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## American Irish Newsletter - July 2001

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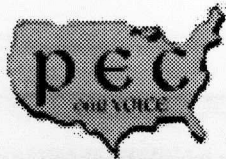
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# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 26, Number 7

July 2001

## From the North: *General Election Shows Sinn Fein's Growing Strength*

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

AT PRESS TIME, Sinn Fein has become the largest nationalist party in the North following the voting in Northern Ireland for the region's 18 seats in the London parliament. Sinn Fein has overtaken the SDLP in both seats and share of the nationalist vote. The election results should be a wake-up call to political leaders in Ireland and Britain that they must implement the Mitchell Agreement.

Sinn Fein gains two seats—one in West Tyrone and one Fermanagh-South Tyrone—to bring its total to four. The SDLP retains its three seats.

Even **Seamus Mallon**, the deputy first minister, has seen Sinn Fein's **Connor Murphy** cut Mallon's lead to 3,576 votes, making Mallon's seat vulnerable. SF has advanced its position in every constituency across the board, while in important constituencies such as west Belfast the SDLP has registered significant losses.

In West Belfast, Sinn Fein leader **Gerry Adams** has increased his lead over the SDLP to 19,392 votes, while Sinn Fein's **Martin McGuinness** similarly has seen his margin over his

SDLP rival rise to 17,126 votes.

The SDLP's parachuting of **Brid Rodgers** into West Tyrone in an attempt to foil Sinn Fein's **Pat Doherty**—demonstrably the strongest nationalist candidate in the battle against the unionists—has failed miserably. Doherty has registered 19,814 votes against her 13,942.

Sinn Fein's **Michelle Gildernew** unexpectedly has taken by a very narrow margin the Fermanagh-South Tyrone seat from a strongly-fancied, but miffed, Ulster Unionist who turned out to be a very bad loser. In the end, therefore, nationalists took 7 of the 18 parliamentary seats.

Had the SDLP agreed to the pre-election pact that Sinn Fein had proposed, the SDLP's share could have been greater, but that party—despite all the evidence—considered itself to be in the driving seat and decided to put its advancement first. By doing so, it endangered even some of the seats that anti-unionists eventually won.

Sinn Fein's claim to be the largest

nationalist party in the North is further substantiated, if marginally, by its having overtaken the SDLP in its share of actual votes cast. These are: Sinn Fein, 158,729; SDLP, 149,088.

The outcome of this election means that the territory of the six counties west of Lough Neagh is now green on the map. Since South Down (an SDLP seat) is a pale shade of green, Orange is confined to a northeastern redoubt with a coastal strip attachment in North Down. Even a large block of Belfast is green with a potential to become even larger when the results of the district council elections come to hand. Sinn Fein could become the largest single party on Belfast City Council, meaning that unionists and the SDLP could no longer obstruct it from getting a turn at holding the lord mayor's office.

The important point is: What do these developments mean in terms of the political future of the North and, especially, the Mitchell Agreement?

Before we can answer this, we must look at what has happened on the unionist side of the equation. Clearly, the British and the UUP are paying a price for the game they have been playing since the Mitchell Agreement came into being three years ago.

As we have pointed out repeatedly in this *Newsletter*, the British and the UUP have pandered to the rejectionists of unionism to try to coerce the IRA into surrendering arms

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## ***Our View: Election Results Favor Action on the Mitchell Agreement***

*GENERAL and local election results throughout Northern Ireland in June reveal growing support for both Sinn Fein and the DUP. On the one hand, Sinn Fein supports the full and prompt implementation of the Mitchell Agreement. On the other, the DUP supports the "renegotiation" (read scrapping) of the Agreement, as the DUP's Gregory Campbell said after he won the East Derry seat in the Westminster elections.*

*Interesting times again lay ahead for the North. Perhaps the trademark anger DUP officials bring to Northern Ireland politics will somehow inject the peace process with some energy. A little chaos here and there might bring change in a way the smoke-and-mirrors plodding and plotting of the UUP and its "we'll do it our way, on our terms" approach to peace did not. It's all we can hope for. The DUP have never brought much intelligence to the table. Increased support for the DUP, we hope, is more a protest against the listlessness of the UUP than support for the sectarianism and paramilitarism of Paisley's party.*

