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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 25, Number 6

June 2000

Time to Close Brian Pearson's Deportation Case

CONGRESSMAN **Ben Gilman** is urging concerned Americans to contact **President Clinton** and request that he permanently dismiss deportation proceedings against former Irish political prisoner **Brian Pearson**.

Although Clinton directed Attorney General **Janet Reno** in Aug. 1997 to suspend deportation proceedings against Pearson, the Administration has been reluctant to permanently dismiss the case against him.

In a May 2 letter to PEC membership coordinator **Loretta Fitzgibbons**, Gilman says the President has not acted on the Pearson case because the Administration is still reeling from the negative media coverage, political pressure, and public criticism that followed Clinton's pardoning last Sept. of 16 members of the Armadas de Liberacion Nacional [FALN] for lethal bombings and attacks against Americans from 1974 to 1983.

"[T]he support and assistance of the entire Irish-American community is necessary to convince the Administration that suspending the case against Brian Pearson will not result in a similar public reaction as the FALN situation," Gilman said in the letter, adding that "a constant and overwhelming flow of correspondence

from the Irish-American community to the President would be helpful at this point and will hopefully make this issue a priority for the Administration."

Pearson came to the US in 1988 after spending 12 years as a political prisoner in the North. After his wife applied for an adjustment of status for Brian as the spouse of an American-born citizen in 1992, the Immigration and Naturalization Service arrested Pearson and threatened to deport him.

Federal Immigration Judge **Phillip Williams** deemed in March 1997 that Pearson was not a terrorist and posed no threat to the security of the US and granted Pearson political asylum and permanent residency status.

In Sept. 1997, Secretary of State **Madeline Albright** directed Reno to suspend all deportation proceedings against Pearson and five other Irishmen. Gilman then asked Reno to close the case, but the INS appealed.

Last Aug., Gilman again asked Clinton to close the case and allow Pearson to travel to the North to visit his ailing 85-year-old mother. As of St. Patrick's Day this year, Clinton has said he would consider the case but has taken no action. (*See Action Request, Page 8*)

Candidates Reply to Irish Question

IN LETTERS to PEC member **Ed Walsh**, contenders for the Oval Office—Vice-president **Al Gore** and Texas governor **George W. Bush**—have addressed questions about their positions on the peace process.

Though neither candidate has been a vocal supporter of Irish peace, Gore, at least, says he "will remain personally committed to the process of peace and reconciliation" in Ireland.

Bush, on the other hand, says he supports First Amendment rights and "will support policies, both domestic and international," that promote a respect for all people. His statement does not actually say he supports the Irish peace process or would involve himself in it as president.

Though Gore has a more informed perception of the Northern conflict, his letter suggests that the British and Irish governments have made great strides toward implementing political reforms in the North. Such progress has not been made. Indeed, his letter claims that power-sharing is in effect, even though he writes while the Executive and Assembly are suspended.

The PEC encourages members to continue contacting the candidates and local party offices to pressure Gore and Bush to clearly, publicly, and firmly state their support for the peace process and the US's continued role in it. (*See Action Request, Page 8*)

Following are excerpts from Gore's and Bush's letters to Walsh.

Al Gore (March 16)

"As you know, I have supported the

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Our View: IRA has Strength to Disarm

WHEN the IRA agreed last month to work with the decommissioning body to put its arms beyond use, it must have done so from a position of strength. Clearly, the organization could not have made the gesture a year ago without seriously endangering the cease-fire. Dissidents would have splintered into marginal little armed groups and mayhem would have ensued. As it was, the calling of a cease-fire itself caused factionalism and no small amount of murder and mayhem. Then it is perhaps safe to conclude that the time was right last month for the IRA and that the republicans will continue to be disciplined, united, and true to their word in support of the peace process.

After all, if the conditions weren't right, such a move would pull the rug right out from under the republican movement, and especially Sinn Fein. Party leader Gerry Adams would no longer be seen to be head of a disciplined, politically-astute movement. His political influence would be shattered. Such a situation would set nationalist politics back to square one. All effort since the 1981 Hunger Strikes to create a political movement would have to be recreated.

We should conclude, then, that the IRA is not defeated and that the republican movement has moved from strength to strength during the peace process. Arms are immaterial in a democratic society. Once the British government delivers democracy, the issue of guns is immaterial. Conversely, that's why failed democracies always give way to armed insurrection. Republicans don't need anyone to tell them that.

