



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Gerry Adams and the IRA as they really are

The following article from a US writer, George Will, a columnist with the Washington Post and the New York post, reveals a picture of Gerry Adams and the IRA which few in USA have yet seen. We are hopeful that it will assist Americans to understand the truth about Irish Republicans and clear away the myths, mostly alcohol-induced, which surrounds the true character of their campaign of terror in Northern Ireland.

RECENTLY, the bodies of 10 men hanged by the British 80 years ago were disinterred in Dublin's Mountjoy prison and their coffins carried in a cortege that paused at the post office where the 1916 Easter Rising began. They were reburied with military honors after a Mass celebrated by a cardinal and attended by Prime Minister Bertie Ahern. They had been executed for conducting guerrilla warfare against the British army in 1920-1921. Ahern delicately, and defensibly, stressed the difference between their "legitimate" violence and that of "other times."

Last week in Belfast, a man of our times, an Irish terrorist who was welcomed at the Bush White House seven months ago, made an overdue and equivocal decision. He essentially "asked" himself to "decommission" his weapons of terror.

Yasser Arafat visited the Clinton White House more frequently - 13 times - than any other foreign official. Gerry Adams, head of the Sinn Fein party, has attended five White House St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

Adams has visited America nine times since 1994, when some of Hollywood's terrorist groupies, including Martin Sheen and Oliver Stone, gave him a 46th birthday party. Simon Jenkins, a British columnist, noted, "For those who make a living faking violence, a practitioner of the real thing has magnetism."

From May 1971 to March 1972, the IRA's second battalion murdered three policemen, 19 soldiers and 27 civilians. Adams was its commander. On July 21, 1972, the Provisional IRA's Belfast Brigade detonated 19 bombs in Belfast, killing nine, mutilating 130. Adams was then running the brigade.

In 1978, 12 people were incinerated when a Provisional IRA bomb destroyed Belfast's La Mon restaurant. Adams was then chief of staff for the Provisional IRA.

Sinn Fein has raised millions of dollars from Irish-Americans since President Clinton permitted fund raising because the party promised (cross its heart and hope to die) the money would not buy guns.

Last week, Adams "asked" Sinn Fein's appendage, the IRA, to "decommission" its weapons. Decommissioning means rendering them "beyond use," whatever that means. Lo and behold, the IRA said it would. This charade of Sinn Fein-IRA separateness is being hailed



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

as another "breakthrough" in another "peace process."

But like Arafat's Palestinian Authority regarding its obligations under the Oslo "peace process," Adams' Sinn Fein-IRA never quite does what it promises to do. Only the IRA knows the locations and quantities of the weapons.

And Moammar Khadafy probably will, if asked, replace the weapons, most of which came from Libya in 1986 and '87. They are estimated to include 1,000 assault rifles, a surface-to-air missile, flamethrowers, rocket launchers and three tons of Semtex plastic explosive.

Although the Good Friday Agreement of April 1998 committed all parties to "total disarmament of all paramilitary organizations," the IRA immediately said: "There will be no decommissioning by the IRA." Sept. 11, 2001, complicated life for Irish terrorists.

Money is one reason for the Sinn Fein-IRA's sudden interest in appearing conciliatory. For American contributors to Sinn Fein, concentrated in New York, and for Sinn Fein's supporters in Washington, Sept. 11 has spoiled the fun of funding and justifying violence from a safe distance.

After Sept. 11, Adams' British publisher decided it would not publish the next volume of his memoirs. However the Times of London reports that Random House, his American publisher, will market the memoirs as the story of the man who "persuaded" the IRA to mend its violent ways and "breathed new life into the peace process."

Adams, like Arafat, and with comparable plausibility, denies complicity in terrorism. Both cultivate the fiction of separation from the violent organizations that serve their respective goals - destruction of British rule in Ulster and of Israel. A mural on an Ulster wall proclaims IRA solidarity with Arafat's cause.

Last week, Adams admitted what Sinn Fein had strenuously denied: One of the three IRA men captured in August while collaborating with narco-terrorists in Colombia is Sinn Fein's representative in Cuba. He said Sinn Fein had not known the man was its representative. Ten days after the Sept. 11 attacks, Sinn Fein said Adams would visit Cuba this fall.

But now we are invited to think that everything changed last week. Hope is possible; skepticism is reasonable. Of the 1916 Rising, William Butler Yeats wrote,

All changed, changed utterly:

A terrible beauty is born

Do not yet bet on beautiful change from the IRA, or against Adams - and Arafat, for that matter - soon being welcomed again in Washington, where wishful thinking is never out of season.