*Sinn Fein's success at every level clearly demonstrates that Irish people in the North crave a democratic government. That party's local success especially shows that citizens recognize the party can deliver on its promises. The North is a small place where people vote for the people they know; local elections are less about abstractions than pragmatism. Good politicians build on this fact to achieve abstract goals such as peace and democracy.*

*Election results show that Northern people are not content to do nothing somewhere near the middle of the road anymore. This is exciting. The frightening aspect of these results is that Sinn Fein and the DUP stand at opposite ends of the world on the Mitchell Agreement (See Action Request, Page 8).*

## ***Peace Process Update***

**May 6**

THE HEAD of Scotland Yard's antiterrorist branch warns of a general election bombing campaign after it links to dissident republicans another blast in London. Sinn Fein president **Gerry Adams** warns that plans to enlarge the European Union under the Treaty of Nice threaten North-South cooperation under the Mitchell Agreement. He says, "Provisions for a two-class EU create a further potential division between the two sides of the border. Will we find one side of the border in the first division of states and the other side of the border in the second division? The Treaty of Nice creates that very real prospect."

**May 10**

Adams says he is mystified by UUP leader **David Trimble's** threat to resign as first minister July 1 if Trimble does not approve of progress on IRA disarmament. Adams says, "It makes the elections irrelevant. It makes the role of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning irrelevant."

**May 11**

East Derry MP **William Ross**, who opposed Trimble in the 1998 referendum on the Mitchell Agreement, welcomes the UUP leader's threat to resign as speaker of the Stormont Assembly. Ross predicts the threat will signify a "pivotal change of policy" on decommissioning.

**May 12**

Republican sources say that Trimble's July 1 deadline for IRA decommissioning is "not possible" and that the UUP leader's threatened resignation from his Stormont post has damaged the efforts of Adams and party colleague **Martin McGuinness** to resolve the arms issue. Republicans point out that the British government failed to honor a deal made with the IRA, including the full implementation of the Patten report on policing and demilitarization. In the context of these issues, the IRA had pledged to put its arms beyond

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## Early Results of North's Local Elections Show Gains for Sinn Fein

(DUBLIN – June 11) Early election results for the North's 582 local councilors in 26 councils suggest Sinn Fein will build on its historic Westminster election wins. At press time, with fewer than half of the first preference votes counted, Sinn Fein is within a single percentage point of becoming the most popular party in the North.

As of June 11, the tally of seats for the parties is: UUP, 85; DUP, 79; SDLP, 64; Sinn Fein, 59; Alliance, 15; Others, 15.

**Ian Paisley's** DUP has made gains at the expense of the UUP and smaller unionist parties, but there is no sign of the meltdown in the UUP vote that some political pundits had predicted. The local government results are crucial to the future of First Minister **David Trimble**, whose party suffered dramatically in the Westminster elections.

At the moment, the Ulster Unionist Party has 179 seats to the DUP's 96, but the UUP could lose up to 40 councilors in this election. Former UUP MP **William Ross** branded party leader Trimble as "a liability" as the counts got under way.

Ross blames Trimble and his backing for the Mitchell Agreement for the loss of his seat in the Westminster poll. UUP hard-liners have indicated that if the local polls prove equally punishing, then there is likely to be a fierce challenge to Trimble's leadership at the party's annual general meeting later this month.

Sinn Fein is polling well west of the Bann on the back of its capture of the Westminster seats of West Tyrone and Fermanagh-South Tyrone. In Belfast, Sinn Fein already has six of the 14 council seats it needs to become the largest party there, and the party is looking at a possible sweep in west Belfast. With a slight decrease in the overall unionist vote, there is growing optimism that Belfast council could be liberated from unionist control and that **Alex Maskey** could become the first Sinn Fein mayor of Belfast City Council.

Many Sinn Fein candidates have topped the poll in some surprise areas, such as Downpatrick. Many seats will be decided on a handful of transfers, and the last will not be declared until mid-June. There are some unusual patterns on vote transfers, with the SDLP's getting some transfers from hard-line DUP voters opposed to any support for pro-Agreement unionists; and Sinn Fein's getting some votes and transfers from young Protestants disenchanted with the choices the unionist parties have offered.