In one fell swoop, the IRA has disarmed the unionists, too. They have no more cards to play. The IRA has called unionism's last bluff. How will they stall peace now?

Peace Process Update

April 12

SDLP leader John Hume wants to see the British and Irish governments and the pro-Agreement parties work together to break the impasse and reestablish the Executive and Assembly. Northern Secretary Peter Mandelson says changes to the RUC will go ahead, despite UUP objections. A reduction in officer numbers will likely be delayed, however.

April 16

Reports suggest that the British and Irish governments will propose a plan to bypass the Ulster Unionist's "no guns, no government policy" that will hinge on the IRA's making a statement declaring its campaign is over for good. In return, the British government would give an undertaking not to suspend the institutions once they are reestablished. The plan could also involve some watering down of the Patten proposals for police reform and Britain's commitments to scale down its military presence in the North.

April 17

Hume urges Britain to repeal the legislation that suspended the Agreement and to promise never to take unilateral action in the North.

April 18

British Prime Minister Tony Blair visits the North to "take stock of the current difficult situation, face to face with key players," according to his spokesman.

April 20

In its annual Easter message, the IRA claims Britain is continuing its war in the North with covert surveillance and informer recruitment. "Those who seek a military victory need to understand that this cannot and will not happen," the IRA states.

April 30

The British government accepts that demands for the IRA to surrender its arms are no longer tenable if the Agreement

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American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC

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From the North: *Unionists Search for new Stumbling Blocks to Peace*

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

AS OF MAY 10, it seems that Britain has been made to see sense over its disastrous manipulation of the peace process—especially its monumentally stupid suspension, at the insistence of the Ulster Unionist Party, of the institutions of the Mitchell Agreement. The proconsul did this despite the opposition of the Irish government, Sinn Fein and the SDLP.

President Bill Clinton also intervened to rectify the problem, and he must have been effective, judging by the speed with which the British backtracked. In any case, the decommissioning issue has been effectively removed as an obstacle to reviving the Stormont institutions, given the latest joint-statement from the two governments and Sinn Fein's ability to comply with its terms.

This development has been almost universally applauded—even by the British and the neo-unionist Irish media. More important, the IRA has reciprocated with its positive statement. It will put weapons “verifiably and completely beyond use” in the manner prescribed in the governments' joint-statement [see *PEC's Web site for text of governments' and IRA's statements*]. In the words of Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, the IRA has been flexible enough to not only stretch itself, but also to overstretch itself. Most commentators appreciate this.

The decommissioning process will now be overseen by two international personalities whose credentials are impeccable: Cyril Ramaphosa, former general secretary of the African National Congress and Martti Ahtisaari, former President of Finland. They will work in conjunction with the decommissioning body, which has been given a lengthened remit.

For its part, the British government has accepted June 2001 as a new deadline to implementing the democratic reforms the Agreement stipulates and to normalizing—i.e., demilitarizing—the North's civic society. In addition, despite the legalistic mumbo-jumbo about the Westminster's continuing sovereignty over the North, the Britain has undertaken to eschew unilateral suspensions of political structures there in the future.

Britain has said it will make no more backstage deals with the UUP or any other party. The British government also appears to have accepted what the republicans have been arguing all along: the sole way in which to make progress in taking the gun out of Anglo-Irish politics is for the conflicting parties to take staged, reciprocal, steps together.

Both governments accepted this fact in their statement. The British, pragmatic as ever, have thrown their UUP subordinates into a quandary. Even the pragmatists of Trimble's “new unionism” faction are having great difficulty in swallowing the new line. The anti-Agreement rejectionists outside the UUP have rejected it. The real fly in the ointment could be not only the rejectionist elements within that party, but also the hypocrites who have been masquerading as a liberal wing.

The stance of UUP deputy leader, John Taylor illustrates these liberals' reaction to the developments that have gained approval elsewhere. Threatening to derail the plans for the restoration of the Executive on May 22, (they had already aborted its formation in July 1999), he has stalled on the process for getting guns out of politics and added new demands. Despite Sinn Fein's and the SDLP's having made it

clear that they are adamantly opposed to any watering-down of the Patten proposals for reforming the RUC, Taylor has demanded that its symbols and name and other aspects be retained. Ignoring the equality and parity of esteem provisions of the Mitchell Agreement, he also demands that British emblems be flown over, or displayed on, public buildings.

Taylor has dug up these demands just as the decommissioning roadblock is clearing out of the way. He is attempting to pressure the British government into doing things that will snap the patience of republicans and many nationalists and bring down the Agreement altogether.

