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**Taoiseach's meeting with the leader of the UUP, 5 June 1996**

The Taoiseach met David Trimble at our home in 5 Victoria Square on the morning of Wednesday, 5 June. The meeting lasted 45 minutes. This note is based on a debriefing given to me afterwards by the Taoiseach.

Mr Trimble expressed reservations about a "political role" for Mr George Mitchell in the all-party negotiations. His other main concern was to underline that Sinn Féin could exclude themselves from negotiations either by failing to re-instate the ceasefire or by refusing to cooperate on decommissioning. Mr Trimble suggested that in Sinn Féin's absence, the other parties would be "free to get on with it".

The Taoiseach went into detail on the advantages of involving Senator Mitchell in the process and mentioned in particular Mitchell's likely influence on Sinn Féin over decommissioning and the principle of consent.

Mr Trimble pointed out that other Unionists were refusing any role to Mitchell and that favourable references by Trimble himself to Mitchell's report went down badly within his party. If Mitchell were to be cast as the "supremo" of the negotiations, the UUP would not take part.

The Taoiseach questioned Mr Trimble as to why there should be objections to Mitchell.

Mr Trimble adverted to Mitchell's connection to the US Democratic Party and to the attitude in some quarters in Britain that it is wrong to bring in an American and an outsider.

As the Taoiseach pursued the issue, Mr Trimble, without altering his basic stance, acknowledged Senator Mitchell's personal qualities.

As discussion turned to likely future developments, Mr Trimble approved the idea of "contingent" agreements being reached during the negotiations. He ascribed this concept to Michael Ancram.

Mr Trimble was of the view that the IRA is likely to return to violence in due course. One possible scenario is that they will use their exclusion from all-party negotiations to build up a sense of "frustration" among their supporters. But in Trimble's view the IRA may be miscalculating British public opinion which has hardened since the Canary Wharf bomb.

Mr Trimble remarked that the electoral system used on 30 May was designed to damage the UUP. He hoped however, to win back lost ground at the next British general election, which he predicted will be held in October.

**Philip McDonagh**  
**10 June 1996**

- For eyes only of**
- Tánaiste (E.Downestobarrange)
  - M/S.W
  - P. Teahan
  - S. Donlon
  - S. Óhúginn (E.Downestobarrange)

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