



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

**Reference Code:** 2021/107/19

**Creator(s):** Department of Justice

**Accession Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting with Ambassador Donald Johnson,  
Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, 12 November 1997

1. Ambassador Johnson met Paul Hickey and the undersigned at the Commission's offices in Dublin Castle. The purpose of the meeting was to hand over the Commission's redraft of its initial report responding to the views of the two Governments given to the Commission on 10 November. A similar meeting was held simultaneously in Belfast with the British side.
2. In handing over the draft, Ambassador Johnson made the following points:
  - The Commission hoped and believed that they had removed language which had been of concern to the Governments and had substituted other language.
  - New paragraph 18 had been redrafted to take account of the views of the Governments.
  - The report presented an overarching general scheme which could be tailored by the Governments as necessary. The report was designed to be intelligible to the paramilitaries and the general public. The Commission saw fully elaborated schemes as being drawn up in private by the Governments in discussion with the Commission.
  - The Commission proposed a meeting with the two Governments in Belfast the following Monday, 17 November, at 1.30pm, at which the two Governments could give their views on the redraft and on the handling of the draft report. He appeared to suggest that the Commission was hoping, in the event of a positive response from the Governments, to make the draft report available to the parties at the meeting of the Talks Decommissioning Sub-Committee later that afternoon.
3. Following a brief examination of the draft, Mr Hickey made the following initial points on a preliminary and personal basis:
  - The draft incorporated a significant number of the Governments' suggestions, for which the Governments would be extremely grateful.
  - However, matters which Ministers would probably wish to consider further would be likely to include:
    - the manner in which the status of the report would be dealt with;
    - contact with representatives of the paramilitary groups at this stage;
    - language which could have an unfortunate effect, eg. "down payment on peace" (paragraph 14), "risks for peace" (paragraph 44).

- In paragraph 18, the Governments were open to the view of the Commission as to whether or not designated representatives should be involved in carrying out the options.
3. With regard to the handling of the report, Mr Hickey referred to what the two Ministers had said on 10 November on the context in which the report would appear and on the vital importance of ensuring that the situation within the republican paramilitaries in particular was not destabilised. It was important that the paramilitary-related parties be taken through the report in advance of its tabling. It would therefore be desirable that the tabling of the report would not take place until such an opportunity presented itself.



Brendan Callaghan