



CAIN Web Service

Statement by David Trimble, Ulster Unionist Party Leader, on Decommissioning, 28 June 1999

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The following is the full text of the statement issued by Mr. David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, on Decommissioning, 28 June 1999

The Referendum vote in Northern Ireland last year was conclusive. It expressed a desire to do away, forever, with paramilitary attacks, with bombings, beatings and the fear imposed by wicked men from both sides of the community.

The Referendum underpinned the Agreement which charted a new path for the people of Northern Ireland. And the people voted by over 70 per cent in favour of that new direction.

We have had a peace of a kind since then. But the paramilitary beatings and the threat of a return to violence have remained, underscored by the refusal of the IRA and others to decommission.

Tony Blair, the Taoiseach, President Clinton and world opinion have repeatedly said the one remaining issue stopping a move towards devolution -decommissioning – revolved around a question of trust.

I blame equally all paramilitaries for their particular confidence trick, carrying on with their own cynical versions of peace – a peace that has seen attacks on all sides of our community. We have watched prisoner releases continue, while the Patten Commission examines the future of the RUC. But we have not had an ounce of IRA Semtex or a single bullet in return.

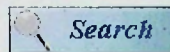
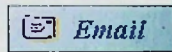
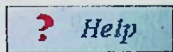
This is different to what Mr Blair and NATO expect in Kosovo. A declaration of an intention to decommission there was unacceptable. It is also unacceptable in Northern Ireland. We have had promises of peace by the IRA before. Senator Mitchell's report on decommissioning in 1996 expressed satisfaction that the IRA was committed to peace. Then came the Docklands atrocity in London.

Why should a promise or indication that decommissioning would "commence" be any different now?

No. Recognisable, quantifiable decommissioning before any Executive is established remains the only way in which democrats can safely see that the war is indeed over.

Mr Blair has signalled that the Assembly will close and the Agreement abandoned if Wednesday's deadline is not met. That is unthinkable. It would merely be a capitulation to terrorism. The Agreement remains our one hope. The vast majority of people voted for peace, for the removal of all terrorist arms. The world acclaimed that vote.

We must all stand firm on decommissioning. Northern Ireland deserves nothing less.



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