



PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST PARTY

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PRESS RELEASE

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“Progressive Unionist Party Statement on Mitchell Review Process.”

The Review of the Good Friday Agreement was based on three fundamental principles agreed on 25th June 1999. The three principles are as follows:

- 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.

On 1st July 1999, the Progressive Unionist Party stated the following responses:

- The Progressive Unionist Party recognise the fundamental necessity for the creation of a wholly inclusive executive. The proper functioning of the structures envisaged in the GFA, we believe, offer the genuine opportunity to address the ills faced by our divided society.
- We believe the removal of illegal war materials from our society is an honourable objective. The Progressive Unionist party do not see decommissioning as a precondition to access to the structures envisaged in the GFA, whilst we recognise that it is an issue that must be dealt with. We commit ourselves to dealing with the issue as set out in the terms of the Agreement. We re-affirm our confidence in the IICD and wholly recognise that they are best suited to deal with this issue.
- We accept that all matters regarding decommissioning including modalities, schemes, verification etc. should be the sole remit of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning and as such we will continue to work in conjunction with them to achieve this most honourable objective.

The Progressive Unionist Party welcome the interim report by Senator George Mitchell, outlining progress made in the Review of the Good Friday Agreement. We find heartening, Mr Mitchell's assertions that the parties “.. now understand each

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others concerns and requirements far better than before, and are committed to resolving the current impasse.”

It has always been our Party's view that devolution should occur and the institutions envisaged within the GFA should be implemented regardless of the decommissioning issue. We believe that the process of decommissioning should be the sole remit of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, and as such should be completely removed from the political equation. The removal of illegal war materials is an integral part of the conflict transformation process, currently taking place in Northern Ireland.

We welcome the proposals outlined by the International Commission and believe that “.. appointing authorised representatives,” would be a positive step in this direction.

The Progressive Unionist Party wholeheartedly believe that the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, as negotiated on the 10th April 1998, and supported by referendum on 22nd May 1998, is our best option for achieving a non sectarian, pluralist and equitable society for Northern Ireland.

ENDS

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