

(As delivered)

Talks, 26 January

POSITION OF THE UDP

Statement in Strand Two meeting, 10am, by the Secretary of State

The British and Irish Governments share the grave public concern over the UFF involvement in recent killings in Northern Ireland, an involvement confirmed by the intelligence of which the Chief Constable has spoken, and then the statement of the UFF itself on Friday.

It has been and must remain the case that parties participating in the talks stand by their total and absolute commitment to the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence, and that in assessing whether they have done so, we take full account of the activities of groups with which they have a clear link.

The Governments are aware of no representations under rule 29, but we believe the UFF statement, given its relationship with the UDP, and the statement by the UDP in response, raises the issue under rule 29 whether that party has demonstrably dishonoured its commitment to the Mitchell Principles.

As the Chair has said, other parties will want an opportunity to express their views on this. The UDP may want to offer a further explanation of its outlook, and if it wishes answer other participants' questions. We therefore support what the Chairman has said that a plenary session would serve this purpose.

The two Governments would then reflect on what further action is appropriate: it would be unhelpful to set a time-limit on that at this point. We shall want to consider any further advice the Chief Constable may offer in the light of the UFF statement and the attacks since.