

# THE ROAD TO THE BELFAST (GOOD FRIDAY) AGREEMENT

**KS3 - LESSON 1**

# The Road to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement

## Introduction

Please note, the transcripts of the resources retain any typographical errors included in the original documents.

The six documents selected within this package reveal the difficulties of making peace at two selected snapshots of time in the peace process in Northern Ireland: June 1996 and June 1997, as well as how and when progress was made at these points.

Although this is 'packaged' as a single lesson, it is likely to take at least two lesson periods of learning time to complete if all students use all the sources. Alternatively the sources could be shared within small groups with each student working on a single source and feeding back.

Students are encouraged to analyse each document, looking for:

- any evidence that the talks are going well or that progress is being made;
- any evidence that there are still challenges or barriers to peace; and
- the reasons why making peace was difficult

## Learning objectives

By the end of the session, students will:

- know two of the key moments on the road towards the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement;
- understand why it was so difficult to make peace; and
- be able to use contemporary documents to deepen their understanding of the peace process.

## Suitable for:

KS3

## Time period:

Post-war, 1945 - present

## Connections to the curriculum:

Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world, 1901 to the present day

## Prior Knowledge:

It is recommended that students watch the video 'From Conflict to Peace' available on The National Archives website:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/belfast-good-friday-agreement/>

and on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQXBpt5RARy>

and undertake the discussion activity to gain an overview of The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and what it achieved.

The discussion resources are available from

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/belfast-good-friday-agreement/bgfa25-discussion-activity/>

## Tasks

### Starter activity

#### Why was Alastair Campbell worried about the Downing Street Christmas tree?

Hand out the starter document.

Starter document: Catalogue reference TNA PREM 49/121

A letter from Alastair Campbell to Jonathan Powell and John Holmes

Students need to examine the communication from Alastair Campbell to Jonathan Powell and John Holmes before answering the questions on Slide 3:

1. What type of document is this?
2. Look for 3 things that Alastair Campbell is worried about?
3. Can you suggest any reasons for this?
4. What 3 questions would you like to ask Alastair Campbell about his letter?

Teachers should then feed in a bit more information using Slide 4, and then use Slide 5 to invite questions.

Teachers can then use Slides 6–9 to introduce the focus of the lesson (if necessary).

### Main activity

#### Why was it so difficult to make peace?

Students should look at each document and complete the table provided, so that they are making notes of:

- any evidence that the talks are going well or that progress is being made;
- any evidence that there are challenges or barriers to peace; and/or
- any clues to explain why making peace was so difficult.

For each document, there are additional questions to aid students in their analysis.

## Tasks

### Review Activity

The review is broken into two stages which will allow the source activity to be more easily delivered over 2 lesson periods.

Review 1 requires students to analyse Sources A-C and then consider the key question of why making peace was so difficult. They need to:

1. Look back over the last column in your table for Sources A-C.
2. List what you consider to be three important reasons why achieving peace was so difficult.
3. Choose one and write a paragraph to explain how it made achieving peace difficult. You need to use support from at least two documents you have examined.

There are some suggested sentence starters on Slide 12 to help them get started.

4. These sentence starters may help...
  - One of the most important reasons it was so difficult to make peace was ...
  - For example, in Source \_\_\_\_, we can see that ...
  - This is further supported by Source \_\_\_\_, which shows us that ...

Review 2 requires students to analyse Sources D-F and then consider whether anything has changed between June 1996 and October 1997. They need to:

1. Look back over the last column in your table for Sources D-F.
2. List what you consider to be three important reasons why achieving peace was so difficult.
3. Consider whether anything has changed between your previous review for June 1996 and this review in October 1997.
4. Choose one change and write a paragraph to explain what has changed and whether it made peace more or less likely. You need to use support from at least two documents you have examined.

There are some suggested sentence starters on Slide 13 to help them get started.

5. These sentence starters may help...
  - One of the most important changes which helped / hindered the peace process was ...
  - For example, in Source \_\_\_\_, we can see that ...
  - This is further supported by Source \_\_\_\_, which shows us that ...

## Teacher's notes on documents

Teachers may find the following background notes on the sources helpful for guiding students:

### Source A

The explosion to which the letter refers was the London Docklands bombing of 9 February 1996. The Provisional IRA detonated a truck bomb which killed two people, injured over a hundred, and devastated a wide area.

The bomb signalled an end to the IRA ceasefire which hitherto had lasted since 31 August 1994. (This had followed the Downing Street Declaration, 1993 which allowed Sinn Féin to participate in peace talks on the condition that the IRA called a ceasefire).

