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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 26, Number 11

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IRA Arms Move Rescues Peace Process

THE DUBLIN and London governments have acknowledged that their response to the IRA's decommissioning of weapons must be immediate and substantial to show that politics works.

Indeed, shortly before the IRA's announcing Oct. 22 that it would begin decommissioning, a Downing Street spokesman is reported as having said British army demilitarization would begin "as quickly as possible" if the IRA were to announce it had fully decommissioned its weapons.

After Sinn Fein announced the IRA would make a significant move on arms to save the peace process and before the IRA began destroying its weapons, Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs **Brian Cowen** called for the British army to start demilitarizing if the IRA did, indeed, destroy arms.

"Obviously, if we have an act of decommissioning there has to be a security reassessment of the situation," Cowen said. "The need to proceed with demilitarization is an important political imperative so people in those areas recognize that politics works," he said.

The IRA's move marks the first time that a republican group that has violently resisted the British presence in Ireland has disposed of weaponry in this way.

The move—long at the top of unionists' list of demands—seems certain to breathe new life into the troubled peace process.

The IRA said its motivation was "to save the peace process." Sinn Fein's **Martin McGuinness** said the IRA made a courageous decision. "It is unprecedented and it is

truly historic. It can be a turning point in the troubled history of Ireland."

He added: "I acknowledge the huge difficulty this presented to the IRA, and I applaud their courage in tackling this sensitive issue."

John Hume of the SDLP said he hoped the move would lead to a positive response from UUP leader **David Trimble** and his party in putting the institutions back in place. The UUP and Alliance Party have welcomed the move. The DUP, as usual, remains skeptical.

Loyalist paramilitaries have pledged not to hand over any guns in response to IRA disarmament. A senior UDA source claimed: "Decommissioning is not on the cards."

David Ervine, a leading member of the loyalist Progressive Unionist Party, hailed the IRA statement as "seriously significant." The East Belfast MLA, whose party is linked to the Ulster Volunteer Force, said: "Having demanded that we see the bona fides of the republican movement, it's incumbent upon us all to get on with the job of moving the process forward."

Ervine offered no hope that the loyalists he speaks for will make a similar gesture. He said, "I have no evidence at all that the UVF or Red Hand Commando are ready to reciprocate in any way." Asked why, he replied: "Because they are not ready."

Meanwhile, the Irish and British governments' Weston Park plan looks set to be implemented once decommissioning body chair **General John de Chastelain** confirms that IRA disarmament had begun. Under the Weston Park plan, the two governments have committed themselves to the "normalization" of security.

Over time, this would mean the "vacation, return or demolition of the great majority of army bases; the demolition of all surveillance towers; no further army presence in police stations; and the use of army helicopters for training purposes only."

It is expected as an initial response to IRA decommissioning, the British

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Our View: *IRA Arms Move* *Demands a Positive Response*

IT MIGHT seem that the IRA is marching to UUP leader David Trimble's tune, throwing out a gun or grenade every time the Orangeman turns the screws on the peace process. On the other hand, it might seem that the IRA, as it itself claims, has advanced the peace process to a point of no return for Trimble.

Either way, the IRA has advanced the peace process to a point of no return for anybody. There is no more room for unionist whining. There is no more room for the SDLP's better-than-thou attitude toward Sinn Fein colleagues. There is no more room for Dublin and London to allege links between Sinn Fein leaders and the IRA. The context has changed utterly, and a terrible prospect is born.

Terrible in the sense of big, unheard of, and untried, of course. The prospect of democracy and full cooperation. The prospect of politics without the lethal mud slinging that has been the hallmark of the unionist hegemony from the get go.

Leave it to DUP leader Ian Paisley to respond to the IRA's destroying weapons with an "I don't believe it." That's all anybody should do, really: leave it.

