

URGENT

GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

on Sinn Féin acceptance of the Mitchell Principles

This announcement is very welcome. Sinn Féin has now committed itself to support for, inter alia, "exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues", to "oppose any effort by others, to use force, or thereafter to use force, to influence the course of outcome of all party negotiations", and to "urge that punishment killing and beatings stop and to take effective steps to prevent such actions". These are very important commitments.

These Sinn Féin commitments represent a most significant step in the movement to inclusive all-party negotiations. They underline the importance of the Mitchell Report in that process. The Government believe that all sides should now agree to pursue the different elements of the report in resolving outstanding issues on decommissioning.

The Government hope that today's statement can be built on and that the IRA reinstate its ceasefire so that the circumstances will be right, including as set down and agreed in the February Communiqué, for the success of fully inclusive all-party talks on June 10th.

20.5-96.