Originally, the Ulster Unionist Council was scheduled to meet on May 20, at which time it would have to take a decision on whether or not the UUP would go back into the Executive with Sinn Fein. The UUP is threatening to postpone this UUC meeting in an effort to prevent Britain from introducing at Westminster the necessary Order in Council on May 16 for reinstating the institutions.

After holding up the implementation of the Agreement for two years, unionists are now demanding that they should not be rushed. The loyalists are not going to be rushed, either. They have made it known that they might not reciprocate the IRA's initiative, even though the British prime minister has—belatedly, and at others' suggestion—called upon them to do so.

How the British government will tackle this disobedience from those who profess their loyalty to the Queen, although not necessarily to her democratically-elected government in parliament, will be the litmus test of Blair's and Mandelson's resolve to push to its fulfillment this peace process.

Newsbits

LEGISLATION to implement police reform in Northern Ireland is to include changing the name of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, but, contrary to the Patten Report's recommendations, the legislation will leave the future of the force's badge open to consultation, according to a report by the BBC tonight. The scenario, set out in a copy of the as yet unpublished Policing Bill which the BBC said it had obtained, would mark a shift in the position of the British government that had previously said Patten recommendations would be implemented in full....BBC Northern Ireland reported that page one of the 50-page Bill proposed changing the name of the Royal Ulster Constabulary to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. On the subject of the new police badge, it required Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary of State to consult with the new policing board—to be set up under the reforms—the Chief Constable, and the Police Association, which is made up of the force's representative bodies. There was also an obligation for members of the new force to register membership of organizations including the Protestant Orange Order, the Freemasons, the loyalist Royal Black Institution, and the Catholic Ancient Order of Hibernians. (IAIS 4/28/00)

Money ear-marked for Irish language development projects has been put on hold. According to the Irish language weekly *La*, the distribution of 3 million pounds has been withheld because of the collapse of the political institutions set up under the Mitchell Agreement and the suspension of the Cross-Border Irish Language Body. *La* reported that British government sources had disclosed that not one penny of the 3 million pounds would be spent because of the dispute over the political process. That means that Irish

language projects in the North that have been expecting grant aid from the new all-Ireland Irish language funding bodies are without funds. The decision to set up the Irish language fund represents the first time that the British government has created a specific kitty for the Irish language. The new funding was to have been administered by the Cross-Border Irish language body but since the Executive and Assembly were suspended by Peter Mandelson in Feb., that body hasn't met....British government sources say it's unlikely the money will be released until the political institutions are in place again. (RM Dist. 4/16/00)

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has warned that inequalities for many people are still commonplace and can only be rectified through major changes in attitudes. The Commission said incidents of religious, racial, sex, and disability discrimination are still a fact of life in the North, a fact it describes as stark. The unemployment rate of Catholics is double that of unemployed Protestants. (IAIS 4/14/00)

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II has presented Britain's highest civilian award for bravery, the George Cross, to the RUC at a special ceremony at Hillsborough Castle in County Down. She praised what she called "the terrible price" paid by the force. In her address, the Queen said members of the force who had been killed or injured were also being rewarded. She arrived at Hillsborough Castle amidst tight security. An earlier bomb alert near the village proved to be a hoax. The Cross is the highest honor that can be conferred on civilians. The award is in recognition of the losses suffered by the RUC, 302 of whom have been killed and more than 8,000 injured in the past 30 years. The

medal was accepted from the Queen by a policeman injured in a rocket attack in Newry in which a colleague died. He was joined by a senior officer and one of the force's latest recruits. (Irish News 4/12/00)

Twelve men shot dead by the security forces in the North were victims of an illegal shoot-to-kill policy, the European Court of Human Rights heard today. The Strasbourg court heard allegations of excessive use of force, a shoot-to-kill policy, and collusion between the security forces and loyalists in the four separate incidents. The men's families say that Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights has been contravened because the investigations into the killings were not thorough enough. Britain continues to claim that its inquests and RUC investigations are sufficient to meet those obligations. Pearse Jordan was shot and fatally wounded on the Falls Road in Belfast by RUC officers in Nov. 1992. Police had stopped his car but found no guns, ammunition, explosives, masks or gloves. Pearse was unarmed. An inquest said he had been struck by three bullets. His father...claims the shooting was used as an alternative to arrest and trial. Gervaise McKerr died in Nov. 1982 when 109 rounds were fired into his car by a trained, five-man RUC unit. His two passengers were also killed. The court heard that the facts relating to the death of McKerr remain in dispute, despite more than 10 years of inquest proceedings and three criminal prosecutions. McKerr's son, Jonathan, says his father was deprived of his life intentionally, in breach of the Human Rights code. The court is also looking at the case of eight IRA men who were shot dead by the SAS in Loughgall, County Armagh in May 1987 and the death of Patrick Shanahan, whom the UFF murdered in 1991. (IAIS 4/4/00)

