

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code:	2023/154/30
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Secret.

Summary of meeting with Gerry Adams, Belfast, 22 May 2000.

1. Adams said that the dilution of the Patten report had created grave problems for the Sinn Féin leadership and had resulted in a "profound kick-back" from quite senior elements in the IRA. As a result, Adams said that if the Army Council were to meet this week, the Confidence Building Measure (CBM) would be in danger of being withdrawn.

2. Adams accepted, however, that the party would have to avoid being in any way unhelpful to Trimble this week. I made the point that his statement on Saturday (about not being able to support the new police force given the present row-back on Patten) had, unfortunately, given Trimble's opponents some negative ammunition. I wasn't sure at this stage what they could do to help, apart from radio silence for the rest of the week, but suggested that Martin Mc Guinness might get together with Reg Empey to tease things out and see what might be possible.

3. The net result of all the difficulty over Patten was that Adams could not see the IRA agreeing to the two inspectors visiting dumps until the Policing Bill had been put right. Adams emphasised that, in Republican terms, allowing access to their dumps was " huge"; We might think that OTR's and demilitarisation were important but, by comparison, they were simply not in the same category.

4. Policing was a key issue for Sinn Féin. Even with Patten implemented in full, it was going to be difficult for a thirty two county republican party to ask people to join a six county police service. Even the SDLP would have a problem, and they were just a six county party. Without a return to the spirit and letter of Patten, Sinn Féin support would be quite impossible. Adams added that he had conveyed this view to Peter Mandelson that morning, and had been assured the he was going to review all the issues of concern. In this respect, the Secretary of State said that he might decide to clarify the name issue this week rather than allow it to become a festering sore. I emphasised that he would need to be sure that this did not damage the Trimble camp in advance of Saturday, and that for the present it might be better to leave the hare sit.

5. Both of us agreed that it would be extremely dangerous and unhelpful if Trimble were to win the vote on Saturday but on a conditional basis (for instance, in relation to the name of the RUC). We have been emphasising to the British that this must be avoided at all costs.

©TSCH/2023/154/30

Other issues.

6. Adams was once again very critical of Peter Mandelson, accusing him of destabilising Republicans while failing to reassure Unionists.

7. Adams was appreciative of the Government's understanding on the disappeared issue, including our willingness to look at the question of suitable memorials and Church services for the victims, in consultation with their families.

8. Sinn Féin would be unhappy with the appointment of Tom Constantine as Oversight Commissioner. This was on the basis that the position should not be given to a former police officer, but rather to an eminent international statesman or woman.

9. Finally, Adams said that, despite the absence of sectoral North-South Councils, due to the suspension of the institutions, he would still like to see the June Plenary being held, as envisaged in the original time-table.

Dermot Gallagher.
23 May 2000.

cc Taoiseach, Dr. Hamill, Mr. Dobbin, Mr. D Cooling, Mr. Kinsella.

©TSCH/2023/154/30