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LINES TO TAKE

- There has been no change in the position of the two Governments since the Prime Minister's and the Taoiseach's joint statement of 15 September.
- This reaffirmed the two Governments' belief that resolution of the decommissioning issue was an indispensable part of the process of negotiations and that they would like to see the decommissioning of some paramilitary arms during the negotiations as progress is made in the political talks.
- Therefore, there is no question of sidelining the decommissioning issue.
- The position is that the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning is working to complete its Initial Report.
- It is sensible for the Commission to approach this difficult and important issue on the basis of wide consultation. They have, therefore, consulted the two Governments and a number of the parties.
- Of course, responsibility for finalising matters rests with the Commission which is a fully independent body.
- We understand that the Report will be circulated to talks participants in the next few days and we hope it can be discussed in the Liaison Sub-Committee on Decommissioning as soon as possible thereafter - perhaps as early as 25 November.

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