American Irish History: *Keely's Cathedrals Cross American Landscape*

By Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

TIPPERARY-BORN Patrick Charles Keely was a self-taught architect who left his mark on American culture through the cathedrals he designed for cities across the country.

Keely was born in Thurles on Aug. 9, 1816 into a family renowned in Tipperary for its carpentry and stone mason skills. Patrick immigrated to the city of Brooklyn, New York, in 1842, and began work as a builder. His obvious skill caused construction companies in Brooklyn to seek out Patrick to design homes.

In the Williamsburgh section of Brooklyn, a Fr. Sylvester Malone asked Keely to help design a new church. Keely's design was so beautiful and advanced that Cardinal Hughes of New York City sought Keely to work on St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue.

Word of Keely's talent as a church designer soon spread throughout the Northeast. Keely went on to design cathedrals in Boston, Mass.; Cleveland, Ohio; Albany, New York; Montreal, Canada; Chicago, Ill.;

Detroit, Mich.; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Erie, Penn.

Although Keely is famous for his cathedral designs, his parish churches are to this day architectural marvels. His Sacred Heart Church in Weymouth, Mass., and St. Rose of Lima Church in Chelsea, Mass., have been compared to architectural masterpieces of Paris.

Keely, who died in 1896, left houses of worship that are part of American life today.

Jeanie Johnston Sets Sail for US

A FULL-SIZE replica of a 19th-century emigrant ship that took thousands of Irish people to North America during the Great Hunger was launched for a return journey in May. The first port of call will be Alexandria, the port of Washington DC, around June 21. It will then visit another 20 cities in the US and Canada including New York, Boston and Montreal.

Dubbed the "ship of peace," the three-mast Jeanie Johnston was built by a team of young people from both sides of the border who worked for two years at a specially-constructed shipyard in Tralee.

The original ship set off on her maiden voyage in 1848, carrying 200 passengers and 17 crew. The recreated ship carried 40 people—10 professional crew, 18 volunteer crew and 12 passengers.

Project leader John Griffin said, "We look forward to promoting Ireland overseas and celebrating the enormous contribution of the Irish to every sphere of American and Canadian life," said Griffin.

Political leaders from all sides in Northern Ireland have given their backing to the project. SDLP leader John Hume described it as a "powerful symbol of peace and reconciliation" while PUP leader David Ervine said it had helped "build bridges" between young people from the north and south.

"The Jeanie Johnston...will destroy a few myths on the east coast of the US when they see Protestants and Catholics, nationalists and unionists together on a different continent talking about tomorrow rather than yesterday," said Ervine.

Mandelson Refuses to Attend House Meeting

CONGRESSMAN Ben Gilman is angry that Northern Ireland Secretary of State Peter Mandelson would not testify in May at a hearing in Washington of the House of Representative Committee on International Relations.

Gilman, who chairs the committee, has written to Mandelson expressing his disappointment that he will not appear at the committee's Northern Ireland hearing, "especially after you indicated on March 16...that you would come."

In a letter to Gilman, Mandelson said, "Although I am happy to meet you and your colleagues from time to time informally... it would not be appropriate for me, as a member of the British government, to give testimony to a formal meeting of your meeting," he said. "I should be happy to send, via our embassy, a written briefing note on areas of interest to the committee."

In a letter to Mandelson, Gilman replied that there was "enormous"

interest in Congress with regard to Northern Ireland and that committee members were "looking forward" to the hearing. "Since your decision to suspend the power-sharing institutions, things have gone from bad to worse in the search for a lasting peace and justice, along with timely and much needed policing reform. We had hoped to discuss these and other important issues with you in depth..."

Gilman said "many governments" had sent representatives to testify before the committee, including Russia, Argentina and El Salvador.

Letters to the Editor

Loyalist Bigot Savors Catholic Murders

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The PEC received the following song via Email. We print it, unedited and in its entirety, as an example of the many letters we receive from unionist and British Web site visitors who oppose our work and, indeed, any challenge to British rule in Ireland.]

