



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Sinn Fein's "Take all . . . Give nothing" policy



Gerry Kelly

To date, not one IRA weapon has been handed over. Indeed, they have not as much as spoken a word to those whose task it is to supervise the decommissioning of terrorist weapons! The IRA remains an armed threat and its weapons are still being used in murder and terror. The recent murder of a Protestant taxi driver in Belfast has shown this to be so. The gun used in that murder has been forensically linked to the murder by the IRA of two policemen in Lurgan before the IRA ceasefire began.

BUT STILL THEY ASK FOR MORE FROM THE UNIONIST PEOPLE AND BLAME THEIR REFUSAL FOR HOLDING UP POLITICAL PROGRESS!!

If the Government gives in yet again and offers further concessions to a still-armed Sinn Fein/IRA, the day when Northern Ireland will be handed over completely to the control of armed terrorists draws near.

***The following articles are from British Newspapers and help to illustrate the hypocritical stance of Sinn fein/IRA on the central issues of democracy and disarming.***

#### **Chastelain warning to Provos on arms decommissioning**

##### **Electronic Telegraph -23 December 2000**

The Provisional IRA was served notice yesterday that time is running out for the Good Friday Agreement unless it swiftly begins to decommission its weapons.

John de Chastelain: 'Time still exists for complete decommissioning of paramilitary arms' General John de Chastelain, who leads the international decommissioning body, delayed making his report until the last possible moment in the hope that the Provos would resume contacts with him. Rumours had abounded in the wake of President Clinton's visit that such a move was imminent. But the Canadian general has had to admit that no progress has been made.

Even though the Government-appointed inspectors, Cyril Ramaphosa, the former African National Congress secretary-general, and Martti Ahtisaari, the former Finnish president, have twice examined two IRA weapons dumps, the Provisionals have had no face-to-face discussions with the general since June.

In his report the general said: "It is crucial that we have substantive engagement with the IRA representative as soon as possible." Talks were supposed to have resumed as part of the May deal to revive the new Stormont power-sharing institutions, which were suspended in February because of the IRA's failure to decommission.

Its political wing, Sinn Fein, claims that the Government has failed to fully implement the Patten reforms on policing and to begin dismantling Army watchtowers in south Armagh. British and Irish officials will have more talks after Christmas. Dublin wants the Government to "jump first" again by removing the watchtowers. But security chiefs say they are



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vital to meet the growing terrorist threat in the area.

The Sinn Fein President, Gerry Adams, said he could not guarantee that the Provisionals would re-engage with the commission in the New Year. His party has launched repeated attacks on the Northern Ireland Secretary, Peter Mandelson, who, it believes, is cautioning Tony Blair to heed the security warnings.

While Gen de Chastelain confirmed that there had been no progress his report said: "We believe that sufficient time still exists for the complete decommissioning of paramilitary arms by June 2001, and that appropriate methods can be set up for that purpose." The Ulster Unionist MP, Ken Maginnis, welcomed the report's acknowledgement that engagement with the IRA representative was crucial.

He said: "Sinn Fein/IRA has squirmed its way through the past seven months seeking to avoid any judgment being made in relation to its own statement on May 6. I would call upon the IRA to respond to this statement by re-engaging with the commission in a way that will see its weapons being put completely and verifiably beyond use."

Gregory Campbell, for the Democratic Unionist Party, said Gen de Chastelain's report did not differ from previous reports of no progress. "That should bring everybody to the conclusion that some of us have been pointing out for the last three years, that the IRA have no intention of voluntarily decommissioning," he said.

