

FOLDEV1/3023

ADAMS' ANSWERS OF 20 FEBRUARY

Commentary by the NIOAnswer 1

Does not explicitly answer the question. Adams, not surprisingly, refuses to answer on behalf of the IRA and emphasises instead what Sinn Féin's position is. He does, however, seem to have gone out of his way to include some rhetorical flourishes to give emphasis to Sinn Féin's apparent desire to see an end to all armed actions. Thus we have the phrases

- "we can, with credibility, seek to persuade the IRA to restore of August 1994 ..."
- "Sinn Féin believes that any restoration by the IRA of its cessation of August 1994 will be genuinely unequivocal, containing a clear and unambiguous commitment to enhance a genuine peace process".

Answer 2

As Adams says, Sinn Féin have already made clear in public that they support the Mitchell principles; it is, nevertheless, useful to have this stated directly in correspondence. Again, Adams refuses to speak on behalf of the IRA, but he gives grammatical emphasis to "the IRA's definitive commitment" to the success of the democratic peace process. He then goes on to accept that threats of violence have no role in a process of democratic negotiations.

Answers 3 and 4

Straightforward answers to straightforward questions.

Answer 5

Adams mirrors Government language in his phrase that "the issue of disarmament needs to be resolved but without blocking the negotiations". He ducks the issue of the Mitchell compromise on decommissioning and fails to repeat the formula used by Martin McGuinness mentioned in the original question, but gives the respectable answer that Sinn Féin are willing to address all aspects of the Mitchell Report. The implication is that Sinn Féin will not accept the Mitchell compromise but have proposals of their own to bring forward.

Answer 6

Although the answer points the finger back at what the British Government should be doing on confidence building measures, it is helpful that Adams endorses Chapter VII of the Mitchell Report which has implications for Sinn Féin.

IPL/TAD/26754