



## DECOMMISSIONING THE AGREEMENT

The question needs to be asked as to whether the British and Irish governments are committed to the Belfast Agreement in the long term. The plans for a "monitoring and compliance" committee fall completely outside the terms of the 1998 Agreement. This could be just the self-destruct mechanism that would enable either unionist party to bring down the agreement altogether, at some future date.

Both Sinn Féin and the SDLP are opposed to this proposed new body. It is felt that any "sanctions" coming from it would be aimed exclusively at Sinn Féin. The Irish government has however agreed to the proposed sanctions policy. This prompted the *Sunday Business Post* to ask in an editorial; "Which side is our government on?" The editorial claimed that the British had outmanoeuvred Dublin, and that our government was failing to defend the Irish national interest. "This is a bad situation for the Irish government, whose officials should not see themselves as impartial judges, but as active negotiators and defenders of Irish national interests. On a previous occasion, in 1995, the then Taoiseach, John Bruton, fell into the trap of backing unionist demands. The peace process unravelled with horrible speed. People died".

The British have suspended the institutions on four occasions due to unionist demands and contrived crises. Each unionist-orchestrated crisis comes at a time of continued loyalist violence against nationalist communities. A cycle of violence that is largely ignored by the two governments. Is there an un-stated agenda being operated by the two governments and by the unionists in regard to Sinn Féin's role in the 6 counties administration? Could that agenda involve either the total exclusion of Sinn Féin for contrived reasons, or alternatively, to put so much pressure upon Sinn Féin on a sustained basis, that it ultimately splits or discards its basic ideology.

The Political establishment "nightmare scenario" would be a Sinn Féin / DUP election victory. There are political establishment fantasists who are still working to bring about a UUP / SDLP administration. Coercion against Sinn Féin is the key

to this possible strategy. A DUP / SDLP arrangement would also be possible. It needs to be noted that a clear majority of UUP candidates for the next assembly election are anti-agreement. There are a number of underlying trends that may be influencing British, Unionist, and even the Dublin governments thinking as regards future strategy.

Firstly, the population difference between the two communities is closing. The nationalist electorate will soon be half, or nearly half the total.

Secondly, with the unionist tendency to split, coupled with the electoral decline of the SDLP, it is not out of the question that Sinn Féin could emerge as the single largest party! Martin McGuinness or Gerry Adams as First Minister! Recent electoral registration changes in the 6 counties could be aimed at reducing the Sinn Féin base.

Thirdly, Dublin regards Sinn Féin as a possible electoral threat. Dublin, the British and the unionists would appear to be in alliance to contain Sinn Féin.

In a speech given at the Fianna Fáil annual 1916 commemoration at Arbour Hill on Sunday, 22 April 2001, our Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern TD, said:

*"It is an illusion for anyone to think that the Agreement can be renegotiated. The balance cannot be tilted, for the exclusive benefit of one side or the other, without endangering the whole edifice. The two communities have no choice but to work together, and neither the British Government acting on their own nor in concert with the Irish Government can govern Northern Ireland over the heads of the people, as if the Good Friday Agreement had never been. The development of democratic life and a stable and prosperous civil society in Northern Ireland depends on no one being allowed to overturn the will of the people solemnly declared."*

Two years on and that illusion has become the reality with the balance being tilted in favour of unionism. The solemn will of the people is being gradually overturned, and over our heads the two governments appear to be decommissioning the Agreement.

# SHOW TRIAL CLOSE TO COLLAPSE

On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2001, 8 members of Republican Sinn Féin were arrested following a raid by 30 armed Special Branch and uniformed Gardaí on the house where they were holding a meeting. They were charged with membership of an illegal organisation, styling itself the Irish Republican Army, otherwise the IRA, otherwise Óglagh na hÉireann.

