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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 24, Number 6

June 1999

Has the IRA Said "Farewell" to Arms?

By Charles P. Mullaney, *Professor, Legal Studies,
Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, Connecticut*

AFTER fighting a bloody campaign to force the British out of Ireland, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has bid a farewell to arms.

Evidence shows that the IRA is a peacemaker, though not everyone believes in its remarkable transformation. For example, a strange obsession about the IRA torments unionists. Unionists say if the IRA won't decommission--give up--its weapons, then Sinn Fein can't participate in government.

"Decommission" means to "remove from service." In fact, the IRA's stash of firearms is already out of service. Weapons experts explain that pistols, rifles, and assault weapons are precision pieces of equipment and must be regularly used and cleaned to be functional, let alone accurate. For at least two years and probably longer, this ordnance has lain unused, buried in six feet of soil. Dirt and moisture can accumulate in the barrels, chambers, and firing mechanisms, causing the weapons to malfunction. Unused, dirty guns bode ill for effective offensive paramilitary operations.

In addition, recent IRA messages indicate it could be out of the bombing business altogether, lest it seek to collapse the peace process and Sinn Fein with it. Thus, in practical terms, the evidence convincingly demonstrates the IRA's armed struggle is over. Lest there be any doubt about its present intentions, the IRA's own 1999 Easter statement is chock-full of pacifism. The IRA might not be a group of flower children, but statements including phrases such as, "(P)ermanent peace," "lasting resolution to the conflict," and "durable peace settlement" sound downright dove-like.

The IRA discards its weapons in dumps, stops its bombing, declares and stands by its cease-fire, and asserts publicly the need of "creating a climate...for a durable peace settlement."

Can unionists and loyalists demonstrate they've done as much for peace in the North? Indeed, in the last tedious year of the peace process, the actions of the Irish Republican Army speak louder than the words of any party.

Chopin Vodka Mocks Ireland's Great Hunger

CHOPIN Vodka is running ads that say, "Why it may be the Poles, rather than the Irish, who are remembered for the potato," according to PEC member Jerry Boyle.

The producers of this ad are well aware of the historical connotation of the potato in Ireland, where millions of people died or emigrated when the potato crop failed from 1845-50, and the British government failed to help.

Ad agency Clarity, Coverdale, & Fury was not concerned when Boyle pointed out that it is inappropriate to suggest that the flavor of a vodka could supplant the memory of the death of millions of Irish people during the Great Hunger.

Please contact this agency and its client to express your displeasure. If you see the ad in a publication, contact the editors and urge them to stop running this advertising. **Write to:** Sarah Guilday at Clarity, Coverdale & Fury, 120 S. 6th Street Suite 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55402, (612) 359-4336. The client is: Eddie Phillips, Millennium Import Co., 25 Main Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55402.

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The PEC is Online

PEC member Chris Yonts is updating and expanding the PEC website (<http://www.sirius.com/~weet/pec/>). You can go online to renew your membership, change your address, complete urgent action requests, review back issues, and contact the PEC with story ideas, to name a few activities.

Our View

SINCE 1975, the PEC has worked hard to help Americans who care about Ireland to make a difference in the quality of life in the North and in the quality of life here.

Disturbed by the injustices and violations of human rights that unionists and the British government inflict upon Irish nationalists in the North, PEC members seek to make a positive, democratic difference by influencing US leaders to develop policies that can help to bring democracy to the North. We work hard to put an end to racism in the forms of denigrating Irish jokes, derogatory St. Patrick's Day cards, and racist advertisements. We work hard to educate Americans about the important contributions of the American Irish people to the development of this nation.

As the PEC continues to pressure US leaders to insist that the British allow democracy to take hold in the North and to promote awareness of the American Irish role in this country, it will continue to reach more people so that our voice can be heard. To that end, we encourage you to copy Newsletter articles and distribute them to the media and your political leaders. Write the action request letters. Use and encourage others to use our website, which we are developing to make it a premier online American Irish human rights resource.

