

# INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON DECOMMISSIONING

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## ASSESSMENT

Ref: Mitchell to de Chastelain Letter of 2 November 1999

Senator Mitchell's review is focussed on the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement on the basis of the three principles agreed on 25 June:

- An inclusive Executive exercising devolved powers;
- Decommissioning of all paramilitary arms by May 2000;
- Decommissioning to be carried out in a manner determined by the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning.

Two of the three principles refer to decommissioning and one refers specifically to the Commission. Senator Mitchell has therefore asked the Commission for an assessment to help him in concluding the Review.

The Commission is determined to complete the task set out for us in the Agreement and to complete it within the two-year period which commenced on the endorsement of the Agreement in referendums, North and South.

This is our assessment as to how we can best achieve that, and in particular how principles 2 and 3 can be achieved in this context. Less than seven months now remain in the time-scale set out in the Good Friday Agreement.

While there are difficulties and challenges posed by those paramilitary groups which are not observing a cease-fire, the



contribution of those on cease-fire over what is now a protracted period is itself significant.

*contextualising*

The Commission has become convinced that a successful outcome to the Review, including the establishment of the political institutions provided for in the Good Friday Agreement, will mark a major move forward in the implementation of the overall settlement envisaged in that Agreement. The implementation of the Agreement in all its aspects will create a new context in which the situation will be transformed.

We remind all the pro-Agreement parties that they are committed:

"to work constructively and in good faith with the Independent Commission and to use any influence they may have, to achieve the decommissioning of all paramilitary arms within two years following endorsement in referendums North and South of the Agreement and in the context of the implementation of the overall settlement."

And that they have reaffirmed:

"Our total and absolute commitment to exclusively democratic and peaceful means of resolving differences on political issues, and our opposition to any use or threat of force by others for any political purpose, whether in regard to this agreement or otherwise."

The time is now very short to achieve decommissioning within the time-scale intended by the Agreement. Bearing in mind the practical arrangements the Commission will need to make, urgent progress is now needed. Having made all possible preparations, including numerous meetings with the parties and others, we will now play a more active role.

We have previously said that decommissioning is a voluntary act and cannot be imposed. To bring decommissioning about, the Commission will need the co-operation and support of the political parties, using all the influence they have, together with the wholehearted commitment of paramilitary organisations.

While decommissioning is an essential element of the Agreement, our discussions over the past year and a half convince us that the context in which it can be achieved is the overall implementation of that Agreement. All participants have a collective responsibility in this regard.

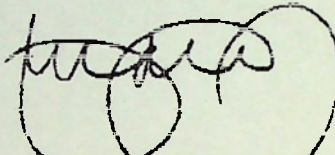
The process of decommissioning involves a number of steps. To achieve our objective it is now urgent that the appointment by paramilitary organisations of authorised representatives and the holding of discussions about modalities with the Commission take place. Such appointments would represent a significant confidence

building measure and would demonstrate each organisation's desire to make a further contribution to the process.

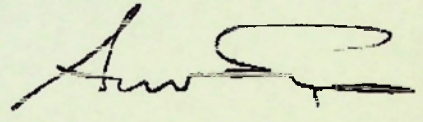
We call on the paramilitary organisations to respond positively by appointing authorised representatives, following which we would set a date for a first meeting with each of them as soon as possible after their appointment. We would issue a report within days of those meetings.



Tarmo Nieminen



John de Shastelain



Andrew D. Sena