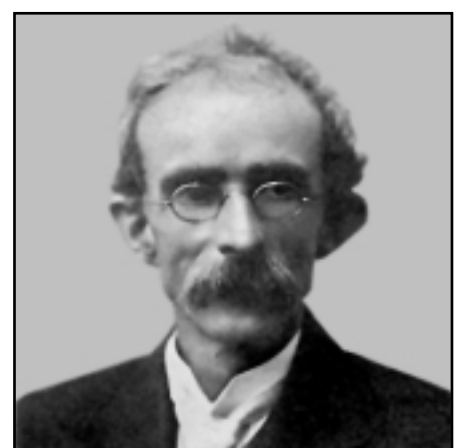


# FORUM MAGAZINE

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The final PIRA humiliation \* A date which will live in infamy \*  
Unionism and the spectre of equality \* Shannon scandal \*  
Lord Falconer acts illegally \* Luis Posada and US state terror \*  
Save 16 Moore St \* Flying column \* Republican prisoners \*

# FORUM CONTENTS

## Analysis:

**Lord Falconer acted unlawfully:** Karen Gold traces the latest twist in the Omagh civil action: **page 3**

**The need to save 16 Moore Street:** Maria McCann highlights the disgraceful neglect of the last headquarters of the 1916 Provisional Irish Government: **page 4**

**The spectre of equality:** John Hanley analyses the recent outbreak of unionist sectarian rioting: **Page 5**

## Special Feature

**The final PIRA humiliation:** Paul Maguire examines the complete surrender of PIRA weapons: **Page 6-7**

## Editorial

**A date which will live in infamy:** The significance of the surrender of PIRA weaponry: **page 9**

## Open Forum

**Luis Posada and US state-terrorism:** Elaine Power on a case which exposes the true extent of US state-terrorism in the Americas: **page 8**

## Flying Column

**Flying Column:** Reflections on current affairs: **page 10**

## Political Prisoners

**Political prisoners:** The ongoing hunger-strike in Camp Delta in Guantanamo Bay and a list of republican prisoners affiliated to the New Republican Forum: **page 11**

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[www.newrepublicanforum.ie](http://www.newrepublicanforum.ie)

# Shannon scandal

Paula Kennedy

During a CNN interview on the eve of the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, George Bush, in an attempt to disguise international opposition to the war, declared that 'more than 35 countries in this coalition are giving crucial support, from the use of naval and air bases to help with intelligence and logistics to the deployment of combat units'. Thus, according to the above Bush criteria, Ireland is a participant in the 'coalition of the willing'. At no time has the current Fianna Fail - Progressive democrat coalition disputed this assertion.

Since March 2003 the Dublin government has permitted approximately 500,000 US military personnel to pass through Shannon Airport in military and chartered aircraft.

In the first six months of this year 158,549 US soldiers travelled to Afghanistan and Iraq via Shannon. This figure is a 100% increase on the number of US soldiers who passed through Shannon during the first six months of 2004.

It is expected that in the twelve months ending in December over 300,000 US troops will have availed of stopover facilities in Shannon en route to Iraq or Afghanistan.

As part of its so-called 'war on terror' the US government is currently implementing a 'rendition programme' whereby it exports detained Islamic prisoners to countries such as Pakistan, Egypt and Afghanistan, where human rights are negligible, and prisoners are frequently subjected to interrogation under torture, before being returned to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba or Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan.

It is widely believed that numerous CIA planes, containing imprisoned Islamic prisoners, have also been allowed pass through Shannon since the commencement of the invasion of Iraq.

The Dublin government has remained tight-lipped about this shameful fact.

However, it seems that the Dublin

government's complicity in more unsavoury aspects of the so-called 'war on terror' and the immoral Anglo-American occupation of Iraq is about to fall under the scrutiny of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights [UNCHR].

The UNCHR is scheduled to investigate the Bush administration's 'rendition programme'. As part of its wide-ranging investigation, it is believed the UNCHR will also investigate Ireland's participation in Washington's 'rendition programme', primarily through the

provision of stopover and refuelling facilities to US planes carrying military personnel and detained Islamic prisoners.

Ireland is currently in breach of Article 18 of the San Remo Manual on International Law which excludes belligerent military aircraft from entering neutral airspace.

Over the past fifty years it was established practice to prohibit foreign military aircraft from entering Irish airspace if they were armed, carrying ammunitions, or engaged in intelligence gathering or military exercises.

This policy was adhered to by successive governments since the foundation of the 26-county state.

Clearly the current Dublin government has disregarded this longstanding policy and its commitments under international law; and is now prepared to provide stopover and refuelling facilities to American planes carrying US military personnel en route to Iraq and Afghanistan or interned Islamic prisoners en route to interrogation under torture or a prolonged period of detention without trial.

For our part the New Republican Forum resolutely opposes the provision of refuelling and stopover facilities to US imperialist forces as part of its illegal occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.

It is essential that the Dublin government reverse its current policy and oppose the Anglo-American occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and terminate all indirect assistance to the Anglo-American imperialist project.



An Iraqi holds a dead baby after a US air strike

# Lord Falconer acted unlawfully

Karen Gold

In September the Belfast High Court granted relief in a judicial review application on behalf of Michael McKevitt and declared that the British Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer, had acted unlawfully when in February 2004 he directed the newly formed Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission [NILSC] to make £742,702 available to the relatives of Omagh's victims to enable them to continue with their civil claim against five men arising out of the 1998 Omagh bombing.

Michael McKevitt is one of five defendants in the civil action, despite the fact that he has never been arrested, questioned or charged in relation to the Omagh bomb.

The plaintiffs, the relatives of Omagh's victims, are seeking considerable damages [£14m] for personal injury, loss and damage and claims on behalf of the estate of deceased persons and their dependents.

On 12 August 2002, the Legal Aid Department [LAD] granted McKevitt legal aid to contest the civil action.