The men are:

1. Des Long (aged 63, vice-president RSF, Cathaoirleach Limerick RSF)
2. Matt Conway (aged 68, member RSF Ard Chomhairle, Kildare)
3. Patrick Kenneally (aged 58, member RSF, Limerick)
4. Patrick O'Shea (aged 54, member of RSF, Limerick)
5. Ger Brommell (aged 43, member of RSF, Limerick)
6. Robert McNamara (aged 59, member RSF Chomhairle na Mumhan, Tipperary)
7. Joseph Lynch (aged 62, PRO of RSF Limerick)
8. Christopher Dunne (aged 28, member RSF, Limerick)

Given that the average age of the men is 54 and the fact that they have been openly active in republican politics for most of their lives, it is hard to picture them out on manoeuvres as members of the IRA, a secret organisation.

The case against Matt Conway was dismissed on January 15<sup>th</sup> 2003 after Chief-Supt Seán Feeley (Kildare) admitted in court that he believed that Matt Conway was a member of an unlawful organisation on December 19<sup>th</sup> 2001. The charge of IRA membership specified December 17<sup>th</sup>. One of the judges remarked that the Garda had "torpedoed" the states case.

The main evidence against the rest of the men was a piece of Eircom headed paper allegedly found in the house during the search by Gardaí. The notepaper contained handwritten notes referring to firearms, "a kneecap job" and €5,000. This evidence was thrown out in the case against six of the men as they had been removed from the house and were in Garda custody when the paper was allegedly found. Although he was also in custody, a biro belonging to Patrick O'Shea was used to write on the paper and his fingerprints were also found to be on the paper, but as of yet no evidence has been produced in relation to whose handwriting it is. All the accused have testified that no notes were taken during the meeting.

On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2003 the court ruled that photos, fingerprints and interviews taken from the seven men after their arrest in Limerick on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001 were not admissible in evidence, as they had been illegally arrested. The men were arrested under Section 30 of the Offences Against the State Act 1939 / 98, which states:

11. - The following section is hereby inserted after section 30 of the Act of 1939:

"30A. (1) Where a person arrested on suspicion of having committed an offence is detained pursuant to section 30 of this Act and is released without any charge having been made against him he shall not -

- (a) be arrested again for the same offence, or
- (b) be arrested for any other offence of which, at the time of the first arrest, the member of the Garda Síochána by whom he was arrested, suspected, or ought reasonably to have suspected, him of having committed,

except under the authority of a warrant issued by a judge of the District Court who is satisfied on information supplied on oath by an officer of the Garda Síochána since the person's release as to his suspected participation in the offence for which his offence is sought."

The men had been "released" after 48 hours and re-arrested in the lobby of the Garda Station under the same Act for

the same alleged offence but without a warrant from a District Court judge. The evidence against the men now hinges on the word of Chief Supt Gerard Kelly, who was only stationed in Limerick 3 months prior to the arrests.

If justice *is seen* to be done, then these men must be set free. *Or* has that been the intention all along; the question needs to be asked - is this a show trial? Under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement dealing with security, the Irish government is obliged to review its emergency legislation:

"5. The Irish Government will initiate a wide-ranging review of the Offences Against the State Acts 1939-85 with a view to both reform and dispensing with those elements no longer required as circumstances permit."

And what better evidence for a review could you have than to have eight known republicans, accused of membership of the IRA, set free by the non-jury Special Criminal Court because of that very same legislation.

## UNDER VIRTUAL HOUSE ARREST

One of the defendants, Joe Lynch, has had the most draconian of bail conditions imposed on him. These conditions amount to virtual house arrest:

- (1) Bail was set at €15,000, €5,000 had to be lodged in court.
- (2) He must return home on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday evenings after court and must reside there.
- (3) He must go directly to his home and once there he cannot leave except to go directly to the train for Dublin to attend court the following morning.
- (4) There cannot be visitors in his home when he is present.
- (5) When home he must be present to answer phone calls from Henry Street Garda station should they phone and he must phone Henry Street station immediately when he arrives home.
- (6) When the court rises on Friday lunchtime he will have to return to Portlaoise prison until the court sits on the following Tuesday morning

Joe Lynch is a carer for his wife, Nora, who is confined to a wheelchair and is recovering from a recent operation. His youngest son, Anthony, is also ill. It is only the serious health problems in the Lynch family, which forced Joe to accept these conditions.

