

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code:	2023/154/32
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.

Dinner with John Hume

11 April 2000

I had dinner with John Hume and the SDLP Press Officer, Barry Turley, last night. Hume was in Dublin for the SDLP meeting with the Taoiseach and his own meeting with Nelson Mandela. Hume complained of being unwell throughout the meal, and also mentioned that Séamus Mallon is ill at present.

On matters of substance, Hume said that he had given Sinn Féin a draft IRA statement as follows;

> *In the real meaning of decommissioning we have already decommissioned our guns. They are silent, have been silent for some years, will remain silent and offer no threat to the Peace Process. They are out of commission, in other words they are beyond use and we are prepared to satisfy General de Chastelain that they are beyond use.*

Hume said that he envisaged this statement being issued at the same time as the Institutions were restored. The IRA would also agree to re-appoint its representative to the IICD, and all parties would renew their commitment to the Mitchell Principles as part of a package.

This plan was handed over to Sinn Féin a week ago but he has not had a response. He has mentioned his ideas to David Trimble who did not comment on them! However, Trimble did say that he would be interested in the Sinn Féin response.

©TSCH/2023/154/32

Hume said that he has not told his party colleagues about his initiative and asked that the Taoiseach not mention it at their meeting this afternoon, unless he (Hume) decided to raise it.

Turley added that it was clear that neither Sinn Féin nor the IRA will agree to any advance on their current position on decommissioning. He reiterated the widely held view within the SDLP that Sinn Féin have now entered "electoral mode", and were now intent on confrontation with the British Government and the UUP in order to advance their prospects.

Turkey also said that morale was very low in the SDLP at present, with the most recent meeting of Assembly members being particularly depressing. He was in no doubt that the SDLP was suffering badly at present and may turn out to be the main casualty of Mandelson's decision to suspend the institutions.

RB

Ray Bassett
Anglo-Irish Division
12 April 2000

©TSCH/2023/154/32