



# The Burning Bush—Online article archive

## Sinn Fein rejects decommissioning and demands disbandment of RUC



Sinn Fein Councillor Alex Maskey

The whole "Peace" deal is quickly being seen for the deception that its opponents declared it to be. Sinn Fein has stated that unless the RUC is disbanded, then there will be no peace. An ultimatum to the new commission on policing in Northern Ireland has been issued by republicans. Sinn Fein has insisted that the peace agreement will collapse unless the Royal Ulster Constabulary is disbanded. "If the RUC remains, then the agreement has failed

and we're back to the drawing board, particularly on issues like policing," Councillor Alex Maskey told a news conference in Belfast. Policing was at the "raw edge" of the peace deal and if a major section of it did not work, then for many people the accord itself would be deemed a failure, he said. Speaking about decommissioning of terrorist weapons on BBC's Today radio programme, Maskey said, "I don't think anyone in the island of Ireland expects decommissioning to begin by any organisation." Billy Hutchinson, spokesman for the Ulster Volunteer Force, the loyalist terror group, took a slightly less intransigent stance when he warned that no decision had yet been taken by paramilitaries about handing over their arms. Sinn



**DUP deputy leader, Peter Robinson, MP**  
"The People of Ulster are beginning to see that the Good Friday Agreement does not exclude terrorists from joining in the police despite the pledges of Tony Blair and David Trimble."

Fein has also demanded that former IRA terrorists be permitted to join the police force that will replace the RUC.



How long before it is clear that these headlines are untrue??

These responses came in the wake of a placatory announcement by the head of the decommissioning body, Canadian General John de Chastelain, who said that a hand-over of terrorist arms would see a reduction in the strength and activities of the security forces in Northern Ireland. More significantly, he indicated that terrorist guns and explosives would be destroyed without forensic testing to see if they had been used in terrorist crimes. This would guarantee terrorist groups that they would never be prosecuted for old crimes. The



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decommissioning body would seal all material handed over to prevent any testing by the police. Furthermore, terrorists would be permitted to destroy their own arms as long as the destruction was verified. Explosives, however, would have to be destroyed by experts from the security forces because of safety requirements.

The intransigence of Sinn Fein/IRA promises to make life very difficult for Prime Minister Tony Blair and his ally in the selling of the Agreement, Ulster Unionist party leader, David Trimble, MP. Tony Blair has reiterated that his government will pass new laws linking the early release of prisoners with decommissioning of arms by terrorist groups. David Trimble said both his and Mr Blair's credibility depended on the Prime Minister adhering to his pre-referendum pledges on the issue. "The Prime Minister assured us of his intention to stick very clearly to the pledges," said Mr Trimble. "He will co-operate with us in ensuring that those pledges are clearly reflected and embodied in the legislation."

But Gerry Adams said Mr Blair had made clear to him that there were no preconditions linked to decommissioning. The only bar to taking office is lack of support at the ballot box. The Prime Minister "made clear that there aren't any preconditions and there can't be any preconditions," said Mr Adams. "I don't think anyone can try to rewrite that agreement."

Either Gerry Adams or David Trimble is telling untruths or Mr. Blair was telling lies to both men to keep them on board the "Agreement Express". It would not be difficult to work out whom Mr. Blair would feel safer in conning!!

One of the things that tipped the balance in favour of the "Peace" Agreement, as far as many unionists were concerned, was the Prime Minister's personal pledge of excluding unrepentant terrorists from any new government and of linking prisoners' releases with the handing over of terrorist weapons. But the IRA has repeatedly said that it is determined to hold on to its weapons, irrespective of Tony Blair's pledges, and is also demanding that its members be allowed to join the new police force which it says must replace the RUC.

When the news of the new legislation governing the release of convicted terrorists was announced on June 5th, we had the same conflicting response. Gerry Adams was pleased that in the legislation the release of prisoners was not linked to decommissioning while David Trimble was pleased that it did. It brings to mind the saying, "There is none so blind as those who will not see." In this instance it is David Trimble and the unionists who voted "YES" who do not want to see that they have indeed been deceived by Tony Blair and that the "NO" camp was right. The happy smile on Gerry Adams' face is all the evidence that doubters should require as evidence of which way things are going.

Any peace that comes to Ulster out of such double-dealing is like the hush that falls upon the multitude gathered to watch a public execution just before the trap-door is released. It is but the prelude to death!



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My pledge to the people of Northern Ireland

- No change in the status of Northern Ireland without the express consent of the people of Northern Ireland.
- Power to take decisions returned to a Northern Ireland Assembly, with accountable North-South cooperation.
- Fairness and equality guaranteed for all.
- Those who use or threaten violence excluded from the government of Northern Ireland.
- Prisoners kept in unless violence is given up for good.

Whatever the referendum result, as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom I will continue to work for stability and prosperity for all the people of Northern Ireland.

Tony Blair

Tony Blair's handwritten pledge to the people of Ulster.