The IRA has called almost a century of bluffs. For almost a century, Britain, Dublin, and unionists have treated Northern nationalists like a mass of contemptible trash. A century of Sinn Fein politics--inclusive, from the ground up, ingenious, and unrelenting--has brought the North to this pass. Now the world is watching and expecting Britain and Dublin to keep their promises and deliver on democracy. The timing was right. There was no shortage of political strength. The British and Irish prime ministers have been fond of saying there's no going back from Mitchell. Will they act in good faith, and where will they take the Irish people?

Peace Process Update

October 10

ADDRESSING the Conservative Party conference in Blackpool, UUP leader **David Trimble** warns that his party is "bringing matters to a head" to force the IRA to hand over weapons. He says he will withdraw his ministers from government to force the issue. The move is part of a year-old UUP plan to work toward suspension of the Assembly in the event of the IRA's refusal to decommission in accordance with a UUP timetable and then to focus on laying blame on republicans for the suspension or collapse of the institutions. At Blackpool, Trimble also calls on the Labor Party to treat the North as "fully part of the UK" with wider powers for the Assembly. He also calls for electors in the North to be allowed to join the Labor Party if they wish, a move currently denied to them. Sinn Fein's **Gerry Adams** and **Martin McGuinness** meet with the Irish and British prime ministers following unionists' failed attempts to have the republican party expelled from the Executive.

October 11

Sinn Fein chairman **Mitchel McLaughlin** suggests the British government appoint ministers to replace UUP ministers to prevent the collapse of the power-sharing government.

October 12

British Secretary of State **John Reid** officially declares that the UDA and LVF cease-fires are over. Reid says: "They have systematically breached their cease-fire, and the patience of the people of Northern Ireland has run out." He says the UDA and LVF have shown "contempt" for the people of the North and for peace and democracy. "They seem determined to spurn the opportunity given to them by the people to make the transition from violence to democracy," Reid says. A UDA leader responds to the announcement by saying: "If UDA

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American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC

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From the North: How Will SDLP Meet Needs of Nationalists?

By Robert Heatley, *co-founder of the campaign for Democracy, a predominantly Protestant organization, Belfast, Northern Ireland*

THE SDLP's annual conference in Nov. failed to address the most compelling questions facing the party. Instead, it congratulated itself on past success. The party would have done well to consider the shifting political context in which it hopes to survive.

First, the SDLP must address the popular support it has lost to Sinn Fein. In the last Westminster and local elections, Sinn Fein overtook the SDLP marginally in terms of the nationalist vote. Newly-elected SDLP leaders—**Mark Durkan** as leader and **Brid Rodgers** as deputy leader—have much to do to recover lost ground.

It will boil down to political philosophy and the application of a correct strategy. Durkan and Rodgers, who replace **John Hume** and **Seamus Mallon**, respectively (both of the latter led the party almost since its inception in the 1970s), must address these questions: How did we achieve the Mitchell Agreement? What must we do to move the Agreement toward what most of our electorate want—the democratic goal of a united Ireland?

If the SDLP addresses these questions, it will recall that nationalism made significant political advances as soon as the SDLP got together with Sinn Fein in the Hume/Adams concordat of 1993—the outcome of five years of talks.

Next, the SDLP must consider the significance of nationalist unity in pushing Ireland toward democracy. Elements within the SDLP believe enough progress (to satisfy them) has been made and Sinn Fein has benefited more from what unionists dub the pan-nationalist front, so the correct thing for the party to do would be to pull the plug on cooperating with Sinn Fein.

There is a danger that, since the contrived election of **David Trimble** and Durkan as first and deputy first ministers, respectively, in the Assembly, the temptation for this kind of refocusing will increase. Cozying up to so-called liberal unionism is a pitfall.

Already the SDLP has taken a serious step in this direction by nominating representatives to the new Policing Board and thereby lending credibility to it. None of the SDLP spokespeople claims Britain has implemented the Patten reforms, so how can the SDLP support the board?

