

Declaration of Intent to Implement the Belfast Agreement
General Preamble

We, the parties to the Belfast Agreement, reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the Belfast Agreement in all its aspects.

We pledge that we will, in good faith, work to bring the new arrangements into being and, further, to ensure the success of each and every one of the arrangements to be established under the Agreement.

We are committed to partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of new democratic relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and south and between these islands.

We reaffirm our total and absolute commitment to exclusively democratic and peaceful means of resolving differences on political issues.

We reaffirm our opposition to any use of or threat of force by others for any political purpose, whether in regard to this agreement or otherwise.

We accept that all of us bear some responsibility for the wrongs of the past.

We accept that great hurt has been caused to both individuals and communities as a result of our conflict.

We pledge to honour those who have died or been injured, and their families by dedicating ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all.

We believe that the provisions within the Belfast Agreement enable us to create a society that can win the acceptance of all its people.

We have engaged fully with the Mitchell Review and reaffirm our commitment to its terms of reference agreed by all parties on June 25th 1999, viz.

- 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 International Commission on Decommissioning

We believe that the Belfast Agreement will be implemented within the timeframe set out within it. We thus reassure each other of good faith in the process by agreeing to establish an Agreement Implementation Committee that will enable us collectively to ensure that the Belfast Agreement is implemented in all its aspects..

In addition we resolve to:
[See options papers]

Declaration of Intent: Summary of Options
11th October 1999

- A. Can be done at this time. Establish working executive as soon as possible. Establish Implementation Committee. IICD continues to report – in December 1999, January 2000.

- B. Can't be done at this time. Produce road map: Establish Shadow Ministers working as Executive to draft programme of government. Have Assembly approve programme. Enable North South Context, East West Context & Civic Forum. Implementation Committee established to convene Jan 2000 to consider IICD report.

- C. Can't be done at this time. Produce road map: Establish Shadow Ministers not meeting in Executive, reporting to Secretary of State. Enable North South Context; East West Context & Civic Forum. Implementation Committee established to convene Jan 2000 to consider IICD reports.

- D. Can't be done at this time. Create framework for trust building opportunities by producing road map. Establish Assembly Committees with no powers of primary legislation. Enable North South context, East West context & Civic Forum. Implementation Committee established to convene Jan 2000 to consider IICD reports.

- E. Can't be done at this or any time. HMGUK & ROIG should take forward as much as they can of Belfast Agreement.

Declaration of Intent to implement the Belfast Agreement in all its aspects

Option A

Can be done at this time. Establish working executive as soon as possible. Establish nature of guarantor/guarantee/sanction. Establish Implementation Committee. IICD continues to report – in December 1999, January 2000.

The d'Hondt procedure to nominate Ministers to be run on November 15th.

The Devolution Order to be laid before the British Parliament on 16th November. Within a period to be specified by the IICD, and as enabled by the Belfast Agreement, the IICD will confirm a start to the process of decommissioning, that start to be defined as in their report of 2 July 1999.

The IICD will report progress in December 1999 and May 2000.

The governments undertake that, in accordance with the review provisions of the Agreement, if commitments under the Agreement are not met, either in relation to decommissioning or to devolution, they will automatically, and with immediate effect suspend the operation of the institutions set up by the Belfast Agreement. In relation to both devolution and decommissioning, this action will be taken on receipt of a report at any time that the commitments now being entered into or steps which are subsequently laid down by the IICD, are not fulfilled, in accordance with the Belfast Agreement.

Declaration of Intent to implement the Belfast Agreement in all its aspects

Option B

Can't be done at this time. Produce road map: Establish Shadow Ministers working as an Executive to draft programme of government. Have Assembly approve programme. Enable North South Context, East West Context & Civic Forum. Implementation Committee established to convene Jan 2000 to consider IICD report.