American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC

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Peace Process Update

April 15

THE BRITISH and Irish governments acknowledge that the Hillsborough Declaration is unworkable after the Alliance Party, Sinn Fein, the PUP, and the Women's Coalition reject it. The US House International Relations Committee passes a freestanding bill calling for an independent investigation into last month's assassination of Northern attorney Rosemary Nelson. The European Parliament passes a similar resolution.

April 18

Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams says the Agreement "is dead" if unionists continue their demand that the IRA decommission before the Executive can begin. UUP leader David Trimble urges loyalists to decommission weapons so that political progress can be made. "The speeches of the republican movement at Easter talked of maintaining their political strategy," Trimble says. "This is a clear indication that it doesn't intend to return to violence." Loyalists had earlier said that they would not decommission and thereby make it possible for Sinn Fein to participate in the Executive.

April 19

Voluntary organizations and business leaders in the North sign a letter urging political leaders to keep the peace process on track.

April 21

Ahern says that Nelson's claims before her death that her life was in danger from the RUC are credible.

April 22

Trimble meets Pope John Paul II in Rome and tells him that "we hope in the course of this year to secure peace."

April 24

SDLP leader John Hume reveals a formula that he hopes could break the arms deadlock. It would involve Sinn Fein's making a pledge to non-violence and agreeing to expel itself from the Executive, should the IRA return to violence. Sinn Fein is open to the plan, but the UUP rejects it.

April 28

The British and Irish governments sign an agreement to set up a commission for overseeing the recovery of the bodies of people who disappeared at the hands of the IRA and

(continued on Page 8)

From the North

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

AFTER 10 hours of negotiations at Downing Street, the seat of British government, the purported obstacle to setting up a Northern Ireland Executive and, thus, the further progressing of the implementation of the Mitchell Agreement, seemed to have been overcome. The Dublin and London governments and the SDLP finally accepted what experts had been saying all along: that the IRA's decommissioning of weapons was not a precondition for Sinn Féin's entrance into that Executive.

Furthermore, even if the Mitchell Agreement's provisions imply an obligation to adhere to purely peaceful political methods for the furtherance of a signatory's political and constitutional goals, in no way could that undertaking be interpreted to mean prior decommissioning before a party could be entitled to its rights under an electoral mandate. For unionists, the stalling game seemed to be up.

The two governments seemed to have come to a realization that the attempt to coerce the IRA with a spurious interpretation of the Mitchell Agreement, using the Northern Ireland unionists as front runners, was turning out to be extremely counterproductive. The Agreement was being placed in jeopardy. After the May 14 meeting, even Trimble, on behalf of the UUP, seemed to have been resigned to comply with the new ordinance coming from his puppet-master. This idea was further reinforced when no significance was seen by the press in the fact that John Taylor, Trimble's hard-line deputy, had left early from the Downing Street gathering. Talk began to circulate of a shadow Executive being formed by May 19 with Blair's

having set an absolute deadline of June 30 for the actual devolution of powers (such as they are) to Stormont. It all seemed to be too good to be true—and it was.

On May 15, Trimble reported back to his UUP Assembly party and then, in the face of at least 8 objectors, he decided to box clever. He disavowed his previous acceptance, surprising the others who had been present in Downing Street, and argued that he could not have accepted the new document because it was "incomplete." Blair, who had labored hard and long to produce it—taking time off from waging war in Serbia (in which he wants American soldiers to take the main brunt and American tax-dollars to pay the main cost)—was reported to be livid with his underling's about-face. There was no more talk about a shadow Executive being set up on May 19. However, the June 30 absolute deadline for devolution would still leave six weeks for the difficulties to be cleared up.