Britain promises new legislation, but nobody has seen it. Only now has the NIO produced the long-promised Criminal Justice Review report. In it, the abolition of the Diplock court system, a crucial reform, has been long-fingered. Indeed, the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) has expressed disappointment with the report, saying, "There is no independent oversight of the recommendations of the review; nor are there time-scales within which the recommendations will occur. Once again we see the process of promised change occurring at the discretion of the very institutions subject to the change."

Despite these objections, the SDLP decided to go into the new Policing Board because it didn't want to appear to be following Sinn Fein's lead.

It has justified the move by saying it will utilize the Board to secure the full implementation of Patten. How does the SDLP propose to achieve this, given that the Policing Board includes five outright unionists, eight people designated as independents whom the Northern secretary of state has appointed, only four SDLP members—but the party representing the most

nationalists has absented itself for a very good reason?

Sinn Fein will not sit on the board because, it argues, it would be nonsensical to argue on the board for Patten reforms when implementing those reforms is the sole responsibility of Britain. Given that the UUP and the DUP, have met at least twice to thrash out a plan for utilizing the board as a vehicle for arresting further police reform, the SDLP might give more credence to Sinn Fein's caution.

If the DUP's latest challenge to Northern Secretary **John Reid** over his failure to set a proximate date for an election fails, then the SDLP could look forward to 18 months to recover its fortunes. That assumes Trimble will surmount another Ulster Unionist Council challenge to his leadership, something for which rejectionists are scheming, and that he will not put another IRA decommissioning tripwire in place for Feb. This is unexplored territory, and the SDLP should move carefully.

Reid, in deference to both the SDLP and the UUP, might succeed in gaining time for them, but the SDLP will still have to sort itself out on two other key issues that increasingly worry its electorate. These are: Is it, or is it not, a post-nationalist party, meaning self-government in a reunited Ireland is now irrelevant? Following from that, does Hume's argument that Ireland's membership in a federalized European Union mean Ireland's taking a share in the sovereignty of Germany and France, and so on? In the event of the Assembly's settling down to quasi-normality in the new year, questions such as these will become important yardsticks by which the SDLP will be measured.

Newsbits

COUNTY Boards of the Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) in Derry and Armagh vote overwhelmingly to retain Rule 21, which bars members of the Crown forces from membership. Crossmaglen delegate **Eddie Hughes** says that asking the GAA to scrap Rule 21 is akin to asking the GAA to endorse the changes to the RUC and that the GAA shouldn't be put in that position. Pressure has been applied to the GAA to remove Rule 21 since the British government's policing legislation became law last month. GAA President **Sean McCague** has called a special conference on Nov. 17 to discuss the issue. With Derry and Armagh leading the way, it is expected that the other Ulster counties will follow suit. (*RM Dist.* 11/2/01)

Two police officers are injured in disturbances in the loyalist lower Shankill area of west Belfast. The security forces move into the area to deal with outbreaks of rioting throughout the evening. Police say a blast bomb, about a dozen petrol bombs, fireworks, and stones are thrown at them as they search a house in Shankill Terrace. A pipe bomb is found during the search, as well as three blank firing pistols, a quantity of ammunition, and a timer power unit. About £900 worth of cannabis and paramilitary regalia are seized. One man is arrested. Disturbances break out again later in the evening. Several hundred people are involved. (*IAIS* 10/12/01)

The North's security minister announces another peace line security wall will be built in north Belfast near a Catholic school. **Jane Kennedy** says she has rejected requests for a permanent security gate on the Ardoyne Road where loyalist residents have been protesting outside Holy Cross Girls' Primary School for six weeks. Kennedy says she is

responding to police requests for improved security and the "grievances and concerns expressed by both communities." She says, "There is no justification for the continuation of this dispute, and I am encouraging both communities, local community leaders, and elected representative in north Belfast to work together to resolve their differences" (*See Action Requests, Page 8*). (*IAIS* 10/10/01)