Joe "Tiny" Lynch is a well-known republican in Limerick City; every thing he does is done openly. Until his recent detention, he sold the RSF newspaper, *Saolise*, on O'Connell Street in Limerick, where he has become an almost permanent fixture every Saturday (with the exception of a number of 6 month breaks at the behest of the state for the sale of Easter lilies!). He has openly sold various republican publications in the same spot for the past 30 years. He has played an active role in the community where he lives. He was part of the setting up of a youth organisation called ABC, which stands for A Better Community. In the last local elections he worked as an election agent for RSF. He is the PRO for RSF in Limerick. He has press releases carried regularly in local papers about criminal activity and bad housing in the area. He has been on local radio to talk about local issues such as crime, housing and anti social behaviour. He also took part on the *Today with Pat Kenny* show with other local community workers in a live discussion about jobs for disadvantaged youths. In all of this, the Special Branch have harassed him. His home is raided on a regular basis. He has been arrested and released without charge on countless occasions, five times last year alone.

Somewhere between caring for his wife and pursuing his legitimate political activities the state believes he has found the time to be a member of the IRA, I think not, but the show must go on.

- Cathal Óg McCarthy

(Cathal Óg McCarthy is a sign painter / decorator and has been an INC activist for the past 7 years. He is Cathaoirleach of the INC)



# The Hell of El Modelo

We sat in a small café, opposite the prison, waiting for clearance from the authorities for our visit. El Modelo is situated in an extremely poor quarter of Bogota and the people around us represented the marginalized in this divided and dangerous country.

Thousands have been displaced from the countryside. The city, at eight million people, is overcrowded and unemployment is high, despite this being an oil-rich country. The dispossessed make their living through hawking goods on street corners or begging. Yet, once we were allowed into the prison, just metres away from this poverty and deprivation, we were met by guards armed with weapons that must have cost a small fortune.

After being searched and finger-printed, we passed through the security checks to the inner prison, a dull, grey, gloomy place, where you could feel the tension. Prisoners convicted for, or on remand for criminal offences stared out at us with blank faces from behind bars. When we reached the compound, or cage, where the Irishmen were detained, we were met by three faces familiar from the Bring Them Home campaign. They were absolutely elated that we had come. We joked with Martin McCauley who had put on a shirt and tie to greet us. All of them seemed more concerned about our safety than their own personal situation.

It was at that moment that I knew that I had made the right decision to travel. I thought about those in the media and the Dáil who had tried to discourage me from coming to Colombia to act as an observer, using all sorts of spurious arguments and attempting to score political points. The succour we offered these three men was the support to which they were entitled, the concern of fellow human beings, fellow Irish citizens, anxious for their safety and that they would get a fair trial.

Conditions in the jail are appalling. In a wing designed for 14 they live along with 40 other prisoners, most of whom belong to the FARC guerrilla movement. Above them is a landing occupied by right-wing paramilitary prisoners who just last year launched an armed attack on the FARC prisoners. I was standing on the spot where prisoners were shot and killed.

We sat in white plastic chairs (up until a few months ago the men had little furniture and had to sleep on the floor) and chatted for about half an hour. A radio played in the background. The other prisoners nodded to the strangers from Ireland and gave us warm smiles. We were handed a cup of coffee. Some men sat weaving or chatting in groups. Others began preparing lunch-cooked beans and potatoes that they had made especially for us. The prisoners have nothing to do but wait. I met one man who had been on remand for ten years -never having faced trial. I thought of what former Beirut hostage Brian Keenan had said: *"Concentration on human rights ensures that victims are no longer faceless. They have names and addresses and families and relatives who await the help of those who call*

*themselves free, educated and compassionate. And that, I hope, is all of us."*

As we stood talking, one of the prisoners pointed to a manhole cover on which we were standing and it was explained that this was where the paramilitaries had dumped the bodies of some of their victims, having cut them up first. In that incident 32 prisoners were killed. In a later incident another ten were to die, most of them at the hands of the 3,000-strong right-wing paramilitary prisoners.