*(continued from Page 1)*

on British/UUP terms while using this ploy to avoid implementing the key reforms specified in the Agreement. They knew that this behavior would serve only to strengthen the No-camp and build up problems. Now these have come home to roost, but, again, they are not insuperable.

In the election **Ian Paisley's** DUP has made significant gains at the expense of **David Trimble's** UUP. The DUP has five seats to the UUP's six. Even worse for the UUP, only two of this party's newly-elected members can be said to be semi-enthusiastically pro-Agreement – Trimble's and that of Lady **Sylvia Hermon** in North Down. Hermon is the wife of a former chief constable of the RUC. Another two are anti-Agreement, though they talk around their opposition, and the other two are outright outspoken against the Agreement. Even Trimble scraped home with a DUP-man breathing down his neck. Everywhere else, UUP candidates stand in jeopardy. Trimble ought to have sold the Agreement more vigorously.

A meeting of the governing body of the UUP is now scheduled for June 23, at which meeting Trimble might be overthrown. The provincially-minded worthies both inside and outside of the UUP are now jubilant with the thought that this electoral outcome will now enable them to force reelected British Prime Minister **Tony Blair** to renegotiate

the Agreement and reshape it to the desires of Orange unionism.

However, even if Trimble falls, that need not be the case. For one thing, the UUP is still marginally ahead of the DUP as the largest unionist party in terms of votes—227,174 to 181,999, respectively—although the DUP has a momentum similar to that of Sinn Fein.

Nevertheless, none of this is likely to matter much. What the rejectionists of every ilk ignore is that Britain has returned its prime minister to government with his massive majority in Westminster scarcely dented. Both he and Taoiseach **Bertie Ahern** have to take into account the fact that the Mitchell Agreement is the property of the Irish people as a whole.

Also, they must be alarmed at the shift in strength inside the republican camp in the North. This fact is likely to weigh more heavily with them than the 18 Westminster election victors. That parliament has about 650 members, and only 18 percent of its members come from Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. **It is, in effect, an English parliament, and it is to that constituency that Blair answers.**

Everyone in the North of Ireland awaits the district council election results to see if the trends outlined in this article will continue.



## Newsbits

SINN Fein president **Gerry Adams** rejects accusations that senior Sinn Fein members are IRA leaders. He says DUP Stormont Assembly member **Peter Robinson's** identifying those he said sit on the IRA's seven-strong Army Council is part of an internal battle within unionism. Robinson tells the Assembly he has seen a document listing the present make-up of the council and that it included Adams and Northern Ireland Education Minister **Martin McGuinness**. Robinson says: "It indicates that the chief of staff is **Thomas Murphy**, the assistant chief is **Brian Keenan**. The other members are Martin McGuinness, Gerard Adams, **Martin Ferris**, **Patrick Doherty**, and **Brian Gillen**." He names nine others he claims are HQ staff, adding: "These are the people who are in charge of the Provisional IRA today." Adams says: "[DUP leader] **Ian Paisley** made exactly the same claims a month or so ago. I said to Ian Paisley that I have to accept that you have a mandate. I have to respect that. I have to work with you. It is important that there are frank exchanges, but I obviously reject the assertion that Peter Robinson made about IRA membership." (IAIS 5/9/01)

Details of a hit list containing the details of up to 80 nationalists becomes known only after a loyalist appears in a Belfast court last weekend. Sinn Fein assembly member for mid-Ulster **Francie Molloy** is angry that the RUC refuses to divulge any information on the list to those targeted other than to say their details are in loyalist hands. (RM Dist. 5/9/01)

