

Para 22

The IRA statement, as noted in paragraph 10 above, asserts that the IRA cessation of military operations remains intact. Having regard to the fact that the terms set for the completion of the process is now close, to the strong determination of the two governments to work with the parties to produce a settlement in the coming six weeks, and to the desirability and importance of as many parties as possible, consistent with the fundamental principles on which these negotiations are based, having the opportunity to contribute to the talks during this critical period, the two governments have come to the following view. Subject crucially to events on the ground and to convincing demonstration in word and deed that a complete, unqualified and unequivocal IRA ceasefire is being fully and continuously observed, [they can envisage that Sinn Fein's return to the talks could take place on/by/in ? March] and that contacts with Sinn Fein would be maintained in the intervening period. However, the governments also reaffirm the paramount importance of the integrity of the process, which depends on the total and absolute commitment of all participants to democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues as required by the Mitchell Principles. In the case of the UDP, and now in the case of Sinn Fein, the governments have been prepared, in the interests of inclusivity and rapid progress in the talks, to envisage a return to the talks at an early stage. However this approach could certainly not be maintained in the event of further violence by the organisations linked to these parties. The credibility of the process could not withstand such a further challenge. All parties should have no doubt about the two governments' resolve in such circumstances.