

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Drumcree Options - Pros and Cons

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Option 1 - Reroute

The original decision by Chief Constable Annseley in 1996 was to reroute the return leg of the Orange Parade away from the Garvaghy Road and to direct it back to its outward leg along the Dungannon and Corcrain Roads. The Order refused to obey this direction and the standoff ensued. A decision to reroute the parade in similar fashion would result in another standoff.

Pros

- Preserves the logic of the original decision which was overturned only under the pressure of accumulated numbers of Orangemen, in the face of widespread insurgency and the threat of loyalist paramilitary violence.

- It will be expected that this time the forces of law and order cannot be successfully challenged since the security forces have had a year in which to prepare for a re-run.

- It allows the new British Government to demonstrate that it will not wilt under the threat of force from whatever quarter.

- It respects the weight of the *political* considerations in terms of respect for the law, the concept of parity of esteem, the need for dialogue to be entrenched as the only option, and the rights of all nationalist communities to enjoy the protection of the law from intimidation and disruption.

- It would enhance confidence that the British Government is determined and resolute in all circumstances, a particularly significant signal given the widespread belief that the republican movement is invoking the decision of the British Government as a major factor in its willingness to consider re-establishing its cease-fire.

- Even if the security forces eventually conceded the parade, they would be doing so on the same terms as last year, i.e. having tested the resolve of the loyal orders to invoke disorder and lawlessness, they would have yielded only in the name of the greater good and extenuating circumstances.

Cons

- It avoids facing up the immediate and pressing *security* situation and the very real threat to life and property.

- It would likely trigger the eruption of innumerable Orange standoffs at flashpoints such as Derry, the Lower Ormeau, North Belfast, Bellaghy, Dunloy and countless other areas besieged at will by local lodges, requiring massive deployments by the security forces.

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- It might also provoke a violent loyalist response attempting a repetition of last year in which bring Northern Ireland was brought to a standstill and security forces stretched to breaking point.

- Loyalist paramilitaries. the LVF in particular, may begin a series of sectarian killings which it would threaten to continue or escalate until the Portadown lodge was allowed to proceed. They might follow through with their threat to commit atrocities in the South.

- Republican groups might respond in kind, including with tit for tat sectarian retaliation (by a group such as the INLA).

Option 2 - Forced Parade

This would involve securing the area with a tight cordon and the erection of screens along the length of the Garvaghy Road to facilitate the return leg of the Church parade. It would be a variant of the second decision last year but possibly managed in such a way as to avoid the 'side effects' last year (the baton charge at the residents) thus hoping to minimise the possibility of a serious nationalist reaction.

Pros

- It would defuse the potential on the loyal order/loyalist side for major disruption and disturbances as outlined above.

- Presumably the parades filed from 6 to 12 July would be called off thus relieving the security forces from the need for major deployments in contentious areas.

- If properly handled, it might avoid a repetition of the scenes last year on the Garvaghy Road which prompted the widespread nationalist disturbances.

- It would avoid the unionist 'middle' ground of the Orange Order and the UUP being associated overtly with lawlessness, disorder and the violent antics of loyalist paramilitaries and thugs.

Cons

- It would demonstrate that the forces of law and order were the handmaids to those able to mount the greater threat i.e. confirming for nationalists that this remains as ever the trump card for the unionist bloc.

- It would demonstrate that the British Government was not prepared even to make the pretence of standing for law and order and that it effectively wilted in the face of the mere prospect of disorder.

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- It would suggest well planned connivance between unionism and the authorities to ensure that unionism got its way without the opprobrium of actually inciting disorder and, in calling off other parades until the Twelfth, claim a spurious generosity and false moral superiority.

- It would spark an immediate nationalist reaction and challenges to the security forces, particularly in republican strongholds in Derry and Belfast. Contrary to the spurious claims of probity by unionists, nationalists protesting this decision would be left invidiously open to the charge of being the sole cause of disorder.

- It would signal to nationalists that the British Government regarded the very profound political implications as secondary to immediate security concerns i.e. that the problem of Northern Ireland would remain pre-eminently a security one.

- It would confirm in many nationalist minds that nothing had fundamentally changed since 1969 and confirm many in their conviction that unionism generally was irredentist, prepared to invoke force or the threat of force to get its way in the face of nationalist rights, and essentially incapable of offering accommodation to nationalists either on a stretch of road or on the broader stage of a political settlement.

