

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Reference Code:	2022/45/599
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STATEMENT BY SENATOR GEORGE J. MITCHELL
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1999

The review has reached the final and most critical phase. The past few days have been very intense. Accordingly, I have asked the parties to pause over the weekend and reflect on the magnitude of the decisions they have to make. We will resume on Monday morning.

I recognise that this process has gone on much longer than originally intended. However, given the gravity of what is at stake, it is appropriate to take the time necessary to thoroughly and carefully consider these important matters. I ask all concerned for their patience and understanding.

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As a result, most of my meetings have been with the seven pro-Agreement parties, each of which confirmed its support for and commitment to: (1) the Good Friday Agreement; (2) the Mitchell Principles of democracy and non-violence; and (3) the three principles, set forth above, which were agreed on June 25. On the basis of these intensive discussions, conducted over a period of nine weeks, I am convinced that these parties are sincere and acting in good faith in seeking the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. They want devolution and decommissioning. The problem, of course, is that there are differences among the parties on how those objectives can be achieved.

My meetings with the parties are well advanced. Consultation with them is the most important but is not the only part of the review. Before advancing it further I must meet with the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, since they initiated the review. In addition, I must obtain the assessment of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, since two of the three principles agreed on June 25 relate to decommissioning; one of them refers specifically to the Commission. Accordingly, I have asked the Commission for its assessment.

I will meet the Taoiseach in Dublin later today, with the Prime Minister in London tomorow, and with President Clinton later in the week. I will renew my meetings with the parties in Belfast on Monday. I expect to have my report ready shortly thereafter.

--End--

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Irish Government Press Line

Friday 12 November

- The Review is going to take a little more time. We had all hoped it would be completed by now. But a final few days more are worth it if we get the prize we all seek.

- That prize - the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement - is still within our grasp.

- The reality is that the Good Friday Agreement remains the best and only way of putting the past behind us; of bringing conflict to a definitive end; and bringing about real partnership.

- That's what the people want, what they voted for, and what we are determined they will have.

- We will, therefore, be reconvening on Monday for one final session of the Review.

- Deep appreciation of Senator Mitchell.

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