Colombian lawyers, trade union and students spokespersons, agricultural workers, Amnesty International, amongst many other organisations, have all tried to tell the world about the truth of the conflict in Colombia whilst most governments have looked the other way. Since 1986, 3,800 trade unionists have been assassinated, 178 in the past year alone. Besides the deaths in the prisons there were worse horror stories about the outside.

The FARC jail commander, Julio Serpa, told us that when his movement had attempted to enter democratic politics four thousand of their candidates were assassinated by the government forces or those right-wing paramilitaries acting as their surrogates. Despite that, and the war that followed, they still want inclusive dialogue and to develop a peace process. He was an impressive figure whom in any other circumstances, I thought, would be a senior civil servant, a bank manager or even a backbench TD! However, this is Colombia and anyone left of centre is an "extremist" or a "legitimate target" for the death squads.

The time passed quickly and we soon had to leave. We said our goodbyes and it was sad to leave them behind, amidst such danger. It occurred to me that their smiles were now struck for our benefit. We were leaving. They were staying. We walked nervously through the corridors of the right-wing paramilitaries and to tell the truth it was nerve-wracking and I could not wait to get to the main prison gate. However we were stopped in our tracks. A prison guard told Paul Hill (of the Guildford Four, another observer), that another Irish citizen had just been detained. Paul was determined that we see him. We were taken from the maximum-security wing to the detention area for petty criminals.

We looked into the cage, which was about the size of a small sitting room. It was filled with what must have been about 50 prisoners. The one European stood out a mile. He stepped forward and Paul asked him did he want us to contact the Irish embassy. But he said he was from Belgium and Paul said he would do what he could. As we walked away we slowly glanced back at the glaring eyes of 50 desperate, ill-dressed and undernourished prisoners.

It was a relief to get away from the hell of El Modelo

— Finian McGrath

(Finian McGrath is a founding member and former Leas Cathaoirleach of the INC. He is a Dublin City Councillor and the independent TD for Dublin North Central)



# THE DUBLIN AND MONAGHAN BOMBINGS: ANOTHER JIGSAW PIECE?

The recent publication of the book "The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings and the Murder Triangle" by Joe Tiernan is a useful addition to growing evidence of British collusion in the 1974 bombings. Many of the names of the main UVF men involved have been in the public arena since before J Bowyer Bell's book "In Dubious Battle". However, some new names and information are given.

The bombs are believed to have been assembled on a farm in Glenane, Newtownhamilton, owned by RUC reservist James Mitchell and his girlfriend Lilly Shields. Mitchell is believed to have financed the explosives which were stolen from quarries by UDR Captain and SAS agent, John Irvine who it is claimed assembled the Dublin bombs. This farm was used as a launch pad for a security force death squad which was allegedly led by UDR Sergeant Robert Mc Connell and is believed to have been assisted by RUC men John Weir, William Mc Caghey, Laurence McClure, Jimmy Hunter and John Poland.(182-6) Mc Connell is also believed to have been involved in the Dublin bombings and was run as an agent by British intelligence.

Another chilling revelation is that the chief suspect for the Parnell St bomb UDR man David Mulholland was recruited as a RUC informer in 1975 by Catholic Detective Inspector Frank Murray and was granted an informal immunity from prosecution by Garda Commissioner Ned Garvey (page 109) Mulholland fled to Chester, England after the Mid Ulster UVF commander, UDR soldier, mastermind of the bombings and British army agent Billy Hanna was killed in 1975. Hanna's army handlers who took him on fishing trips are named as William Appleby and 'Finco' (page 89). UVF leader and mastermind of the 1972-73 Dublin bombings Jim Hanna from Lisburn was a British army agent run by officers Anthony Box, Alan Homer, Timothy Golden and Anthony Ling.(pages146-150) The editor of the UVF magazine 'Combat' Billy Mitchell from Carrickfergus also took part in these bombings as well as in 1974.