In January 1996, the former US Senator George Mitchell (who was heading an international commission) had set out the 'Mitchell Principles'. These required a commitment to non-violence to enter the talks process, and set out a plan for achieving decommissioning of weapons. Sinn Féin said it agreed to the Principles, but the IRA leadership did not, and refused to hand over any weapons. However, the UK government demanded a full IRA disarmament as a precondition for Sinn Féin involvement in the peace talks. Following this, the IRA conducted the London Docklands bombing. This was followed by another truck bomb in Manchester in June 1996.

### Source B

Following the bombing, the UK and Irish governments announced that all-party peace talks would resume in June 1996, following elections to a new body, the Northern Ireland Forum. The UK government dropped its demand for the IRA to disarm completely before Sinn Féin were allowed to take part in negotiations. However, the party was told that they would not be allowed to participate without a permanent IRA ceasefire. Sinn Féin, who had won 15.5% of the vote in Northern Ireland and 17 of the Forum's 110 seats, claimed this electoral support gave them a mandate for involvement in the peace talks.

### Sources C and D

The talks began on 10 June 1996 at Stormont in Belfast. As expected, Sinn Féin were not allowed to enter the talks because the IRA had not resumed its ceasefire before the talks began.

The multi-party talks continued slowly and intermittently amongst further violence and heightening tension. In March 1997, the talks were suspended until June, to allow the parties to contest the forth-coming general election.

### Sources E and F

On 1 May 1997, the Labour Party won the UK General Election in a landslide victory. Tony Blair became the Prime Minister and Mo Mowlam became the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Tony Blair said that the Northern Ireland peace process was one of the government's top priorities.

In July 1997, the IRA announced a new ceasefire, and following this, Sinn Féin were allowed to enter the peace talks in September. In protest at this, both the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the UK Unionist Party (UKUP) pulled out, meaning the talks still lacked representation from all parties. However, David Trimble and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), alongside the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), remained, despite criticism from other Unionists.

## Why was it so difficult to make peace?

Source	Date	What is the source?	Evidence of progress	Evidence of challenges	Reasons achieving peace was difficult

*File Holmes met*

From: Alastair Campbell  
Date: 29 November 1997

separate copies to:

cc: Carol Allen

JONATHAN POWELL

JOHN HOLMES

*cc: Holmes*

#### CHRISTMAS TREE

I am not sure what our arrangements are for putting up a Christmas tree, but can I alert you to a potential problem?

With Gerry Adams due in on 11 December, we need to think through whether we want him photographed with the No 10 door and a Christmas tree.

Given the attacks we will have to fend off over him coming at all, do we want the added problem of the symbolism of Gerry Adams as a man of peace, bringing glad tidings, and all the other Christmas cliches that will be churned out?

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

*re*

## Transcript - Starter Document

From: Alistair Campbell

Date: 29 November 1997

cc: Carol Allen

separate copies to:

JONATHAN POWELL

JOHN HOLMES

CHRISTMAS TREE

I am not sure what our arrangements are for putting up a Christmas tree, but can I alert you to a potential problem?

