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IRA ends its armed struggle

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29 July, 2005

THE ARTICLE

IRA ends its armed struggle

BNE: In a momentous decision, the IRA has formally announced it will lay down its arms and stop its armed struggle against Britain. The step effectively ends thirty-five years of bloody and brutal violence from one of Europe's best-organized paramilitary groups. For over three decades, the IRA bombed the British mainland, often in bars and shopping markets, and killed British soldiers in Northern Ireland. Tony Blair welcomed the bold initiative as a moment in history of "unprecedented magnitude". Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said it presented an unparalleled challenge and opportunity. He said: "There is an enormous responsibility on us to seize this moment and to make Irish freedom a reality."

A former IRA prisoner read the statement the world had been eagerly awaiting. It stated: "All IRA units have been ordered to dump arms. All volunteers have been instructed to assist the development of purely political and democratic programs through exclusively peaceful means. Volunteers must not engage in any other activities whatsoever." The statement declared that the armed struggle had been a legitimate one and that the goal was still of a united Ireland and "to end British rule". The declaration also stated that: "There is a compelling imperative on all sides to build a just and lasting peace." Mr. Adams greeted the declaration by saying: "This is the era of the nation builders."

The full IRA statement:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4724599.stm

WARM-UPS

1. HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about the momentous events that have helped shape your country's history. What was the most important decision taken? What recent decisions have been taken? What would have happened to your country had those decisions not been made? Who are the important decision makers (alive or dead) in your country's history?

2. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think terrorist groups around the world will follow the IRA's example. Students B think terror groups around the world will completely ignore the IRA's actions. Change partners often.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Decisions / the IRA / arms / violence / British soldiers / moments in history / challenges / Irish freedom / peace / nation building

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. STRUGGLE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "struggle". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. MY STRUGGLES: Do you have to struggle to do things every day? Is it a struggle to get out of bed in the morning? Is it a struggle to do your homework / the housework. In pairs / groups, brainstorm the things you struggle with every day. Talk about each of these struggles. Do you also struggle with the things brainstormed?

6. BIG DECISIONS: Have you made many big or momentous decisions in your life? Talk about the decisions you have made regarding the following:

- a. Career
- b. Family
- c. Shopping
- d. Relationships
- e. English
- f. Studying
- g. Hairstyle
- h. Health
- i. Home
- j. Other

Change partners and compare what you talked about.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. The IRA has ended its armed struggle against Britain. | T / F |
| b. The IRA waged a decade-long war against the U.K. | T / F |
| c. Tony Blair treated the IRA announcement with skepticism. | T / F |
| d. Irish freedom will become a reality next week. | T / F |
| e. All IRA volunteers have been ordered to dump their arms. | T / F |
| f. The IRA ordered its volunteers not to engage in violence. | T / F |
| g. The goal of the IRA is still to end British rule in Ireland. | T / F |
| h. Many IRA fighters will now become builders and carpenters. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| a. momentous | significance |
| b. arms | valid |
| c. brutal | anxiously |
| d. magnitude | fair |
| e. seize | weapons |
| f. eagerly | necessity |
| g. legitimate | embrace |
| h. imperative | pivotal |
| i. just | age |
| j. era | cruel |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. a momentous | awaiting |
| b. lay down | and opportunity |
| c. ends thirty years of bloody | and lasting peace |
| d. an unparalleled challenge | its arms |
| e. seize | the nation builders |
| f. eagerly | this moment |
| g. dump | decision |
| h. a compelling | arms |
| i. build a just | and brutal violence |
| j. This is the era of | imperative on all sides |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD? Strike through the incorrect word from the pairs in **bold**.

IRA ends its armed struggle

BNE: In a **momentous / momentary** decision, the IRA has formally announced it will lay down its **arms / legs** and stop its armed struggle against Britain. The step effectively ends thirty-five years of **bleeding / bloody** and brutal violence from one of Europe's best-organized paramilitary groups. For over three decades, the IRA bombed the British mainland, often in bars and shopping markets, and killed British soldiers in Northern Ireland. Tony Blair welcomed the bold **invitation / initiative** as a moment in history of "unprecedented magnitude". Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said it presented an **uncharacteristic / unparalleled** challenge and opportunity. He said: "There is an enormous responsibility on us to **seizure / seize** this moment and to make Irish freedom a reality."