Two new names linked to the Monaghan bombings are Portadown men Cha Gilmore and local UDA leader Nico Jackson (page 116) as well as Portadown UVF leader Stewart Young who fled to Troon in Scotland in 1977 who it is believed was assisted by his brothers Nelson and Ivor (pages 122-4) and Whitten brothers Sammy and Jackie. UDA man Billy Fulton, uncle of former LVF leader Mark 'swinger' Fulton, and his assistant J.G. are alleged to have supplied the home made explosives for the Dublin and Monaghan attacks. )

Other brothers involved in loyalist violence at this time were Harris and Billy Boyle, Tyrone UDR soldiers John and Wesley Sommerville involved in the Dublin bombings and 1975 Baronrath attack with Robin 'the

Jackal' Jackson and his brother-in-law Roy Metcalf. Jackson who is thought to have delivered the bombs to Dublin was run as a British army agent as was loyalist killer Sammy Mc Coo all of whom drank in the Golden Hinde pub in Edgarstown along with other loyalists Philip Silcock, R.J. Kerr. (pages 95-97, 164-7)

Two of the Dublin Bomb cars were stolen on the Shankill Road by William Frenchie Marchant and John Bingham, both later killed by republicans.

The UDR soldier believed to be responsible for most of the UDA attacks in Donegal during the 1970's is named as Derryman Andy Robinson also a British Army agent who fled to Portpatrick in Scotland. Fermanagh UDR men George Farrell and Robert Bridge are accused of other attacks in the South at this time.(page144-5)

There are of course apparent inconsistencies and contradictions with other accounts of the bombings. According to Don Mullen's book 'The Dublin and Monaghan bombings' the Monaghan bomb was the less sophisticated and similar to traditional loyalist bombs of this period while the timing and absence of explosive residue in the Dublin bombs suggests the involvement of explosive experts in the opinions of bomb disposal experts George Styles, Patrick Trears and Ed Komac (chapters 5 & 7) however Tiernan claims the Monaghan bomb was assembled by the British army and the Dublin bomb were made by Mitchell and Irvine (pages 97 & 125).

Tiernan does not examine Mullen's allegations of the involvement of Captains Robert Niarac, Tony Ball and Major Andy Nightingale 14th Intelligence in Castledillon all of whom later died mysteriously in the Dublin bombings (page 215) and the serious questions posed by Don Mullen to Lt Colonel Peter Maynard about his activities in mid Ulster in this period remain unanswered. (Pages 229 & 262)

But even without an examination of these allegations the scandal remains that most of those who carried out the Dublin and Monaghan bombings were either serving or former members of the UDR and RUC or were security force informers, can you imagine the British reaction if evidence emerged that the Birmingham pub bombings were carried out by members of the Gardai or army and whose colleagues later refused to co-operate in the investigation to bring them to justice. The fact that many of those loyalists most deeply involved and those soldiers who are believed to have run them died mysterious or violent deaths, many at the hands of republicans, raises the appalling vista that as well as infiltrating and manipulating loyalist paramilitary groups for their own ends British intelligence may have done the same to some republican groups to clear the tracks of their collusion.

— Paul McGuill

(Paul McGuill is a library assistant and has been an INC activist since 1994. he was INC Cathaoirleach from 1998 - 2000 and is currently Secretary of the INC)



# SHORT STRAND REVISITED

Following the recent visit to the Short Strand area of Belfast on a fact finding mission by members of the Irish National Congress in October 2002, a further visit was carried out on Monday 24th March by Tom Cooper and Tony Beaufort on behalf of the INC, to see if there was any improvement in the day to day situation there.

On our arrival in Short Strand, we went to the community centre and were met by Sinn Féin councillor Joe O'Donnell. He was very pleased that the INC had come to Belfast to see at first hand the situation that the nationalist community has to endure. Explaining to us that since Christmas the situation had improved somewhat, it was still necessary to have the fire hoses at the ready as petrol bombs were still being thrown from Cluan Place. Councillor O'Donnell said that organisations like the INC were influential in bringing the truth to both the public and politicians alike.

