

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

I am absolutely delighted by the success of the security authorities in foiling the IRA's latest plans to attack the people of this country as they go about their daily lives. The police and Security Service deserve all our congratulations for this important operation.

The discovery of these plans and the huge stocks of explosives and arms put in their proper context professions of peaceful intentions by Sinn Fein's leaders and speculation about a renewed IRA ceasefire. It remains impossible to reconcile Sinn Fein's rhetoric for peace with the IRA's preparations for murder.

The British Government remain fully committed to the Belfast negotiations aimed at a comprehensive political settlement in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland's future will be settled by democratic, peaceful discussion, not by violence or threats of violence. It is time Sinn Fein and the IRA learned that lesson once and for all.