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## THE TALKS PROCESS

The Government's aim in Northern Ireland is to secure a comprehensive and widely acceptable political settlement which satisfactorily addresses all those issues of concern to all the main participants.

Recent security events only reinforce the urgent need for dialogue through the multi-party talks process. The Government will not be deflected from its search for a lasting political settlement.

Progress in the talks has been slow - painstakingly slow at times, but these are complex and difficult negotiations.

The Government welcomes the progress to date; it shows that the determination to advance the process is there. But, there is still a long way to travel.

The talks participants are currently engaged in a substantive discussion of the important and sensitive issue of decommissioning.

Without the talks, there is no hope of constructive advances and if such hope is taken away, the consequences may be very bleak.

There is a heavy responsibility on all the participants not only to continue the talks but to move on to the substance of the issues.

For its part the Government is absolutely determined to press on with the talks. As the Prime Minister said at the Party Conference, "there is no other show in town."

### Sinn Fein

There is no question of a secret deal with Sinn Fein. Both we and the Irish Government are agreed that Sinn Fein will not be admitted to the talks process unless and until there is a genuinely unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire of 1994.

From: Allan McVeigh (am)  
 Julie Mapstone (pw)  
 5 November 1996

If there is a restoration of the ceasefire, the IRA and Sinn Fein would need to show the people of Northern Ireland, by their actions as well as their words, that it was indeed unequivocal.

### Loyalist ceasefire

Despite recent provocation, the Loyalist ceasefire continues to hold. The whole community has much reason to be thankful for their restraint and self-discipline in maintaining their ceasefire.

### NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Mr Wood (S&L) - B  
 Mr Boston - B  
 Mr Priestly - B  
 Mr Hill (S&L) - B  
 Mr Lavery - B  
 Mr Maccabe - B  
 Mr Perry - B  
 Ms Bharucha - B  
 Ms Mapstone - B  
 Mr Whysall (S&L) - B  
 Ms Collins, Cab Off (via IRL) - B  
 Mr Dickinson, TAU - B  
 Mr Lamont, RID FCO - B  
 JMA Dublin - B  
 Mr Westmacott (via RID) - B  
 Mr Campbell-Bannerman - B  
 Mrs McNally (S&L) - B  
 Mr Holmes, No 10

### TALKS: SUMMARY 5 NOVEMBER 1996

The morning plenary, of just over three hours duration, continued in the questioning mode commenced towards yesterday's close.

2. Peter Robinson completed, for the time being, his probing, rather than testing (knowing the answers before he had asked his questions), of RMC's position on decommissioning through his questions to Michael Ancra. In a sense this was the warming-up exercise to an aerobics session involving, in the main, the DUP and SDLP as participants, with the rest onlookers. Reg Sney took over from Ken Maginnis at the first sign of beads of sweat on the