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PRESS AND INFORMATION OFFICE
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Further Report of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning

The Independent International Commission on Decommissioning has today presented a further report to the Irish and British Governments. The text is attached.

10 December, 1999.

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REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON DECOMMISSIONING

To:

The Rt. Hon. Peter Mandelson, MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Belfast

To:

Mr. John O'Donoghue, TD
Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Dublin

1. In the 15 November assessment we prepared for Senator Mitchell, we called on paramilitary organisations to respond positively by appointing authorised representatives. We also said that we would issue a report to the governments within days of holding meetings with representatives of the paramilitary groups. This is that report. We will report further in January.

2. In the same assessment we stated our belief that "the implementation of the Agreement in all its aspects will create a new context in which the situation will be transformed." Since writing that assessment we have taken note of the much improved political atmosphere created by the establishment of the new political institutions, the renewed collective commitment of the parties, and the appointment of authorized representatives by two para-military groups that had not previously done so. These events provide the basis for an assessment that decommissioning will occur.

3. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) announced on 2 December that they had appointed a representative to enter into discussions with the Commission. We have held an initial meeting with that individual. The meeting was frank and useful and a further meeting has been agreed.

4. Similarly the Commission has met again with the Ulster Volunteer Force/Red Hand Commando (UVF/RHC) representative. This meeting too was frank and useful. The representative reiterated the view, provided earlier to the Commission, that "the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement in full, coupled with the acceptance from Republicans that the Agreement is the final settlement to end the constitutional conflict, are the only conditions which will facilitate the process of decommissioning weapons."

5. The Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) announced on 8 December that they had decided to appoint representatives to liaise directly with the Commission. Earlier today we held an initial

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meeting with those representatives. This meeting was helpful and we have agreed on the next meeting. The representatives impressed on us a point they made public recently, to the effect that "disarmament will only be considered in the context of the IRA having already begun to decommission its arsenal of weaponry."

6. We have noted elsewhere our belief that decommissioning cannot be imposed. But we believe that the above-mentioned achievements provide the context for the voluntary decommissioning of arms. In our 2 July report to the Governments we noted that a timetable for decommissioning is best agreed with the representatives of the paramilitary groups. We believe that still to be the case. Nonetheless, the Commission is prepared, if necessary, to state that actual decommissioning is to start within a specified period.

7. The naming of new representatives and the initial meetings we have held with them demonstrate some progress. We expect more to follow. As noted in the opening paragraph, we will report again to the governments in January, and as necessary thereafter.

Tauno Nieminen

John de Chastelain

Andrew D. Sens

Belfast, 10 December 1999

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