From the outset, the Omagh families funded the civil proceedings by accepting substantial private donations from members of the British establishment. One of their first substantial financial donors was Mr Peter Mandelson, the former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

However, over time, the exorbitant costs demanded by the O2 legal firm, who represent the families, eroded the funds which the families received from high profile members of the British establishment.

In an attempt to keep the civil action afloat the families' legal representatives intimated that the British state should subsidise the civil action.

But in December 2003 - before the British state directly intervened - the NILSC first informed Michael McKevitt that his legal aid certificate was being withdrawn.

The NILSC informed McKevitt that his legal aid certificate was being revoked on two grounds: [1] because of his conviction in the south for membership of, and directing, an unlawful organisation; and [2] because if found liable he would not be in a position to meet the exorbitant damages [£14m] as he is 'a man of straw' and therefore the allocation of legal aid in this instance is futile and tantamount to a

waste of the NILSC's limited budget.

In 2004 a judicial review of the decision to revoke Michael McKevitt's legal aid proved unsuccessful before Mr. Justice Garvin.

Events gathered pace. On 9 August 2003, Paul Murphy informed *The Guardian*: 'I have been working for many months with ministerial colleagues in the Department of Constitutional Affairs to try to find ways of helping the Omagh families fund their legal case...I have discussed



Lord Falconer

the families' concerns with the Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer, and he has found a way to give the families the money they need'.

Then in February 2004, the Lord Chancellor [Lord Falconer] made an unprecedented legal decision when he directed the newly formed Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission [NILSC] to make substantial payments [£742,702] to the relatives of Omagh's victims which enabled them to continue with their civil claim.

This decision was taken after a prolonged period of consultations with Paul Murphy, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

One of the grounds upon which the NILSC revoked Michael McKevitt's legal aid was that he is 'a man of straw' who would be unable to meet any damages awarded against him. Yet notwithstanding this fact, the Lord Chancellor directed that £742,702 be awarded to sustain this futile civil action. This is just one proof that the motivation behind the civil action is accusatory and not compensatory.

The double standards that lie at the heart of the decision to fund the Omagh families' unviable civil action was exposed by a recent ruling in the Belfast High Court. A West Belfast rel-

ative of a man murdered by Michael Stone in the 1988 Miltown cemetery attack recently sought legal aid to compel the Assets Recovery Agency [ARA] to seize the proceeds [£4,000] from Stone's latest book. The Belfast High Court refused the application by stating that the expenditure of substantial legal aid funds in pursuit of £4,000 would not be a prudent allocation of public funds. Yet the courts were willing to award £742,702 to sustain a civil action in which damages could not be met.

Michael McKevitt challenged - by way of judicial review - the Lord Chancellor's directive to the NILSC on the grounds that the directive was ultra vires and unlawful in that it exceeds the power conferred upon the Lord Chancellor by the Access to Justice [Northern Ireland] Order 2003.

The Access to Justice Order clearly states that the Lord Chancellor should not involve himself or his office in any decision as to the funding of individual cases.

The Belfast High Court accepted this legal argument and declared the Lord Chancellor's directive unlawful.

In light of this ruling the Lord Chancellor has given the Belfast High Court an undertaking that no further legal aid will be provided to the families.

To date the Omagh families have received in excess of £442,702 from the NILSC.

By subsidising the Omagh civil action in this manner the British government attempted to prosecute Michael McKevitt using a lower civil standard of proof [on the balance of probabilities] than would be necessary in criminal proceedings [beyond reasonable doubt].

Furthermore, the relatives of Omagh's victims are pursuing this civil action even though they have already been compensated in full by the British state through its compensation scheme pursuant to the Criminal Injuries [Compensation] [Northern Ireland] Order 1988.

This has led many legal observers to conclude that the motivation behind the civil action is accusatory and not compensatory.

The matter of whether the initial payment of £442,702 should be repaid in full to the NILSC will be decided by the Belfast High Court over the coming weeks.

# The need to save 16 Moore Street

Maria McCann

On the evening of 28 April 1916, with the GPO engulfed in flames, the leaders of the Provisional Irish Government and dozens of IRA men and women retreated from the GPO and made their way to Moore Street under a constant barrage of British gunfire. The rebels entered Dunne's Butchers at No. 5 Moore Street and began tunnelling from one house to another before finally halting at No 16, Plunkett's poultry shop. In an upstairs room at the rear of the house the Provisional Irish Government held its last council of war. Present were Patrick Pearse, Tom Clarke, Joseph Plunkett, Sean MacDiarmada and James Connolly. In desperate circumstances the leaders examined their options.

After a prolonged and acrimonious discussion the Provisional Irish Government agreed to surrender. From this upstairs room Elizabeth O'Farrell was entrusted to inform the British Army Command of the rebel surrender. O'Farrell made her way to Parnell Street, where she was brought into Tom Clarke's shop by several British soldiers. There General Lowe demanded that O'Farrell return and inform Patrick Pearse that he must present himself at the Moore Street barricade and make an unconditional surrender no later than 2.30pm. At the appointed hour Pearse presented General Lowe with his sword, pistol and ammunition and signed the document of surrender outside O'Byrne's shop on the corner of Moore Street. The remaining leaders of the Provisional Government and the IRA men and women who left 16 Moore Street on that faithful day were marching to their graves or a prison cell. But their courage and determination continues to inspire and will continue to do so until Ireland is free and independent.

The past ninety years have witnessed a worsening deterioration in the condition of 16 Moore Street. Until recently most Dubliners have been unaware of the building's significance. A tiny plaque hanging high on the building's outer wall, unnoticeable at street-level, is the only indication of No.16's historical importance. Sometime ago it emerged that devel-

opers want to demolish 16 Moore St and build a shopping centre in its place. A small but vocal group, the Save 16 Moore Street Committee, met at Taylor's Hall on Wednesday, August 24th, to oppose the demolition of 16 Moore Street and demand its repair and restoration. The appalling and dilapidated state of No. 16 was recently highlighted by Matt Doyle of the National Graves Association. 'Time is



2005: 16 Moore Street

against us with the condition of the building deteriorating quickly', said Doyle. 'There is a need for urgent action to be taken with regard to the roof. Recent damage has left the building exposed to the elements. If 16 Moore Street is to be saved, work will have to commence within the next few days'.

