

The NIWC subscribes to the three principles outlined by the two premiers on Friday last, viz. That:

1. Inclusive Executive

It has always been the view of the NIWC that there should be an inclusive executive established as soon as possible.

2. Obligation to decommission

There is an obligation to decommission under the terms laid down in the Good Friday Agreement, and in the context of the overall implementation of the Agreement. Further, the GFA states that ALL parties are responsible for working towards decommissioning. This means that all parties must work to create the environment in which decommissioning will take place. In the context of partial or no decommissioning by May 2000, the contribution of all parties to creating this situation must be examined, by the two governments, with a view to applying any sanction. Any sanctions attached to failure in this regard must be capable of being applied to all parties. Regardless of the nature and legislative status of any sanction, it would be useful if the governments could assure all parties that they will apply any sanctions consistently and without favour. It would be useful also if the parties agreed to the principle of an approach to sanction application which was across the board. Further it would be useful if parties were to agree at this stage the nature of the sanction. In discussing the nature of any sanction the parties and governments should be cognisant of the sanctions already contained within the Northern Ireland Act.

3. Responsibility of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning to determine the modalities of decommissioning.

We believe that there may be a phase in the process of decommissioning before identification of practical modalities take place. In our view, if one is going to undertake a task, phase one is to signal intent to carry out the task; phase two is to plan and detail how to conduct the task, and phase three is to actually carry out the task. We would view a signal of intent, coupled with an indication of the time in which the task is to be carried out to constitute a start to the decommissioning process. It is the responsibility of the IICD to verify these phases; indeed this is its role.

We believe that the only way that decommissioning will happen will be under the terms of the Agreement – and certainly not by moving outside of it.