### **Feud fears after republican is shot**

**Belfast Telegraph, 20 Dec 2000**

Concern was mounting over tensions among republicans today after an IRA killer was shot six times in a paramilitary-style attack. Robert "Rab" Duffy was found in a lay-by close to a Catholic Church at Aughanduff, near Silverbridge, around 5.30pm yesterday. He had gunshot wounds to both ankles, knees and hands and it is understood that there were signs that he had been bound. His condition was stable today. Duffy (28) was freed under the Good Friday Agreement after being sentenced to life for the murder of company director John Gibson in 1993. Mr Gibson (51) - whose building company Henry Brothers was targeted by the IRA - was shot in the driveway of his Carnmoney home. Hours earlier, he had been told he was being honoured for his work for the British Diabetic Association. Duffy, from Ligoniel Road in Belfast, was jailed after DNA tests matched him to blood from the murder scene. Detectives are investigating a motive for the attack. A security source said: "It is obviously a serious departure for any republican grouping to carry out this type of brutal attack on an ex-prisoner."

### **Provo sights set on further concessions**

**By Malachi O'Doherty Belfast Telegraph, 20/12/00**

Has the State more right to arm itself against the IRA than the IRA has to arm against the State? I would say so; a republican would say no.

The question of how decommissioning is to be managed has been bringing us closer and closer to a parity of legitimacy between paramilitary weaponry and the weaponry of the State. If you are a republican you should probably think that has been a considerable



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achievement; if you are not, you might wonder how it has happened that the bad guys are using guns they don't even fire to define the boundaries of the national writ. The Republic's Government appears to believe that if the British would take down the watchtowers in south Armagh and beef up policing reform, the IRA would respond by disarming. Who would have thought two years ago that would be the trade off we would reach?

The Agreement anticipated that decommissioning would start long before Patten would even report his proposals for policing reform. It steered clear of any barter that would equate the weapons stocks of the paramilitaries with those of the State but promised that, in the new atmosphere of peace, both would be reduced. By refusing to disarm before Patten, the paramilitaries succeeded in bringing the structure of the police service and the military installations of the State into negotiations about their own arms. In May, the Provisionals managed a controlled minimal response to a demand for decommissioning which they had withstood for two years. It was an important relaxation of republican principle and it may have amounted, in a real sense, to actual decommissioning. Are weapons not out of commission while they are amenable to inspection? How safe would it be for anyone to retrieve them from inspected dumps now? But what the IRA also managed then was to slice the clear demand that they disarm up into little pieces, effectively so that the bartering for concessions could be prolonged. It was, maybe, the smartest thing they had ever done. Crucial to it was forestalling any movement on arms right up to the May 22 deadline. They wriggled out of a deadlock and found themselves with even more room to manoeuvre, not less.

They have since played it as if every arms inspection has to be earned. The IRA's case for holding back now is that the British have not kept to commitments they made in May. The IRA has empowered itself to maintain pressure on them to pay in full for the guns or even just for a meeting with De Chastelain to talk about the guns. Now the British have to disarm something just to get the IRA to talk about disarming later, when there will be yet another price exacted. Last week the IRA had the US president and the Irish Government asking Tony Blair to concede the watchtowers over south Armagh in return for decommissioning progress. Are we astonished by this? No. The whole discussion about disarmament is now founded on an assumption that the IRA and the British fought a war and that the best, perhaps only solution, is that each surrenders to the other and calls it quits. Of course there are precedents for balanced moves between the IRA and the Army, going back to that two-week ceasefire in 1972, when the Army patrolled with rifles slung over the shoulder rather than held at the ready. Those who negotiated the IRA ceasefire in 1975 say it was a formal truce that even allowed some Provisionals to carry guns. If some sequencing could be worked out for taking down the watchtowers and sealing the dumps, fewer now would get hung up on the principle implied by that, that a paramilitary group is an equal player with the Government in deciding the deployment of its military forces. The Government isn't having it, not because it doesn't like the principle, which can always be fudged, but because it doesn't want to be made accountable for a Real IRA bomb getting through. Imagine how that would look with an election just a few months away. The Republic's Government and the Americans have offered to help fight terrorism when Britain scales down; the Irish by bringing more of their own soldiers to the border, the Americans in ways unspecified, perhaps involving spy satellites. The Irish offer looked a lot weaker after the Real IRA managed last week to ambush Garda officers sorting bootleg videos and



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to steal them back. The American one presumes that Clinton can commit the new administration and we don't know if he can. Currently it looks as if the Government can not relax its guard against the Real IRA to placate the Provos. Until now, by a kind of political judo, the Provos have tumbled unionists and the Government over their own demand for decommissioning. Perhaps they have squeezed as much as they are going to get out of them. But would you bet on it?

