

Annex A

Suggested points to cover: political issues

UUP

- Assess Mr Trimble's/the UUP's standing and confidence, especially vis a vis the DUP;
- express the Government's commitment to the principle of consent and to the three stranded talks process;
- respond cautiously to "Pathways to Peace within the Union", indicating a readiness to consider taking some elements forward within the talks process. Avoid any commitments on Northern Ireland Grand Committee, local government changes, structured relationship with parties etc;
- probe UUP commitment to the talks process;
- express determination to find an agreed way through the decommissioning issue, based on the Mitchell "compromise approach" (avoiding discussion of details), allowing an early date to be set for the launch of the three strands;
- reaffirm criteria for Sinn Fein entry to negotiations, while refusing definitively to close the door. Assert readiness to proceed without them;
- Discuss the prospects for developing a constructive relationship between the UUP and SDLP, building confidence on both sides, to enable the talks to move forward constructively.

## SDLP

- Confirm commitment to the search for a comprehensive and balanced political accommodation;
- express determination to find an agreed way through the decommissioning impasse, based on the Mitchell "compromise approach" (avoiding discussion of details), allowing an early date to be set for the launch of the three strands;
- confirm desire to see Sinn Fein join the process on stated terms, but assert readiness to proceed without them. Note that progress in the talks could add to pressure on the Republican Movement to make a definitive commitment to politics;
- discuss the prospects for developing a constructive relationship between the UUP and SDLP, building confidence on both sides, to enable the talks process to move forward constructively;
- avoid discussion of alternatives to the talks process.

## DUP/UKUP

- Emphasise Government's commitment to the principle of consent and to the three stranded talks process. Point to widespread acceptance of the principle of consent (by all except Sinn Fein) and the likelihood that any negotiated settlement would be predicated on that basis;
- point to the benefits of a widely acceptable political accommodation, acceptable to majorities on both sides of the community, which would

enable significantly greater local political accountability and generate political stability;

- express determination to find an agreed way through the decommissioning issue, based on the Mitchell "compromise approach" (avoiding discussion of details), allowing an early date to be set for the launch of the three strands;
- reaffirm criteria for Sinn Fein entry to negotiations, while refusing definitively to close the door. Assert readiness to proceed without them;
- dismiss criticism of Irish Government's role
- note any allegation that Loyalists have demonstrably dishonoured their commitment to the Mitchell principles; confirm that commitment to the principles remains a condition of participation in the talks; but point out that there will be opportunities to consider the Loyalist parties' entitlement to remain in the talks when they resume on 3 June.

#### Alliance Party

- Emphasise commitment to the three stranded talks process and belief that it remains viable;
- express determination to find an agreed way through the decommissioning issue, based on the Mitchell "compromise approach" (acknowledging the constructive role played by the Alliance Party in promoting what contingent agreement has so far emerged), allowing an early date to be set for the launch of the three strands;
- reaffirm criteria for Sinn Fein entry to negotiations, while refusing definitively to close the door. Assert readiness to proceed without them;

- point to value of UUP/SDLP cooperation, with Alliance Party support, in moving the talks process forward;
- seek Alliance Party assessment of the other parties' positions.