A former IRA prisoner read the statement the world had been eagerly **arguing / awaiting**. It stated: "All IRA units have been ordered to **dump / dupe** arms. All volunteers have been instructed to assist the development of purely political and democratic programs through **exclusively / excluded** peaceful means. Volunteers must not engage in any other activities whatsoever." The statement declared that the armed struggle had been a **legitimate / legalized** one and that the goal was still of a united Ireland and "to end British rule". The declaration also stated that: "There is a **repelling / compelling** imperative on all sides to build a just and lasting peace." Mr. Adams greeted the declaration by saying: "This is the era of the nation **carpenters / builders**."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'lay' and 'down'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHICH WORD? In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "MOMENTOUS DECISIONS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about big decisions.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- formally
- bloody
- mainland
- bold
- unparalleled
- seize
- eagerly
- dump
- engage
- legitimate
- united
- era

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Do you keep up with news on Northern Ireland?
- d. What do you know about Northern Ireland?
- e. What do you know about the Northern Ireland peace process?
- f. What do you think of the IRA's decision?
- g. Do you think terrorist groups around the world might follow the IRA's example and lay down their arms?
- h. Are there any lessons to be learned from the Northern Ireland peace process?
- i. Do you think there should be a united Ireland?
- j. Would you fight for your country?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What big decisions have you made recently?
- d. Do you think there is ever any justification for armed struggle?
- e. Do you think Britain should end its involvement in other areas or countries around the world?
- f. Have there been similar armed struggles in your country?
- g. Do you think people who engage in armed struggles are terrorists?
- h. What is the most momentous decision your country has taken?
- i. Do you think all armed struggles around the world will end one day?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

DECISIONS: You have many momentous decisions to make about your future. Write down what you have to weigh up before you make the decisions in the table below. Ask your partner(s) for advice.

DECISION	THINGS TO WEIGH UP
Career	
Family	
Shopping	
Relationships	
English	
Studying	
Hairstyle	
Health	
Home	
Other	

Change partners and explain what you discussed with your previous partner(s). Try to get more advice to help your previous partner.

Return to your original partner and give them the new advice.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

IRA ends its armed struggle

BNE: In a _____ decision, the IRA has formally announced it will lay down its arms and stop its armed _____ against Britain. The step effectively ends thirty-five years of bloody and brutal violence from one of Europe's best-organized paramilitary groups. For over three decades, the IRA bombed the British _____, often in bars and shopping markets, and killed British soldiers in Northern Ireland. Tony Blair welcomed the bold _____ as a moment in history of "unprecedented _____". Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said it presented an unparalleled challenge and opportunity. He said: "There is an enormous responsibility on us to _____ this moment and to make Irish freedom a reality."

A former IRA prisoner read the statement the world had been _____ awaiting. It stated: "All IRA units have been ordered to _____ arms. All volunteers have been instructed to assist the development of purely political and democratic programs through _____ peaceful means. Volunteers must not engage in any other activities _____." The statement declared that the armed struggle had been a _____ one and that the goal was still of a united Ireland and "to end British rule". The declaration also stated that: "There is a compelling _____ on all sides to build a just and lasting peace." Mr. Adams greeted the declaration by saying: "This is the era of the nation builders."

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Northern Ireland and the IRA. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. ARMED STRUGGLE: Make a poster outlining another armed struggle around the world. Include information about the history, aims, participants, leaders and the future. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all describe similar struggles?

4. LETTER TO THE IRA: Write a letter to the head of the IRA. Tell him/her what you think of the recent announcement to end violence and lay down arms. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. F d. F e. T f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. momentous	significance
b. arms	valid
c. brutal	anxiously
d. magnitude	fair
e. seize	weapons
f. eagerly	necessity
g. legitimate	embrace
h. imperative	pivotal
i. just	age
j. era	cruel

PHRASE MATCH:

a. a momentous	awaiting
b. lay down	and opportunity
c. ends thirty years of bloody	and lasting peace
d. an unparalleled challenge	its arms
e. seize	the nation builders
f. eagerly	this moment
g. dump	decision
h. a compelling	arms
i. build a just	and brutal violence
j. This is the era of	imperative on all sides

WHICH WORD?

IRA ends its armed struggle

BNE: In a **momentous** decision, the IRA has formally announced it will lay down its **arms** and stop its armed struggle against Britain. The step effectively ends thirty-five years of **bloody** and brutal violence from one of Europe's best-organized paramilitary groups. For over three decades, the IRA bombed the British mainland, often in bars and shopping markets, and killed British soldiers in Northern Ireland. Tony Blair welcomed the bold **initiative** as a moment in history of "unprecedented magnitude". Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said it presented an **unparalleled** challenge and opportunity. He said: "There is an enormous responsibility on us to **seize** this moment and to make Irish freedom a reality."

A former IRA prisoner read the statement the world had been eagerly **awaiting**. It stated: "All IRA units have been ordered to **dump** arms. All volunteers have been instructed to assist the development of purely political and democratic programs through **exclusively** peaceful means. Volunteers must not engage in any other activities whatsoever." The statement declared that the armed struggle had been a **legitimate** one and that the goal was still of a united Ireland and "to end British rule". The declaration also stated that: "There is a **compelling** imperative on all sides to build a just and lasting peace." Mr. Adams greeted the declaration by saying: "This is the era of the nation **builders**."