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NOTE TO EDITORS**CONFIDENCE BUILDING FOR THE PRO-UNION COMMUNITY**

The Ulster Unionist Party has been at the Multi-Party Talks since they commenced on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1996. We have not walked away but have accepted our responsibility as the upholders of the Unionist Cause - a Union which we have maintained since partition in 1921.

The premature invitation by HM Government to Sinn Fein to become a participant at these Talks was anticipated by us in July of this year and the arrival of Sinn Fein at Stormont has required assurances for Unionism before we continued with the Talks.

Since July we have been in regular contact with the Prime Minister and other Government Ministers. We have not been in contact with the Irish Government.

As a result of these on-going discussions we can report:

1. Both Governments have now accepted that the principle of consent will apply to all aspects of the Talks and any Agreements emerging therefrom.
2. Both Governments have now accepted that decommissioning is an indispensable part of the process and they now expect paramilitary organisations to proceed with the decommissioning of illegal armaments in parallel with the Talks. Special review plenaries have been built into the procedure to make sure that decommissioning occurs.
3. Attempts to remove General de Castelain as Chairman of the International body to oversee the de-militarisation programme have been overcome. He remains Chairman as Ulster Unionists had demanded.
4. H M Government have agreed to look urgently at how best to mark the sacrifices made by the victims of violence and help those left behind.
5. HM Government has now agreed to our request that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will attend the NI Forum on a regular basis.
6. Arising from the different circumstances in Northern Ireland the new Gun Legislation in Great Britain will not be extended to Northern Ireland.
7. The proposed legislation on policing in Northern Ireland will not be presented as an Order in Council but will now be a Bill - thus giving Members of Parliament the opportunity to amend the Bill.
8. The Government has agreed to our request that powers of District Councils be extended in relation to the development of property and land in their own area for the purposes of Economic Development.
9. The Government has accepted our request that the recommendations of the Coopers & Lybrand Report on financing of education be acted upon. This will be beneficial to our controlled schools.
10. The Government has appointed an Ulster Unionist to be a member of the Council of Europe at Strasbourg for the first time in 20 years.
11. The Irish Government will most definitely not be involved in the Talks relevant to the internal institutions of Government and Administration of Northern Ireland.