In the advance of an inclusive Executive being established we have agreed to the following actions:

To establish a Belfast Agreement Implementation Committee (BAIC), to be chaired by Senator Mitchell, and comprising all the parties who were signatories to the Agreement. This committee will meet at least once a month to evaluate progress made.

To establish Shadow Ministers as envisaged by the Belfast Agreement.

Shadow Ministers would have responsibility in their respective areas of work. Shadow Ministers would report to each other collectively in an Executive format, but would report directly to the Secretary of State, who would have power of veto over any decision taken in this transitional period. Shadow Ministers would work together to prepare a programme of government and a budget to be presented to a meeting of the Assembly.

During the same period the First Minister (designate) and the Deputy First Minister (designate) will continue their responsibilities including:

- Further elaboration of the work outlined in NNIA Report No. 7 (15th February 1999)
- Specifically, to include further elaboration of the work on the British Irish Council, North South Ministerial Council and the Civic Forum. Shadow Ministers would be entitled to work with their counterparts in both the NSMC and the BIC.

The IICD would continue to report to the government.

The BAIC will convene a meeting in January 2000 which will consider the reports of the IICD, with view to transforming the Shadow Arrangements to full Ministers and to convening the first Executive Meeting of full Ministers.

Parties anticipate that devolution of power would take place by May 2000.

Declaration to Implement the Belfast Agreement in all its aspects

(Option C)

Can't be done at this time. Produce road map: Establish Shadow Ministers not meeting in Executive, reporting to Secretary of State. Enable North South Context; East West Context & Civic Forum. Implementation Committee established to convene Jan 2000 to consider IICD reports.

In the advance of an inclusive Executive being established we have agreed to the following actions:

To establish a Belfast Agreement Implementation Committee (BAIC), to be chaired by Senator Mitchell, and comprising all the parties who were signatories to the Agreement. This committee will meet at least once a month to evaluate progress made.

To establish Shadow Ministers, which would involve the nomination of Shadow Ministers by invitation from the Secretary of State.

Shadow Ministers would have responsibility in their respective areas of work. Shadow Ministers would not report to each other in an Executive, but would report directly to the Secretary of State, who would have power of veto over any decision taken in this transitional period. Shadow Ministers would work together to prepare a programme of government and a budget to be presented to a meeting of the Assembly.

During the same period the First Minister (deisgnate) and the Deputy First Minister (designate) will continue their responsibilities including:

- Further elaboration of the work outlined in NNIA Report No. 7 (15th February 1999)
- Specifically, to include further elaboration of the work on the British Irish Council and the North South Ministerial Council. Shadow Ministers would be entitled to work with their counterparts in both the NSMC and the BIC.

The IICD would continue to report to the government.

The BAIC will convene a meeting in January 2000 which will consider the reports of the IICD, with view to transforming the Shadow Arrangements to full Ministers and to convening the first Executive Meeting of full Ministers.

Parties anticipate that devolution of power would take place by May 2000

Declaration of Intent to Implement the Belfast Agreement in all its aspects
(Option D)

Can't be done at this time. Create framework for trust building opportunities by producing road map. Establish Assembly Committees with no powers of primary legislation. Enable North South context, East West context & Civic Forum. Implementation Committee established to convene Jan 2000 to consider IICD reports.

[In advance of an inclusive executive being established] We have therefore agreed to:

1. Negotiate a draft programme of government setting out our priorities for local government for the next five years.
2. Establish Assembly Committees to have scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Department with which each is associated.

They will have the power to:

- Consider and advise on Departmental budgets and Annual Plans in the context of the budget allocation;
- Approve relevant secondary legislation;
- Call for persons and papers;
- Initiate enquiries and make reports
- Consider and advise on matters brought to the Committee by the Minister currently responsible for the Department.
- Nominate members to operate on a cross-border basis to the agreed implementation bodies.
- Nominate members to operate on a cross-border basis on the agreed matters for co-operation.
- Appoint relevant members to interact as equals with Ministerial members of the Dail in council format.