UUP leader **David Trimble** resists demands to sack outgoing MP **Cecil Walker** over claims Walker backs a united Ireland. Walker's DUP

opponent for the North Belfast seat, **Nigel Dodds**, has urged Trimble to act immediately following an interview in the *North Belfast News*, but the UUP leader has retaliated by accusing Dodds of dishonesty and behaving in a "despicable fashion." Trimble says: "Coming into North Belfast as a vote splitter is bad enough, but then to pursue this personal attack on Cecil Walker is thoroughly disgusting." The storm flares after a reporter asks Walker if a united Ireland in 30 years would bring benefits. In his reply, the veteran UUP MP says: "In 30 years I'll be dead, so its hard to see then, but maybe it wouldn't be a bad thing then." He adds that it isn't right at the present time. Dodds accuses his rival of being completely out of touch with the unionist community....In a staunch defense of his party colleague, Trimble insists he was referring to the "benefits rather than the concept" (of a united Ireland) and calls for Dodds to step down. (IAIS 5/18/01)

The English Court of Appeals grants a complete victory to journalist **Sean McPhilemy** in his libel case against the conservative London newspaper, *The Sunday Times*, regarding its coverage of the Channel 4 television documentary, *The Committee*, which forms the basis of the best-selling book by the same name. The paper has alleged that McPhilemy, in his account of collusion between prominent unionist figures, loyalist death-squads, and the RUC, perpetrated a hoax upon the public. The English jury rules that *The Sunday Times* has failed to prove its allegations. In May 1993, the paper published an article by its Irish correspondent, **Liam Clarke**, that accused McPhilemy of promising to pay his main source money "to recite a prepared script." The suggestion

was that the man was bribed to tell a false story. McPhilemy has spent the best part of eight years defending his reputation against the paper's false allegations....The Court rules for McPhilemy without hearing oral arguments on his behalf, concluding that *The Sunday Times* has no basis for bringing its appeal....The Appeals Court decision represents yet another vindication for McPhilemy, who previously won an apology and substantial damages from the *Sunday Express*. (RM Dist. 5/28/01)

The family of Pat Finucane renews its call for an independent, public inquiry into his murder after an RUC officer admits he helped a loyalist to set up Catholic targets at the time of the Belfast civil rights attorney Pat Finucane's death. The man, who is referred to as **Geoff**, was an intelligence officer in the army's Force Research Unit (FRU), in which he handled the double agent **Brian Nelson**, a military spy who was also a senior member of the UDA, the loyalist death squad responsible for Finucane's death in 1989....The confession is revealed in a new book, *Brits: The War Against the IRA*, by **Peter Taylor**, a BBC journalist. Geoff tells Taylor: "He [Nelson] strayed outside the law at our behest. We instructed him to carry out his job of targeting these people. My hierarchy loosely saw that if he carried out an action and then reported it, it would negate his guilt. He was doing his job under our direction, and once he'd informed us of what he had done, it would not be illegal." Geoff says he was genuinely surprised when Nelson was jailed on related matters, as he believed the man would be protected. "I'm ashamed at the way he's been treated by the establishment....He was hung out to dry." (RM Dist. 5/21/01)

## Congress Honors Hunger Strikers

REPRESENTATIVES **Michael Capuano** and **Richard Neal** introduced a resolution in May commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 1981 hunger strike.

May 5, 2001, marked the 20th anniversary of the death of Bobby Sands. He was the first of 10 prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh prison to see a hunger strike through to the end, bringing world attention to the plight of Irish nationalists in the North.

"It is important to acknowledge and reflect upon the sacrifices made by these ten individuals. Their peaceful demonstration brought world attention to the struggle in Northern Ireland and made a significant political impact on the region's peace process," said Capuano.

The resolution states, in part: "Whereas the hunger strikers brought world attention to the political landscape of the Northern Ireland struggle; and

"Whereas in April 1981 before dying, the leader of the hunger strikers, Bobby Sands, was elected to the United Kingdom Parliament: Now, therefore, be it

"Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes

## House Opposes Trimble's Sanctions

THE HOUSE Committee on International Relations voted May 2 to accept Congressman **Joe Crowley's** amendment calling on UUP leader **David Trimble** to reinstate Sinn Fein ministers to the North-South Ministerial Council. The measure amends HR 1646, legislation that authorizes the State Department for fiscal years 2002 and 2003.

"I am pleased that the International Relations Committee voted to include this amendment. Sinn Fein has been unlawfully excluded from the Ministerial Council since Feb. 2000, when unionists rejected an IRA decommissioning proposal. This year, the Belfast High Court ruled that Sinn Fein's exclusion was unlawful and runs counter to the objectives of the [Mitchell] Agreement," said Crowley.

