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SELLING TO UNIONISTS

1. The settlement train is leaving. This blows the whistle and waves the flag. Either Sinn Fein get on the train right now or it leaves without them.
2. We must persuade Hume and the Irish Government, if Sinn Fein do not join, that it is not because we have not tried. So make one last effort - this is it.
3. The criteria for Sinn Fein's entry remain the same: it is the the quality of the ceasefire that matters. It must be reflected in word and deed. Would not be taken in by a fudged, tactical ceasefire.
4. Sinn Fein wanted immediate entry: not on. Sinn Fein wanted a firm date for entry: but we have given a conditional date. It depends on the quality of the ceasefire and whether or not the criteria are met: they remain critical.
5. Without some date, Hume, the Irish and the US would not regard this as a serious effort.
6. We must get momentum in to the process:
 - the longer we wait on Sinn Fein, the longer real talks are delayed whether with or without them;
 - want to force the IRA to a decision before the marching season. Fear they want to keep their options open;
 - but want to give unionists maximum space: so plan Sinn Fein will formally enter in July but no real business done until September.
7. No fudging on:

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— consent;

- need for unionist agreement to any settlement;
- criteria for ceasefire;
- need to resolve decommissioning by sufficient consensus.

8. Stuck to established policy:

- confidence-building: repeated what we are already committed to;
- timeframe: simply explained timeframe in last year's Act (assume unionists do not see negotiations going beyond end of Forum in May 1998);
- decommissioning: told Sinn Fein it cannot be wished away. Mitchell is the only way forward. We have got to get sufficient consensus to move into the strands.

9. Entry process for Sinn Fein:

- the criteria are the keys to entry: ceasefire must be reflected in words and deeds;
- similar process to 28 November;
- adjournment to talks simply recognises the reality: but Forum can go on;
- access to Castle Buildings: similar to last year when Castle Buildings used for preparatory meetings for negotiations;
- entry in July will be for the formalities: Mitchell principles etc;

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● real business starts in September: if decommissioning not resolved by then, that is what Sinn Fein will have to start with.

10. This puts Sinn Fein to the test now. Are they in or out? If out, then we shall know quickly and we shall move on quickly without them. If in, then there are more tests: Mitchell principles, decommissioning, finding agreement.

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