

CONFIDENTIAL**TAB A****SPEAKING NOTE**

- * Welcome Sinn Féin's continuing involvement in the talks.
- * Am dealing with Sinn Féin in **good faith**.
- * **Want to help you if you are committed to peace.**
- * **Peace and politics are the only way forward.**
- * We are **committed to radical reform** in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere. The status quo is not an option..
- * We are **committed to genuine negotiations**. We want the widest possible consensus, including Sinn Féin.
- * Hope we now see signs of **greater engagement in talks**, and the outline of an agreement becoming clearer.
- * Understand your frustration at **UUP's non-engagement**: will continue to press Trimble.
- * However, believe your focus on the need for direct engagement with the UUP may be a mistake - by elevating a symbolic issue into a totem you have played into the hands of the UUP. It would be better to build on the substantive point that both parties are contributing fully to the negotiations; and as the talks move deeper into substance the likelihood of direct engagement will increase anyway.

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* Recognise the **importance of building confidence** within all sections of the community.

* However, confidence building is a **two-way street**: Sinn Féin, like all the other parties, must do their bit to enhance confidence and trust both within and outwith the negotiations.

* Have to reiterate: we are **treating you in all respects as a constitutional political party**. We cannot however be indulgent of any conduct by the IRA that amounts to a violation of the ceasefire.

* Happy to discuss the key areas in which an agreement will be found. All elements are of course essential to the whole, but can we go through one by one?

* Provisions **safeguarding rights and addressing equality and justice issues**.

* **A constitutional understanding**: we are committed to the principle of consent in all its aspects, reflected in legislation.

* **A local institution**: all parties, except so far you, favour an Assembly of some kind in Northern Ireland, with executive and legislative powers at least in respect of economic and social matters.

* **A framework for co-operation in these two islands** governing the totality of relationships, including Northern Ireland;

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- * **A framework for North/South co-operation:** bringing together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the South.
- * **Standing intergovernmental machinery between the British and Irish governments.**