The focus then moved to just how these difficulties could be cleared up, given the now diametrically opposed positions of the unionists on one side and the two governments, the SDLP and SF on the other. Would the British government, once again, welch away from squaring up to the recalcitrant unionists and prefer to try to get Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern to come along with it? Would the unionist veto, representing a tiny fragment of all the peoples in Ireland and Britain, once again win out?

Several months ago, we asked if the time had eventually arrived when a British government, given unionism's inability to stomach any real modifica-

tion to its Orange unionist state, would see its own colonialist interests as being jeopardized by such obduracy and have to face up to the fact that something would have to be done about it—even if this did mean dispensing with the long-serving and useful Orange card. It is said that Mo (who is not liked by any brand of unionism) was very much peeved when her deadline had to be missed because of unionism's resistance. On that occasion, Blair overruled her. With the happenings of the weekend of May 14-15, people are asking: Has it become Blair's turn to be overruled?

This question will be answered June 30. If the UUP is still adhering to its declaration of "no guns, no government," what will Blair do? At the time of writing (May 19), the negotiations at Downing Street have recommenced. Under the pretext of "completing" and "clarifying" Trimble, according to Gerry Adams, will be attempting further stalling in the implementation of the Agreement. Unbelievably, the unionists are complaining that they are "being rushed," though they have held up progress for years.

Meanwhile the spate of loyalist burnings-out, pipe-bombings, political assassinations, and the targeting of hundreds of people (according to the RUC, which appears to be singularly unsuccessful in coping with the problem) go on. The Orange Order thumbs its nose at the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, whose timid reaction to the Drumcree crises. The church's response has already been castigated by reputable journalist critics, although, there is growing concern within that body for more resolute action.

A turbulent summer seems to be looming, and everyone is watching the appropriate space to see if Blair will overcome the unionist rejectionist "No Men."

Newsbits

A MAN who lost his hand in a botched loyalist pipe bomb attack at a neighbor's house is to seek compensation for his injuries, the Irish News has learned. Richard Hastings (28), who was acquitted on Friday of explosive charges, is expected to file for damages after losing his hand when the pipe bomb he was carrying exploded prematurely. But last night the family whose home was targeted in the attack broke their silence to voice anger at the move. Father-of-three John McConaghie said: "It's a disgrace that this man can apply for compensation after what he did. I sat through the whole trial and from what I heard I thought he would have been found guilty. Why should he benefit anyway. We are the victims," he said. But I'm not surprised. He was even granted bail and was free to walk around after such serious charges were put to him....Hastings, who was originally charged with attempted murder, was freed on bail of almost 32,000 pounds after the attack in December 1997. The charge was reduced to causing an explosion and possession of explosives with intent when the case came before the courts. (*Irish News* 4/21/99)

British army experts defused two pipe bombs delivered to nationalist homes early today, the latest in a string of attacks against Northern Ireland's minority community. The crude bombs, disguised as parcels and designed to detonate when opened, were delivered to two homes in a predominantly Protestant unionist neighborhood of Randalstown, 15 miles northwest of Belfast. (*IAIS* 4/15/99)

The IDB [Industrial Development Board] as the primary job agency in the north has a responsibility to be proactive in counteracting the historical

imbalances of employment and unemployment between the unionist and nationalist male populations.... [Y]et only 49 percent of employees in IDB-assisted factories in West Belfast are Catholic. This compares to a population that is 74 percent Catholic. (*WBEF* 3/25/99)

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern yesterday signaled the increasing possibility of an official inquiry into the 1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombings. The Ulster Volunteer Force claimed responsibility for the bombings—the biggest atrocity in the troubles - but there have been persistent reports that members of the British security forces may have been involved.... The meeting came just weeks after the Justice for the Forgotten campaign revealed that a dossier had been compiled naming then members of the British security forces allegedly behind the attacks. Solicitor Greg O'Neill said: "The revelations about how this atrocity was inquired into by the Garda is giving very grave cause for concern....A tribunal of inquiry can certainly focus on the investigative process that took place in the Republic and the decisions taken by the Garda at a senior level in terms of how the investigation was brought forward and the degree to which issues relating to cooperation with the RUC were dealt with." (*Irish News* 4/24/99)