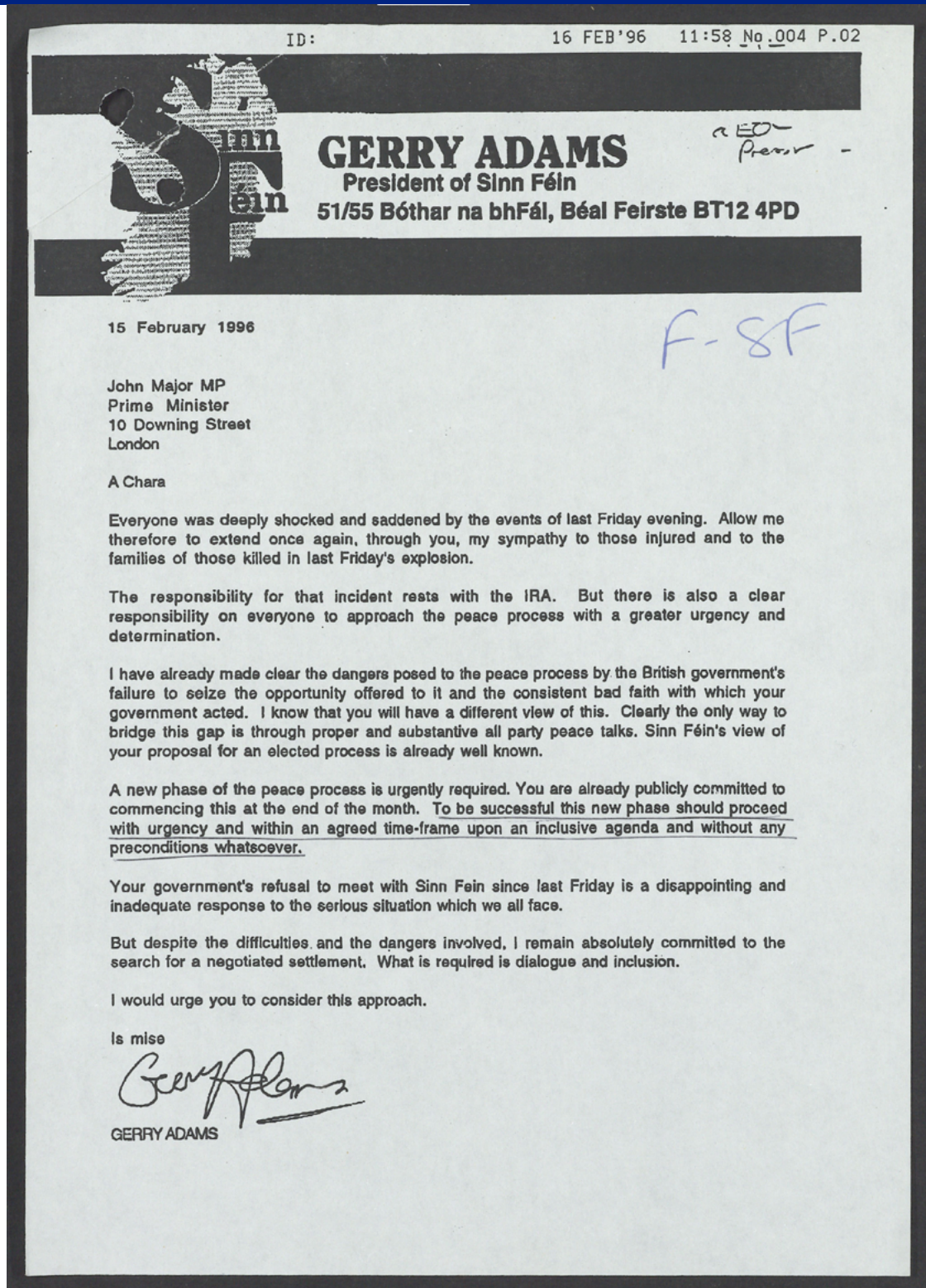
With Gerry Adams due on 11 December, we need to think through whether we want him photographed with the No 10 door and a Christmas tree.

Given the attacks we will have to fend off over him coming at all, do we want the added problem of the symbolism of Gerry Adams as a man of peace, bringing glad tidings, and all the other Christmas clichés that will be churned out?

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL



**Source A - CJ4/12375 - A letter from Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Féin, to John Major, the UK Prime Minister.**



**Additional questions using the source above:**

1. What can you suggest happened last Friday?
2. Who was responsible?
3. What does Adams think about the UK government?
4. What does Adams say is now more urgent than ever?

## Transcript - Source A

GERRY ADAMS

President of Sinn Féin

51/55 Bóthar na bhFál, Béal Feirste BT12 4PD

15 February 1996

John Major MP

Prime Minister

10 Downing Street

London

A Chara

Everyone was deeply shocked and saddened by the events of last Friday evening. Allow me therefore to extend once again, through you, my sympathy to those injured and to the families of those killed in last Friday's explosion.

The responsibility for that incident rests with the IRA. But there is also a clear responsibility on everyone to approach the peace process with a greater urgency and determination.

I have already made clear the dangers posed to the peace process by the British government's failure to seize the opportunity offered to it and the consistent bad faith with which your government acted. I know that you will have a different view of this. Clearly the only way to bridge this gap is through proper and substantive all party peace talks. Sinn Féin's view of your proposal for an elected process is already well known.

A new phase of the peace process is urgently required. You are already publicly committed to commencing this at the end of the month. To be successful this new phase should proceed with urgency and within an agreed time-frame upon an inclusive agenda and without any preconditions whatsoever.

Your government's refusal to meet with Sinn Fein since last Friday is a disappointing and inadequate response to the serious situation which we all face.