Thousands of people line Dublin's streets for the state funerals of Kevin Barry and nine other IRA volunteers whom British forces executed for their part in the War of Independence. Eighty years pass before Dublin recognizes the sacrifices of Kevin Barry, Thomas Whelan, Patrick Moran, Frank Flood, Patrick Doyle, Bernard Ryan, Thomas Bryan, Thomas Traynor, Edmond Foley, and Patrick Maher. The ceremony begins at noon with a prayer service at Mountjoy Prison. The cortege of 10 coffins and 10 mourning cars proceeds through Dublin to the General Post Office, site of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic. After Mass in the presence of parliamentarians and relatives of the men at the Pro-Cathedral, reburial takes place in Glasnevin Cemetery. The remains of the men were exhumed from the grounds of Mountjoy Prison, where they had been buried in unconsecrated ground. Sinn Fein welcomes the reburial of the Irish patriots, despite the widespread belief that the Dublin government had sought to exploit the funerals by arranging them on the same weekend as the annual conference of the governing Fianna Fail party. (*RM Dist.* 10/14/01)

A former British soldier in Derry on Bloody Sunday has changed the evidence he gave at the original inquiry concerning an incident in which he shot a man at close range with a rubber

bullet. The change is revealed as **Manus Morrison** gives evidence to the Saville Inquiry. Morrison was injured by a rubber bullet as he escorted an injured man to hospital. In the incident, British soldiers stopped a car carrying the wounded civilian at a British army roadblock, and soldiers fired a rubber bullet gun—and possibly a pistol—at the occupants. Morrison said two soldiers told them to pull the vehicle onto the side of the road. "The soldier with the baton gun told me to get out of the car. I opened the door and as I was getting out I was suddenly hit at close range with a rubber bullet to my left shoulder. At the time I was not standing straight; I was in a bent position getting out of the car and facing the soldier. He did not say anything to me, he just shot me," Morrison says, adding that he ran off in fear. He says he heard later that the other soldier fired a number of shots after him. The original statement by Soldier 135 of the Royal Anglians claimed three cars stopped at the barrier, and as he approached the first one, a man "threw the door open to block my way." He said he fired one baton round at this man as he turned to run away, and it hit him a glancing blow on his left shoulder. In the new account, the soldier says he now remembers only one car at the barrier. The soldier's account says he went to the front passenger door. There were two men in the front of the car. "I told the driver to turn the engine off...and that both men were to f...ing get out of the car," the soldier's statement says. "I put my baton gun on the side of the car, resting on the window frame and I immediately fired and blew them out of there. "The baton round hit them and knocked them both out of the driver's door and onto the ground. They immediately got up and ran away. They vanished down the road." (*RM Dist.* 10/10/01)

Who Tampered with Finucane Murder Weapon?

By Barry McCaffrey, *North Belfast News*, Oct. 10, 2001

NEITHER the RUC nor the British army will comment on that shows the weapon used to kill Belfast lawyer Pat Finucane in 1989 was mysteriously handed over to the British army in 1995. The gun should have remained in the custody of the Northern Ireland Forensic Laboratory as key evidence in the murder.

The barrel and the slide of the gun, both essential to the identification of the weapon, were replaced on the Browning 9mm pistol while it was in the hands of the British army.

A senior source within the Stevens Inquiry into the Finucane murder has described the destruction of vital forensic evidence in the case as being the result of either "utter incompetence" or "organized mischief."

The *North Belfast News* has uncovered evidence that the Browning 9mm pistol used to kill Finucane was recovered five months after the lawyer's murder, on July 1, 1989, at a house in Bellevue Street.

In the following six years, it was tested twice at the Northern Ireland Forensic Laboratory and confirmed as the murder weapon used to kill the father of three.

Documents the *News* has uncovered show that the murder weapon was inexplicably handed over to the British army from the Northern Ireland Forensic Laboratory at its Seapark site on Oct. 3, 1995, even though it was still part of an ongoing murder investigation.

British army documents show that the weapon subsequently had its barrel and slide changed even though a forensic report carried out in 1992 found that the weapon was in full working order.