Even though the Dublin government has done nothing to redress the decay and decline of a key 1916 site, in the heart of the Taoiseach's constituency, Dublin City Council can move to redress this problem. Under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 a local authority can serve a notice on a owner or occupier of a neglected and derelict building requiring them to undertake works to repair the building and preserve it from further neglect. If the owner fails to comply with the notice, Dublin City Council could initiate the necessary work and lay the charges at the door of the owner.

But instead of acting expeditiously to halt the further deterioration of the building, Dublin City Council created

confusion by suggesting that Moore Street may have been renumbered in the years since the Rising. However, Matt Doyle of the National Graves' Association rejected this suggestion as a mischievous distraction. 'The National Graves' Association can categorically state that 16 Moore Street was the last headquarters of the Provisional Irish Government of 1916', said Doyle. I would argue that Dublin City Council has not mistakenly forgotten the last location of the last headquarters of the Provisional Irish Government of 1916. But perhaps they would like to forget it. We must make it our business to ensure that they are not allowed turn their back on this important part of our history.

On 9 September, Dermot Aherne, the Irish foreign affairs minister, announced the allocation of a further €15 million euro to complete the construction of a new visitor centre at the Battle of the Boyne site on the banks of the River Boyne near Drogheda in Co Louth. This will bring the total spending on the project to €30 million. The Battle of the Boyne site was purchased by the Dublin government in 1999. It was developed under the auspices of the Belfast Agreement and has been open to the public each summer since 2003.

The Dublin government's contrasting treatment of the Battle of the Boyne site and 16 Moore Street is nothing short of a national scandal. I am not for one moment suggesting that the Battle of the Boyne site is unworthy or undeserving of funding. It is an important historical site and I welcome its development. But 16 Moore Street is just as important in historical terms and equally deserving of funding. Over the past decade many of the political ideals that were held dear to genuine nationalists and republicans were bartered and squandered as part of a process that entrenched British rule in Ireland and coaxed unionism into an internal power-sharing arrangement within the six-counties.

Our political ideals have been destroyed and squandered. We must not stand idly by as official Ireland allows our national historical heritage to fall to rack and ruin. Join the campaign to save 16 Moore Street.

# The spectre of equality

John Hanley

A lot of column inches have been devoted to appraising the recent outburst of orchestrated unionist/loyalist violence. Unionist establishment politicians have almost unanimously refused to condemn the sectarian carnage, despite being confronted with evidence of attacks against Catholic churches, the desecration of Catholic graves in Magherafelt and Belfast, the attempted murder of two young nationalists in Belfast, a brief siege of nationalist housing estates on the Grosvenor and Springfield Road, ongoing attacks against nationalist residents in the Co Antrim village of Ahoghill and 50 rounds being fired at PSNI/RUC landrovers.

I wonder how unionist politicians and the British state would have responded to similar behaviour by nationalists. One can only imagine the unionist outcry. And how many ex-republican prisoners would be back behind bars? How many young nationalists would have been hospitalised by British Army-PSNI plastic bullets? Instead of acting with good authority and criticising the blatant thuggery, unionist politicians have proffered a shopping list of rationalisations for the recent 'disturbances'. Excuses range from anger at the release of Sean Kelly, the disbandment of the RIR, the minimalist acts of demilitarisation in South Armagh, equal cross-community recruitment by the PSNI, and perhaps most often quoted: the ongoing largesse that is being bestowed upon the nationalist community under the threat of renewed violence. Listening to unionist and loyalist politicians ranting and raving on our national airwaves one could be forgiven for momentarily imagining that unionism has its back to the wall and that the much-awaited declaration of our 32 county socialist republic is imminent. But what is at the heart of unionist ire?

Let us briefly deal with the most pronounced unionist grievance: ongoing financial investment for the nationalist community and concomitant discrimination against loyalist working-class communities. There is no denying that there is social deprivation in loyalist working-class areas. But it is nothing on the level suggested. In fact a recent report published by the northern Department of Social Development

[DSD] found that individual nationalists are still twice as likely to be unemployed than their unionist counterparts and for longer periods. The report also pointed out that young nationalists are more likely to leave school without qualifications and that seven of the ten most deprived wards in the six-counties are nationalist. The social and economic statistics simply do not corroborate the grievances that have been voiced by unionist and loyalist politicians.

Clearly, things are not as bad on the



Clean up after unionist rioting

socio-economic level as most unionists would have us believe. And if one switches to the all important constitutional question, things look a lot brighter for unionism, now that it has finally secured a resounding political victory via the Belfast Agreement. However, unionist politicians have chosen not to sell this pro-union political victory to their electorate. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised. Communal fear is a useful aid in keeping a political constituency in line. Just ask George W Bush and his neo-conservative electoral strategists. But let me pose this scenario. If in 1990 unionism had of been told that by 2005 the provisional movement would have abandoned its armed campaign, decommissioned its arsenal and effectively disbanded in return for the entrenchment of British sovereignty in Ireland, Sinn Féin's acceptance of the unionist veto, the deletion of Articles 2 & 3 and the provisional's willingness 'to administrate British rule in Ireland for the foreseeable future', most unionists would have thought you were insane. But this is precisely what has transpired. In short the unionist community and its political leadership are refusing to publicly acknowledge that the Belfast Agreement is an Irish republican Versailles and a remarkable pro-British

victory.

