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(a) that the decommissioning issue will be dealt with meaningfully in the course of negotiations

Irish Paper on method of dealing with decommissioning in terms of the communiqué of 28 February

(b) that, as envisaged in the "ground-rules" paper, all items of a comprehensive agenda will be fully and constructively addressed, and

1. In the joint communiqué of 28 February 1996 the Taoiseach and Prime Minister recognised the need for confidence-building measures relating to all-party negotiations. In particular, the communiqué envisaged in paragraph 12:
 3. The "As one such measure, all participants would need to make clear at the beginning of the discussions their total and absolute commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence set out in the report of the International Body. They would also need to address, at that stage, its proposals on decommissioning. Confidence building would also require that the parties have reassurance that a meaningful and inclusive process of negotiations is genuinely being offered to address the legitimate concerns of their traditions and the need for new political arrangements with which all can identify". and the most that those around the table can do is to seek to persuade the paramilitary leaders that weapons must be
2. The negotiations should therefore be ordered so as to provide reassurance on two sets of concerns:

(a) that the decommissioning issue will be dealt with meaningfully in the course of negotiations.

(b) that, as envisaged in the "ground-rules" paper, all items of a comprehensive agenda will be fully and constructively addressed, and

(c) that no participant will seek to control the agenda, or veto the concerns of others, by making negotiation on any particular agenda item conditional on its own prior satisfaction on any other item.

3. The decommissioning issue requires particular treatment for a number of reasons:

(a) It is different to all other agenda items in that it deals with a situation which is in breach of the law, and raises a range of complex legal issues which are the specific concerns of the Governments.

4. If the negotiations are not inclusive, the decommissioning issue will not

(b) The decision to decommission voluntarily is for the paramilitary leaders in control of the weaponry, and the most that those around the table can do is to seek to persuade the paramilitary leaders that weapons must be decommissioned.

(c) Most participants, for obvious reasons, will have no significant input into technical or operational discussions on decommissioning, and will be concerned mainly with the political and other implications of the progress being made in this regard.

(d) The prospect of any progress on decommissioning will depend directly on the degree to which the political negotiations are inclusive and comprehensive and develop a positive dynamic. It is still unclear whether, under the terms of paragraph 5 of the February 28th communiqué, the negotiations opening on June 10th will include the parties on both sides with presumed influence on the respective paramilitaries. The manner in which it is proposed to address the decommissioning issue may itself have a bearing on the inclusiveness or otherwise of the negotiations.

4. If the negotiations are not inclusive, the decommissioning issue will not seriously feature in them. If, however, the conditions for inclusive negotiations in the February communiqué are fulfilled, a different situation will arise. In the light of the factors which set decommissioning apart from the other agenda items, special provisions should be made to deal with it successfully. The issue is too sensitive and important to be left vague, or at the hazard of the opening phase of negotiations, since it would be a very grave setback to confidence in

the political process as a whole if the negotiations were to become deadlocked or even founder abruptly on this issue. as follows:

5. To minimise that risk, and to enhance confidence in the negotiations, we would accordingly propose that both Governments should seek the prior agreement of the main prospective participants for a specific approach to fulfil the requirements of the February 28th communiqué. The need for clarity on this issue has also been accepted by unionist spokesmen. (both Governments and of

the parties which they judged likely to have influence on the

6. We would propose this approach should be as follows:

- (i) The negotiations would begin with a round of statements in plenary session in which all participants would make clear their total and, and absolute commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence set out in the report of the International Body. In the event of any and the participant failing to make such a statement, the Chairperson would report this to the two Governments for their consideration and appropriate action. (remit of the decommissioning stream would also be

communicated by the two Governments to the participants at the

- (ii) The opening statements would also set out participants' views on the proposed agenda, including addressing the proposals of the Body on decommissioning.

(iii) The Governments would then table in plenary a joint proposal to deal with the decommissioning issue, as follows:

- In parallel with the political negotiations, a separate mechanism would be launched to progress decommissioning, on the lines set out in the report of the International Body.
- This would comprise representatives of both Governments and of the parties which they judged likely to have influence on the paramilitaries.
- To ensure confidence and balance, this separate mechanism should be under the general aegis of the International Body, and its meetings should be chaired by General John de Chastelain, with appropriate technical support, as agreed between him and the two Governments.
- The detailed remit of the decommissioning stream would also be communicated by the two Governments to the participants at the opening plenary.

23 April 1996

- The Chairperson of the decommissioning stream would periodically brief the participants in the political negotiations on the progress made on decommissioning, for example at regular meetings which might be held in plenary session to enable participants to consider progress across the negotiations as a whole.
 - Before the conclusion of the political negotiations, the Chairperson would lay before the participants a report setting out the results achieved on the decommissioning issue.
 - These results would be considered by all the participants alongside the outcome of the three strands of the political negotiations.
- (iv) The opening plenary (if necessary after adjournment to allow the respective strands to agree their particular agenda) would adopt and commit the parties to negotiate, the comprehensive agenda, and their proposal on the decommissioning issue would be activated by the two Governments in the light of this.

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