"This body was created to bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to discuss matters of mutual interest on a cross-border, all-island basis. When Trimble unilaterally excluded Sinn Fein ministers **Martin McGuinness** and **Bairbre de Brun** from these meetings, he put the very integrity of the North-South body in jeopardy. Trimble's action is no different from the Republican leadership of the House's prohibiting Democrats from attending committee meetings," said Crowley, by way of example.

the historical significance of the sacrifices made by the Irish Republican hunger strikers of 1981 and the subsequent political impact their actions had on the Northern Ireland peace process."

"I cosponsored this important resolution in the House of Representatives because the sacrifice of the Irish republican hunger strikers who died in 1981 should never be forgotten. Their courage and conviction dramatically changed the politics of the conflict in Ireland, and started the process that led to the historic [Mitchell] Agreement," said Neal.

"The early efforts of 10 young men who changed the tone of Ireland's campaign toward peace should not be forgotten," added Capuano.

These representatives also signed on as original cosponsors: **Michael Doyle, Robert Borski, Peter King, Jim McGovern, Michael McNulty, Frank Pallone, Joe Crowley, and Ben Gilman.** **Rod Blagojevich** of Illinois has also signed on.

Please contact Capuano to thank him for introducing this resolution (See *Action Request*, Page 8).

### Letter to the Editor

## Churchill Is Not Our Hero

NEEDLESS to say, I was quite displeased to read [in the May issue of the *Newsletter*] of the US Navy's decision to name the latest of its AEGIS guided missile destroyers after the late (and unlamented) Winston Spencer Churchill. I believe this is a direct slap in the face of all (including myself) who served in World War II. The high honor of having a naval vessel given one's name has traditionally been reserved for heroes of the US Navy, not for foreigners—not even for those of heroic stature.

Churchill's only known loyalty was to his own utterly corrupt ruling class. In the course of his political career, he committed innumerable crimes and was responsible for the deaths of huge numbers of innocent people.

Rest assured, I shall write to Secretary of Defense **Donald Rumsfeld** and to my senator and to my representative, though, frankly, I do not believe it will do a bit of good as far as changing the decision [about the name of the destroyer]. Even so, we always have a moral responsibility to protest against evil as best we can.

**Joseph Wall, Pennsylvania**



## **Book Review**

# ***Paratroopers Let the Truth Out of Their Sights on Bloody Sunday***

By Patrick Holt, *Academic Dean, St. Basil College – Ukrainian Catholic Seminary, Stamford, Connecticut*

*THOSE are Real Bullets, Bloody Sunday, Derry 1972* joins the company of reputable texts on Bloody Sunday that damn the British military for deliberate murder that Jan. day in Derry 29 years ago.

Authors **Peter Pringle** and **Philip Jacobson** were investigative reporters for *The Sunday Times* who covered Derry in the days following Bloody Sunday. The second inquiry into Bloody Sunday, the Saville Inquiry that began in 1998, awakened the event for the authors, whom the Inquiry asked to turn over their interview notes from that time.

The book provides solid, objective accounts of Bloody Sunday, including minute details of the killing of each of the 13 victims and the trauma that overcame Derry's Catholics.

Pringle and Jacobson are at their best describing the actions of the paratroopers responsible for the killings. Their coverage of and sources for the conduct of these players, feared even by other British military units on the scene, is the best reason to read this book.

This information suggests that the Paras and their commanders had planned on making not only arrests but also "kills" during the peaceful march.

The contradictory statements of soldiers in Derry that day are enough to damn them for intentional assassinations, the torture of innocent civilians, and the falsifying of evidence against peaceful protesters.

The accounts are no less numbing for the passage of time or the volume of affronts committed that day. The preparations of Lieutenant Colonel **Wilford** and his Paras are chilling. Wilford had prepared for far more

IRA activity than military intelligence had expected, and he planted snipers and highly armed commandos all around the marchers.

At the end of the march, the radio records for the Paras and other army and RUC elements on scene report no machine gun, nail, or gas bomb attacks on the police or army. Later, many of the soldiers' revised their accounts to suggest that they were under barrages of fire all afternoon. Many eyewitnesses on the other side of that barricade confirm that no shots or projectiles came from behind the barrier.