To: aipec@homestead.com

Subject:

From: "Mark Scott"

<boba_fett@starwarsemail.com

Date: Mon., May 1 2000 7:22:40 AM -0700

Send the prods out

To shoot the fenians down.

They thought the U.V.F. were dead

In dear Belfast town,

But when they got to Belfast

They was seriously shot dead

By the First U.V. Battalion

Of the U.V. Brigade.

Chorus

Glory! Glory! British Ruled Northern Ireland,

Glory! Glory! to this Great British Nation,

Glory to the memory of the men who fought and fell,

"No Surrender" is the war cry

Of the Great Protestant Men

We have no costly tenders

Nor no unsecures to show,

We're at need to defend ourselves

No matter where we go,

We're out for you Republican Bastards,

To hell with a United Ireland!

"No Surrender" is the war cry

Of the Great Protestant Men.

Chorus

Now the fenians came from Londonderry

Equipped with sh***y guns,

They've men by the thousand

Sh** by the ton,

But when they got to Belfast

The they got f***ed up the bum

By their gay rifles and revolvers!

Glory to the U.V.F. who killed the Fenian Belfast Brigade.

F*** THE POPE!

RUC Honors Highlight Colonial Misrule

AS WAS REPORTED in the media [see Newsbits], Britain's Queen Elizabeth visited the Six Counties on April 12. Britain's queen visited the Six Counties to present awards and medals to members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The queen was quoted as praising the "heroism" and "valor" of the RUC in its battle against "terrorism."

The RUC since its inception in the 1920s has enforced British colonialism and the policy of oppressing Irish nationalists. Irish people have been murdered, beaten, and jailed by the RUC just for the reason that they are Irish.

More than two years have passed since the Irish people approved the Mitchell Agreement. In reality, what has changed? The Union Jack still flies high over Irish soil. A British monarch awards her colonial police force with honors for suppressing Irish nationalists. Britain abolishes a

Northern Assembly and imposes direct colonial rule, putting Ireland's destiny back into the hands of the British people.

Was the Irish peace process just a photo opportunity for American, Irish, and British politicians, or was it for real? Was it a wise move for the Dublin government to give up claims to the Six Counties and to give official legitimacy to the British system that oppresses Irish nationalists? Is British Prime Minister Tony Blair caring about Irish rights, or is he just another in a long line of British prime ministers who have done Ireland wrong? Time will answer these questions. In the meantime, though, Britain uses its political and military resources to continue division and mistrust in Northern Ireland.

--Kevin Murphy
Massachusetts

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- Write in with your letters, action requests, story ideas, and concerns

(continued from Page 1)

negotiations that led to the signing of the Good Friday Accord, and I continue to press for full implementation of the Agreement in all aspects. I am pleased at the significant progress that parties have made on human rights and policing reforms, reductions of the British security presence in the North, revitalization of the economy, and efforts to ensure equal access to employment and benefits. As a result of remarkable actions last fall, the people of Northern Ireland are now exercising self-government on an inclusive basis for the first time. The new Executive has taken up its mandate, and North-South bodies have begun their work. General de Chastelain and his commission are discussing the issue of decommission-

ing of arms with representatives of the paramilitaries. I believe that process should continue in the context of full implementation of the Agreement....

"I believe it is necessary to give the agreed-upon process a chance to work—something for which all parties have a collective responsibility. I urge all the parties to continue their efforts to implement all aspects of the Good Friday Accord....

"As president, I will remain personally committed to the process of peace and reconciliation that is unfolding there and I urge you to continue to support all sides as they move courageously forward...."

George W. Bush (March 22)

"Like you, I hope that Protestants

and Catholics in Northern Ireland find a way to overcome the remaining obstacles and finally achieve a lasting peace. I believe that the US should do everything it can to help make this happen. While America should not dictate the terms of peace in Northern Ireland, we should encourage greater discussion between the parties.

"I am staunchly committed to the principles of religious freedom, tolerance, and diversity as they are embodied in the First Amendment. And that is why, if I am fortunate to be elected President, I will support policies, both domestic and international, which promote a respect for individuals from all faiths, all backgrounds, and all walks of life."

Follow-up Stories

The Committee is Vindicated

TWELVE jurors in the London High Court awarded a unanimous victory March 30 to journalist **Sean McPhilemy** in his libel case against London's *The Sunday Times*. McPhilemy was the executive producer of the Channel 4 Television documentary *The Committee* and the author of the bestselling book by the same name.