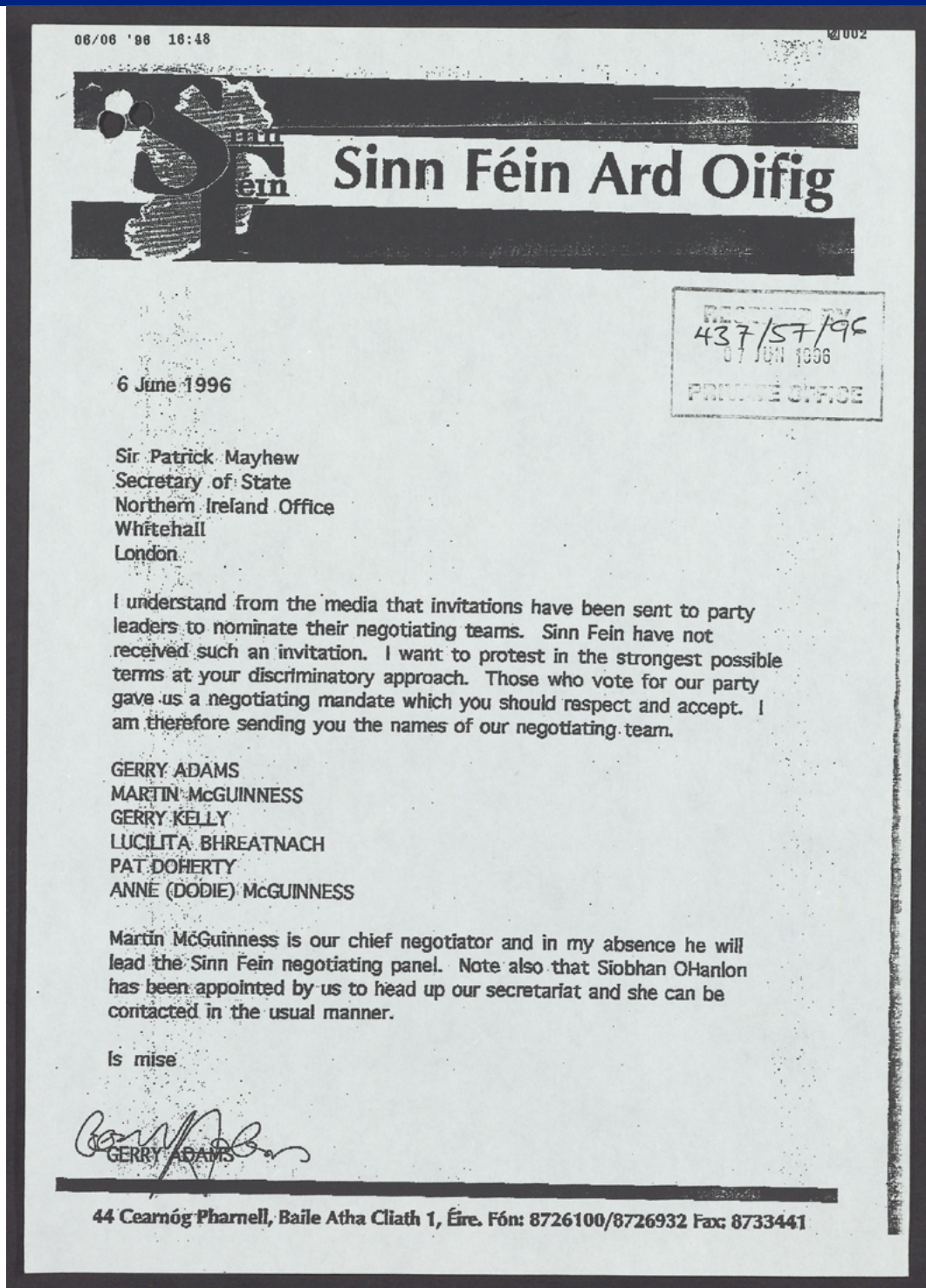
But despite the difficulties and the danger involved, I remain absolutely committed to the search for a negotiated settlement. What is required is dialogue and inclusion.

I would urge you to consider this approach.

Is mise

GERRY ADAMS

**Source B - CJ4/12383 - A letter from Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Féin, to Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (a UK government minister)**



**Additional questions using the source above:**

1. What has Gerry Adams heard from the media?
2. What was his reaction to hearing this news?
3. Why does he feel Sinn Féin have a right to be involved?
4. Thinking back to Source A, can you suggest any reasons for the UK government's decision?

## Transcript - Source B

Sinn Féin Ard Oifig

6 June 1996

Sir Patrick Mayhew  
Secretary of State  
Northern Ireland Office  
Whitehall  
London

I understand from the media that invitations have been sent to party leaders to nominate their negotiating teams. Sinn Fein have not received such an invitation. I want to protest in the strongest possible terms at your discriminatory approach. Those who vote for our party gave us a negotiating mandate which you should respect and accept. I am therefore sending you the names of our negotiating team.

GERRY ADAMS  
MARTIN McGUINNESS  
GERRY KELLY  
LUCILITA BHREATNACH  
PAT DOHERTY  
ANNE (DODIE) McGUINNESS

Martin McGuinness is our chief negotiator and in my absence he will lead the Sinn Fein negotiating panel. Note also that Siobhan O'Hanlon has been appointed by us to head up our secretariat and she can be contacted in the usual manner.