But how does this explain 'growing unionist disquiet and alienation'? Could it be that unionism is just simply unwilling to pay the political price for the provisional movement's capitulation: equality for the nationalist community within a British six-county state? Perhaps here lies the real motivation behind the recent sectarian upheavals. The provisionals have abandoned their tradition republican objectives for a chunk of the British six-county pie. No sane person disputes this. But is unionism prepared to accept nationalist equality within the six-county state? Is unionism capable of accepting wide-ranging reform? Eoghan Harris once provoked a UUP audience by reminding them: 'The provos are like a child who has been continually pestering his parents for a bike for Christmas. After thirty years they're not getting the bike. For God's sake at least give them a few stickers'. It would seem that unionism wants the stickers as well. Unionism is psychologically and politically unwilling to embrace equality and share power with nationalists and republicans within a six-county context. Increased nationalist participation in 'our' police, the banning of Orange marches through nationalist areas, ministerial portfolios in the hands of republicans and nationalists and the advance of a human rights and equality agenda is anathema to the colonial mindset that is political unionism.

It has been muted that the DUP is more than content with direct rule and is prepared to wait years before it shares power with Sinn Féin. Recent events have once again shown that unionism is an exclusive, reactionary and anti-democratic political phenomenon. Having donned the laurel wreath of political victory and reassured of the constitutional status quo, unionism is only now lashing out at the prospect of equality within its six-county orange state. Meanwhile the unionist political establishment exhibits all of the hubris of the political victor who is unwilling to countenance a place at the table for the vanquished. It seems Adams and McGuinness cannot even persuade unionism to share power within a reformed British six-county state. How in the name of God do they expect to persuade them to enter an all-Ireland political arrangement?

# The final PIRA humiliation

Paul Maguire

***We will never decommission. Never. The only thing that will be decommissioned is the British state in Ireland*** - Prominent Belfast provisional Brian Keenan in August 2001.

***The IRA leadership can now confirm that the process of putting our arms beyond use has now been completed*** - PIRA statement announcing the full decommissioning of its weapons

On 26 September 2005, almost two months after it announced the formal end of its armed campaign against the British occupation in Ireland, the leadership of the Provisional Irish Republican Army [PIRA] surrendered and decommissioned its entire arsenal before the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning [IICD], a body that was established at the behest of the British government.

## Initial demand

The provisional movement's demise has been unique in that its political surrender preceded its military surrender. By 1998 the Adams-McGuinness led provisional movement had jettisoned the traditional republican demand for a British withdrawal from Ireland, embraced the unionist veto, accepted the entrenchment of British sovereignty, supported the deletion of Articles 2&3 and the revival of Stormont, welcomed the reform of the RUC and had publicly committed itself 'to administering British rule in Ireland for the foreseeable future'. It was an ideological volte-face unparalleled in modern Irish political history.

But these political compromises were never going to be enough to satiate the British military establishment. These enemies of Irish freedom would not countenance the continuing existence of the physical force republicanism. Peace process or no peace process their primary objective remained the wholesale defeat and humiliation of the militant separatism.

For the British military establishment the peace process was just as another theatre where it could attempt to humiliate and defeat the Irish freedom struggle. To use a Mao Zedong adage, in their eyes, the peace process was simply war by another means.

With this politico-military objective in mind it came as no surprise that the initial demand for IRA decommissioning came from Sir Patrick Mayhew during a March 1995 visit to Washington. The provisional leadership



**PIRA weapons: surrendered and destroyed**

immediately poured cold water on this demand. Volunteers were informed that under no circumstances would PIRA weapons be destroyed at the behest of the British government. 'Not a bullet, not an ounce' became the mantra. However, both governments were given a totally different assurance. During *Tonight with Vincent Browne* [26-09-05] Albert Reynolds disclosed that, notwithstanding the provisional's public position at the time, Martin McGuinness had assured him he realised 'that all weapons would have to be banjaxed'.

However, Adams and McGuinness did not convince everyone within their ranks. During a 1996 Army Convention a section of the PIRA attempted to tie both the political and military hands of the Adams-McGuinness leadership by passing a motion which ensured that: 'The Army Authority shall retain, maintain and ensure the safety of all armaments, equipment and other resources of Oglagh na hEireann until such a time as the sovereignty and unity of the Republic of Ireland has been attained. Once a settlement has been agreed, leading to a united Ireland, all

decisions relating to decommissioning of armaments, equipment and other resources must be ratified by an Army Convention'.

The motion was adopted by a large majority. It put PIRA arms beyond the immediate grasp of Adams and McGuinness and stipulated that weapons would not be decommissioned until a British withdrawal had been secured.

## Paving the way

In August 1997 both governments established the IICD to facilitate the destruction of republican arms. The IICD was headed by General John de Chastelain, a Canadian of Scottish ancestry, whose father and mother were prominent members of MI6.

By October 1997 it had become clear that the provisional leadership was about to settle for a predominantly internal settlement which would leave British rule in Ireland intact. A PIRA split was inevitable. It came in late October 1997 when opponents of the Adams-McGuinness strategy departed and reconstituted Oglagh na hEireann. The Adams-McGuinness leadership, having shrugged off its main source of opposition, moved with speed to remould PIRA policy on future acts of decommissioning.

It was widely reported in the media at the time that the PIRA Army Council had appointed Brian Keenan to liaise with the IICD. Around this time the Army Council also designated its former Chief-of-Staff, Kevin McKenna, as the person to oversee the centralisation of arms dumps, which would pave the way for the surrender and destruction of PIRA weaponry under the auspices of General de Chastelain.

This was no easy task. According to Ed Maloney, author of *A Secret History of the IRA*, by 1988, Michael McKevitt, the then PIRA quarter-master general [QMG] had already imported a colossal 140 tonnes of Libyan weapons under the nose of both the British and Irish intelligence services. This massive arsenal would have to be centralised before any destruction could commence.

In 1998 the PIRA Army Council also appointed a prominent member of the QMG department from County Cavan to assist McKenna in locating and centralising PIRA weapons. From its initial stages this task took a number of years to complete, as according to Ed Maloney, McKevitt had departed from the provisionals in 1997 with his entire QMG department. At a December 1998 Convention, the PIRA Army Council was reinvested with the power to decide when to decommission weapons. This empowered Adams and McGuinness to deal with PIRA weaponry as they wished and it represented a direct reversal of motion adopted by the October 1996 Convention, which vested this authority in an Army Convention.