The father of murdered LVF chief Billy Wright yesterday took his campaign for an inquiry into his son's death to Stormont. David Wright, whose calls for an independent inquiry into his son's killing at the top security Maze prison were turned down by the secretary of state, said he would lobby politicians to gain

support for his campaign. And he said he hoped to form a pressure group, with the backing of United Unionists and "anyone interested in justice." Wright was murdered by the INLA—who were housed in the same block as the LVF in the top security Maze prison—two days after Christmas in 1997 as he waited in a prison van to take a visit. His father claims that a number of security lapses - including the removal of a guard from a watch tower minutes before the murder—proves there was state collusion in his son's murder. (*Irish News* 4/21/99)

With two months to go until the annual controversial Drumcree Orange Order march in Portadown, Northern Ireland's First Minister David Trimble has met with the representatives of the local residents group whose area the march would lead through....The meeting took place nine years after nationalist residents first requested a meeting with Trimble to discuss the Drumcree parade. The meeting ...has been described as the culmination of many months of behind-the-scenes work by local councillors and Trimble to try to avert another Drumcree crisis this year....[L]ocal Orange Order County Armagh grand master and assembly member Denis Watson refused to take part. DUP assembly member Paul Berry joined the crowd of protesters during the night. He said: "It's quite clear that Trimble wants decommissioning and Drumcree all tied into one. Tony Blair recognizes that Drumcree is the poison in the system. I say to [him] tonight, the only way to get rid of the poison is to allow our brethren to walk down the Garvaghy Road." The talks ...ended with parties agreeing to meet for further discussions. (*IAIS* 5/4/99)

American Irish History: *American Irish Help to Build Texas*

By Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

THE FOUNDING of Texas can be traced to many American Irish people.

Texas was a part of New Spain, and many Spanish soldiers and administrators there were of Irish origin. Spanish officials Hugo O'Connor, Alexander O'Reilly, and Philip Nolan served as Spanish governors or commanders of Texas. Irish-born John McHenry was an early explorer of west Texas. Early Spanish Irish settlers of Texas were Juan Curon (originally Curran), Edmund Norris, and Hugo Coyle. Spanish colonial records find that Irish Catholics Guillermo Gardner and Juan Fear built settlements in Texas.

When Texas became part of Mexico, many Irish immigrants settled

in Texas to enjoy religious freedom and to escape anti-Catholic sentiments in the southern US.

In 1829, the Irish town San Patricio was formed. The Mexican authorities discouraged foreign colonies in Texas, but they welcomed the Irish. Many ranches in the area were owned by O'Briens, O'Connors, and Powerses.

When Texans sought independence from Mexico, many American Irish people fought at the Alamo for Texas. Even Sam Houston was of Irish stock. American Irish Texas Captain Dimmit unfurled the first Texas Lone Star flag at La Bahia. When Texas won independence at the battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836, the battle site was on the ranch of a Mrs. McCormick.

American Irishmen James Powers and James Kerr also played a major role in the Texas army's victory. The people of Mattamoras, Mexico, honored their Irish neighbors with a three-day feast.

Afterwards, along the Rio Grande, American Irish settlers and merchants named O'Boyle, Treanor, Clarke, and Lynch developed a strong friendship with their Mexican neighbors.

In San Antonio, a neighborhood existed that was called the Old Irish flats, where families of Murphys, O'Briens, McCloskeys, Callaghans, and Rices lived. Hugh Rice first drew up plans for the old Buffalo Bayou, which today is Houston.

Source: Library of Edward Kelley, Dorchester, Mass.

Congress Talks Peace

CONGRESS, the Ad-Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs, and Friends of Ireland discussed the peace process May 5.