Is mise

GERRY ADAMS

**Source C - CJ4/12228 - Extracts from a Northern Ireland Office (UK government department) record of a morning session during the peace talks on 12 June 1996 in Stormont, Belfast. The notes were recorded by a UK government official.**

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: INT/3

RECORD OF PLENARY SESSION, CASTLE BUILDINGS, 12 JUNE

Independent Chairmen (after adjournment)

Senator Mitchell  
General de Chastelain  
Mr Holkeri

British Government Team

Secretary of State  
Michael Ancram  
Sir David Fell

Irish Government Team

Tánaiste  
Mrs Owen  
Mr de Rossa

Alliance Party

Dr Alderdice  
Mr Close  
Mr Neeson

Labour

Malachi Curran

NI Women's Coalition

Ms McWilliams  
Ms Sagar

PUP

Mr Smyth  
Mr Ervine

SDLP

Mr Hume  
Mr Mallon  
Mr McGrady

UDP

Mr McMichael  
Mr White

UDUP (for part of meeting)

Dr Paisley  
Mr Robinson  
Rev McCrea

UK Unionist (for part of meeting)

Mr McCartney  
Dr O'Brien  
Mr Wilson

UUP

Mr Trimble  
Mr Taylor  
Mr Empey

1. The meeting began at 12.20 am.

CONFIDENTIAL

POLDEVT/137

**Source C - CJ4/12228 - Extracts from a Northern Ireland Office (UK government department) record of a morning session during the peace talks on 12 June 1996 in Stormont, Belfast. The notes were recorded by a UK government official.**

5. When other delegates had arrived, the Secretary of State opened the meeting. The day had seen a long and useful period of deliberation, which had led the two Governments to put forward a paper which they believed offered a way forward [A possible approach to resolving procedural difficulties, 00.01am draft, annexed at A]. On the basis of this, in particular paragraph 4.1, he invited Senator Mitchell to take over, following a five minute adjournment. Dr Paisley shouted 'No, no, no'; and the rest of his delegation, and the UKUP's, left, with disparaging comments about 'British democracy'; Mr Wilson (UKUP) moved to take over one of the Independent Chairmen's chairs.

6. As proceedings were about to resume after the adjournment, Dr Paisley addressed Senator Mitchell. He said he did not accept him in the chair: his name had not been put to the meeting, and he objected

in the strongest manner to the intrusion. He repeated his points about undertakings that proposals put forward would have to be to the satisfaction of participants, undertakings which had not been met. The Secretary of State had not given an opportunity to discuss it. His lackey had seen to it that he had not visited the DUP room. [I was the lackey who had visited delegations to tell them a paper, then a meeting, were imminent, if that is what was referred to: there was no-one in the DUP office, and Dr Paisley was already in the Private Office].

7. Dr Paisley then left the room, shouting that he did not wish to sit with a member of the Irish Government who threatened that there would be bodies in the street, a remark ascribed to the 'man with the beard' [presumably Mr de Rossa. It had been reported around the building that he had made such a prediction, in the event that Senator Mitchell was not appointed and the process broke down].

**Additional questions using the sources above:**

1. How would you describe the range of parties present at the discussions?
2. Which party is missing?
3. Look at Point 5. What is the Secretary of State's view about the talks the previous day?
4. What did Dr Paisley and his delegation do when Senator Mitchell was invited to take over leading the meeting?
5. Look at Point 6. After the adjournment, what did Dr. Paisley say to Senator Mitchell?
6. What does the person recording these notes say about Dr. Paisley at this point?
7. Look at Point 7. What did Dr. Paisley do next?

## Transcripts - Source C

Confidential. Ref:INT/3

RECORD OF PLENARY SESSION, CASTLE BUILDINGS, 12 JUNE

Independent Chairman (after adjournment) Senator Mitchell. General de Chastelain. Mr Holkeri	
British government team Secretary of State. Michael Ancram. Sir David Fell	Irish government team Tánaiste. Mrs Owen. Mr de Rossa
Alliance Party Dr Alerdice. Mr Close. Mr Neeson	Labour Malachi Curran
NI Women's Coalition Ms McWilliams. Ms Sagar	PUP Mr Smyth. Mr Ervine
SDLP Mr Hume. Mr Mallon. Mr. McGrady	UDP Mr McMichael. Mr White
UDUP (for part of meeting) Dr Paisley. Mr Robinson. Rev McCrea	UK Unionist (for part of meeting) Mr McCartney. Dr O'Brien. Mr Wilson
UUP Mr Trimble. Mr Taylor. Mr Empey	

1. The meeting began at 12.20 am.

5. When other delegates had arrived, the Secretary of State opened the meeting. The day had seen a long and useful period of deliberation, which had led the two Governments to put forward a paper which they believed offered a way forward (A possible approach to resolving procedural difficulties, 00.01am draft, annexed at A). On the basis of this, in particular paragraph 4.1, he invited Senator Mitchell to take over, following a five minute adjournment. Dr Paisley shouted 'No, no, no'; and the rest of his delegation, and the UKUP's, left, with disparaging comments about 'British democracy'; Mr Wilson (UKUP) moved to take over one of the Independent Chairmen's chairs.

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7. Dr Paisley then left the room, shouting that he did not wish to sit with a member of the Irish Government who threatened that there would be bodies in the street, a remark ascribed to the 'man with the beard' [presumably Mr de Rossa. It had been reported around the building that he had made such a prediction, in the event that Senator Mitchell was not appointed and the process broke down].