### PIRA surrenders weaponry

Despite the previous promises of 'Not an bullet, not an ounce', and despite the repeated declarations that there would be no destruction of PIRA weaponry, in the period between October 2001 and October 2003, the provisionals completed three 'significant acts of decommissioning' under the auspices of the IICD. After the first act the PIRA leadership once again misled its volunteers by informing them that the only weapons destroyed were compromised weapons in compromised dumps. On the second occasion volunteers were informed that only homemade material, mass-produced by the PIRA's Engineering Department since 1994, had been destroyed. These ludicrous claims could only be believed by those who refused to accept the harsh reality of the Adams-McGuinness 'peace strategy', namely, that the PIRA was being bartered and sacrificed to secure power for Sinn Fein in partitionist institutions in both parts of the island. On 28 July 2005 the PIRA instructed its appointed representative to renew contact with the IICD. Throughout the month of September the remainder of the entire PIRA arsenal was destroyed under the watchful eye of General John de Chastelain who on September 26 declared: 'The IRA has met its commitment to put all its arms beyond use'.

### Why not sooner?

In the aftermath of the recent PIRA announcement some commentators

have asked why PIRA disarmament could not have been achieved sooner. There are two reasons why this was not possible. Firstly, in the period following the Belfast Agreement, the prospect of large-scale PIRA defections to other armed republican organisations weighed heavily on the minds of the provisional leadership. This is the main reason why their project of taking the gun out of republican politics could not have been achieved more expeditiously. However, in 2005, the absence of a viable military alternative



**Adams: architect of PIRA surrender**

to the provisionals has removed all restraints in this regard. Secondly, Adams and McGuinness took a strategic decision not to make their ultimate concession while a lame-duck David Trimble remained at the helm of Ulster Unionism and particularly when all the signs indicated that the political pendulum within unionism was swinging towards the DUP. In the past Trimble supporters have argued that the former UUP leader transformed the provisionals from 'militant separatists to structural unionists'. But DUP supporters can now gloat that Paisley secured the provisional's military surrender. And who can deny the truth of these assertions?

### Logical conclusion

The full surrender of PIRA weaponry is the logical outcome of the so-called Adams-McGuinness peace strategy. The vast bulk of the provisional arsenal was imported in the mid-eighties to sustain an armed campaign which had as its objective a British withdrawal. But when the Adams-McGuinness leadership disregarded this objective, these weapons were superfluous and later became an albatross around the

neck of Sinn Fein electoral ambitions. The question now is what is the purpose of a disarmed PIRA? The PIRA was founded to wage armed struggle against the British state in Ireland. It has formally ended its armed campaign against the occupation and agreed 'to administer British rule in Ireland for the foreseeable future'. Clearly having being disarmed and having discarded its original objectives, the organisation has no *raison d'être* to exist. The DUP leadership is cognisant of this, as is the Sinn Fein leadership. One does not need to be a prophet to forecast that complete PIRA disbandment will be Paisley's next demand for entering into power-sharing with the provisionals. Having secured full PIRA decommissioning without any major opposition, it is probable that Adams and McGuinness will secure PIRA disbandment in the near future.

### An ignominious end

It was in May 1987 that Gerry Adams - via Fr Alec Reid - first offered Charles Haughey a full PIRA ceasefire in return for the creation of 'a pan-nationalist alliance'. The intervening years have witnessed Adams and McGuinness dilute traditional republican demands and bring about the military surrender of the PIRA. It was apt that Fr Alec Reid should witness the final PIRA humiliation, for the Redemptorist priest was Adams' original conduit - almost two decades ago - in attempting to bring this event about. Thirty five years after the PIRA was founded, with hundreds of its volunteers martyred, thousands more having served lengthy prison sentences, and some of its prisoners still in British and Irish jails, the PIRA has left the field without having attained any of its initial political objectives and without its arsenal intact. Revolution has been replaced with constitutionalism. The demand for British withdrawal has been replaced with a craven pursuit of political power in partitionist institutions in both parts of the island. The provisional movement has departed from the revolutionary path to follow in the sterile constitutional footsteps of Collins, DeValera and Goulding. By any standards it is an ignominious end for what was once the world's most effective guerrilla army.

# Luis Posada and US state-terrorism

Elaine Power

*If someone protects a terrorist, if someone feeds a terrorist, that person is just as guilty as a terrorist* - US President, George W Bush, August 2003

In April 2005 a private jet touched down on a Miami Airfield. The plane carried precious US cargo, in the form of Luis Posada Carilles, a Cuban-born CIA henchman, who played a central role in the CIA's 40-year dirty war in Latin America and the Caribbean. The US State Department - for reasons which will become apparent - went to great lengths to secure Posada's release from his Panamanian jail, out of fear that he would expose his long-standing murderous activities as an employee of the US state. Only his release and speedy return to America could guarantee his silence. However, within days of his arrival in Miami, the Venezuelan government of Hugo Chavez stuck a spanner in the works by applying for Posada to be extradited to Venezuela so that he could face charges for the torture and murder of 60 civil rights activists. More than any other, the case of Luis Posada reveals the true extent of US state-terrorism and exposes the grotesque hypocrisy that is the Bush administration's so-called 'war on terror'.

Luis Posada Carilles was one of Fulgencia Batista's loyal henchmen who, in the aftermath of 1959 Cuban Revolution, was forced to relocate to Miami. Around this time the CIA recruited Posada and enrolled him in 'Operation 40', a prominent anti-Castro counter-revolutionary militia, which according to Frank Sturgis [CIA operative and Watergate burglar] functioned 'to assassinate either members of the military or the political parties of the country that you were going to infiltrate...we were concentrating on Cuba at that time'.