Commenting on the volatile element within loyalism, which loyalist community leaders found very hard to control, councillor O'Donnell believes that a very minor incident can manifest itself into a major confrontation. An incident relating to a mechanical digger was outlined to us, which put PSNI behaviour into perspective. This mechanical digger was stolen at the top of the Newtownards road and driven down to the Short Strand unchallenged where it demolished CCTV security cameras, and then returned to the top of the Newtownards road again. All of this was done with both the police and British army in attendance. The fact that they demolished CCTV cameras speaks for itself. From our discussions with a variety of people from the Short Strand area, it was crystal clear to both Tony and myself that the police were part of the problem instead of being part of the solution.

When one looks at the geographical position of the Short Strand, it is pure logic that the residents would not instigate attacks on their loyalist neighbours, because they are surrounded on three sides by loyalist East

Belfast, and by the river Lagan on the other side. It would be total madness to do so, but the primary reason they would not instigate attacks is because they do not want confrontation, they want peace. The media coverage of the situation came in for some criticism from councillor O'Donnell when he said that despite overwhelming evidence of first strike attacks by loyalists, the media portrayed it as fifty-fifty responsibility. These reports were usually published without any attempt to ascertain the truth by speaking to community leaders in advance of publishing.

The leader of Fine Gael Mr Enda Kenny came in for some criticism because on a recent visit to the area he had personally met representatives from, and visited, Cluan Place, where most of the attacks emanate. Unfortunately, Mr Kenny did not see fit to go to the Short Strand and speak with their representatives.

In his criticism of the police, councillor O'Donnell cited a case in which a catholic resident of the Newtownards road, while driving home saw three young men handling pipe bombs near St Matthews catholic church. On reaching his home he contacted the local PSNI station, who told him if he wished to make a complaint to get in touch with the police Ombudsman. However, in spite of the behaviour of the police and in the face of these ongoing loyalist attacks, we were told that what was most hurtful to the people of the area was the fact that the media, both written and visual, deliberately reported inaccurate versions of what had happened. What the local community want is fair, accurate and balanced reporting of the facts.

A full report on both visits to the Short Strand by members of the Irish National Congress is being compiled and will be sent to the Department of Foreign Affairs, which hopefully will be followed by action on their part. The INC will be most vigilant in this matter.

— Tom Cooper.

(Tom Cooper is a truck driver from Dublin and has been an INC activist since 1993. He has been a member of the National Executive since 1994.)



# Colombia: What Kind of Country?

Following the arrest of three Irish citizens in Colombia last year pro British politicians and journalists have been circulating the most frenzied propaganda and misinformation depicting the presence of these three Irishmen in FARC controlled territory as a clear and present danger to the Irish and Colombian peace processes as well as US security. They have also sought to distort the true situation in Colombia into a life or death struggle between a fledgling democracy and evil "narco terrorists". In reality the situation is much more complicated and the US government comes out of it much more deeply implicated in narco terrorism than the three Irishmen.

Between 1948 and 1958 200,000 Colombians were killed in a bitter civil war between the countries Liberal and Conservative elites known as 'La Violencia'. This conflict was brought to an end by alternating power-sharing arrangement between the countries two major political groups known as the "National Front", which lasted until 1974. This arrangement failed to address Colombia's calamitous social and economic situation where the level of absolute poverty increased from 25% to 50.7% of the population in the same period. The failure of land reform legislation in 1961 left 70% of the arable land in the hands of 3% of the landowners<sup>1</sup>. Groups, which were excluded from this "tag team democracy", especially landless peasants, grew increasingly disillusioned with the status quo and in 1964 formed a group, which would become FARC.

