

STATEMENT BY SENATOR GEORGE J. MITCHELL**15 NOVEMBER 1999****INTERIM REPORT**

In my statement of 2 November, I reported that my discussions with the parties were well advanced. I have since then met the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister, as well as President Clinton, and last week and today I have had further meetings with the parties. The Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) has also been preparing, at my request, an assessment of the current state of the decommissioning issue.

In the course of the Review, the parties have engaged with one another in an unprecedented manner. They have been exploring intensively how to implement the Good Friday Agreement on the basis of the three principles relating to devolution and decommissioning, as agreed on 25 June 1999, which are the focus of the Review.

I believe that the parties now understand each other's concerns and requirements far better than before, and are committed to resolving the current impasse. I am increasingly confident that a way will be found to do so.

The pro-Agreement parties and the Governments share the view that devolution should occur and the institutions should be established at the earliest possible date. It is also common ground that decommissioning should occur as quickly as possible and that the IICD should play the central role in achieving this, under the terms of the Agreement.

Accordingly, I have asked that

1. The assessment on which the IICD has been working be made public promptly, and the parties give their views on that report; and
2. On tomorrow the parties make public their positions, as they have developed during this Review, on the issues we have been considering together.

Shortly after these further steps are taken I expect to be in a position to issue a final report on the Review.

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