Posada was involved in the 1960 Havana harbour bombing of La Coubre, a Belgian vessel carrying military supplies for the Cuban government. Posada and 'Operation 40' also participated in the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion: a failed adventure which consolidated the Cuban revolution. In

1965 Posada, still on the CIA payroll, became a high-ranking member of Venezuela's secret police. During this period he is suspected to have been involved in the torture and murder of more than 60 civil rights activists.

In 1976 George Bush Snr was appointed Director of the CIA. One of his first acts saw the merging of five disparate anti-Castro groups under the umbrella of the Coordination of United Revolutionary Organisations [CORU]. Ted Shackley [the then CIA Director of Special Operations] trained CORU personnel to 'jointly participate in the planning, financing and carrying out of terrorist operations and attacks

arm the Contras in their attempts to overthrow the Sandinista government.

In a 1998 *New York Times* interview Posada admitted to planting 4 bombs in Cuban hotels during the summer of 1997, which resulted in the death of one Italian tourist. Posada next made international headline when he was arrested in Panama with Guillermo Nuevo. Both were carrying a suitcase full of explosives. It is widely believed that they were intending to assassinate Fidel Castro at the Pan-American Summit. Nuevo and Posada were jailed in 2000, but were released 4 years later as a result of a deal hatched in Miami involving Colin Powell

[the then US Secretary of State, Otto Reich [the then US Assistant Secretary of Western Hemispheric Affairs] and a representative of Panamanian President Mireya Moscoso.

Luis Posada made a triumphant return to Miami, where he roamed the streets at will. However, within six weeks of his return, the Venezuelan Supreme Court applied for the CIA-controlled

terrorist to be extradited because 'as the author of homicide in Venezuela he must be judged'.

For the past forty years the US state trained, financed, equipped and deployed Luis Posada - and many more like him - with murderous effect, as part of its dirty war in Latin America and the Caribbean. But now Posada's murderous history is coming back to haunt the US government, as it hypocritically pontificates about its so-called 'war on terror'. The evidence against Posada is overwhelming. Even US Democrat Senator Delahunt, in a recent *Newsweek* interview, was forced to admit that 'there are mounds of evidence, reportedly including US intelligence reports, that link Posada to numerous terrorist attacks throughout the hemisphere'.

The Bush administration is in a dilemma. If it extradites Luis Posada it runs the risk of exposing the nefarious details of its 40-year long dirty war in the Americas; while if it refuses to extradite and shields Posada, its so-called 'war on terror' will be exposed for the sham that it is.

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against Cuba'. Posada was once again central to CIA plans. In the summer of 1976 CORU planted bombs in Costa Rica, Jamaica, Barbados, Puerto Rico, Panama and Colombia. It attempted to kidnap the Cuban ambassador in Mexico and murdered the Chilean Foreign Minister, Orlando Letelier and his aide in Washington. On 6 October 1976 CORU evaded airport security and planted a bomb on a Cuban airliner: 76 people were murdered. Declassified FBI reports from 1976 reveal the US government was - at all times - fully aware of CORU counter-revolutionary operations.

In the face of overwhelming evidence, Posada was jailed in the US for his role in the bombing. However, his jailing was merely a cover. He 'miraculously' escaped after a brief period in detention. Thereafter, he quickly rejoined the CORU and spent the next eight years working as a CIA 'support director' in El Salvador, where he played a central part in the arming of the Contra terrorists in Nicaragua. Posada was responsible for gathering cargoes of cocaine in El Salvador which were dispatched to the US, the proceeds of which were used to train and



## A date which will live in infamy

When is a political event historic? And how does one define the end of an era? These are pertinent questions at this time. Over recent days political commentators have used words and phrases such as 'historic' and 'the end of an era' to mark the provisional movement's decision to surrender and decommission its substantial arsenal. But they have failed to explain why it is historic. And they have been reluctant to ask whether history can provide us with any clues as to whether it may mark the end of an era.

Politicians of various hues have rushed to offer their own unique historical perspective. Bertie Ahern believes 26 September 2005 is an historic date because it marks the end of the physical force tradition in Irish political affairs. He is not alone in arguing this point. On a recent series of *Questions and Answers* Martin Ferris suggested that Gerry Adams had succeeded where Collins, De Valera and Goulding had failed, namely, he had successfully diverted the republican movement away from revolutionary physical force and guided it down the purely constitutional path without leaving a residual militant offshoot in his wake. The accuracy of these pronouncements will be addressed in due course.

But let us begin by asking whether the PIRA's decision to fully decommission is historic? And if so, why is it remarkable? It is an understatement to describe the provisional's recent disarming as historic. But why is it so? It cannot be historic in terms of conflict resolution because the causes of conflict remain. Travel the short distance to the border. Witness the ongoing British military presence. Ask the residents of the South Armagh village of Jonesborough about the so-called peace dividend. They will tell you that on the day the provisional movement surrendered its arsenal they were subjected to a 24-hour British Army incursion. Houses were raided, outhouses were ransacked and cars were torn asunder. Consult a constitutional lawyer about the wider constitutional implications of the Belfast Agreement and he will inform you that British sovereignty in Ireland has been entrenched now that Articles 2 & 3 have been diluted. Therefore, the provisional's arms surrender is not historic in terms of conflict resolution. The causes of conflict remain. The historical importance of 26 September 2005 lies in the fact that the provisional movement has become the first republican organisation since 1791 to surrender its arsenal at the behest of the British government while the occupation is still in place. And why has it decommissioned its weaponry? To comply with a longstanding British demand and to secure political access to ministerial portfolios in a subservient British parliament in Ireland and to participate in a future coalition governments south of the border.

It is unconscionable for any republican to accept British sovereignty over any part of Ireland. And it is equally unconscionable to surrender arms for destruction while

Britain occupies one sod of Irish soil. These arms were procured to liberate our country. They were not procured to be bartered for power in partitionist institutions on both parts of the island. Thus republicans do not regard 26 September 2005 as an historic date in any positive sense of the word. On the contrary we regard it as a date which will live in infamy.