Sinn Fein chief negotiator Martin McGuinness told the meeting that any attempt to park the Mitchell Agreement over the summer would hand the initiative to those intent on wrecking the peace process. He said the unionist demand for decommissioning had to be seen in the context of loyalist attacks on nationalists and the murder of Rosemary Nelson.

Representatives at the meeting included: **Ben Gilman Jim Walsh, Chris Smith, Peter King, Richard Neal, Sam Gejdenson, Cynthia McKinney, William Delahunt, Dana Rohrabacher, Joe Crowley, Donald Payne, and Ciro Rodriguez.** All expressed their support for the implementation of the Agreement.

CAJ Challenges "Emergency" Law

EMERGENCY legislation that has passed into ordinary criminal law in Northern Ireland is facing another legal challenge in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

The case concerns a man who was convicted of failing to answer questions, provide information, and attend an interview under Schedule 5 of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1991. This legislation was introduced to investigate the finances of paramilitary groups. Individuals are subject to prosecution if they fail to attend police stations when served with notices under the Act, to produce documents, and to answer questions.

"In other words, if an individual exercised his/her right to silence,

he/she could well be prosecuted. These provisions were extensively used when the Act was passed, although few prosecutions ensued," according to the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ).

The man was convicted despite arguments from his counsel that the provisions in question violated his rights under the ECHR.

"This is yet another example of an aspect of the emergency legal regime quietly making its way into the ordinary criminal law," the CAJ said. "This problem of seepage has already been brought to the attention of the Criminal Justice Review, established by the [Mitchell] Agreement, to conduct a wide-ranging review of the criminal justice system."

Congress Supports Independent Murder Probe

by Sandy Carlson, *Editor*

CONGRESS has added its weight to the mounting pressure on the British to initiate an independent inquiry into the death of Northern Ireland human rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson.

The House of Representatives endorsed a resolution April 20 calling for an independent inquiry into Nelson's murder. The final vote was 421-2 in favor of the resolution. House Resolution 128, "condemning the murder of human rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson and calling for the protection of defense attorneys in Northern Ireland" went before the full House and passed with a vote of 421-2. **It was opposed by Ron Paul of Texas and John Hostettler of Indiana for unstated reasons.** *[Editor's Note: Visit the PEC's website to complete the electronic action request or see the Action Request on Page 8 urging them to support the resolution.]*

Congressman **Chris Smith's** House Resolution 128 calls on the United Kingdom to: A) launch an inquiry totally independent of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to gather evidence, conduct the ground investigation, and issue a detailed, public, report on the murder of defense attorney Rosemary Nelson; B) institute an independent judicial inquiry into allegations that defense attorneys are systematically harassed and intimidated by security forces; and C) implement the United Nations Special Rapporteur's recommendation for an independent inquiry into the possibility of collusion in the killing of defense attorney Patrick Finucane.

"The success of the peace process is predicated on the people's ability to believe that injustices such as this will be investigated thoroughly, fairly, and transparently," said Smith.

The vote will be seen as a boost to the recently-launched Rosemary Nelson Campaign, which is considering asking UN Special Rapporteur Param Cumaraswamy, who investigated claims that RUC officers issued death threats against Nelson, to lead an independent probe into the killing.

The campaign is also calling for a wider independent judicial inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Nelson's murder in a loyalist car bomb attack on March 15.

Campaign spokesperson Ellen Weaver said: "Following calls from others around the world, the passing of this resolution adds further weight to the demand from Paul Nelson for both an international and independent investigation and a judicial inquiry into the murder of Rosemary Nelson."

Referring to allegations of security force collusion in the killing, group spokesperson Robbie McVeigh said, "Human rights lawyers are in the frontline of the defense of human rights around the world. In this context, the murder of Rosemary Nelson was a direct and profound attack on the human rights of everybody in the North of Ireland. Swift movement towards the establishing of a fully independent investigation and inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Rosemary's death is the only way in which the human rights which were guaranteed by the [Mitchell] Agreement can be properly protected."

