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ANNEX B

# **DRAFT SPEAKING NOTES FOR MEETINGS WITH THE PARTIES**

- Lancaster House marks another phase in the negotiations which will no doubt heighten public interest in the Talks and focus attention on the need to find agreement by May.
- The Taoiseach and I have tried to move discussions forward by producing the Propositions on Heads of Agreement which represents the views expressed by all the parties to the Governments in bilateral and round table discussions.
- I welcome the broadly positive response to Propositions from most parties and I understand the reservations which some have expressed on particular elements. However, I would emphasise again that the Propositions have been prepared to assist with the detailed negotiations and that nothing has been set in stone.
- It is up to you the participants to negotiate the detail and to find a settlement that will command widespread support across the communities.
- I believe that you have shown courage in coming this far and that you have demonstrated the will to succeed. I would now urge you to continue to the end that which you have started in the certain knowledge that finding agreement threatens no-one.
- There is all to play for and the prize of a peaceful future is surely worth the effort.
- I have been saddened by the murders of recent days and the unnecessary pain and suffering that has been inflicted on more families. My sense of outrage runs deep. The people of Northern Ireland deserve better and it is up to us to find a settlement that will end the suffering.
- That settlement must be firmly based on the principle of consent which underpins these negotiations and provide a balanced outcome that meets the needs of both communities. Compromises will have to be made. Fear and distrust of the motives of others will have to be set aside and negotiations taken forward on the basis of good faith.
- If we are to reach our objective of a fair and lasting settlement then all parties will have to engage with each other in the negotiations. That is only common sense. Only through dialogue will the common ground be found.
- Mo Mowlam and I are committed to helping the parties to resolve the problems of the past. The onus is on you to make this happen. Let us commit ourselves to explore all options and pursue every challenge in the short time available to reach an agreement.

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**Points to Make**

*Propositions on Heads of Agreement*

- We produced the Propositions to provide a basis for discussion, which the Governments hoped could help the talks participants move towards agreement.
- The propositions, while in the name of the two Governments, derive in a very real sense from the views of all parties on the various issues which arise in the talks - expressed both in bilateral meetings and in the round table discussions which have taken place. The possible propositions represent our best guess at what could be a generally acceptable outcome.
- Unionist reservations about the nature and role of cross-border bodies and nationalists' concerns about devolved institutions for Northern Ireland are matters for the talks' participants to agree as part of the overall settlement.
- As the Rules of Procedure make clear, no negotiated outcome is either predetermined or excluded in advance or limited by anything other than the need for agreement.

*Insufficient time available for negotiations between now and the May deadline*

- The Government shares this concern and will work with the Irish Government and the Independent Chairmen to ensure that greater momentum is injected into the negotiations.
- With regard to Strand One the British Government has circulated a work plan and is preparing papers to facilitate discussion of Strand One institutions and powers to be devolved to a Northern Ireland assembly.
- Inevitably the pace of the negotiations will be dictated by the participants themselves. Time is slipping away and the participants must recognise that people in both communities are looking to them to find a settlement which will give hope to all the people of Northern Ireland for a peaceful future free from the threat of violence.

*Unionists not talking to Sinn Fein*

- The UUP are actively engaged in the talks alongside Sinn Fein: their bilateral relations with other parties are a matter for them

*Dr Mowlam's meeting with Loyalist Prisoners*

- Dr Mowlam's visit to the prisoners in the Maze was designed to reinforce the Talks process by helping the prisoners to understand the broad parameters of

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any agreement likely to emerge from the Talks. She did not negotiate with the prisoners.

- Dr Mowlam and I believed that the Government should take all reasonable steps to keep the parties in the process particularly against the background of the upsurge in violence over the Christmas period.
- We understand and have acknowledged that Dr Mowlam's visit has upset those who have been the victims of violence. However, it is precisely for the reason of giving the Talks a chance to succeed, and thus end the violence that Dr Mowlam, met the prisoners.

*Recent violence and the talks*

- The recent murderous attacks on both sides of the community have disgusted almost everyone in Northern Ireland; and they have provoked widespread despair, not only because of the awful human tragedy, but because they threaten the advances made since the years of daily violence.
- It was right that the participants thought deeply about the UDP's position in the Talks. The principles of democracy and non-violence cannot be compromised. The UDP took the right decision to withdraw.
- But also right that the door has been left open to them to re-join if, over a period of weeks, there is a complete, unequivocal and unqualified UFF ceasefire demonstrated in word and deed.

*Decommissioning*

- The Governments are moving swiftly to make the decommissioning schemes recommended by the Independent Commission.
- The Governments want to see some decommissioning during the negotiations and believe this could be a major contribution to confidence-building and momentum towards agreement. I welcome the rapid progress that is being made on the mechanisms to enable this.

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