

INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON DECOMMISSIONING

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REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON DECOMMISSIONING

To:

The Rt. Hon. Peter Hain, MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
BELFAST

To:

Mr. Michael McDowell, TD
Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform
DUBLIN

1. Since we reported to you last September, we have continued in our efforts to execute our remit. We have concentrated on the Loyalist paramilitary groups and attempted to engage with them in the pursuit of our mandate. We also wish to advise you of actions we have taken regarding security assessments recently received concerning IRA arms.

2. We have now held several meetings with the UPRG, including some in which a UDA representative participated. While these have not led to firm decommissioning proposals, we are advised that the UDA is prepared to address the issue of arms in the context of a satisfactory consideration by the British government of its community's socio-economic concerns.

3. While the LVF has not resumed formal contact with us, it has authorized informal discussions with an intermediary and we have held a number of meetings with him. We are aware of recent media reports in which the LVF has signalled its intention to stand down its activities. While we have no indication how such a stand-down would involve the disposal of LVF arms, we have emphasized that their decommissioning must take place under our supervision. We are led to understand that the LVF wishes to receive community-related assurances from the British government before any action on its arms proceeds.

4. The UVF has not resumed formal contact with us but we will continue in our attempts to re-open this channel in the coming months.

5. We are aware of several media reports since our September announcement suggesting that the IRA may still hold some arms. Last week we were informed by security sources in Northern Ireland that they had intelligence to the effect that some individuals and groups within the IRA have retained a range of arms including handguns. There was no indication that the quantities of arms involved were substantial. We were also told there is no suggestion these arms (purportedly kept for personal

protection and area defence) have been retained with the approval of the IRA leadership or as part of any wider strategy to return to violence.

6. If substantiated, this assessment would be at variance with the statement we made last September that we believed all IRA arms had been decommissioned commensurate with our remit. Accordingly, we undertook to examine whether, in light of the assessment, we were misinformed or had made a misjudgement in September.

7. Our statement then that all IRA arms had been decommissioned was qualified – as we said at the time – by the representative's assurance that while the IRA had gathered for decommissioning all the arms under its control, and while these arms had subsequently been put beyond use under our supervision, it could not guarantee that a small number might not have gone astray over the years as individual custodians died or the locations of some caches were lost.

8. Over the past week we have discussed the intelligence assessment with senior officers in the Garda Síochána. Intelligence available to the Garda at the time of decommissioning last year indicated that extensive efforts had been made by the IRA to locate and gather weapons, which, in turn, were put beyond use in the process overseen by us. Further, the Garda informed us that what they regard as reliable sources in relation to the IRA and its weaponry, have produced no intelligence suggesting any arms have been retained.

9. In our first meeting last week the IRA representative confirmed that the leadership remains committed to its statement of 28 July, in which it announced an end to the armed campaign and ordered all IRA units to dump their arms. He re-iterated that all the arms that were dumped following that statement were then collected and put beyond use in September under our supervision. He assured us that no IRA arms had been retained or placed in long term hides.

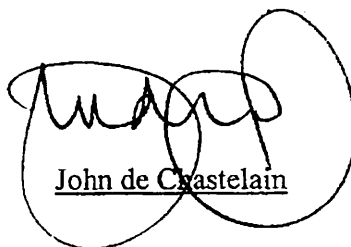
10. In a meeting later in the week the representative told us that following our earlier discussion, the IRA leadership questioned each of their commanders about the intelligence assessment. These have confirmed that all the arms under their control were decommissioned in September, as we stated.

11. We are re-assured by the fact that none of the various intelligence assessments suggest the IRA leadership is moving away from its July 28 commitments. We conclude that in the absence of evidence to the contrary our 26 September assessment regarding IRA arms remains correct.

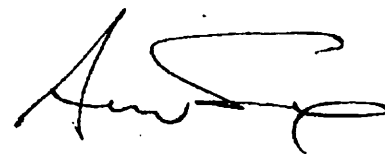
12. We have informed the Independent Monitoring Commission of the substance of this report so they are kept aware of developments in our area of responsibility.



Tauno Nieminen



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19 January 2006