

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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A Suggested Way Forward

Summary of Proposed Package

1. In view of the real danger of the peace process unravelling if the present stalemate continues, the two Governments need urgently to propose an overall, balanced package under which (a) the institutions would be re-established; (b) a detailed and time-tabled programme for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement would be set out, and (c), in the context of the latter, the IRA would make a commitment to unarmed politics and to putting its weapons beyond use.

2. The following sets out what would be required of the British Government, of Sinn Féin and of the UUP under this new approach.

What is Required of the British

3. The two Governments would establish a small, senior level working group to draw up a programme and timetable for the implementation of all the outstanding aspects of the Agreement, including in relation to the Patten Report, the Criminal Justice Review and security normalisation (demilitarisation). The objective on demilitarisation, for example, would be an immediate start to the process in the South Armagh area, with a view to achieving a satisfactory level of normalisation across Northern Ireland by the end of March 2001.

4. The British Government would also make a commitment that, as a key part of this overall package, they would restore the institutions on a given date. (They would also, of course, do their utmost to persuade David Trimble actively to

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sell the new deal to his party Council).

What is Required of the IRA

5. In the context of clear, time-tabled British commitments in relation to the full implementation of the Agreement, and following quickly on the restoration of the institutions, the IRA would offer a statement (either directly or through de Chastelain) along the following lines:

- they recognise that the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, together with the commitment of the two Governments to the sustained and irreversible operation of the institutions, will lead to a fundamentally changed situation; and

- within the context of the full implementation of the Agreement, the IRA will accept that the ending of British interference in Irish affairs should be pursued exclusively by political means and commit themselves, in accordance with their constitution, to put their arms and explosives beyond use [by 31 July 2001] in a complete, verifiable and acceptable manner so as to ensure maximum public confidence.

  [Such a statement would have to be in clear and unambiguous language. Moreover, if such an approach were to be broadly acceptable, certain details would need to be clarified, in particular what is meant by "putting arms beyond use". This might or might not meet the current definitions of decommissioning; if not, the Governments would be open, in consultation with de Chastelain, to changing these].

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What is Required of the Unionists

6. David Trimble will, inescapably, have to face a meeting of the UUC. It is hard to see that he would have much hope of success if the IRA statement was not public by then. The quid pro quo on the IRA side would be that the institutions would already have been restored. Unionists would therefore have to accept, for a short period, the restoration of the institutions in advance of the IRA statement.

7. More fundamentally, Unionists would have to accept that there would be (a) no IRA product in the short term and (b) that arms would be put beyond use only on the basis set out above. To have a reasonable hope of success, Trimble would have to be able to argue convincingly that the war was indeed over, that the IRA itself was in the course of transformation, that the threat to the Unionist community was at an end, and that peace was permanent. However, if these arguments were available to David Trimble, and to the two Governments, a very powerful and compelling case could be made that they constituted a much more reassuring and fundamental breakthrough than the narrow definition of decommissioning that we have been operating on to date.

13 March 2000

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Summarised Points from Discussion with Bill Jeffrey, Belfast, 14 March 2000

Window of Opportunity

1. The British Prime Minister is very keen to move matters on urgently after the Lisbon Summit. We both saw the four weeks between Monday 27 March and Good Friday 21 April as the vital period for achieving a breakthrough.

Elements of overall package broadly acceptable

2. Both sides at official level are broadly agreed on the elements of a package (along the lines in the Sequence of Steps text, in brief). A demilitarisation timetable will be the most difficult element of this for the British - Patten and the Criminal Justice Review being more straightforward, given that they involve implementing the recommendations of separate Commissions. At official level, the British are disposed to accepting our proposal to establish a small Committee (four people in total) to work urgently on the negotiation of a programme for the implementation of the Agreement.

3. In addition to the elements that we envisaged making up the package, the British have raised a number of issues, in particular the inclusion of an early confidence building measure by the IRA. While we said that this could not be fully ruled out, we emphasised that, in our view, it was highly unlikely that it would be available.

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4. The Secretary of State believes he could sell the envisaged approach to Trimble, as at least worth trying. He also told Trimble that the objective was to reach agreement on a package by Easter.

British draft of IRA statement

5. Bill Jeffrey gave me a copy of their initial effort at drafting a possible IRA statement, and this is attached.

Resolution of UUP Council, 12 February

6. Bill Jeffrey saw the Unionist Council resolution of 12 February as giving Trimble some room for manoeuvre. Specifically it would seem to prevent Trimble from participating in the Assembly and the Executive, but not from being re-appointed as First Minister, before reporting further to the Council. This resolution is also attached.

