

Faxed to File
Chequers 19/7

STATEMENT ON NORTHERN IRELAND
(issued to the press at 1015, 19 July)

I welcome today's announcement which is good for the people of Northern Ireland and for the people of Britain. Following the continuing loyalist ceasefire and the courageous Orange Order decision of last week this can build on a new mood of hope for peace and a lasting political settlement in Northern Ireland. Obviously we will want to assess the ceasefire with great care. What we and others want to see is an end to violence for good and an irrevocable commitment to peaceful means. Meanwhile we remain determined to get the substantive political talks underway in September as we have said. Whether Sinn Fein will be there depends on whether the ceasefire is genuine in words and deed as we have always said.