Nevertheless, civilians were at the receiving end of heavy fire and other forms of attack. One member of the parachute regiment estimated that his squad fired more than 100 live rounds into a barricade 100 yards away in 30 seconds. The fire from the Paras reached both extremes, from well-aimed fire from snipers to indiscriminate machine gun fire.

Most of the dead were shot in the back, some while crawling to safety. Medics, priests and bystanders attempting to help the injured were also fired upon and beaten. The harassment continued for the rest of the day, including lengthy searches of ambulances trying to take the injured to the hospital.

The military and the British government spent days issuing reports that at least four of the dead were wanted men and that Jack Duddy had actually died the previous day and that his body had been planted in the street. It took weeks for the military to withdraw these reports.

The book ends without any real discussion of the Widgery inquiry that cleared the troops of charges of

excessive force and firing at civilians. The last entry in this book notes that two years after the killings, the British government settled with the families of the dead—in most cases for 250 pounds per family.

Twenty-nine years later, it is abundantly clear that English policy in the North has changed little. Attempts to damn the victims continue in the case of Patrick Finucane and others.

The lack of freedom of the press and of open proceedings has guaranteed that the current Saville Inquiry will also be tainted. Already, the Saville Inquiry has harassed Pringle and Jacobson to identify anonymous privileged sources while the British High Court has decided that the soldiers involved will remain anonymous throughout the inquiry.

This is a fair-minded book that provides great detail, and a few new insights, into the events of Jan. 1972. Although it is not a must-read, for those interested in closely following the events and the Saville Inquiry, it provides some new, damning, information about English military policy in Derry in the early days of the Troubles.

For books that are more informative about Bloody Sunday, we recommend Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh's *Ulster's White Negroes*, which contains a chapter with solid description of the day's events; Eamonn McCann's *Bloody Sunday in Derry: What Really Happened* for better interviews with eyewitnesses; and Don Mullan's *Bloody Sunday: Massacre in Northern Ireland* for the fullest interviews with eyewitnesses and key documents relating to government conduct on that day.

## Arms Inspectors: IRA Plays by the Rules

INTERNATIONAL observers report that IRA weapons remain secure.

General **John de Chastelain**, head of the International Decommissioning Commission, also says that since his last reported meeting with the IRA's representative in March, he has continued to engage with him.

Weapons inspectors **Cyril Ramaphosa** and **Martti Ahtisaari** say in a May 30 report to de Chastelain that they carried out their third inspection of the dumps and that they are confident the arms could not be used without detection.

They say: "The IRA has once again fully honored [its] commitments and complied with the terms of our engagement, and we are convinced that this cooperation will continue."

Emphasizing the achievement of democratic politics in the North, Sinn Féin's **Gerry Kelly** points out that IRA talks with de Chastelain's disarmament commission are unprecedented in republican history.

"Five years ago, that would be unimaginable," said Kelly after the decommissioning commission published its report. Kelly said the ongoing talks between the two sides marked a massive development.

**The full text of the commission's report follows.**

"This is a report to the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) following another

inspection of IRA arms dumps.

"Our mandate as weapons inspectors is to inspect the contents of a number of IRA arms dumps and to report that we have done so, and to reinspect these dumps regularly to ensure that the weapons have remained secure.

"Since our second inspection on Oct. 26, 2000, we had planned to carry out an inspection during the first quarter of this year. We have, however, been unable to carry out this inspection earlier due to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease and the consequent restrictions on movement.

"With the easing of these restrictions of movement, we reinspected the arms dumps. As we stated in our previous reports, these dumps held a substantial amount of military material, including explosives and related equipment, as well as weapons and other material [sic]. We confirm that the arms dumps have not been tampered with and remain secure.

"We observed that the weapons and explosives continued to be safely and adequately stored. We remain confident that they cannot be used without our detection.

"The IRA has once again fully honored [its] commitments and complied with the terms of our engagement, and we are convinced that this cooperation will continue.

"We will continue to reinspect the arms dumps in order to ensure that the weapons remain secure."

