

ANNEX

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE ULSTER DEMOCRATIC PARTY (UDP)

*Expulsion of Sinn Fein and the UDP from the Talks*

Accusation

The terms set by the Governments for the re-entry of Sinn Fein to the talks are more lenient than those set for the UDP.

The Facts

The UDP were expelled for 27 days (11 of which were talks' negotiating days) with the Governments' determination referring to a return to the talks depending on: "if over a period of weeks a complete, unequivocal and unconditional UFF ceasefire were demonstrated, etc., the Governments would consider the possibility of the UDP rejoining the negotiations". The overall situation was complicated by the original UFF statement, announcing the end of their violence, which was unsatisfactory in both of the versions circulating. Sinn Fein, subject to events on the ground, have been expelled for a set period of 16 days (6 of which are talks' negotiating days) returning on 9 March.

Key Points To Make

- Welcome the return of the UDP to the talks and their reaffirmation of the Mitchell Principles on non-violence. UDP have an important role to play in the negotiations. However, in the event that there is evidence to link the UFF to any future murders then the Governments will not hesitate in taking the necessary action to expel the UDP again.
- The Governments did not stipulate an exact date for the return of the UDP but always wanted their return to be as early as possible subject to events on the ground. This reflected our commitment to having as inclusive a process as possible. In this context the timescale indicated by the Governments for the return of Sinn Fein to the talks reflects the reality that we are coming to the end of the period set aside to achieve an accommodation between the parties in the talks. However, the return of Sinn Fein will also be subject to events on the ground and there is no intention on our part to treat Sinn Fein with leniency.

*Making progress in the negotiations between now and the May deadline/SDLP and the Irish Government may stall the negotiations pending the return of Sinn Fein*



- The British and Irish Governments are committed to facilitating the parties to reach agreement by early April followed by a referendum in early May. We believe that it will be possible to meet this deadline given the parties' clear commitment to intensifying the negotiations.
- We have heard nothing from either the SDLP or the Irish Government that they are anything other than committed to making progress.

*Prime Minister to meet Gerry Adams*

- I [the Prime Minister] have no plans to meet Mr Adams.

*Prisoner Issues*

- Prisoner issues are important to parties on both sides of the community in Northern Ireland. We have made it clear that such issues can only be addressed as part of the political process and the talks provide the appropriate forum for the consideration of prisoner releases. We have not excluded further movement. However, any changes to present arrangements must not undermine community confidence in the criminal justice system and the political process.



ANNEX

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE ULSTER DEMOCRATIC PARTY (UDP)

*Expulsion of Sinn Fein and the UDP from the Talks*

Accusation

The terms set by the Governments for the re-entry of Sinn Fein to the talks are more lenient than those set for the UDP.

The Facts

The UDP were expelled for 27 days (11 of which were talks' negotiating days) with the Governments' determination referring to a return to the talks depending on: "if over a period of weeks a complete, unequivocal and unconditional UFF ceasefire were demonstrated, etc., the Governments would consider the possibility of the UDP rejoining the negotiations". The overall situation was complicated by the original UFF statement, announcing the end of their violence, which was unsatisfactory in both of the versions circulating. Sinn Fein, subject to events on the ground, have been expelled for a set period of 16 days (6 of which are talks' negotiating days) returning on 9 March.

Key Points To Make

- Welcome the return of the UDP to the talks and their reaffirmation of the Mitchell Principles on non-violence. UDP have an important role to play in the negotiations. However, in the event that there is evidence to link the UFF to any future murders then the Governments will not hesitate in taking the necessary action to expel the UDP again.
- The Governments did not stipulate an exact date for the return of the UDP but always wanted their return to be as early as possible subject to events on the ground. **This reflected our commitment to having as inclusive a process as possible. In this context the timescale indicated by the Governments for the return of Sinn Fein to the talks reflects the reality that we are coming to the end of the period set aside to achieve an accommodation between the parties in the talks.** However, the return of Sinn Fein will also be **subject to events on the ground** and there is no intention on our part to treat Sinn Fein with leniency.

*Making progress in the negotiations between now and the May deadline/SDLP and the Irish Government may stall the negotiations pending the return of Sinn Fein*



- The British and Irish Governments are committed to facilitating the parties to reach agreement by early April followed by a referendum in early May. We believe that it will be possible to meet this deadline given the parties' clear commitment to intensifying the negotiations.
- We have heard nothing from either the SDLP or the Irish Government that they are anything other than committed to making progress.

*Prime Minister to meet Gerry Adams*

- I [the Prime Minister] have no plans to meet Mr Adams.

*Prisoner Issues*

- Prisoner issues are important to parties on both sides of the community in Northern Ireland. We have made it clear that such issues can only be addressed as part of the political process and the talks provide the appropriate forum for the consideration of prisoner releases. We have not excluded further movement. However, any changes to present arrangements must not undermine community confidence in the criminal justice system and the political process.