Campaign organizers said the Nelson family's calls for an independent inquiry has been backed by Catholic Primate Archbishop Sean Brady, SDLP leader John Hume, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams, the European Parliament, and Cumaraswamy. Amnesty International, Human Rights

Watch, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, British/Irish Rights Watch, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Irish Council on Civil Liberties, and the PEC are also calling for an outside police force to conduct the investigation.

RUC Chief Ronnie Flanagan has rejected calls for an outside police force to carry out the investigation. The British government has also rejected calls to remove all RUC officers from the investigation.

In its response to the recently-published UN report on the harassment of defense attorneys, the British government said the murder of Nelson focused attention on its findings but that "this should not be taken to suggest that the RUC had any involvement directly or indirectly in her murder." Cumaraswamy has said that he hopes "involvement of the RUC in the investigation (into Nelson's murder) would not affect and taint the impartiality and credibility" of the investigation.

Meanwhile, a report in Dublin's April 25 *Sunday Business Post* claimed the FBI would soon be removed from the investigation, that murdered loyalist Frankie Curry orchestrated the murder, and that he had links to RUC Special Branch.

Although security sources have dismissed the claims, the Nelson Campaign said they added weight to its calls for an independent investigation.

The *Post* report claims Curry, who was in prison when the murder took place, had access to telephones and visitors in prison and had orchestrated the attack, arranging for others to plant the device. Curry was shot dead two days after the murder. If charges are brought against any of Curry's associates in the Nelson case, it could hinder independent investigators to discover if there was RUC collusion, since the matter would be "sub judice."

House Considers RUC and the Peace Process

IN APRIL, Congress called for the disbanding of the Northern Ireland police force and for progress in the peace process.

The House called for the complete disbanding of the RUC at special Congressional hearings into policing in the north of Ireland. Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, Congressman **Ben Gilman**, was the first to speak at the hearings on April 22.

"Let there be no mistake, new and acceptable policing for the North of Ireland must come, sooner rather than later. It must be root and branch, not that which is politically acceptable to the ruling unionist majority," Gilman said.

Expert witnesses including Halya Gowan of Amnesty International, a representative of the Lawyers Committee on Human Rights, human rights activist Monsignor Raymond Murray, Jane Winter of British-Irish Rights Watch, and Maggie Beirne of the Committee on the Administration of Justice testified about ongoing abuses

against citizens at the hands of the RUC and other British forces in the north of Ireland. The Committee also heard from Diane Hamill, sister of Robert Hamill, a Catholic man beaten to death in 1997 by a loyalist gang while police stood by without intervening. The Hamill family has been campaigning since Robert's death for justice and accountability from the RUC for its complicity in his murder.

Robbie McVeigh, a spokesperson for the Rosemary Nelson Campaign, testified on behalf of the murdered lawyer. Nelson was to have testified at this hearing with regard to the RUC's threatening defense attorneys.

Democratic Congressman **Gregory Meeks** quoted Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as he explained the reasons he felt the hearings of the day were so important: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

The hearings recalled Nelson's testimony before the committee in Sept. 1998, in which she spoke of the death threats and harassment she

received from the RUC and of the complete impossibility of her seeking police protection in that environment.

Congressman **Joseph Crowley** introduced a resolution April 20 that recognized the first anniversary of the Mitchell Agreement and encouraged all parties to move forward to secure a lasting peace. Crowley said that the passage of this resolution emphasized the need for all parties involved, including the two governments, to remain committed to the letter of the Mitchell Agreement and not to be tempted by fudging difficult issues over in order to appease certain parties.

Congressman **Richard Neal** likened the current stalling of the process to a football game, saying that all parties working towards peace found themselves at the one yard line when UUP leader David Trimble and his party stepped away from the line and claimed the goal line should be moved back ten yards. "Indeed, nothing will ever satisfy them. If it is not decommissioning, then it would invariably be something—anything else to prevent change."

