

The Irish Time article of 22 February

Adams uses the article to expand on the position taken in his answers to John Hume. On the issue of the timeframe for political negotiations he, for the first time, picks up the language of the 28 November statement by saying that "a realistic indicative timeframe is the only way to create the necessary urgency and momentum towards agreement". This is very different from his position in January, when he and John Hume submitted amendments to the 10 October statement, which attempted to commit the two governments to "an agreed timeframe and calendar for the conduct of negotiations".

The long paragraph on confidence building measures appears to be an attempt to switch the onus to the British Government, rather than Sinn Féin. On the other hand Adams might be inviting us to tick off progress on the list of issues, knowing that much has already been done by HMG. It is presumably no accident that he has relegated the most controversial issues, surrounding political prisoners, emergency legislation and policing to the end of the list.

In the concluding paragraphs Adams again mirrors the language of the 28 November statement by referring to Sinn Féin's belief that a new ceasefire will be "genuinely unequivocal".