

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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To: Mr. Paddy Teahon, Department of the Taoiseach

From: Dermot Gallagher

Date: 31 March, 2000

Pages: 1 + 8

4133

Ms Griffin.

10.4.2000

Draft of normalisation paper attached, together with shorter note incorporating the specific normalisation steps.

Taoiseach.

This paper was to be given by the Irish side to the British side in the Implementation Group Secretary-General Teahon may already have shown you this draft.

4.4.2000

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Secret **Draft 31.3.00**

Full Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Normalisation of Security Arrangements

Good Friday Agreement Background

1. In the Good Friday Agreement, the British Government committed itself to making "progress towards the objective of as early a return as possible to normal security arrangements, consistent with the level of threat". The British Government also committed itself to publishing an overall strategy dealing with the reduction of troop levels, the removal of security installations, the removal of emergency powers in Northern Ireland and "other measures appropriate to and compatible with a normal peaceful society".

Measures to date

2. Against that background, the British Authorities have already taken a number of normalisation measures, including the following:

   a. 26 military bases and installations have been closed or demolished;

   b. army patrols are down 70% compared to April 1998 levels;

   c. troop levels have been reduced by 3,500. The last roulement battalion in Belfast was recently withdrawn from the city;

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d. routine army patrolling has been ended in most of Northern Ireland, including Belfast.

Next Steps

3. The British Government believes that the statement issued by the IRA confirms that there has been a clear reduction in the level of threat and has substantially changed the context in which normalisation is being considered. Moreover, the reform of policing, as outlined in the Patten Commission, is transforming the environment in which the police operate. In this new context, the British Government believes that the police in Northern Ireland, like in Britain and in the South, will increasingly be able to operate on a day to day basis without military support and its infrastructure.

4. Against that background, the British Government is prepared to put in train a significant further rolling process of demilitarisation, with a view to achieving full normalisation of security arrangements by the end of 2001. The new package of measures will be undertaken on the basis set out below, and within a timeframe, for the most part, of three-monthly blocks.

Within three months (ie by July 2000)

- The dismantling of the remaining installation at Clogue (two parts);

- the dismantling of the look-out post in Crossmaglen police station, which protrudes on to the Square;

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- the dismantling of the unmanned hill-top units at Camlough, Sturgan, Drominpee and Forkhill;

- The commencement of the dismantling of the observation towers in Glassdrummond, Drumackavall and Crievekeeran;

- the removal of the outer walls and protective shields at Keady and Middletown police stations;

- an end to helicopter flights in the vicinity of Glassdrummond school during school hours;

- the withdrawal from land being used by the army in Crossmaglen and the making good of all damage to this property;

- the scaling back of all military patrolling in urban areas by one third;

- the ending of patrolling by the RIR; all RIR personnel to be withdrawn to barracks;

- a 50% reduction in the level of army helicopter activity in the South Armagh and East Tyrone areas;

- the dismantling of army observation posts on top of the Broadway, Divis and New Lodge flats.

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During period August - October 2000

- The two remaining roulement battalions to return to their home bases in Britain;

- four of the eight remaining Permanent Vehicle Checkpoints on the border to be dismantled;

- any remaining surveillance towers and masts in Belfast and Derry to be dismantled;

- the closure of Strand Road and Gough Barracks interrogation centres;

- new Regulations to be introduced to ensure a substantial reduction in the number of personally held firearms, as well as stricter controls on, and a reduction in the number of, those held by clubs.

During period November 2000 - January 2001

- Army numbers, including RIR, to be reduced to a maximum of 9,000, through further withdrawals of troops to home bases in Britain and a restructuring or disbandment of the RIR;

- all specialist police (including Divisional Mobile Support Units) and army units to be withdrawn from operational duty;

- the role of the armed forces to be confined to normal barrack duty

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throughout Northern Ireland;

- all remaining surveillance towers, masts and associated military structures throughout South Armagh to be mothballed and the troops required to support them to be withdrawn to barracks;

- the dismantling of urban security barriers/gates to be completed;

- army barracks in Crossmaglen and Forkhill to be dismantled; new police service stations to remain;

- the removal of all other barriers and checkpoints.