Stevens Inquiry team chief **Hugh Orde** has confirmed that an investigation into the revelations was already under way and if necessary any findings would be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Neither the RUC nor the British army will reveal who gave the order for a weapon in an ongoing murder investigation to be taken from the forensic lab.

This is despite the existence of a British army investigation carried out by a major in the Counter Intelligence's G2 Department in Sept., a report of which states: "As a result of my enquiries, I have found no record of any special agreement being entered into by the army in relation to this particular weapon."

"Weapons released from the laboratory are accepted as no longer being required for investigation purposes and as

such they are submitted to workshops to be serviced and conditioned prior to being reintroduced into service in accordance with the same procedures that would cover any weapon returned from an external unit without a conditioning report."

The rifling grooves in the barrel of any weapon make marks on a bullet that are as individual as a finger print. The extractor on the slide of the weapon makes a similar identification marking on the spent shell.

News that potential forensic evidence in a murder case has been tampered with comes 18 months after the Ministry of Defense admitted destroying two rifles it had promised to keep for a new inquiry into the Bloody Sunday killings.

Commenting on the revelations about the Finucane murder weapon, British/Irish Human Rights Watch spokeswoman **Jane Winters** says: "We are very surprised to learn that this weapon was returned to the British army and put into use despite the fact that the RUC was claiming that there was an ongoing investigation into the murder of Pat Finucane. This is yet another puzzle that has emerged in this very disturbing case. This matter clearly needs to be investigated and only adds to the need for a public inquiry at the earliest possible opportunity."

The Browning pistol was part of a cache of weapons stolen from Palace Barracks in Aug. 1987 by a serving member of the UDR, **Steven Fletcher**. Fletcher was arrested in the Republic less than a month later in possession of another handgun also stolen from Palace Barracks.

The UDR soldier was sentenced in April 1988 to five years in jail for his part in the theft of the 12 weapons from the Palace Barracks armory. Fletcher's lawyers claimed at his trial that he had sold the guns to the members of the UDA at a drinking club in Mayo Street in west Belfast.

The weapon is believed to have been used in the attempted murder of a nationalist in Carlisle Square in Sept. 1988 before it was used to murder Finucane.

The weapon was not to resurface for another five months, when it was recovered at a house in Bellevue Street in the Shankill. A .38 Special revolver was recovered at the same time. Three men were charged with possession of the weapons and sentenced to between three and one years in Hydebank Detention Center. None of the charges related to the murder of Finucane.

IRA Disposes of Weapons

[Editor's Note: The following is the full text of the IRA's Oct. 23 statement.]

THE IRA IS COMMITTED to its republican objectives and to the establishment of a united Ireland based on justice, equality, and freedom.

In Aug. 1994, against a background of lengthy and intensive discussions involving the two governments and others, the leadership of the IRA called a complete cessation of military operations in order to create the dynamic for a peace process.

"Decommissioning" was no part of that. There was no ambiguity about this. Unfortunately, there are those within the British establishment and the leadership of unionism who are fundamentally opposed to change. At every opportunity they have used the issue of arms as an excuse to undermine and frustrate progress.

It is for this reason that decommissioning was introduced to the process by the British government. It has been used since to prevent the changes that a lasting peace requires.

In order to overcome this and to encourage the changes necessary for a lasting peace, the leadership of Oglai na hEireann (IRA) has taken a number of substantial initiatives.

These include our engagement with the IICD (Independent International Commission on Decommissioning) and the inspection of a number of arms dumps by the two international inspectors, **Cyril Ramaphosa** and **Martti Ahtisaari**.

No one should doubt the difficulties these initiatives cause for us, our volunteers, and our supporters.

The political process is now on the point of collapse. Such a collapse would certainly, and eventually, put the overall peace process in jeopardy.

There is a responsibility upon everyone seriously committed to a just peace to do our best to avoid this.

Therefore, in order to save the peace process, we have implemented the scheme agreed with the IICD in Aug.

Our motivation is clear. This unprecedented move is to save the peace process and to persuade others of our genuine intentions.