Dermot Gallagher
14 March, 2000

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DRAFT IRA STATEMENT

Oglaigh na hEireann believes that the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement will progressively and irreversibly remove the causes of conflict.

In the context of the Agreement's implementation, Oglaigh na hEireann will, by [ ], fully and completely put IRA arms beyond use, in such a way as can be independently verified and will avoid risk to the public and misappropriation by others.

In the meantime, the cessation will continue, and the guns will remain silent.

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RESOLUTION OF THE UU COUNCIL

12 Feb. 2000

At the meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council held on Saturday 12 February, the following resolution was passed.

"The Ulster Unionist Council

endorses the resolution of the Executive Committee of 7 February 2000 (see below) in relation to the Patten Report;

endorses the recommendation of the Leader to establish a broadly based working party to examine the political way ahead in the context of the Review.

In the event of any proposal by the Secretary of State to revoke the suspension of the Assembly and Executive, before any UUP participation the Leader will make a further report to this Council."

At the Executive Committee of the UUC held on 7 February the following resolution was passed.

"The Executive Committee of the Ulster Unionist Council, whilst welcoming constructive proposals to enhance the operational capability of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, deeply regrets the decision by Her Majesty's Government to accept the more controversial recommendations of the Patten Commission.

Ulster Unionists remain resolutely opposed to these recommendations, including proposals to abolish the proud name and insignia of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and to politicise policing through the establishment of District Policing Partnerships. These proposals fail to meet the requirement for widespread community support.

While continuing to oppose such changes during the passage of legislation to implement Patten's recommendations the Ulster Unionist Party will also raise these issues I the course of any **review** or further inter-party talks and will require them to be satisfactorily resolved."

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Sequence of Steps

(There is developing agreement on this at official level)

1. Two Governments agree on broad approach.

2. (a) Sinn Féin accept approach in principle; (b) David Trimble accepts approach in principle.

3. -- Governments negotiate programme for implementation of Good Friday Agreement;

   -- In parallel, IRA statement is worked on.

4. Package finalised, and both UUP and Sinn Féin briefed in detail, followed by bilateral meeting between UUP and Sinn Féin.

5. Governments brief SDLP and, in broader terms, other parties.

6. Governments state that they believe that the restoration of the institutions will create the basis for implementing all outstanding aspects of the Agreement, including the arms issue.

7. Assembly/Executive restored by Secretary of State. Ministers resume office automatically. Trimble indicates that he and his colleagues will participate in the institutions only after endorsement by his Council (i.e. Trimble/Mallon do not convene Executive until after UUC has met).

8. Immediately following restoration of institutions, IRA issue statement.

9. Programme for implementation of Agreement is then published.

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10. UUC meeting.

11. Trimble/Mallon convene Executive.

Additional elements raised by British only

(a) Early confidence-building gesture by IRA (some dumping of arms or standing down of units was mentioned).

(b) Failsafe mechanism in case commitments not met.

(c) What sanctions would parties be prepared to consider if there was a return to violence?

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Secret Draft 13.3.00

Draft IRA Statement

The leadership of Óglaigh na hÉireann reaffirm our commitment to the achievement of our objectives, the creation of a national democracy through a united, independent and free Ireland.

The IRA wants a permanent peace in Ireland. Our long established ceasefire is evidence of that. The IRA poses no threat to the peace process.

The present crisis has been caused by the reintroduction of the Unionist veto by the British Government. Efforts by the Republican movement to resolve the arms crisis in an acceptable manner have been undermined by the unilateral and illegal act of the British Government in suspending the institutions.

We have said in the past that the search for a durable peace will continue to present challenges to Irish republicans, unionists and the British and Irish Governments. We reiterate that reality. Despite the current crisis stemming from the British Government's unilateral and illegal decision, we are prepared to further our contribution to the search for progress. It was the IRA who took the first step to remove the guns from Irish politics by silencing our weapons, and thereby created the space for politicians to make politics work.

We have long acknowledged the Good Friday Agreement as a significant development. The full implementation of the Agreement, together with the sustained and irreversible operation of the institutions, would lead to a fundamentally changed situation. The re-establishment of the institutions must be the first step in this process.

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Within the context of the full implementation of the Agreement, Óglaigh na hÉireann accept that the ending of British Government interference in Ireland - the root cause of conflict in our country- should be pursued exclusively by political means. We will therefore commit ourselves to initiate, in accordance with our constitution and within an agreed timeframe, a comprehensive internal process leading to the putting of arms and explosives beyond use in a complete, verifiable and acceptable manner and so as to ensure maximum public confidence. We acknowledge the role that the IICD would play in that regard, and accordingly we are re-instating our representative to the Commission.

In these circumstances, we will have entered the era of permanent peace in Ireland.

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