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From: Clive Barbour
Talks Admin
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- cc: PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B
- PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
- PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Brooke - B
- Mr Daniell - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Shannon - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Wood (B&L) - B
- Mr Brooker - B
- Mrs Brown - B
- Mr Dodds - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Perry - B
- Mr Marsh - B
- Mr Stephens, SIL - B
- Mr Bramley - B
- Mr Beeton - B
- Mr Margetts - B
- Mr R Lyne, No 10 - Fax
- Mr P Lever, Cabinet Office - Fax
- HMA, Dublin - B
- HMA, Washington - Fax
- Mr Lamont, RID - B

Mrs Dalton
LD 9/11

cc Mr Maffee

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

LXD: SUBMISSION BY THE PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST PARTY - 23 DECEMBER 1994

I am now attaching the text of the submission which has been put forward by the PUP at today's session of LXD.

Signed

CLIVE BARBOUR

PM/TALKS/161

Submission from the
Progressive Unionist Party
23 December 1994

Proposals for Consent

In its opening statement (15/12/94) HMG stated that it intended to publish its own "understanding of those local democratic institutions in Northern Ireland which as part of an overall settlement might best secure widespread acceptance, as a basis for public discussion and a guide for further negotiation in the Talks process". In what way will this document differ in terms of spirit and intent from that of the Joint Framework Document? Do proposals for a British interpretation of the Framework Document mean that differences as to interpretation already exist between HMG and the Irish Government, and is there any suggestion that the proposals to be put to the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum may be open to interpretation by different traditions within Northern Ireland and between the peoples of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic? If so, what is possible?

All Ireland Structures

Notwithstanding assurances from HMG sources that there is no commitment on its part to establish All-Ireland Structures with executive powers, the ordinary loyalist people are still concerned at the statement made by the former Irish Prime Minister (Mr Reynolds) that "agreement has already been made" to set up such structures. What concrete assurances can HMG give that no such agreement has been made, and can any indication be given as to what agreement, tentative or otherwise, has been reached between the two Governments on the issue of cross-border structures?

Mandate

We believe that the constant references to the Progressive Unionist Party not having a substantial electoral mandate is unjustified. Electoral mandates can only be achieved through elections and in the

absence of elections it is just not possible for either the PUP or the UDP to seek such a mandate. If HMG wishes us to become more deeply involved in the democratic process, and if we cannot seek a mandate because there is no opportunity to do so, how else can we participate in the political process?

* We believe that, notwithstanding our lack of an electoral mandate, we have a significant contribution to make towards the development of peace in Northern Ireland.

* We have helped to broker a ceasefire.

* We are encouraging the CLMC to maintain and consolidate that ceasefire.

* We have encouraged moderate nationalists to believe that, notwithstanding our past, we are offering a new brand of unionism which poses no threat to their religious, political or cultural beliefs and aspirations.

* We are genuinely seeking to facilitate a transformation of the conflict from violence to non-violence.

* We are serving as the conscience of the wider unionist family.

* We are actively engaged in normal constituency work.

Thus, whether our mandate is significant or not, the Progressive Unionist Party has made, and continues to make, a significant contribution to the political life of working class areas, and towards the development of genuine democracy in Northern Ireland. Invitations to have input to the Talks process on the future of Northern Ireland should be made on the significance of our contribution to the political process and not the significance of our electoral mandate.

prisoners

The Progressive Unionist Party is bitterly disappointed and deeply concerned at the lack of constructive responses by HMG on the issue of prisoners. This negativity is causing widespread frustration and disappointment amongst both prisoners and their families and we are concerned lest this leads to a wider disaffection throughout the loyalist community.

We are very much aware of the need to be sensitive to the hurts and feelings of the innocent victims of the conflict, yet we must not lose sight of the fact that the relatives of prisoners are innocent victims and we believe that a creative and constructive approach to addressing the issue of prisoners would greatly assist those of us who are endeavouring to consolidate the ceasefire and cement the peace process.

Arms

The Progressive Unionist Party is as committed to the removal of war materials, legal or otherwise, from the political conflict in Northern Ireland as is HMG. However we do not believe that the issue of arms should be linked to either the release of prisoners or to the continuation of dialogue between HMG and the Progressive Unionist Party. Neither prisoners nor the talks process should be held as hostages pending a final resolution of the arms issue.

The PUP is fully committed to being facilitators for conflict transformation in the Province because we genuinely wish to see an end to violence and because we are sincerely committed to the development of genuine democratic politics in the Province. There has not even been a hint of a breach of the ceasefire from within the ranks of those who regard us as their confidants and we are confident that the ceasefire will remain solid within the loyalist community. At the same time we must voice our concern at HMG's failure to acknowledge the magnitude of the task that is ours in brokering and defending the ceasefire and, more particularly, in seeking to politicise those who were formerly committed to the armed conflict.

HMG must acknowledge the fears in loyalist ranks about possible rumps within ^{the} republican movement. The ongoing targeting of members of both the Security Forces and the Unionist community by republicans is a source of genuine concern and it is unrealistic for any faction to consider unilateral disarmament. We have moved a long way since the publication of the Downing Street Declaration and we believe that we have a long way yet to go before we can even begin to talk about real peace. We must progress slowly. We must not rush too far ahead of those who have laid down the guns and entrusted us with the task of creating and developing conditions whereby the guns can be finally removed from the conflict.

The Progressive Unionist Party wishes to stress that it does not have a military capacity and that, unlike Sinn Fein, we do not see the democratic process as an either/or process and we are not entering into dialogue with any hidden threat of a possible return to violence if our political philosophy is rejected. Irrespective of the final outcome of the peace process the Progressive Unionist party is wholly committed to democratic politics.

Enniskillen Bomb

In the light of HMG's insistence that the continuation and completion of dialogue with Sinn Fein depends upon the continued commitment of the Provisional Republican Movement to non-violent action, in both word and deed, is HMG convinced that the planting of a bomb last weekend at Enniskillen was not the work of PIRA and is that confidence based upon reliable intelligence information?

If HMG accepts that PIRA was not responsible can we be assured that the Security Forces are in a position to deal effectively with any rump faction within either PIRA or the wider republican movement, and can remedial action be taken in such a manner so as not to give dissident republicans an opportunity to engage in unjustified accusations of "security force harassment" or otherwise alienate moderate nationalists from the "peace process"?

does HMG agree that the Provisional Republican Movement has a duty and a responsibility to defend its own ceasefire by denouncing unauthorised acts from within and without the Movement? What solution has HMG to the problem of breaches of the ceasefire by republicans?