For the past number of years Gerry Adams repeatedly stated that his primary political objective was to remove the gun from Irish politics. Not remove the British state from Irish politics. Only the gun. To date he has only managed to remove republican guns. British Army and British state-sponsored loyalist weapons remain in commission. Notwithstanding this fact, does the provisional's surrender mark the end of an era - as Bertie Ahern and Martin Ferris would have us believe? Does it signal the end of militant separatism?

History can assist us in answering this question. On 28 July 2005 the provisional movement formally ended its armed campaign against the British state in Ireland. It may be the first republican organisation since 1791 to surrender its weapons for destruction at the behest of the British state but it is not the first republican organisation to have failed to achieve the objective of Irish national liberation. Nor is it the only republican organisation to metamorphose into a purely constitutional mode. There are numerous other examples: Fianna Fail [1926], Clan na Phoblachta [1946] and Sinn Féin the Workers' Party [1970]. These organisations were all IRA offshoots. Did their emergence signal an end to militant separatism? No it did not. Why? Because the cause of conflict - the British presence in Ireland - remained.

Revolutionary nationalism has not always been a permanent feature of the Irish political landscape. The revolutionary tide ebbs and flows. At present militant separatism has suffered a strategic reversal. Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness bear primary responsibility for this. They have perpetrated the most monumental treason in Irish republican history. And yet it would seem that their arrogance is as grand as their treason. Adams and McGuinness believe they have finally removed the republican gun from Irish politics without leaving a militant republican offshoot in their wake. But these quislings must recognise that their mandate only permits them to speak on behalf of a minority of the Irish people. They cannot speak for future generations. Militant Irish republicanism did not end on 26 September 2005. It is a living thing. That chapter of Irish history can only be written when British rule in Ireland ends. For if the pages of Irish history teach us anything, they teach us that revolutionary violence is inevitable as long as Britain exercises sovereignty over any part of Ireland.

Letters and articles (800, 1100 or 2200 words) can be sent to Forum Magazine at:

The New Republican Forum, PO Box 10, Dundalk Sorting Office, Dundalk, Co. Louth, Ireland.

# Flying Column

## Hand of God, voice of truth

International soccer legend, Diego Maradona, who recently overcame a battle with a life-threatening cardio-vascular condition, is currently presenting his own one-hour chat show, *The Night of Number Ten*, on Argentine TV. The build up to the first showed centred around Maradona's promise to reveal what actually happened during his 'Hand of God' goal against England in the 1986 World Cup quarter-final in Mexico. To the roll of a drum, Maradona informed his studio audience and viewers that he did indeed handle the ball and that he had scored a similar goal for Napoli against Udinese earlier in his career. He added that he urged his embarrassed team-mates to exaggerate the famous goal celebration by telling them: 'He who robs the robber is pardoned for a hundred years', which all of his team-mates understood to be a reference to the Malvinas War. The British never forgave Maradona for the 'Hand of God' goal: a fact which they have never failed to remind the world at every given opportunity. Contrast this to their begrudging silence concerning the second goal in that game, when Maradona weaved and shimmied past four English players, before rounding Peter Shilton to slide the ball into the net, executing what was perhaps the greatest goal ever scored in the beautiful game. Maradona has extended Fidel Castro an invitation to appear on his show, in appreciation for the help he received while convalescing in Cuba during his recent battle with drugs.

## The world according to Pat

Pat Robertson's recent incitement that the US government murder Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is without doubt outrageous. But for this particular far-right Christian evangelist, outrageous statements are simply par for the course. It just happens that most of you won't have heard them, unless you are one of the 863,000 daily viewers who tune into his loony right-wing TV show. During a recent TV appearance Robertson declared that feminism: 'encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians'!

## Hurricane Katrina exposes racism

US oil giants used Hurricane Katrina as an excuse to hike gas prices still further beyond the record pump prices set in August. There is no doubt climate disaster can be profitable - just so long as you happen to be a stockholder or an executive of a major U.S. oil company. The scale of the devastation resulting from Hurricane Katrina won't be known for weeks. But we already know who has borne the brunt of this tragedy: the poor and predominantly black working-class communities of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, who had neither the finance nor means to flee the city. The Bush administration's initial lax response was quite rightly the subject of intense criticism across the US. Perhaps their inaction can be explained by the fact that those most affected were poor and black: people of no consequence as far as the neo-conservatives in Washington are concerned. This attitude of racist indifference was best exemplified by

the former US first lady Barbara Bush who, after meeting hurricane evacuees in the Houston Astrodome, declared: 'So many of these people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this is working very well for them'. Is it any wonder young George turned out the way he did? As the old saying goes: 'What's in the cat, is in the kitten'.

## A hard neck

*An Phoblacht* [01-09-05] marked the death of Gerry Fitt with an article which chronicled the life and legacy of the former West Belfast MP. Dismissive of Fitt's political career the piece declared: 'By 1973 during the negotiations for the Sunningdale Agreement, Fitt's lasting disengagement with the interests and wishes of the nationalist people had become apparent'. Flying Column thinks that's a tad rich, coming from the Sinn Fein news-sheet. At Sunningdale Fitt negotiated a power-sharing executive, an All-Ireland Council [to the intense hostility of unionism] without the deletion of Articles 2 & 3. In negotiating the 1998 Belfast Agreement the Sinn Fein leadership conceded Articles 2 & 3 and could only secure minimalist cross-border bodies, a sectarian-orientated assembly and a power-sharing executive. If Fitt disengaged from 'the interests and wishes of the nationalist people', what does that say about Provisional Sinn



Fein leadership?

