

TALKS: POINTS TO MAKE

- Agreement on the rules of procedure is a major achievement. We owe a lot to Senator Mitchell's unique skills in promoting consensus
- you have always acknowledged the value of this exercise. Agree it is entirely wrong to dismiss it as "procedural wrangling" (on which, in any case, neither side has a monopoly). We need fair and effective rules which all can feel comfortable with. The process has provided several opportunities to exchange views and send signals about substantive political issues and the participants have certainly developed a sense of shared ownership
- very conscious of the pressures on the SDLP and anxious that the process should not prejudice their standing in the community, or expose them unnecessarily to Sinn Fein's challenge
- the "address" to decommissioning promised in our communique of 28 February was never going to be easy and the last few days have illustrated the difficulty of even reaching agreement among the talks participants on how to go about it. The two Governments must work together over the Summer to identify constructive ways of persuading the parties to move towards our joint position
- understand the UUP are thinking about a further meeting with you. We have strongly encouraged that and I urge you to pursue the idea. The greater the level of understanding and confidence on both sides, the better our chances.