The jury ruled unanimously that *The Sunday Times* had failed to prove its allegations that McPhilemy's reporting was a hoax on the public and that the newspaper failed to prove that a high-level murder committee, as featured in the program, did not exist.

The verdict is being seen as another vindication for the journalist who reported on an alleged secret committee which included well-known local businessmen, politicians, lawyers and policemen, met regularly with loyalist paramilitary chiefs to plan the assassination of Irish republicans with the collusion of an RUC inner force.

McPhilemy previously won an apology and substantial damages from the *Sunday Express*. *The Sunday Times* has said it is considering appealing the substantial award the court required it to pay to McPhilemy.

Now that McPhilemy has won the libel battle in London, he will turn his attention to his defense against a \$100 million lawsuit filed against him and his book publisher in Washington, D.C., by two Portadown businessmen whom he alleged were members of the committee. McPhilemy has moved to have the case dismissed on First Amendment grounds.

Serving Queen is Unnecessary

A judge ruled May 2 that Britain's lord chancellor was wrong to insist that barristers declare they would serve the queen before they could become QCs.

Barristers Seamus Treacy and Barry Macdonald, both Catholics, were in court to hear Justice Kerr rule that the lord chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg,

was wrong to retain the controversial declaration.

The two barristers had applied for a judicial review of his decision that they must declare they would "well and truly serve Queen Elizabeth II" despite a recommendation by the Elliott Committee—composed of members of the Bar Council—that any reference to the queen should be dropped.

The committee stated the declaration should merely promise to "serve all whom I may lawfully be called upon to serve in the office of one of Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the law." That recommendation followed a 1995 judicial review by Catholic barrister Phillip Magee that led to the scrapping of an oath of allegiance to the queen.

Treacy and Macdonald claimed the declaration to serve the queen discriminated against them as nationalists and was an affront to their political sensibilities.

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Action Requests

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Mention that you are a PEC member.*

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Washington, DC 20500, Tele. 202-456-1111, Email
president@whitehouse.gov

Contact: **Texas Gov. George Bush**, P.O. Box 1902,
Austin, TX 78767, Tele. 512-637-2000, Web site
<http://www.georgewbush.com>

Contact: **Vice-president Al Gore**, P.O. Box 18237,
Washington, DC 20036; Tele. 615-340-2000; Fax
615-340-3295; Web site <http://www.algore2000.com>

Message: I am writing to express support for Congressman Ben Gilman's efforts to close the deportation case against Irishman Brian Pearson. Attorney General Janet Reno has suspended the case against Pearson, who has been granted political asylum and has been living in this country since 1988. Please bring this nightmare to an end.

Contact: **Texas Gov. George Bush**, P.O. Box 1902,
Austin, TX 78767, Tele. 512-637-2000, Web site
<http://www.georgewbush.com>

Contact: **Vice-president Al Gore**, P.O. Box 18237,
Washington, DC 20036; Tele. 615-340-2000; Fax
615-340-3295; Web site <http://www.algore2000.com>

Message: I urge you to make the Irish peace process a campaign issue by publicly and clearly stating your support for continued US involvement in it. Countless Americans have supported the peace process and deserve a clear statement of your position on it.

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is to be saved. Britain also recognizes that any initiative to save the Agreement must involve a change in the concept of decommissioning, replacing the demand for the surrender of arms to stipulating they be put "beyond use."

May 2

The British and Irish prime ministers fail to agree on a way out of the peace process deadlock. After more than seven hours of discussions with the main parties in Downing Street, Blair and Irish premier Bertie Ahern cannot agree that they have made sufficient progress to justify further negotiations.

May 6

The IRA says it will reenter discussions with the international decommissioning body to show its commitment to the peace process. The IRA says it will initiate a process that will completely and verifiably put its weapons beyond use. Britain says it will reinstate the Assembly and Executive by May 22, pending the support of the political parties. Britain and Ireland declare their commitment to the full implementation of the Mitchell Agreement by next June.

May 8

Mandelson tells the British Council's Northern Ireland conference that the North has turned itself into a leader in the protection of human rights, adding: "Northern Ireland's human rights movement truly surfaced in 1969, a year that saw huge peaceful protests to demand rights for all, regardless of their religion or politics."

May 9

Former African National Congress general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa and former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari head the team that will inspect IRA weapons dumps. Mandelson calls on loyalists to say how they will put their weapons beyond use.