

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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COLLECTIVE ACT OF RECONCILIATION

1. The basic idea, put privately to S.F. (McGuinness) around mid February is in two parts:

   (a) A mechanism to address the arms difficulty;
   (b) Proposals for other "demilitarisation"moves.

It was stressed that the ideas were being put forward without the knowledge of parties who would have to agree, if it was to be realised (e.g Army,R.U.C, Gardai, British Government). The process of consultation would take place if S.F/IRA. signalled interest

2 On Arms the plan, in essence, is that-

(1) Both Governments would announce that there would be a collective act of reconciliation,which would be a recognition, not only of the great benefit to all the people of these islands brought about by continuing ceasefires, but an acknowledgement, also, that progress towards "settling the peace" ought to be marked in a powerful and tangible way.

(2) The Governments would say that, for their part, the intention would be to construct a monument which would consist of reconstituted (smelted down) army (Irish and British) and police (Garda and RUC)weaponry. This weaponry would be set aside and smelted down now with the product being stored for later reconstruction.

(3) The Governments would invite anybody wishing to do so, voluntarily to "offer" weaponry(legally or illegally held)for inclusion amongst the army/police material. S.F./IRA could then signal their willingness to contribute, in recognition of the value of the collective act,in itself, and its importance as a major step in total "demilitarisation"of the Northern situation.

(4) IRA and other paramilitary groupings could chop-up/destroy the material themselves, if they wished, but would have to provide deChastelian with a means of confirming what equipment was involved.

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(5) On receipt of a signal of intent to offer IRA arms, Ministers designate would be appointed. DeChastelian would signal, at the appropriate time, that he was satisfied that paramilitary weaponry was being "put beyond use" (i.e.chopped up, or whatever, by the IRA) – full powers would then be transferred and all other changes made at about that time.

[There could be various other developments/variations of the foregoing. For example, both Governments could announce that the monument would be sited in a "Reconciliation" theme park, or museum in Belfast (Armagh?), towards the preparation of which both Governments would contribute financial resources.]

[It would probably be necessary, also, to have some sort of Artistic competition (for monument design etc.). All of this would take time, but the process would not be delayed in the meantime, - it would get underway, once the material had been chopped up (or smelted).]

3. On other demilitarisation moves, what is involved, essentially, is "normalisation" with some

important specifics built in. The basic ideas put to S.F. in mid February included-

(1) Gradual but speedy reduction of British Army presence to peacetime levels and duties, assuming that the situation on the ground allowed it

(2) Signal of intention to leave Crossmaglen GAA grounds possibly by the end of the year (today's announcement answers this) and to close the Castlereagh Centre(possibly by July)

(3) Acceleration of other "normalisation" elements (S.F. presented a list of requirements during talks last week.

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(4) Reduction of Garda/Army presence on the border, again assuming that the situation on the ground allowed it.

(5) Review of Offences Against the State legislation. (A number of other matters were discussed with S.F. when they came with last weeks list- these have been made known to the British Side). Release of the Balcome Street Four now seems possible - this would be quite important

4.The fundamental thoughts behind all of this are:

(a) Broadly based demilitarisation in celebration and commemoration of what has been achieved and what is about to be achieved (rather than more narrowly-based and almost. certainly unattainable decommissioning by one party which could see the process indefinitely stalled.)

(b)The idea of invitation (rather than compulsion) to participate in putting weaponry "beyond use" for what would be seen by everybody as a worthy cause, not connected in any way with concepts of defeat or victory.

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