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**IGC - INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON DECOMMISSIONING:
DRAFT INITIAL REPORT**

One topic which is likely to feature at tomorrow's IGC is the Decommissioning Commission's draft initial report, which was passed to the two Governments last week.

2. I attach a at Annex A joint briefing note, agreed at official level with the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform, which suggests the approach the Governments might take in responding to the Commission. (This slightly ponderous procedure, for which I apologise, is designed to demonstrate - and enforce - the two Governments' joint approach to the decommissioning issue, and for that reason is useful.) In brief, the draft report, at Annex B, is curate's eggish: while parts are very useful, some sections are drafted in a peremptory tone which will not commend the paper to Sinn Fein and the loyalist parties, while the modalities section requires some technical adjustment. Advice on the proposed changes, and how best to approach the Commission, will come forward as soon as our

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negotiations with the DOJ have been completed. We do not expect there to be any detailed discussion of the draft report itself at tomorrow's IGC.

3. I will be at this afternoon's IGC pre-brief.

Signed

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1. The Draft Initial Report was made available by the Commission to officials of both Governments at a meeting in the Commission's offices in Belfast on 28 October, at which the members of the Commission also raised a number of ancillary points. The Commission are anxious to finalise the Report with a view to making it available to the Talks Sub-Committee on Decommissioning as soon as possible.

2. Officials of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Northern Ireland Office have considered the Draft Report. They believe that it provides a useful basis for further discussions with the parties in the Talks on certain key issues which will be fundamental to any future schemes for decommissioning. They are equally clear, however, that as it stands the Draft Report does not represent proposals for the schemes for decommissioning which the Commission have been tasked to prepare. They also believe that, were the Draft Report to be tabled or made available to the parties in its current form the drafting of certain sections could create difficulties for the Commission's future work, not least with the parties close to the paramilitary groupings, and could therefore hamper its efforts to reach agreement on decommissioning schemes. Officials are currently preparing suggested amendments, taking on board the comments of security and legal experts in both jurisdictions.

3. One particular issue which the Commission raised with the Governments is the suggestion that the Commission might, in advance of decommissioning by paramilitary groups and the promulgation of schemes for this purpose, become engaged in