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Dear Martin,

It is 11pm on Sunday March 21<sup>st</sup> 1999 I am writing this comm. because I keep remembering something you said, Quote. 'We all have a responsibility to make this agreement work'

I, along with five million of my fellow Irish men and women desperately want the Good Friday Agreement to work. I recognise the burden of responsibility which you are carrying on behalf of the Republican Movement at this moment in the history of our country I am not going to give lectures or preach sermons. It is suffice to say that the destiny of our country is held in your hands and I hope and genuinely pray, that you can find the authority of leadership to walk us out of the arms impasse and get on with the job of running the country and securing a future for our children and our grandchildren.

The war is indeed over and I sincerely hope you can deliver the peace.

You have my full support,

Brendan



11/4/99

A Chara,

I'm sitting here tonight, Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April 1999 and my feelings must, I believe, represent a great many people in Ireland at this moment in our history. Coincidentally I met Grainne Mc Cafferty, Head of St. Cecilia's College at the weekend. Grainne has always been a most honest and firm supporter and she said to me that she longed for the day when the girls leaving her school could do so with the prospect of real jobs and an equal future for themselves and their families-to-be. She added that she was shattered at the possibility of a collapse or even an adjournment or the 'parking' of the peace process. She went on to ask me was there nothing which could be done?

Of course, I had no answers and the purpose of writing this note is in a sense to relieve the anxiety which is felt by myself and throughout the community. You are aware, of course of my views on the decommissioning issue, that at this moment in our history, **"Time is more important than weapons."** This, of course, is not the view of the Republican Movement and I, and a great many other people, respect and understand this position.

The analyses, as put forward by yourself and Mitchel McLaughlin recently, regarding The Good Friday Agreement of one year ago, are very compelling and I find no fault in them.

However, I am plagued by the thought given to me in the 60's by Eddie Tinney that there's something very wrong with this country when it has taken 600 years to gain its freedom.



As you have said recently, there can be no going back and I'm wondering if the time has come to demand the inclusion of the current leadership of Oglagh na h'Eireann and by implication, the leadership of the other groupings, into this peace process.

It is becoming more obvious to me that we have set up and developed a peace process which excludes a great number of the very people who did the fighting on both sides. Looking at it like this, the current process has a major design fault. The permanent exclusion of the people who have to die in the event of failure is a nonsense and I'm just wondering why I hadn't seen it like this as it was developing.

I know the pro-democracy argument against this thinking, but then, it was in the very name of democracy that Patrick Mayhew convinced John Major to introduce the decommissioning argument - with the sole purpose of excluding the Republican and loyalist people from sharing in government.

Could you please give some attention to these thoughts which I believe are written on behalf of a wider constituency than myself. As I have ended in the past - you have my full support in a very difficult task.

Mise le meas

Brendan



June 19, 1999

A Chara,

Scratch any Republican, North or South and you'll find a proud woman or man. They'll be proud of the advances which their leadership have made since the sacrifices of the Hunger Strike in 1981. They'll be proud of their ability to put the Republican analysis across on the media, both in the United States and in Great Britain. They'll be proud of the fighting and winning in the democratic election process, and most of all they'll be proud of the achievements in the Good Friday Agreement.

For the first time in two hundred years there is cohesive hope for a new beginning and a new future. All of these achievements had to be worked at, argued for, split over, carried forward, driven forward.

The vision which began to form out of the depths of the sacrifice of the Hunger Strikers will be seen over the next one hundred years in its proper context. This was to mark the beginning of the end of the struggle. A people moving forward with the shackles of history falling by the wayside.

The notion that the Republican Movement negotiated out of weakness or defeat will historically be proved totally incorrect. The army negotiated out of strength and gave the backing to the leadership at every twist and turn on the road to the Good Friday Agreement.

The Republican analysis of the Good Friday Agreement as I stated in my paper of 11 April 1999 is correct and I don't intend to revisit this particular point.

I want to dwell solely on the Republican need to retain arms almost to the point of a religious fervour, as if there is some intrinsic national heritage in the very metal, the very fabric of munitions.

My paper of 27 October 1998 detailing the history of rebellions against the British Crown starting with 1641 and highlighting 1798 and the constant supremacy of the British, even the very



shortage of gunpowder at Vinegar Hill, acknowledges the Republican psyche for retaining arms. I have no doubt that over the last two hundred years thousands of Republican Volunteers have dreamed about the day when they could match might with might on a battlefield against the Crown forces.

Indeed I would contend that it was this 1798 thinking which brought us to Easter 1916 and can be easily traced to the O'Bradaigh, O'Connell, Keenan, Cahill and McKee era of the 50's and 60's and to the Cathal Goulding era and the rebirth of the Republican Movement in 1971.

Through the Battle of the Bogside, the burning of Bombay Street and the attack on Clonard the Republican psyche on the need for weapons was being reinforced reborn almost as if by rote. Again the Crown forces heavily armed were reminding the "croppies" to lie down or be put down and Billy McKee and others stood up and the armed struggle was revived.

Historically it could be argued that at no time in the previous two hundred years would it have been wise or prudent to voluntarily change the policy on the retention of weapons. History is on the side of the "pike in the thatch".

The crucial question at this moment in our history is - Are we, through the Good Friday Agreement, at last on the final road- is the war really over?

If the answer to that question is YES, then the leadership, which has displayed so much initiative and pragmatism since 1986, must have the courage to walk away from the trap of the decommissioning issue.

Throughout the struggle the Crown has consistently entrapped the Republican Movement by the use of such devices as oaths of allegiance, Flags and Emblems, religious conversions, anthems, court recognition etc. to isolate and defeat the Republican Movement.

I would contend that this has been the major weakness in the Republican side of the struggle. This form of entrapment which was only beginning to be recognised and successfully dealt with in the late 80's and early 90's for what it was.



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Today the Mayhew/Major entrapment is being used to block the single most important event since 1798 - the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

In this global village of a world we are living in, instant media coverage of everything ensures that there are some legitimate arguments which you can never succeed in getting across.

There are some battles you simply cannot win because the public simply do not wish to hear and at this moment in our history the instruments of the — — —

To have permitted the solution and by implication the way forward, to fall into a debate in which Unionism has become a major player was a tactical mistake on the part of the leadership. The fact that the decommissioning of Republican weapons was artificially created by Mayhew and Major was enough of a warning signal to avoid the trap.

Waste no more time on it. Treat the metal in the weaponry for what it is worth and finish the argument by whatever pragmatic means the Army Council can devise.

The Republican Movement is allowing itself to be trapped as much by its own psyche on weaponry as it is by the Unionist veto.

Is mise,

June