Adams: Republicans Must Stay United

EXCERPTS from Sinn Fein leader **Gerry Adams's** Oct. 22 speech setting the stage for the IRA's announcement on decommissioning follow.

Our aim is to save the [Mitchell] Agreement. Sinn Fein's commitment to the process is absolute. The initiatives we have taken, the initiatives we have encouraged others to take, including the IRA, have contributed decisively to the peace process. Our approach has been to create a context in which politics works, in which institutions are stable, inclusive, and sustained, and in which the process toward equality and justice is underpinned.

Sinn Fein is not naive. Our strategy is determined by objective realities. It is guided among other things by the fact that the democratic rights and entitlements of nationalists and republicans cannot be conditional. These rights are universal rights. They effect all citizens.

We are now in a good but challenging period for Irish republicanism. We have made significant advances this year. There is a continued need for all of us to stay connected and to keep fulfilling our roles. Our focus is on building the peace. Everyone has a role in that daunting task. We have to ensure that we have done our utmost to

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government will demolish Magherafelt Army base, the super-sangar at Newtownhamilton RUC Station, and two observation towers in Camlough, in south Armagh.

The Weston Park package also saw the two governments commit themselves to:

-a review of the controversial Parades

Commission, which decides on the routes of contentious marches;

-the appointment of a judge to investigate allegations of state collusion on either side of the border in the killings of solicitors Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson, LVF leader Billy Wright in the Maze Prison, Lord Justice and Lady Gibson, RUC Chief Superintendent Harry Breen and Superintendent Bob Buchanan, and

Portadown Catholic Robert Hamill;

-an amnesty for paramilitaries at large not covered by the Mitchell Agreement's early prisoner release scheme;

-the formation of an implementation group to oversee the handling of the Agreement; and

-the operation by all parties in good faith of all the political institutions.

UUP Holds Secret Meetings with Loyalists

THE UUP'S **David Burnside** and **Fred Cobain**, Assembly member for North Belfast, have held a secret meeting with leaders of the loyalist paramilitary UDA and UVF.

The UDA has taken the lead in loyalist bombings, shootings, and intimidation of nationalists. The loyalist terror campaign finally resulted in the British government's admitting in Oct. that the UDA's cease-fire is over.

Many in the North see the UUP as hypocritical for seeking expulsion of Sinn Fein ministers from government, ostensibly on the basis of Sinn Fein's contacts with the IRA

In the face of calls for his resignation from some members of his party, Burnside insisted that the meeting was "perfectly legitimate," had taken place with the knowledge of party leader **David Trimble**, and there had been

ongoing contact between the UUP and the UDA since the summer.

Burnside said that he had told the UDA that he "didn't believe that violence helped their cause." Significantly, he did not say that he had told them he thought violence against Catholics was wrong, merely that it was unhelpful.

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leaders are arrested, then its 5,000 members will take to the streets and the place will go berserk. There won't be a bus left in Belfast; they'll be burnt. [British Prime Minister] **Tony Blair** will not just have **Osama bin Laden** to deal with—Northern Ireland will be out of control."

October 16

Reid announces that the name of the Royal Ulster Constabulary will be changed to the Police Service of Northern Ireland on Nov. 4 as the 19-member Policing Board receives its powers.

October 17

Trimble indicates he will again seek the office of first minister if the IRA were to begin disarming. He also indicates he will lift his illegal ban on Sinn Fein ministers' participating in meetings of cross-border institutions. The UUP's **David Burnside** and **Fred Cobain** have held a secret meeting with leaders of the loyalist paramilitary UDA and UVF. *(See story, this page.)*

October 18

Trimble and Adams meet in a bid to save Northern Ireland's political institutions. UUP ministers resign from the Executive.

October 19

The UUP's **Jeffrey Donaldson** says the IRA must give up all of its weapons before his party will engage in power-sharing arrangements. Republicans have been anxious to secure guarantees from unionists that unionists will match any move on decommissioning with a commitment to fully operate the Assembly, executive, and cross-border bodies without threatening to resign or to impose any bans on Sinn Fein ministers. Republicans also want the British government to guarantee the stability of the institutions and to scale down significantly British army bases and operations in Northern Ireland, further amend police legislation, reform the criminal justice system, and achieve equality in accordance with the terms of the Mitchell

Agreement.

