

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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STATEMENT BY SENATOR GEORGE J MITCHELL
SEPTEMBER 6 1999

At the request of the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach I have agreed to facilitate an intensive implementation review. As they said on July 20:

"The review will take as its starting point the three principles agreed by all pro-Agreement parties on 25 June:

- an inclusive Executive exercising devolved power;
- decommissioning of all paramilitary arms by May 2000;
- decommissioning to be carried out in a manner determined by the International Commission on Decommissioning;

and [the review] will determine how to overcome the difficulties which exist in the practical implementation of those principles. This will be its only focus."

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I have repeated the statement of the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach because I believe it important at the outset to emphasize the limited nature of this review. We are not here to renegotiate the Good Friday Agreement. We are here solely to determine how to overcome the difficulties in implementing the principles set forth by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach in July.

I believe those difficulties can be overcome. If I thought otherwise I would not be here. The people of Northern Ireland have been clear, consistent and overwhelming in their desire for peace and political stability. They want their political differences resolved by democratic and exclusively peaceful means.

I join them in condemning the use or threat of violence to try to solve political problems. As one of the authors of what have come to be known as the Mitchell Principles, I believe in their ongoing relevance to this process, and I will be discussing with all of the parties their full commitment to those principles.

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There is a chance – the best in many years – to set Northern Ireland on the path to enduring peace and political stability. The political leaders of Northern Ireland must seize this opportunity.

Neither I nor anyone else has a magic wand that will wave away these problems. But I believe it can be done. Whether it is done is up to the political leaders.

Each of them sought public office and the power that comes with it. With that power comes responsibility. At this time and place, that means having the courage and wisdom to find a way to overcome the obstacles to implementation of the Agreement.

I believe in Northern Ireland, I believe in the people of Northern Ireland, I believe in the political leaders of Northern Ireland. I know them. I respect them. I look forward to working with them and the Governments in what I hope will be a short and successful review.

-End-

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Senator Mitchell has offered the following times to the participants over the next three days. A few parties have yet to formally confirm these arrangements.

Monday 6 September

1300	UUP
1430	SDLP
1600	DUP
1730	Sinn Fein

Tuesday 7 September

0930	Alliance
1030	NI Women's Coalition
1130	NI Unionist Party
1230	PUP
1430	UKUP
1530	UDP
1630	UUAP

Wednesday 8 September

0900	British and Irish Governments

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