

TRIMBLE: SPEAKING NOTE

- Wanted to touch base before the Christmas break. Your discussions with the Irish over the holiday will be important. Hope you can find a measure of agreement. We will help if we can.
- Realise recent moves over prisoners have put you in a difficult position. Irish releases nothing to do with us. On transfers, we are simply implementing the existing legislation in a normal way. No question of early releases on our side, although this issue will have to be addressed for both Loyalists and Republicans in the context of a final settlement.
- Extremely keen to move the process forward when Talks resume on 12 January. Prospects for Heads of Agreement then? Interested in your idea of "taking note" rather than endorsing Heads of Agreement, as suggested to JEH. But would this take us far enough forward?
- Thought it might be useful to give our draft Heads of Agreement to the Irish before you see them, to show where we think they need to be on East/West. What do you think?
- Believe they are ready to go a long way on East/West if you and they can understand each other on North/South.
- Please keep in touch over holiday if you have particular problems. Look forward to talking again otherwise in week beginning 5 January.