- It would put the SDLP in a very vulnerable position with little choice but to compete for indignation with republicans, possibly to the point of resiling from the talks process either temporarily or permanently.

- It might effectively end republican consideration of the terms of a new cease-fire in the current circumstances.

Option 3 - Partial Reroute

This would involve the Orange march turning right at the T- junction of the Drumcree and Garvaghy Roads after the Church service and proceeding along the top end of the Garvaghy Road (or a variant through Ballyoran heights) to the roundabout at the Dungannon Road and finish the parade back along the outward leg.

Pros

- It would leave the Orange Order partially satisfied and partially aggrieved.

- It would leave the residents partially satisfied that the main section of the Garvaghy Road was avoided but aggrieved that nationalists around Ballyoran were sacrificed and that the fundamental issue of dialogue, mutual respect and agreed accommodation were avoided.

- It would minimise the security presence in the heart of the nationalist community.

- It would likely avoid providing a trigger for either side to mount widespread protests.

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Cons

- It would not probably not be accepted by the Orange Order; such a proposal was put by the RUC to the Orange Order last year and refused. When it was referred to at the proximity talks, it was firmly rejected by the Order.

- Since the Order is determined to the march the route of its choice, any attempt to implement this would likely result in a standoff in any event.

Option 4 - Reverse Direction

This involves the erection of 15' high screens along the Garvaghy Road and the passage of the Orange Lodge, possible of limited number, *up* the Garvaghy early in the morning to the Church service. The security presence is quickly withdrawn to allow the Garvaghy residents cross it to their Mass services and possibly hold their festival.

Pros

- It would be over quickly and the Garvaghy Road cleared.

- There would be no Orange standoff.

- Triumphalism may be muted by the arrival at the Church.

- The Orange Order would claim to have made a significant compromise by reversing its route.

Cons

- It would simply be a relatively unimaginative variant of the worst option.

- It would involve a massive security operation to clear the road for the erection of the screens, involving possible violence against the Garvaghy residents with the obvious images and consequences.

- Nationalist would condemn it as creating an "open air prison".

- It would present a concession to the threat of violence without any compensating gesture to nationalists and the need for dialogue.

- It would place the SDLP in a very difficult position.

- It would not establish any progress toward a resolution.

- It might spark serious nationalist rioting, for example in Derry.

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Option 5 - The McCartney Proposal

This involves a declaration by the authorities that the march will be allowed to proceed and a subsequent declaration by the Orange Order that having secured its right to march it will in the interests of peace not exercise that right.

Pros

- It would obviate the need for a massive security operation.
- It would represent a genuine gesture of goodwill by the Order.
- It would hopefully but not certainly defuse tensions created by other Orange marches which may or may not be cancelled.
- It would dissipate the threat of nationalist disturbances.

Cons

- The Portadown Lodge may not accept it.
- Loyalists in the area might not accept it.
- Residents would reject the notion that the march was being conceded by the authorities in principle.
- It would avoid the issue of creating some form of dialogue between the Lodge and the residents.

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Option 6 - A Possible Irish Proposal

Our response to this crisis may well deeply influence the nature of the working relationship between Dublin and London. An assertion of the over-riding political principles may be accepted in full by the British Prime Minister. He may then advert to the serious crisis at hand which may determine the viability of the talks process and with it the peace process. He may ask the Taoiseach what contribution he can make to resolving the issue other than setting out our stall. The following scenario may be worth considering as our proposal, untested thus far with either side but touching on the key issues for both sides:

- **A colour party from the Portadown Lodge, limited to members of good standing (bowler hatted members and no sash/jeans types) moves up the Garvaghy Road, accompanied by David Trimble. There is a light, soft-hatted, RUC presence.**

- **The main body of the Orange Parade moves to Drumcree Church by its traditional outward leg.**

- **The colour party encounters a delegation of residents accompanied by John Hume and local SDLP representative Bríd Rodgers. At this encounter, the Orange side makes a statement of its principles. In return, the residents side (Hume speaking, MacCionnaith present but silent) makes a statement of its principles and asks for a commitment to engage in a process of dialogue. The Orange registers this request. In the interests of peace, the resident delegation move aside and the Orange Order proceeds with colours folded and without music along the Garvaghy Road to the Church. It will be greeted by the main body inside the Church and declare that it has asserted its rights on the Garvaghy. The service concludes and the parade returns by its outward leg.**

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