**Source D - CJ4/1228 - A copy of a press release concerning the peace talks so far. It was tabled by Senator Mitchell at the end of the meeting in Source C and there were no objections from those present.**

NORTHERN IRELAND: MULTI-PARTY TALKS

12 JUNE

Press Statement

The participants in the talks engaged in a round of intensive bilateral exchanges during the day.

In a plenary meeting they agreed the approach to resolving procedural difficulties set out in the attached paper.

At the invitation of the two Governments, Senator Mitchell assumed the chair of the opening plenary session. General de Chastelain and Mr Holkeri were appointed as chairman of Strand 2 and the Business Committee and alternate chairman respectively.

The British and Irish Governments, the Alliance Party, Labour, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, the Progressive Unionist Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the Ulster Democratic Party and the Ulster Unionist Party all confirmed their total and absolute commitment specifically to the principles of democracy and non-violence as set out in paragraph 20 of the report of the International Body.

The participants will meet again this morning to confer on the issues mentioned in paragraph 5 of the attached paper.

**Additional questions using the source above:**

1. What is the purpose of this document?
2. What is the tone of the document?
3. What impression do you get of the peace talks so far from this document? Is it similar or different to the impression you get from Source C?
4. Can you think of any reasons for this?



## Transcript - Source D

12 June

NORTHERN IRELAND: MULTI-PARTY TALKS

Press Statement

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The participants will meet again this morning to confer on the issues mentioned in paragraph 5 of the attached paper.

**Source E - PREM 49/403 - Extracts from an opening statement by Martin McGuinness, Sinn Féin's Vice President and chief negotiator at the peace talks in Stormont, Belfast, 7 October 1997. The title of the statement was 'A New Beginning.'**

A Chairde,

Ba mhaith liom a rá, ar son Sinn Féin, go bhfuil athas orainn bheith anseo. Is lá stáiriúil é seo.

Today we enter into negotiations, the agreed outcome of which will inevitably mean far reaching change.

A democratic settlement acceptable to all the inhabitants of this island means that we need to approach these negotiations in the knowledge that the status quo has failed to deliver a society where all citizens are treated as equals.

#### **A Democratic Peace Settlement:**

There is no going back to the failed policies of the past. Partition has failed. The partition of this small island and the division of our people have created a failed political entity in the North of our country. The inequality and the discrimination against nationalists and the militarisation of this part of our country must end.

This requires a negotiated and democratic settlement of the conflict. We now, for the first time since partition, have the opportunity to negotiate that settlement.

Britain's policy which resulted in the undemocratic partition of our national territory, sustains division among our people, and it follows that our people cannot be united while our country remains divided.

### **There Must Be Change**

We enter into these negotiations as Irish Republicans but in a spirit of openness, flexibility and friendship. We are willing to engage in real and meaningful negotiations with those who come to these negotiations with a pro-Union agenda. Our objective is, through dialogue among all the people of this island, to achieve an agreed Ireland.

It is our view that Britain's policy is the root cause of the conflict in our country and therefore is the key matter which must be addressed in these negotiations.

All political, economic and historical arguments prove that a United Ireland offers the best guarantee of equal citizenship and the basis for stability and an enduring peace. History has shown that an internal Six-County arrangement is not a viable option. An 'arrangement' is not a solution.

Furthermore both the British and Irish governments and all of the Nationalist parties on this island are agreed that an internal settlement is not a solution.

### **Overcoming Mistrust**

We can empathise with the concerns of the unionist population about their position in an Irish national democracy. And in this process they must be addressed and resolved in a real manner. We need to reach an agreement which rejects exclusion for any reason. That is not only the basic concept of democracy but a practical necessity if we are to reach a settlement and an agreed peaceful Ireland.

Sinn Féin is aware that there is mistrust between republicans and the unionist section of our people. We realise also that dialogue and negotiation is the best way of dealing with that mistrust. We believe that this dialogue and negotiation can be the bed-rock on which, together, we can build a peaceful settlement to this age old conflict.

For too long we have fought with each other and talked past each other. It is time that we started talking and listening *to* each other.

Sinn Féin recognises that all sides have suffered and that great patience will be required in any process of reconciliation. We want to reach an accommodation with the unionist people of this island.

