

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Following is text of reply from the Provisional Army Council to the proposal handed by the Protestant Churchmen to the Sinn Fein representatives at the meeting at Feakle last week.

Begins:

We have considered at length the points you submitted to our colleagues. We wish to make the following observations:

Point One: It is sovereignty rather than political or territorial interests, which is the basic issue. Until Her Majesty's Government clearly states it has no claim to sovereignty to any part of Ireland, the statement is meaningless.

We accept that economic commitments must be honoured.

Point Two: A noble wish with which we concur but we believe it can only be realised in the full community of the people of Ireland.

Point Three: We feel you are referring to a truce. We see no difficulty in maintaining community peace if a bi-lateral truce is agreed to between the British Army and the Irish Republican Army. We would welcome discussions with Loyalist groups to secure their co-operation in maintaining peace.

Point Four: We accept that following a declaration of intent to withdraw, a limited British Army presence will be maintained while a negotiated and agreed settlement is sought and implemented.

Point Five:- It is meaningless to talk about democratic processes while, among other things, 2000 political prisoners are in jail.

/We submit

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We submit for your consideration and for forwarding to the British Government the following set of proposals.

To provide the basis for a lasting peace, the Republican Movement calls for the implementation of the following measures.

1. The establishment of a constituent assembly elected by the people of Ireland through universal adult suffrage and proportional representation. The assembly to draft a new all-Ireland constitution which would provide for a provincial parliament for Ulster (9 counties) with meaningful powers. The constitution to be submitted in national referendum within six months of the first meeting of the assembly and its adoption to require two-thirds support of the total valid poll.
2. A public commitment by the British Government to withdraw from Ireland within twelve months of the adoption of the new all-Ireland constitution. This commitment to entail an immediate end to all raids, arrests and harassment of the population and a withdrawal of troops to barracks.
3. Declaration of amnesty for all political prisoners, in Britain and Ireland, and all persons on the wanted list. The amnesty to be given effect by immediate releases and to be completed not later than 30 days prior to the date of the general election for the constituent assembly.
4. On the acceptance of these terms the Republican Movement would be prepared to order a total ceasefire. A number of matters would require further clarification and elaboration which would be discussed as soon as the ceasefire is established.

The Republican Movement for its part would welcome tripartite talks with Loyalist and British Army forces to secure their co-operation in the implementation of the ceasefire and the maintenance of community peace.

/Finally:

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Finally:

Having discussed the terms offered by the Church representatives, and found them to be unacceptable, we, the Republican Movement, will declare a temporary cessation of activities from midnight on the 22nd of December, 1974, until midnight on the 2nd of January, 1975, to enable the British Government to reply favourably to the counter proposals we have made to them. This cessation will be total and complete providing that,

1. British Army raids, harassment and arrests cease for the same period.
2. No show of provocation is carried out by the Crown Forces.
3. The re-introduction of the R U C into areas in which they are not acceptable is not attempted. (This includes any of the Crown Forces in or out of uniform).
4. Any breach of these terms will be considered as a refusal to accept the eleven day cessation, and appropriate action will be taken to protect our people.

We wish to have an indication of the British Government's attitude before the 28th of December 1974.

The Army Council Oglagh na Heireann.

December 1974.

Ends.

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