October 22

Adams and McGuinness announce that they have proposed to the IRA that it could make a ground-breaking move on the weapons issue to save the peace process from collapse.

October 23

The IRA announces it has disposed of some of its arms. Loyalist paramilitaries pledge not to hand over any guns in response to IRA disarmament.

October 24

Trimble reappoints the UUP's three ministers to the Executive following the IRA's move on weapons. Britain announces it will begin demilitarizing the North.

October 25

DUP ministers return to the Executive. Former President **Bill Clinton** praises the IRA's decision to start decommissioning, saying he is "very proud" and that Europe should be grateful for the move. President **George Bush** and Secretary of State **Colin Powell** welcome the IRA's move on weapons. Powell says the move shows that the peace process can work.

October 27

The UUP Executive endorses Trimble's bid to be reelected as the North's first minister. The UUP Executive also welcomes the IRA's move on arms.

November 2

Trimble fails to win reelection as first minister because he does not get a majority of support within the unionist Assembly bloc. Two hard-liners in his party vote with anti-Mitchell Agreement unionists. Trimble does gain a majority vote in the assembly overall, but no provision can be passed in the Assembly unless it gains the support of a majority of both the unionist and nationalist blocs. The Alliance Party agrees to try to secure Trimble's reelection to the top Assembly post by redesignating some of its five Assembly members as unionists.

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*Please take the actions recommended below.
Mention that you are a PEC member.*

Contact: **Isabel McGrann**, The Right to Education Group, tele. 02890-719161; fax 02890-719115; email reg@ardoyne.com

Message: I support the Right to Education Group's four principals of the right to education—that is, every child has the right to education in the school of his/her choice; every parent or guardian has the right to accompany his/her child to and from school; every person has the right to live free from sectarian harassment; and the loyalist blockade of Holy Cross Primary School should cease immediately. Unionist politicians must use their good offices to stop loyalist harassment of schoolgirls and their families.

Contact: **President George Bush**, The White House, Washington, DC 20500; tele. 202-456-1111; fax 202-456-2461; email president@whitehouse.gov

Message: I urge you to make good on your presidential campaign promises concerning Northern Ireland. Appoint a special envoy to the North, pressure Britain to fully implement the Patten Commission's recommendations on policing reform, and see that the terms of the Mitchell Agreement are fully implemented. Now that the IRA has begun destroying its weapons, it is incumbent on all political leaders to ensure that democracy succeeds in Ireland.

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He also claimed that he and Cobain had been attempting to establish the conditions under which the UDA and UVF would decommission. His claim has seriously undermined the UUP's insistence that decommissioning is an absolute requirement and not subject to any negotiation.

Burnside said in Oct. (during a speech in which he also advocated that the UUP and DUP merge) the party should not accept anything that could be interpreted as "symbolic" by the IRA and that it should in any case force the collapse of the elected Assembly to create a more "realistic" model based on that operated in Wales.

Trimble himself has always carefully avoided talking about loyalist paramilitaries when referring to the subject of decommissioning and has often appeared extremely reluctant to condemn loyalist violence against nationalists. His apparent sanctioning of members of his party's engaging with the UDA and UVF raises many questions about his claim that the UUP "does not deal" with paramilitaries. The logic of Trimble's position was already in difficulty in Oct., when his party relied on the votes of the UVF-aligned PUP members of the Assembly in its attempt to have Sinn Fein excluded from government.

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prevent the situation from slipping back into conflict.

I would appeal to republicans to stay united. I would particularly appeal to IRA volunteers and their families and to the IRA support base to stay together in comradeship. This is the time for commitment to the republican cause. It is a time for clear heads and brave hearts.

A positive IRA move must be responded to with generosity and vision.