Post January 2001

- The four remaining Permanent Vehicle Checkpoints on the border to be dismantled by June 2,001;

- all remaining surveillance towers, masts and associated military structures throughout South Armagh to be demolished by end 2001.

Conclusion

6. It goes without saying that the British Government remains committed to ensuring the maximum level of security at all times for the people of Northern Ireland. The process of moving towards full normalisation of security arrangements must be undertaken in a careful, balanced way, taking account of many factors, including the threat of violence. As indicated, it is the assessment of the British Government

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that the level of threat has been substantially reduced. Moreover, the British Government is in no doubt that the progressive normalisation of security arrangements will in itself serve to consolidate the transition to a stable and permanent peace. That is why the British Government believes it is now possible and appropriate to undertake the series of normalisation measures outlined above.

7. In the Good Friday Agreement, the Secretary of State undertakes "to consult regularly on progress, and the response to any continuing paramilitary activity, with the Irish Government and the political parties, as appropriate". In that context, the two Governments will meet regularly to review progress in regard to the package of normalisation measures outlined in this paper and will report to the parties represented in the Assembly. The British Government reserves the right, in light of any negative material change in the security situation, to alter the package proposed on a commensurate basis. It is the strong belief of the British Government that such alteration will not be necessary and that movement towards full normalisation can now proceed irreversibly.

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Normalisation of Security Arrangements

- The dismantling of the remaining installation at Clogue (two parts);
- the dismantling of the look-out post in Crossmaglen police station, which protrudes on to the Square;
- the dismantling of the unmanned hill-top units at Camlough, Sturgan, Drominpee and Forkhill;
- The commencement of the dismantling of the observation towers in Glassdrummond, Drumackavall and Crievekeeran;
- the removal of the outer walls and protective shields at Keady and Middletown police stations;
- an end to helicopter flights in the vicinity of Glassdrummond school during school hours;
- the withdrawal from land being used by the army in Crossmaglen and the making good of all damage to this property;
- the scaling back of all military patrolling in urban areas by one third;
- the ending of patrolling by the RIR; all RIR personnel to be withdrawn to barracks;
- a 50% reduction in the level of army helicopter activity in the South Armagh and East Tyrone areas;
- the dismantling of army observation posts on top of the Broadway, Divis and New Lodge flats;
- The two remaining roulement battalions to return to their home bases in Britain;
- four of the eight remaining Permanent Vehicle Checkpoints on the border to be dismantled;

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- any remaining surveillance towers and masts in Belfast and Derry to be dismantled;

- the closure of Strand Road and Gough Barracks interrogation centres;

- new Regulations to be introduced to ensure a substantial reduction in the number of personally held firearms, as well as stricter controls on, and a reduction in the number of, those held by clubs;

- Army numbers, including RIR, to be reduced to a maximum of 9,000, through further withdrawals of troops to home bases in Britain and a restructuring or disbandment of the RIR;

- all specialist police (including Divisional Mobile Support Units) and army units to be withdrawn from operational duty;

- the role of the armed forces to be confined to normal barrack duty throughout Northern Ireland;

- all remaining surveillance towers, masts and associated military structures throughout South Armagh to be mothballed and the troops required to support them to be withdrawn to barracks;

- the dismantling of urban security barriers/gates to be completed;

- army barracks in Crossmaglen and Forkhill to be dismantled; new police service stations to remain;

- the removal of all other barriers and checkpoints;

- The four remaining Permanent Vehicle Checkpoints on the border to be dismantled by June 2,001;

- all remaining surveillance towers, masts and associated military structures throughout South Armagh to be demolished by end 2001.

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