

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



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Dear John

**PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE ULSTER DEMOCRATIC PARTY (UDP):
THURSDAY 26 FEBRUARY**

This is to provide briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting with the UDP on Thursday 26 February. Their delegation will comprise Gary McMichael, David Adams, John White and Frank McCoubrey.

It is likely that the UDP's prime objective will be to use the meeting as an opportunity to publicly register that they have complained directly to the Prime Minister about their perceived lack of even-handedness in the Governments' (harsh) approach to the UDP's expulsion from the talks contrasted with a more lenient approach to Sinn Fein. Our contacts with the UDP indicate that while the leadership understands the real politics underlying the terms of the respective expulsions of the UDP and Sinn Fein, their constituency genuinely believes that they have been treated unfairly.

The UDP asserts that Sinn Fein are being treated more favourably than the UDP because Sinn Fein were expelled from the talks for the two murders which PIRA denied involvement in. This contrasts with the UFF which admitted their involvement in the murders resulting in the expulsion of the UDP. However, the determination by the Governments was more favourable towards those who are deceitful (Sinn Fein and PIRA) than towards those who are honest about their activities - the UFF and the UDP.

It is also likely that the UDP will want to discuss a number of issues with the Prime Minister including:



- sharing with the Prime Minister their analysis of the current position within the talks, they are concerned that the process may in some way be stalled by the SDLP and the Irish Government pending the return of Sinn Fein;
- assert their view that the Prime Minister should not meet Gerry Adams before Sinn Fein's re-entry to the talks because that facility was not available to the UDP. If such a meeting takes place this will be viewed as a further example of double standards being applied by the Government.
- hear directly from the Prime Minister how the Government envisages the talks process moving towards an agreement in the limited time remaining for intensive negotiations.
- the handling of prisoner issues as part of or alongside an overall settlement.

The UDP clearly believes that the Government regards republicans as more important to the talks process than loyalists. Tactically, the Prime Minister may therefore wish to reassure them that they have an important role to play in the negotiations and welcome their reaffirmation of the Mitchell Principles on non-violence but also remind them that if the UFF commits murder in the future then the consequences will be a further expulsion of the UDP.

I have attached in the annex a short background note and some key points which cover the above issues.

I am copying this letter to Jan Polley.

Yours ever,
Ken.

W K LINDSAY