

CONFIDENTIALAppendix 1**ANNEX B****DRAFT STATEMENT FOR USE ON 9 SEPTEMBER IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE TO RESOLVE DECOMMISSIONING OR SECURE THE LAUNCH OF THE THREE STRANDS**

There has been extensive discussion in the talks since last Autumn on the issue of decommissioning, and the two Governments have taken the fullest possible account of the views expressed. Participants have, nevertheless, been unable to reach a sufficient measure of agreement on the issue. Nor has it proved possible to agree that substantive political negotiations in the three strands should commence while this issue remains unresolved. It is clear, therefore, that the present talks process is for the time being incapable of moving forward.

We therefore believe that the talks as formally constituted last June must stand suspended. We should be ready to resume them if in the future it appeared they were capable of reaching a successful conclusion. Since the talks are suspended, the forum cannot, as a matter of law, continue, and the Secretary of State will make the necessary order to that effect, subject to parliamentary approval.

We nevertheless believe it is essential for discussions to take place about building a new settlement here that is capable of commanding support in both parts of the community, permitting elected representatives in Northern Ireland a greater involvement in its affairs, and putting broader relationships on a more satisfactory footing. We believe the great majority of people in Northern Ireland want such dialogue to begin, and to advance as quickly as possible.

We therefore invite all parties entitled to participate in the current talks to meet us in Castle Buildings at 10 am next Monday, 15 September, to consider together how best to take such discussions forward.

We believe there is a substantial measure of agreement across the two communities in Northern Ireland about better arrangements for the future. It is a tragedy that the formal

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talks process has not been able to address those issues. Neither part of the community has anything to lose, and both have much to gain, from a process of dialogue. If talking were shown to offer no way forward, however, the outlook for Northern Ireland would be bleak. We therefore invite all participants to enter wholeheartedly with us next Monday in the search for a better future.

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