tangible evidence that there will be decommissioning before talks begin
We also need to address Articles 2 & 3

JB - Reference to Communique - To go forward with decommissioning we need to move on wider issues
- Agrees with the principle of decommissioning

DT - The fear of the threat is very real

JT - If there is a ceasefire before June 10, and then it breaks after talks begin, the talks will stop

PdR - The communique was drafted post 9th February, and it took decommissioning into consideration

JT - We must get an IRA ceasefire, otherwise the UDA/UVF won't decommission

KM - There is no benefit for SF entering into the democratic process unless they give tangible evidence of their commitment to para 10 of the Downing St declaration, and to Mitchell

DS - But SF are the same as any other party, and they should be treated likewise

KM - SF must be forced to declare their position on Para 10 and Mitchell

JB - It doesn't matter what the majority want SF to do
They cannot afford a split in their ranks. We should be more patient with them

DT - This then creates a two edged sword, because even at June 10 they still won't be able to make decisions. Thus they will be in no position to make a tangible contribution to any matters discussed

JB - " We need to get Adams to admit his errors"

KM (to DS) - What do you think we're going to achieve in talks in a year, that you could not achieve in the Peace Forum ?
- There is nothing for them at the end of the day

DS - Does this mean there is nothing for the nationalist aspiration ?

KM - Will there be decommissioning on a monthly basis ?

DS - Probably not

KM - I have not seen anything within the law here to strangle the paramilitaries

PdR - We have had closer security co-operation

JB - There has been no lack of resolution against terrorism here.
We need evidence to convict

KM - What can SF get from talks ?

JB - SF don't want a United Ireland. " They want to get one over on the Unionists in terms of a constitutional settlement"
- Monthly decommissioning is unrealistic

DT - But the UUP cannot negotiate with SF until they've made a commitment

KM - UUP won't get involved in a dummy run

DS - SF said they would only move on real negotiations

JT - NI is bracing itself for more war

DS - Very dis-heartened to hear John say that

DT - We need to address the issue of the 3 strand process. We are not happy about not being party to all the stages.

DS - Wants equal weighting given to all the teams in negotiations

JT - This will not be acceptable to Unionist voters.
We cannot have the same weight as the UVF

DT - Compares the number of parties involved in the 1992 talks, to present day
There must be weighted proportional representation on the basis of seats held in the Forum

JB - The 'Greater Envelope' to be created will address and incorporate the concerns of each community

KM - If we are going to have co-operation, it must be acceptable to all

JB - If we accept that NI is part of the UK by consent, there is a duty on Unionists to get the loyalty of those who presently do not support you

- " There are immense flaws in Articles 2 & 3 "
- But the Unionist project should be to increase support for the Union
- I believe this government offers unionists the best opportunity to reach agreement on this island
Unionists must realise this, and accordingly act responsibly.
- " We have no ambition to interfere in Northern Ireland "
- If nationalists in the north do not want us involved, then we will honour their decision
- Any settlement which will satisfy the 2 communities in NI is acceptable to us

DS - Does not think an agreement between the internal parties in NI is enough to satisfy constitutional and militant nationalists in the North.

DT - But we must have agreement to build trust within NI

- We are meeting tonight exceptionally. If we were to meet more often then we would be seen to be operating within the Anglo-Irish agreement
- We need to be able to talk outside the Anglo-Irish agreement.

JB - Extends his appreciation for our visit, and hopes that we can meet again to continue to move the process forward.

David Kerr LL.B
PA to Mr D Trimble MP
12/03/96