

Briefing meeting on Decommissioning
2 February 1998

Kate Fearon NIWC
Gen. de Chastelain IBD
Andy ??
Tourane ??
Ambassador???

Gen. de Chastelain presented an update of the current programme of the International Body on Decommissioning. The following points were noted:

- * The Commission hopes to visit sites in Dublin and N Ireland in the next two weeks which will afford practical demonstrations of how weapons will be destroyed safely. This will not be done publically.
- * By the end of February it is expected that the two governments will have put together the legislative schemes for operationalising the plans of the Commission. This will involve things like amnesty, and a consideration will be how the work of the governments and the commission will interface. The amnesty option should be put in place by the governments towards the end of the month.
- * The IBD is keen to meet the recommendation of the Mitchell report to have some decommissioning take place during negotiations. They are conscious that time is running out for this to happen.
- * The technical and intellectual work of the IBD is essentially complete, and they are keen to hold a press conference to publicise this fact. The NIWC supported this view, and suggested that it would be useful to begin briefing journalists at this stage, as it would be important that journalists understood the issues properly in order to see through the various spins which will undoubtedly be put on their report.
- * There was a sense that there was not much more that the IBD could actually do, and that it was over to the parties. The NIWC asked what the indications were that decommissioning would actually happen. Two points were forwarded in response. One, is that, if the paramilitaries decide to decommission, then the IBD have got it technically right: their route is the one that will be taken. Unfortunately, it was felt that there were 'no plans for imminent decommissioning'.
- * The IBD has offices in Dublin Castle, and would be keen to meet the NIWC when the Talks move to Dublin in the week of Feb 16th.
- * The IBD will gladly meet with the NIWC at any stage before the Liaison sub committee meets again in the week of Feb 23.

The meeting lasted approx. 25 mins.