In the late 1970's FARC financed its military campaign through an alliance with Colombian drug cartels however this alliance ended when the drug barons sought to launder their profits by buying huge cattle ranches thus becoming the traditional enemy of the peasants. FARC then began raising money by kidnapping drug barons and their families this led the drug barons to form their own paramilitary groups MAS (death to kidnappers) in 1981 and ACCU in 1982. These narco paramilitaries then formed an alliance with the Colombian political and military establishment. To this day the Colombian military have collaborated with these drug gangs, providing them with logistical and intelligence support. They returned the favour by eliminating the military's political critics bringing an end to FARC's cease-fire. Between 1985 and 1990 the Patriotic Union (UP) a party affiliated with the FARC had 1,000 members killed including 2 Presidential candidates. In 1983, 59 out of 163 people implicated in the MAS death squad were either police or military. In 1990 US intelligence re-organised and trained the Colombian armed forces and intelligence on a counter

insurgency basis. Colombia's terrible human rights record, which saw political killings rise from 1,053 in the 1970's to 12,859 in the 1980's, led America to cut off military aid to Colombia from 1994 - 1997. However between 1984 and 1992, 6,844 Colombian soldiers received the U.S. the international military education-training programme including some of the Colombian officers and units most notorious for colluding with narco paramilitaries who were trained by US Special Forces in the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. One example is Major Becerra Bohorquez who was implicated in the 1988 massacre of 20 banana union workers and a 1993 massacre of 13 people. Despite 23,532 political killings in 1997, 76% of which were carried out by military backed paramilitary groups, 7% by the armed forces and 17% by revolutionary guerrilla groups, a peace process between the FARC and Colombian government began and lasted until February 2002<sup>2</sup>.

Following in his father's footsteps, George Bush junior stepped up counter insurgency aid to Colombia's military under the guise of a "war on drugs" declared by his father in 1990. However, as American radical Noam Chomsky points out, this intervention would be better directed closer to home given CIA involvement in the Mafia "French Connection", the South East Asian "Golden Triangle", Panama and Afghan drugs trade in order to finance its covert operations world wide<sup>3</sup>. Leading US army counter insurgency expert Colonel John Waghelstein wanted to link revolutionaries and drug dealers in the mind of public opinion to justify post cold war defence spending and so that "Those church and academic groups that have slavishly supported insurgency in Latin America would find themselves on the wrong side of the moral issue"<sup>4</sup>. In an effort to add plausible deniability to the US covert action, training of narco-paramilitary death squads was sub contracted to British and Israeli ex-servicemen of Spearhead security<sup>5</sup>.

The American democratic dream is better represented by those American critics of their governments policy like Noam Chomsky, Bob Woodward and American Amnesty International than it is by those who backed "stability" in Marcos' Philippines, Suharto's Indonesia, Mobutu's Zaire, Papa Doc's Haiti and Pinochet's Chile. Therefore it is not enough for us to demand the freedom of the three Irish Citizens in Colombia we must also demand freedom for the 37 million Colombians as well.

— Paul McGill

<sup>1</sup> Chomsky, Noam, World Orders Old & New, Page 61.

<sup>2</sup> Leech, Gary M., Fifty Years of Violence, Colombia Report, Information Network of the Americas.

<sup>3</sup> Chomsky, Noam, Deterring Democracy, Pages 117 - 8

<sup>4</sup> ibid, Page 121.

<sup>5</sup> ibid, Pages 133 - 4



# ILLEGAL WAR WAGED ON IRAQ

The much-threatened Anglo-American war of aggression against Iraq had just begun as this issue of INC News was nearing completion. The Irish National Congress condemns utterly the unprovoked war of aggression now being waged on Iraq, a sovereign state, by U.S., British and Australian forces.

This war is an unjust war, a deliberate and contemptuous rejection of the United Nations Charter and of International Law. The stated aim of the "Coalition", or "Axis of Diesel" (to be more accurate) is to change the regime in Iraq and liberate the Iraqi people, such action is an illegal act, according to International Law, albeit a brutal regime that was armed and financed by those very forces of "liberation". The final outcome of this war will probably involve an Anglo-American regime of colonial occupation in an Arab land. Just imagine the implications for world peace arising out of that fact.

