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CHAIRMEN'S REPORT TO THE PLENARY, DECEMBER 2, 1997:

STRAND TWO; LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE ON DECOMMISSIONING; LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE ON CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES

STRAND TWO

Strand Two met in full session six times over the period 7 October to 10 November. As agreed by participants, sessions were devoted to an overview of the comprehensive agenda, without seeking agreement on any agenda item. After the inaugural session at which opening statements were made, principles and requirements, constitutional issues, new arrangements, the relationships with other arrangements, and rights and safeguards were addressed sequentially. Those participants who chose to do so submitted papers detailing their views in advance of each session; each participant had an opportunity to expound and elaborate on its own views, as well as to pose questions and seek clarification of the views of other participants.

A period of intensive consultations took place the week of 17 November. The Chairmen met with each party on a bilateral basis to review discussions to date, to attempt to identify areas of commonality, and to explore ideas on the way forward. Participants also conducted bilaterals and meetings in other formats among themselves.

LIAISON SUBCOMMITTEE ON DECOMMISSIONING

The Liaison Subcommittee on Decommissioning held its inaugural meeting on 8 October. The Subcommittee met twice subsequently. On 17 November the two governments briefed the Subcommittee on the legislation passed in both jurisdictions in 1997. On 25 November the Subcommittee held a meeting to discuss and consider the Initial Report of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD). Subcommittee participants had an opportunity to question the Commissioners about their report and to offer their reactions to the work of the IICD to date. No general conclusions about the Initial Report were agreed. The Subcommittee will next meet at the call of the Chair once the IICD has completed the next phase of its task, the detailed proposals for decommissioning schemes.

LIAISON SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES

The Liaison Subcommittee on Confidence Building Measures held its inaugural meeting on 8 October. At its second meeting on 10 November, participants in the Subcommittee made general statements on confidence building measures, many based on papers submitted on an optional basis and agreed to address, in biweekly meetings on an issue-per-session basis, five broad subjects: prisoners; economic and social development; paramilitary activity; security issues; and policing issues. The 1 December discussion of prisoners elicited a variety of views.