

6. The British and Irish Governments agree that, beyond the unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire, these negotiations are without preconditions. But in the light of the breaking of the ceasefire and the events since then, assurances are obviously needed that any new ceasefire would be intended to be genuinely unequivocal, i.e. lasting and not simply a tactical device.

*The successful conclusion of this process would depend on*  
7. ~~A reliable judgement to this effect would depend on whether words,~~  
actions and all the circumstances were consistent with a lasting ceasefire. For example, how far the declaration of a new ceasefire *was convincingly* involved convincing ~~lasting~~ *unequivocal and intended to be lasting* commitment to the end of violence and to exclusively peaceful means would be an important indicator. Whether or not any paramilitary activity, including surveillance, targeting and weapons preparation, continued would also be directly relevant. Developments which were inconsistent with an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire or the Mitchell principles would affect consideration adversely. Sufficient time would have to be taken to ensure the requirements of paragraphs 8 and 9 of Command Paper 3232 were accordingly met before Sinn Fein were invited to participate in negotiations.

*Set out below*  
8. Consistent with this, ~~we envisage that the following~~ process *would follow* the declaration by the IRA of an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire with the stated purpose of the conflict being permanently ended:

- meetings with Sinn Fein at various levels to explore with them what assurances could be given and what confidence-building measures established;
- the British and Irish Governments would invite Sinn Fein to meet them together for the purpose of making an early total and absolute commitment to the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence;

- the two Governments would then propose bilateral and other consultations with all the parties to seek to determine how, if this process ~~could be~~ <sup>were</sup> successfully concluded, the negotiations could most constructively be advanced, ~~including the issue of the~~ <sup>following Sinn Fein's entry</sup> participants adopting an agreed indicative timeframe for taking stock of their progress;
- ~~if Sinn Fein were invited formally to participate following the a~~ <sup>set out above, including due time for</sup> successful conclusion of this process, the two Governments would expect the independent chairmen to convene a plenary session for all participants ~~within a further 4-6 weeks or the most practicable date thereafter~~ <sup>with Sinn Fein invited formally</sup> ~~to participate~~ <sup>to participate</sup> to consider the outcome of these consultations and the future programme of work.

9. From their entry into negotiations onwards, Sinn Fein would, in common with all the other participants, be subject to all the agreed provisions and rules of procedure. These include those governing the contingency where any participant is no longer entitled to participate on the grounds that they have demonstrably dishonoured the principles of democracy and non-violence.