## Provo intimidation

On 13 September a group of 50 people picketed the home of Bridgeen Hagans, the partner of the late Robert McCartney, in the Mountpottinger Road area of Belfast. This picket was a cowardly attempt to intimidate a grieving mother of two. It could not have taken place without the provisional movement's approval. This form of intimidation was not an isolated incident. During recent unionist rioting on the Springfield Road, as nationalist and republican residents sought to defend their areas from loyalist incursions, three prominent Belfast provisionals threatened Brendan Shannon, a former PIRA prisoner, that 'he would be buried' for having publicly disagreed with a Sinn Fein MLA's demand that nationalists should rely upon the PSNI and not themselves for protection! Having reached an accommodation with - and now unwilling to fight - its traditional enemy, the provisional movement is venting its spleen against its own internal critics.

## A new era of peace?

On the day the provisional leadership announced the full decommissioning of its arsenal, nationalist residents of Jonesborough, South Armagh were subjected to a 24-hour British Army/PSNI siege. Dozens of homes and outhouses were ransacked and searched by British soldiers and armed members of the PSNI. Many locals believed the heavy-handed operation was a deliberate attempt to rub salt into the wound of the proud republican community of South Armagh. On the same day, a loyalist device was planted at the entrance to the O'Donovan Rossa GAA Club in County Derry. As the provos disarm, the traditional enemies of Irish freedom remain as active as ever.

# Political Prisoners

## Hunger strike escalates

Eoin McGrath

United States military authorities at Guantanamo Bay prison camp are currently force-feeding 20 hunger-striking political prisoners.

The hunger strike is in protest at the detainees' long imprisonment without charge and the brutality of the authorities, including alleged beatings, sexual assaults and the desecration of the Koran on numerous occasions.

Amnesty International, in its recently issued annual report on human rights, said Guantanamo had become the 'gulag of our times'.

According to just-released memos, eyewitness accounts report of seeing captives shackled in a fetal position for 24 hours without food or water and left in their own excrement, another gagged with duct tape that covered much of his head and another who had torn out his hair after being chained all night in a hot room.

The U.S considers none of the detainees as prisoners of war, which means they do not enjoy rights under the Geneva Convention, which protects POWs from indefinite imprisonment and aggressive interrogation.

It is Washington's view that because the detainees allegedly targeted civilians and did not belong to a conventional army - or, in the case of the Taliban, did not serve under a legitimate government, this classifies them as unlawful or enemy combatants - a decision that some governments, numerous human rights organisations and critics of US foreign policy vehemently disagree.

A report in *The New York Times* quoted Kristine Huskey, a lawyer who represents detainees in Guantanamo, as saying: "The situation in the camp itself is very bad." Huskey continued: 'the hunger strike is far more widespread than the government is letting on'.

Republicans are only too aware of this failed policy, having experienced numerous British government's attempt to beat, intimidate and force feed republican prisoners to conform and to lose identity as POWs and abandon their ideology.

*The New York Times* recently quoted a Libyan detainee Omar Deghayes who is on hunger strike as saying 'Look, I'm dying a slow death in this place as it is. I don't have any hope of fair treatment, so what have I got to lose?'

In light of the seriousness of this issue, the US military's position and justification for this forced policy, is that some inmates continue to provide valuable information, ranging from how al-Qaeda raises funds and recruits members to how it plans attacks.

Detainees, officials say, have helped identify new prisoners, from Osama bin Laden's bodyguards to rank-and-file militia fighters.

Late last year, according to officials, a few detainees helped uncover a previously unknown al-Qaeda cell in another country.

However, earlier this year the civilian head of military intelligence at Guantanamo admitted in various interviews that the majority of detainees were no longer of much intelligence value and were not even being regularly interrogated for intelligence gathering purposes.

With this arrogant uncaring approach, it is imperative that all governments and progressive forces apply the necessary pressure on President Bush to ultimately release all prisoners that are being held without trial and until this takes place to apply principles consistent with the Geneva Convention before this hunger strike escalates in to a state sponsored death camp.

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## The following Irish republican prisoners are affiliated to the New Republican Forum:

### Portlaoise Prison, Ireland

Tony Hyland  
25 years

Michael McKeivitt  
20 years

Paddy McDonagh  
10 years

Kieran McDonagh  
10 years

Alan Patterson  
9 years

Ken Patterson  
7 years

Declan Carroll  
7 years

Richard Whyte  
5 years

Christy Dineen  
5 years

Sean Moloney  
4.5 years

James Bullman  
4 years

Jeff Lee  
4 years

### Whitemoor Prison, England

Michael McDonald  
30 years

Declan Rafferty  
30 years

### Full Sutton Prison, England

Fintan O'Farrell  
30 years

James McCormack  
18 years

Noel Maguire,  
18 years

### Long Lartin Prison, England

Aidan Hulme  
16 years

Robert Hulme  
16 years

# NEW REPUBLICAN FORUM

The New Republican Forum is a coalition of political and community activists, founded to challenge the political status quo in Ireland by providing a radical Republican alternative to the mainstream political establishment.

## The New Republican Forum:

- Stands for the reunification of Ireland and opposes all aspects of British interference in Irish affairs.
- Opposes the Belfast Agreement, which subverts the Irish people's inalienable right to self-determination.
- Stands for the creation of a just society in Ireland, based on principles of equality, social justice and genuine democracy, underpinned by a comprehensive charter of inalienable human rights.
- Supports the promotion and development of Irish culture.
- Opposes the resurgence of imperialism as a political ideology, led by the United States, its allies and client regimes.
- Supports all oppressed peoples struggling for national liberation.
- Opposes any attempt by the Dublin government to aid or assist any Western military alliance.

## Our aims are:

- To establish a credible Republican opposition to British rule in Ireland.
- To critically reassess and analyse the history of the Republican struggle in Ireland, and by so doing, chart a course for the future of the Republican movement.
- To establish, support and coordinate the activities of Republican, community-based and other progressive organisations, forging a basis for a new national movement.
- To liaise with other progressive forces, nationally and internationally, including anti-capitalist groups, trade unionists and environmental movements, along with national liberation movements worldwide, to further the cause of anti-imperialism.
- To establish a range of independent media outlets providing Irish people with alternative sources of information on political and social issues

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