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## ATTWOOD: TAKE HEAT AND RISKS OUT OF SUNDAY

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Commenting on the Parades Commission decision not to hold a review of the parade and protest on Sunday, SDLP Alex Attwood MLA said:

“The big issue to be faced up to is what can be said and what can be done by everyone, including the British Army and Sinn Fein, to take the heat and risks out of Sunday. A Parades Commission review was one way to help people step back and think through how to diffuse fears and anxieties. The responsibility to do so still remains. It is useful that the Parades Commission is keeping its door open to help all this to be worked through.

“The SDLP believes that there are a number of steps that the British Army and Sinn Fein need to consider to help defuse fears and anxieties. The routes to be marched, the flags displayed, the music played, the start and end locations for the parade and protest are all matters where voluntary changes could help a little to change the tone and character of Sunday. In particular, public statements from the British Army and political leaderships – including that there are serious differences in the City of Belfast around the military parade and the British Army - could contribute to defusing the run-up to Sunday. That is what the SDLP has been encouraging, both through the request for a Parades Commission review and through other means over the last 36 hours.

“The nationalist community did not support the military parade in the first instance and does not support the protest in the second instance. That continues to be the broad view of nationalism. It is the reason why the SDLP advises that the nationalist community should go to neither the military parade nor the protest on Sunday. That is the dignified and proper response, not least to those elements in unionism and nationalism that are escalating tensions in the run up to Sunday.”

ENDS

30.10-08

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