

pre - Weston Park

2001  
Press Releases

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[to be] it, and agree a collective process for keeping the  
[through] a committee, a contact group, or some other  
[structure] that meets regularly.

**2. An upgrade**

The SDLP believe one way - collective implementation process [almost by default] is to upgrade the role of the de Chastelain Commission. It has precedent for doing so as it arose from the Talks Sub Committee. If the IICD were to have a direct interface with all of the parties [who could continue of course to meet privately with it] on a collective basis there would at least be a regular focus on the political process outside of the Assembly and concomitant institutions. I think we can support such a proposal, but we would prefer to have a regular focus on other issues, like criminal justice, policing, demilitarisation, human rights and equality.

**3. Who has a Plan B?**

More and more, it seems the republican movement were the only ones who have had a 'Plan B' from the outset. In the event of the GFA not delivering what they sold it as delivering - a genuine powersharing government etc. they would renegotiate with the British and Irish, with view to stepping closer to joint sovereignty. And it seems, far from being the 'only show in town' republican rhetoric currently suggests that, even if the GFA worked out, it was nothing more than a transitional arrangement, not out of conflict into democracy, but to a United Ireland. We should be persuaders for Plan A.

**4. Internal conflicts**

While UU are publicly in a mess, SF have some difficulties also. But they may need to sustain some internal injury, just as the UUs have done. Even though they made a massive gesture [and effectively broke the IRA green book code in so doing] last year in the form of the weapons inspection, this failed to be appreciated by unionists. If there is a further gesture, unionists need some clarity around the impact of this, and need to appreciate it. Also though, republicans have no appreciation of the thinking of unionism - how badly divided they are, and how badly they need some help on the issue of decommissioning.

**5. Decommissioning**

We have been round the houses many times on this issue. Our line has always been that the GFA does not require actual decommissioning, but asks participants to use their influence to bring it about. While it remains a voluntary process, I do think that the context is slightly different, in that the IRA themselves have raised an expectation of more, and greater physical acts by the weapons inspectorate gesture. And there is also the 'deal' between HMG and the IRA last May - in 'zipping' terms, was inspection a first step, and when HMG 'delivered' on OTRs, demilitarisation and policing there would be further steps - i.e. concreting over, putting beyond use permanently. Or were the governments satisfied solely with the inspection? If there are further steps envisaged, and our conversations with republicans indicate that there can be, what format might these take? The legislation currently talks of 'destruction' of weapons., and is highly technical, focusing on modalities. Can this be amended, either legislatively, or by joint-



**Analysis notes**  
**050701**

**1. A collective implementation process**

We have proposed this many times in the past 3 years. Most of the Executive parties barely paid lip-service to it, but the SDLP, now [and arguably from Hillsboro 2000] out in the cold are more receptive to the idea. Whatever the detail of a deal, if it is done, we stress that it is important that all participants bear witness to it, and agree a collective process for keeping the deal under review. This can be in the form of a committee, a contact group, or some other mechanism that formalises an inclusive structure that meets regularly.

**2. An upgrade in De Chastelain's role.**

The SDLP believe one way of securing a collective implementation process [almost by default] is to upgrade the role of the de Chastelain Commission. It has precedent for doing so as it arose from the Talks Sub Committee. If the IICD were to have a direct interface with all of the parties [who could continue of course to meet privately with it] on a collective basis there would at least be a regular focus on the political process outside of the Assembly and concomitant institutions. I think we can support such a proposal, but we would prefer to have a regular focus on other issues, like criminal justice, policing, demilitarisation, human rights and equality.

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government agreement so that it talks of 'putting weapons beyond use' [a political phrase, not a legislative clause] saving face for republicans and enabling Trimble/the UUP to accept them – for once and for all. Merit in exploring the issue of access to weapons- republicans have opened up dumps, a real symbolic gesture, but they still have access. Is zero access what is needed, or is there a limited access mechanism [in order to progressively and autonomously put beyond use] available?

Need also to reframe debate in terms of confidence building measures, so gesture not one of surrender? Principle of reciprocity important – protection of institutions and guarantee not to abuse for own political gain in return for gesture(s). Need to be clear that republican participation is not within Unionists gift – they have a right to it, based on their mandate. As IICD says in its initial report – 'the fundamental challenge for decommissioning is not technical, but psychological. The call for a "decommissioning of mindsets" has existed for some time and remains valid today.' [p5] We should remember it is two sets of mindsets we are talking about – republican and holding onto weapons, and David Trimble's, most recently articulated in the wake of the Cummings murder.

#### **6. A deal on policing – far away, or so close?**

HMG [and ROIG?] seem to think that a deal on policing is possible, but our conversation with the SDLP suggests that it is as far away as ever. The main issues are powers of police board, inquiries, use of plastic bullets, special branch, the oath for new and existing officers, when the full time reserve and part time reserve will be going, the FRU. Some of these are in Patten, some are not explicitly in Patten. NIWC has declared support for the Police Act, but much of it has to be commenced – new recruits will be joining the PSNI, but name not formally changed as yet. If name changed, oath will have to be changed etc. This was due for end September, but looks like end October at the moment. Possible potential in language around Code of Ethics?