



Proposed NIWC position

The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition wants to see an end to violence in Northern Ireland. To this end, we are calling for the decommissioning of terrorism in all its aspects. A paramilitary does not need a weapon to act, he needs a reason. Our aim must be to remove any means by which the paramilitary organisations will justify their actions.

They include the following on the nationalist/republican side:

1) Concern over Unionist control/abuse of rights

Response - Unionists agree to set up the Executive and show, together with the SDLP, that they are committed to fair and inclusive government acting in full accordance with the Good Friday Agreement.

2) Fear over Protestant aggression towards Catholics

Response - Unionists provide firm leadership to demonstrate their refusal to accept acts of provocation or aggression against any citizen of Northern Ireland. This will include a firm decision that Orange parades should not march in areas of contention.

Why limit this now?

3) Suspicion that sectarianism is institutionalised in the security forces

Response - A serious Unionist understanding of the concerns of Nationalists in this respect demonstrated by a commitment to reform the RUC to make it correctly reflect the religious, political gender balance of Northern Ireland society

Who? ctd to reform RUC - not main SAS. Palter

4) Awareness of the lack of commitment to reconciliation at street level

Response - Greater push on the part of Unionists to remove all signs of sectarian symbolism from the streets in addition to greater commitment to cross-community efforts to promote reconciliation.

- loyalists control - takes long time to negotiate localised all time.

5) Anger at the lack of visible reduction in security presence in NI

Response - Unionist commitment to 'normalisation' of security presence in NI (particularly heavily militarised area) with a time-table set out for return to peace-time security presence by the May 2000

HMG resp.



The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition recognises that the removal of this so-called 'justification' of the paramilitary struggle on one side needs to be complemented by certain actions which would dispel unionists concerns/fears and suspicion. These include:

1) Unionist fears that the Republican movement will return to war

Response – symbolic decommissioning as a demonstration of IRA commitment to democracy. This demonstration should include a timetable, agreed with de Chastelain committing all paramilitary organisations to decommissioning by May 2000.

2) Unionist concern over loss of rights, erosion of culture

Response – agreement to accept the rights of the Orange Order to march peacefully in areas of Protestant majority and agreement to accept the Orange Order as a legitimate expression of the Protestant culture. Also agreement to accept right of NI citizens to be British/Irish or both – end the 'Brits out' mentality.

*Mixing this??*

3) Fear over Catholic aggression towards Protestants

Response – commitment on the part of Republicans to a strong leadership which will condemn and disassociate itself from all use of provocation or aggressive acts of violence against any citizen of Northern Ireland.

4) Aware of the lack of commitment to reconciliation at street level

Response – greater push on the part of Republicans to remove all visible signs of sectarian symbolism from the street in addition to greater commitment to promote cross-community reconciliation.

*Longer term political agreement will find conditions.*

*W. B. ...  
...  
...*

5) Impression that the GFA is stacked against unionists

Response – acceptance that the release of prisoners is a gesture towards paramilitary organisations and that this should increase the incentive for paramilitary organisations to disarm.

*Frontloaded perhaps, but UVF prisoners also*

preserve integrity

Aware of the need for movement on both sides and the need for both sides to 'save face' in this endeavour, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition is calling for agreement from both sides to commit themselves to these responses as mutual gestures of good faith.

Aware that the sequencing/timing of these gestures is paramount in the 'face-saving' exercise, the Women's Coalition is calling for the inclusion of these commitments as an addendum to the Good Friday Agreement. This addendum should include the immediate set up of an executive, followed by a timetable for decommissioning running parallel with normalisation, followed by an agreement by all of the exact grounds upon which the Executive will be abandoned.



Response to Blair position and de Chastelain questions - Jane Morrice

Blair position – Executive + decommissioning timetable + May 2000 deadline + abandon executive if decommissioning does not take place

Response - all parties need to be very clear on exactly what they are entering into if they agree to these steps. We need definitions ie.

The meaning of 'all paramilitary arms' – is this according to security force estimates? If so, the exact amount must be spelled out so that no-one can come back and say it did or did not happen in May 2000.

The meaning of a time-table – do we expect certain amounts to be handed over at certain times over the next ten months? Do we set a starting date?

The veto on the Executive after May 2000 – do we accept anything less? ie. If we accept that Sinn Fein has no power over the IRA and decommissioning does not happen according to the rules set by May 2000 is it enough to ask that Sinn Fein distance themselves from the IRA?

FG