**Source E continued - PREM 49/403 - Extracts from an opening statement by  
Martin McGuinness**

**We want to overcome the mistrust which exists between us.  
But building trust and reaching accommodation is a shared  
responsibility. The unionists must also want to build trust  
and reach an accommodation.**

**Additional questions using the sources above:**

1. Who wrote this document and what does this reveal about what has changed since the last round of peace talks (Sources C and D)?
2. The title of the statement is 'A New Beginning'. What are the subtitles to the different sections? What do these suggest about the motivation or hopes of the author?
3. The opening statement translates as, My friends, I want to say that we, Sinn Féin, are glad to be here. This is a historic day. Why do you think the statement was made in the Irish language?
4. Look at the section entitled, 'A democratic peace settlement'. What does the author think about Partition and the UK government?
5. Look at the section entitled, 'There must be change.' What is the tone of the first paragraph?
6. Who or what does the author blame for conflict in Northern Ireland? What do they believe the solution to be?
7. Look at the section entitled, 'Overcoming mistrust.' What is the general tone of this section?
8. In the final paragraph, is there any evidence of continuing mistrust?

## Transcript - Source E

A Chairde,

Ba mhaith liom a rá ar son Sinn Féin, go bhfuil athas orainn bheith anseo. Is lá stáiriúil é seo.

Today we enter int negotiations, the agreed outcome of which will inevitably mean far reaching change.

A democratic settlement acceptable to all the inhabitants of this island means that we need to approach these negotiations in the knowledge that the status quo has failed to deliver a society where all citizens are treated as equals.

A Democratic Peace Settlement:

There is no going back to the failed policies of the past. Partition has failed. The partition of this small island and the division of our people have created a failed political entity in the North of our country. The inequality and the discrimination against nationalists and the militarisation of this part of our country must end.

This requires a negotiated and democratic settlement of the conflict. We now, for the first time since partition, have the opportunity to negotiate that settlement.

Britain's policy which resulted in the undemocratic partition of our national territory, sustains division among our people, and it follows that our people cannot be united while our country remains divided.

There Must Be Change

We enter into these negotiations as Irish Republicans but in a spirit of openness, flexibility and friendship. We are willing to engage in real and meaningful negotiations with those who come to these negotiations with a pro-Union agenda. Our objective is, through dialogue among all the people of this island, to achieve an agreed Ireland.

It is our view that Britain's policy is the root cause of conflict in our country and therefore is the key matter which must be addressed in these negotiations.

All political, economic and historical arguments prove that a United Ireland offers the best guarantee of equal citizenship and the basis for stability and an enduring peace. History has shown that an internal Six-County arrangement is not a viable option. An 'arrangement' is not a solution.

Overcoming Mistrust

We can empathise with the concerns of the unionist population about their position in an Irish national democracy. And in this process they must be addressed and resolved in a real manner. We need to reach an agreement which rejects exclusion for any reason. That is not only the basic concept of democracy but a practical necessity if we are to reach a settlement and an agreed

## Transcript - Source E

peaceful Ireland.

Sinn Féin is aware that there is mistrust between republicans and the unionist section of our people. We realise also that dialogue and negotiation is the best way of dealing with that mistrust. We believe that this dialogue and negotiation can be the bed-rock on which, together, we can build a peaceful settlement to the age old conflict.

For too long we have fought with each other and talked past each other. It is time that we started talking to each other.

Sinn Féin recognises that all sides have suffered and that great patience will be required in any process of reconciliation. We want to reach an accommodation with the unionist people of this island.

We want to overcome the mistrust which exists between us. But building trust and reaching accommodation is a shared responsibility. The unionists must also want to build trust and reach an accommodation.

**Source F - PREM 49/403 - Extracts from an opening statement by Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), which was led by David Trimble, at the peace talks in Stormont, Belfast, on 7 October 1997. [Trimble was not present]**

# **Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)**

Statement  
by the

## **Ulster Unionist Party**

### **Launch of Strand 1 Talks**

7 October 1997

The Ulster Unionist Party is participating in these talks because the best way to defend and promote the cause of the Union is not by abstention, but by fighting for our cause from within the talks process. Too often, we have seen the wishes of the greater number of people of Northern Ireland ignored and the imposition of so-called solutions, such as the Anglo-Irish agreement, forced upon them. These talks require the principle of consent to be accepted by the participants and the reality that the Union will continue for as long as that is the wish of the greater number of the people in Northern Ireland. By attending these talks the Ulster Unionist Party is determined to challenge the sincerity of Sinn Fein/IRA's declared commitment to peace and to the democratic process. We view consent and actual disarmament as a test of Sinn Fein/IRA's commitment to exclusively peaceful means as required by the Mitchell Principles. Terrorists must not be allowed to use, or threaten to use, their weaponry in order to extract concessions at the table of democracy. If Sinn Fein/IRA is truly committed to democratic and exclusively peaceful means of achieving political accommodation within Northern Ireland, it no longer needs to retain its murderous arsenal.