### **Attacks figures hit new high Call for end to shootings and beatings**

**By Martin Breen, Belfast Telegraph, Dec 26th 2000**

THE shocking toll of paramilitary-style attacks reached a four-year high today, soaring towards the 260 mark. Nationalist and unionist politicians called for an end to the brutal attacks as figures showed that not since the ceasefires were declared have loyalists and republicans shot so many people. Within the past year loyalists carried out 156 shootings and beatings while republicans were responsible for 103. That compares to 137 loyalist attacks and 70 attributed to republicans - a total of 207 - for the whole last year. Paramilitary-style attacks and shootings are often seen as a barometer for stability inside terrorist groups. If the paramilitary leaderships, particularly on the republican side, feel frustrated about the pace of political progress, they have been known to let the paramilitary squads resume their work. A breakdown for this year shows loyalist terrorists have shot 86 people and beaten 70 while republican shootings also reached a post-1994 high by almost doubling from 26 to 50 over the past year. The IRA and other republican terror groups assaulted 53 people during 2000. Most of the republican attacks have been attributed to the Provisional IRA, even though Sinn Fein has two ministers in the Stormont Executive and such attacks are in contravention to the Mitchell Principles of non-violence. Paramilitary vengeance squads are now at their most active since 1996, when 326 people were assaulted or shot compared to 228 and 216 for the following years respectively. SDLP Assembly Member Alban Maginness said today the shock figures raised questions about the commitment of republicans and loyalists to the democratic process. He said: "These are an attack on human rights. These attacks have to stop. They are completely unacceptable in a civilised society." "I would think the continuation of these attacks raises fairly grave questions about the commitment of both republicans and loyalists to the new democratic culture that has been created under the Good Friday Agreement." Senior Ulster Unionist Jim Rodgers also demanded that paramilitary leaders halt the shootings and beatings in the New Year. "These people want to act as a police force and God help us if that ever happens." Security forces are concerned at the escalation in terrorist activity. They say the IRA, UDA, UVF and dissident groups have also become more deeply involved in "mafia" type activities such as smuggling and robberies.

### **Ex-prisoners free to return to NI**

**BBC -27 December 2000**

Four former IRA prisoners who escaped from prison in Belfast have been granted special dispensation by the Queen to return to Northern Ireland.



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The Royal prerogative of mercy given to Angelo Fusco, Robert Campbell, Paul Patrick Magee and Anthony Gerard Sloan means they are free from any risk of prosecution.

The move endorses an announcement made by Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Mandelson earlier this year that convicted terrorists living outside the province would not be pursued.

The four Provisionals were among a group of eight who broke out of Crumlin Road jail in North Belfast in June 1981.

Fusco, Magee and Campbell were convicted in their absence for their part in the murder of British Army Captain Herbert Richard Westmacott.

He was the highest ranking member of the SAS to be killed in the troubles. Captain Westmacott was shot dead by an IRA unit on the Antrim Road in the north of the city in May 1980. The men were all later recaptured in the Republic of Ireland where they were imprisoned for eight years. No pardon But because they had served less than two years of their original sentence the IRA men did not qualify for the Good Friday Agreement's accelerated early release scheme.

Mr Mandelson said in September that he did not intend to pursue convictions against terrorists living outside Northern Ireland who previously would have faced an extradition battle. This move has now been underlined by the Queen signing the papers for the four former prisoners over the course of the weekend.

A Northern Ireland Office spokeswoman explained that legal technicalities meant the Queen's signature was necessary to ensure the former prisoners did not face re-capture by returning to Northern Ireland. "It has always been a proper use of the Royal prerogative of mercy to address anomalies created by the strict application of the law," she said. However, the spokeswoman added that this should not be regarded as a pardon. She also said cases involving others living outside Northern Ireland would have to be considered as they arose.