## IRA: Solving Arms Problem Is Essential to Peace Process

(DUBLIN – May 31) "The leadership of Oglagh na hEireann [the IRA] confirms yesterday's comments by **Cyril Ramaphosa** and **Martti Ahtisaari** in respect of a third inspection of IRA arms dumps.

"On May 6, 2000, we outlined a clear and reasonable context in which the IRA leadership would initiate a process to put arms beyond use in a complete and verifiable manner. We also gave a number of undertakings premised on the speedy and full implementation of the [Mitchell] Agreement and other commitments, both public and private, made by the British government. The IRA leadership agreed to put in place a confidence-building measure to confirm that our weapons remain secure.

"Subsequently, the two agreed international inspectors carried out an inspection of a number of our arms dumps and submitted a report to the IICD [the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning].

"The British government failed to honor the commitments it entered into at that time. Nevertheless, last Oct. we announced that a re-inspection of these dumps had taken place. We wish to confirm that another inspection has taken place in recent days.

"On March 8, the IRA leadership announced it would enter into further discussions with the IICD. We did so despite the British government's continuing failure to honor the commitments it entered into at Hillsborough in May 2000. We did so on the basis of the position we outlined in our May 6 statement as an earnest of our commitment to resolve the issue of arms.

"Since March 8, our representative has been involved in an ongoing series of discussions with the IICD, including four meetings. This continuing dialogue and the inspections represent clear and irrefutable evidence of the IRA's commitment to a just, equitable peace settlement. The IRA leadership has honored every commitment we have made and we will continue to do so; others should do likewise. We reiterate our view that the resolution of the issue of arms is a necessary step in a genuine peace process."



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## **Action Requests**

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

Contact: Rep. **Michael E. Capuano**, 1232 Longworth House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515, tele. 202-225-5111; fax 202-225-9322; email [Danny.Ryan@mail.house.gov](mailto:Danny.Ryan@mail.house.gov)

**Message:** Thank you for introducing HR 132 honoring the sacrifices of the 1981 Hunger Strikers in Long Kesh prison in Northern Ireland. Your efforts and the efforts of the resolution's cosponsors helps keep the issue of the Northern Ireland conflict in the public eye. With your help and the help of your colleagues, the US might help see the conflict to a peaceful, permanent, democratic resolution. Please continue your support for peace in Ireland.

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

**Message:** General and local election results in Northern Ireland show the majority of the people there continue to support the Mitchell Agreement. Results also show that more and more people are frustrated with the political climate there, as voters moved away from the so-called moderate parties--the SDLP and the UUP--in favor of Sinn Fein and the DUP. Such a situation suggests that while Sinn Fein will work for democratic reform, more and more unionists will work against it. Your intervention to see that the terms of the Mitchell Agreement are implemented is therefore vital.

(continued from Page 2)

use. Loyalists attack some SDLP members' homes.

**May 15**

The DUP predicts it will "clear out" UUP members from Westminster as disgruntled unionists vent their frustration with the UUP in the upcoming election.

**May 17**

Democratic Unionist Party deputy leader **Peter Robinson** calls on Trimble to resign immediately as the Irish Republic brings its legislation into line with Britain on the amnesty period for paramilitary decommissioning. Justice Minister **John O'Donoghue** extends the amnesty rules in the 1997 Decommissioning Act until Feb. 2002, instead of next week.

**May 18**

Loyalists in Coleraine, County Derry, carry out pipe-bomb attacks on Catholic homes.

**May 23**

Trimble describes the North-South ministerial meeting between Sinn Fein ministers and two Irish government ministers as a "political stunt." The meeting, which defies UUP sanctions, involves Sinn Fein's **Martin McGuinness** and **Bairbre de Brún**. They discuss cross-border cooperation in health and education with their Southern counterparts at Dublin Castle. Robinson claims the meeting proves Trimble has no control over Sinn Fein in the Executive.

**May 26**

SDLP leader **John Hume** says his party is close to a deal that would make the North's new policing service agreeable to nationalists, but Sinn Fein says it is confident that unresolved problems surrounding policing reform will be resolved after the general election.

**May 30**

The decommissioning body says its inspection of IRA arms dumps confirms that the arms remain secure.