Britain's Decision is an "Attempt to Frustrate"

HUMAN rights organizations are critical of an RUC decision to call in an English policeman to investigate the murder of Pat Finucane, the lawyer who was killed 10 years ago. His family have rejected the inquiry, saying it shows Britain's refusal to establish the truth about the lawyer's death.

New evidence has backed suspicions that British forces were involved in that murder, and there have been calls for an independent inquiry from Congress, the European Parliament, the UN, and the Irish government.

The Irish government has described the decision to involve John Stevens in a new probe into Finucane's murder as

"an attempt to frustrate a public and fully independent inquiry."

Ten years ago, Stevens concluded that there was no evidence of "widespread or institutionalized collusion between the RUC and loyalist paramilitaries." However, a part of the report never published for "state security" reasons found evidence of collusion between the army's intelligence unit and loyalist gunmen.

Likewise, Cumaraswamy has indicated that there is "prima facie evidence" of RUC collusion in Finucane's murder. He said that he was "even more convinced that there is now a stronger case made out" for a

public inquiry and requested the full publication of the John Stevens report.

Britain concedes that Cumaraswamy's assessment of alleged RUC collusion is "fortified by the refusal to make public even the summary of the second report by John Stevens, which came out after the Brian Nelson case."

A Northern Ireland Office spokesperson has said that Northern Secretary Mo Mowlam was "not ruling out" a public inquiry into the murder of Pat Finucane, but is currently waiting for the assessment of the British/Irish Rights Watch report by John Stevens and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Action Requests

Please write these letters or make the telephone calls. Mention that you are a PEC member.

Write: **Ambassador Sean O'Huiginn**, Embassy of Ireland, 2234 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20008; Telephone (202) 462-3939

Message: Please express to Taoiseach Bertie Ahern my support for his calling on the British government to fully and properly investigate the murder of Northern Ireland human rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson. I am deeply concerned that crimes such as the Nelson murder will undo the peace process.

Write: **President Bill Clinton**, The White House, Washington, DC 20500; Telephone (202) 456-1111; Fax (202) 456-2461; Email: president@whitehouse.gov

Message: I urge you to call on the British government to initiate an independent, international investigation into the murder of Northern Ireland human rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson. I am concerned that crimes such as the Nelson murder can undo the peace process.

Write: **Rep. Ron Paul (TX)** and **Rep. John Hostettler (IN)**, Rayburn Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515; Ron Paul Email: Ron.Paul@mail.house.gov; John Hostettler Email: John.Hostettler@mail.house.gov

Message: I urge you to support House Resolution 128, sponsored by Rep. Chris Smith (NJ), calling for an independent investigation into the murder of Northern Ireland civil rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson. Crimes such as the murder of Nelson have the potential to undo the peace process, in which the US has played a central role.

(continued from Page 2)

other groups during the Troubles. The governments say they will not adjourn the peace process this summer.

April 29

Orange Volunteers launch a bomb attack on a pub.

May 3

The NIO propose a six-month "transitional period" for a power-sharing executive in a bid to break the talks deadlock. If some paramilitary weapons were handed over during that period, then the executive-in-waiting could assume full powers. A transitional executive would allow the four main parties to nominate ministers and choose departments. Ahern rejects the idea.

May 5

The Irish government is concerned that the British government is discriminating against Catholics in its appointment of top civil servants in the new Assembly. Four Protestants and two Catholics have been appointed so far, and it is believed there is only one Catholic candidate among the seven on the short list for the other four positions.

May 6

Talks between the British and Irish governments and the parties fail to break the peace process impasse. The Alliance Party declares its support for the Sinn Fein nominee for this year's deputy lord mayor for Belfast. Loyalist violence intensifies--two boys narrowly escape death when a bookmaker's shop is attacked.

May 9

Blair tells the German magazine *Focus* that decommissioning is "an issue more of symbolism and trust than it is to do with the foundations of the agreement."

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