The Ulster Unionist Party and its supporters oppose a United Ireland because we are British. We actively espouse the United Kingdom and the Union that exists between the people of England, Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland. We believe that the United Kingdom, by adding up those four parts, equals more than the sum of those four parts, and it reflects the interaction which has existed in the British Isles throughout history. The Union with Great Britain is a Union in the hearts and minds of the Unionist people. The feeling of Britishness is not a device or artifice which has been imposed on an unsuspecting people by successive British governments. Britishness is at the heart of the Unionist philosophy, the feeling of belonging; the feeling of sharing with our fellow-citizens in Great Britain in great national events; of being part of something larger than simply the six counties in the north-eastern corner of this island. It is a shared psychological bond; a shared emotional bond, common bonds of history and of shared adversities, shared triumphs and shared sacrifices.

3 glengall street  
belfast 12  
tel 01232 324601  
fax 01232 246738

1

**building**  
your future  
within **the union**

**25**  
years on

THE	
NATIONAL	
ARCHIVES	

**Source F - PREM 49/403 - Extracts from an opening statement by Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), which was led by David Trimble, at the peace talks in Stormont, Belfast, on 7 October 1997. [Trimble was not present]**

Since 1177, when the Normans came to Ulster, eastern Ulster has been loyal to the crown of, firstly England, and then, Great Britain. But, our Britishness is more than loyalty to the Crown. It is a sense of communion with the rest of the peoples of the United Kingdom, built up over centuries. Northern Ireland itself has been a part of the United Kingdom from before the time when Nelson defeated the French at Trafalgar and before Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. Our ancestors shared in the project of the Empire; sacrificed themselves for King and Country on the battlefields of Europe, whilst Republicans rose in revolt in Ireland; and stood alone with Britain during the Second World War, while our southern neighbour remained aloof from the battle to preserve European civilisation. Indeed, as Winston Churchill said,

*'But for the loyalty of Northern Ireland...the light which now shines so brightly throughout the World, would have been quenched.'*

In short, our sense of Britishness was forged in sweat and blood.

**Additional questions using the source above:**

1. Read the first section. Why does the UUP say they are participating in these peace talks?
2. What might we reasonably infer by the fact that they are defending their decision to take part?
3. Do you think the UUP believes that Sinn Féin's commitment to peace is sincere? How can you tell?
4. Read the second section. What are the UUP opposed to?
5. How would you sum up the theme of the second section?
6. Read the third section. Which two historical figures are mentioned? Why do you think this is?
7. What is the impact of the final sentence?



## Transcript - Source F

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

Statement by the Ulster Unionist Party

Launch of Strand 1 Talks

7 October 1997

The Ulster Unionist Party is participating in these talks because the best way to defend and promote the cause of the Union is not by abstention, but by fighting for our cause from within the talks process. Too often, we have seen the wishes of the greater number of people of Northern Ireland ignored and the imposition of so-called solutions, such as the Anglo-Irish agreement, forced upon them. These talks require the principle of consent to be accepted by the participants and the reality that the Union will continue for as long as that is the wish of the greater number of the people in Northern Ireland. By attending these talks the Ulster Unionist Party is determined to challenge the sincerity of Sinn Fein/IRA's declared commitment to peace and to the democratic process. We view consent and actual disarmament as a test of Sinn Fein's commitment to exclusively peaceful means as required by the Mitchell Principles. Terrorists must not be allowed to use, or threaten to use, their weaponry in order to extract concessions at the table of democracy. If Sinn Fein/IRA is truly committed to democratic and exclusively peaceful means of achieving political accommodation within Northern Ireland, it no longer needs to retain its murderous arsenal.

The Ulster Unionist Party and its supporters oppose a United Ireland because we are British. We actively espouse the United Kingdom and the Union that exists between the people of England, Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland. We believe that the United Kingdom, by adding up those four parts, equals more than the sum of those four parts, and it reflects the interaction which has existed in the British Isles throughout history. The Union with Great Britain is a Union in the hearts and minds of the Unionist people. The feeling of Britishness is not a device or artifice which has been imposed on an unsuspecting people by successive British governments. Britishness is at the heart of the Unionist philosophy, the feeling of belonging; the feeling of sharing with our fellow-citizens in Great Britain in great national events; of being part of something larger than simply the six counties in the north-eastern corner of this island. It is a shared psychological bond; a shared emotional bond, common bonds of history and of shared adversities, shared triumphs and shared sacrifices.

Since 1177, when the Normans came to Ulster, eastern Ulster has been loyal to the crown of, firstly England, and then, Great Britain. But, our Britishness is more than loyalty to the Crown. It is a sense of communion with the rest of the peoples of the United Kingdom built up over centuries. Northern Ireland itself has been a part of the United Kingdom from before the time when Nelson defeated the French at Trafalgar and before Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. Our ancestors shared in the project of the Empire; sacrificed themselves for King and Country on the battlefields of Europe, whilst Republicans rose in revolt in Ireland; and stood alone with Britain during the Second World War, while our southern neighbour remained aloof from the battle to preserve European civilisation. Indeed, as Winston Churchill said,

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