

# INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON DECOMMISSIONING

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## REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON DECOMMISSIONING

To: The Rt. Hon. Dr John Reid, MP Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Belfast	To: Mr. John O'Donoghue, TD Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform Dublin
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### INTRODUCTION

1. On 05 May 2000 the two Governments said the remaining steps necessary to secure full implementation of the Agreement could be achieved by June 2001. Decommissioning of paramilitary arms was one of the remaining steps and we submit this report accordingly.

2. During the past year the UVF and UFF representatives gave us general agreement on methods of decommissioning and supporting issues, although the UFF representatives recently qualified their continuing discussion of the subject with us. Since the IRA re-opened engagement with us in March 2001, we focussed on ascertaining details of the IRA's commitment to put its arms beyond use.

3. The commitments given us to date notwithstanding, we must report that no decommissioning by the IRA, the UVF and the UFF has yet started, although each of these groups has re-affirmed the circumstances under which they might do so.

### DISCUSSIONS WITH THE IRA REPRESENTATIVE

4. Since March, we have held a number of lengthy meetings with the IRA representative, most recently within the past week. During each of the meetings we have pressed for answers to three questions:

- a. The IRA's commitment to put its arms beyond use;
- b. The method it will use and whether it meets our remit to verify that arms are rendered permanently inaccessible or permanently unusable; and
- c. When the process of putting arms beyond use will begin.

5. In each of our meetings we have been assured of the IRA's commitment to put its arms beyond use, completely and verifiably, but only in the context of its statement of 06 May 2000. Taken in conjunction with the continued maintenance of the July 1997 ceasefire, and the opening of some IRA arms dumps to inspections by the International Inspectors, we believe that this conditional commitment is made in good

faith.

6. We have, however, been unable to ascertain how the IRA will put its arms beyond use, except for the assurance that it will be complete and verifiable. The IRA has taken note of our need for this information, but until we know what method will be used, we cannot judge if it meets our remit. We should record that the representative has said he wishes to continue to engage with us on issues related to our remit as the political process continues.

7. We should also note that in May 2000 the Governments asked us to consider decommissioning methods other than the two already approved. We have done so, and we made clear to the IRA representative that we would welcome suggestions in this regard.

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UVF REPRESENTATIVE

8. We have had a number of discussions with the UVF representative, most recently this week. He confirms that the statements he made earlier on decommissioning methods and supporting issues remain in effect; but he re-iterates that the UVF will not consider decommissioning before they know the IRA's intentions and hear their declaration that the war is over.

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UFF REPRESENTATIVES

9. Similarly we have had a number of discussions with the UFF representatives, most recently this week. At this most recent meeting, while the representatives did not withdraw their earlier statements on decommissioning methods and supporting issues, they told us it would be difficult to discuss decommissioning further with us "while members of the UFF were continuing to be interned."

CONCLUSION

10. We have been unable to meet either of the decommissioning target dates called for by the Agreement or by the Governments: respectively, 22 May 2000 and June 2001. Some people have said they believe our inability to engineer a start to decommissioning has called into question our usefulness to the process, and suggest we now withdraw from it. Others have urged us to remain engaged and to continue to press paramilitary groups to begin decommissioning. We have given both these views careful consideration.

11. Given the conditions the IRA, the UVF and the UFF say they require before they will put their arms beyond use, we believe we cannot influence that activity by making demands or by setting deadlines. But we will continue to do what we can to implement our mandate through continuing contact and discussion with each of the three paramilitary groups, insisting that the objectives of the legislation calling for arms to be rendered permanently inaccessible or permanently unusable are respected. We will do so mindful that this contentious issue must be resolved as soon as possible.

Tauno Nieminen.....

John de Chastelain .....

Andrew D. Sens

30 June 2001