The INC rarely comments upon issues unconnected with the Irish National question. We are doing so this time because for the first time in the 81 years of the existence of the Irish state, we find ourselves involved in a foreign war, due to our government consenting to the use of Shannon Airport by U.S. forces on their way to wage an unjust and illegal war on Iraq. At the very least, our government is guilty of complicity in the slaughter of innocent Iraqi civilians. Imagine if you had been caught giving shelter to terrorists on their way to plant a bomb, although you didn't actually build or intend to plant the bomb you would still be charged as an accomplice. This is what our government is guilty of, only on a much larger scale.

The Irish people have no quarrel with Iraq and want no role in the illegal Anglo-American war of aggression; moreover Iraq is a militarily diminished country, unable even to defend its own airspace. It has also suffered 12 years of one of the harshest economic blockades inflicted against any country in history:

- UN sanctions have resulted in the deaths of over 500,000 children in Iraq since 1991. They have died because of a lack of basic medicines, starvation and as a result of the destruction of public services such as hospitals, sewage and water treatment plants. At least the same number of adults are also known to have died (*Denis Halliday, former UN sanctions administrator*)
- Environmental degradation and the use of depleted uranium shells in the '91 gulf war have significantly raised levels of cancers amongst the Iraqi public. An estimated 175,000 of the city of Basra's population of 350,000 are suffering from some form of cancer. There are neither medicines nor facilities to treat these patients. (*Denis Halliday, former UN sanctions administrator*)
- 47% of Iraqis are under 16. (*UN population Survey*)

One can only wonder if there will be an Iraqi people left to enjoy their "liberation" once the war is over. Those who do survive can take comfort in the knowledge that the Bush administration have promised to hold the oil fields and the wealth of Iraq "in trust for the Iraqi people" until they have recovered.

The INC deplores the weak and spineless position that has been adopted by the Irish government in relation to this matter, a position that is totally at variance with the views of the vast majority Irish citizens. We wish to add our voice to those many organisations and groupings that are calling for the withdrawal of landing rights at Shannon Airport to U.S. forces and for a vigorous re-assertion of Ireland's neutrality policy.



On Saturday, February 15th 2003, more than 100,000 people demonstrated in Dublin against the threat of an Anglo-American war of aggression against Iraq. Similar demonstrations were held in Cork, Belfast, Galway and Derry, they were part of a worldwide Day of Action.

Elements within the media and the Irish Government labelled the protestors as being anti-American and left wing extremists. Nothing could have been further from the truth. While a substantial number of groups, organisations, unions and political parties were represented; the vast majority of those demonstrating were families and individuals, many of them participating in a protest for the first time in their lives.

Pictured above is the INC contingent with banner participating in the march. The INC is affiliated to the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA).

Pictured on the right, a non-aligned individual expresses his views





## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

the Irish National Congress will hold its AGM on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2003 in the Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Square at 1pm.

The main speaker will be a representative from the Short Strand Community (to be confirmed).

There will also be a viewing of the video "Short Strand: A Community Under Siege"

## Christmas Raffle Results

The winners in the Christmas raffle were:

1<sup>st</sup> Prize (Christmas hamper):

F.P. McGrath, Dublin (Ticket No. 3091)

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize (Christmas cake):

Geraldine Dunne, Dublin (Ticket No. 2362)

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize (Bottle of Spirits):

Brendan Carraher, Co. Armagh (Ticket No. 1893)

Congratulations to the winners and a heartfelt thanks you to all members and supporters who participated. Once again the response was magnificent.

## INC Easter Raffle

The prizes for this years raffle are:

1. An Easter hamper.
2. An Easter cake.
3. A bottle of spirits.

With this newsletter you will receive a booklet of (6) raffle tickets. Due to an increase in the cost of printing and posting 1 raffle ticket will now cost €2. One booklet is €10. If you would like to participate in this draw, please send your completed stubs and money to: I.N.C. P.O. box 2814, Dublin 7 before the 16th April. The draw will take place on Thursday, April 17th.

## An Ghaeilge

Tugann Comhdháil Náisiúnta na hÉireann tacaíocht le forbairt na Gaeilge. Ba bhreá linn alt as Gaeilge bheith i ngach eagrán den *INC News*, ach tá fadhb mór againn. Níl a dhóthain líofacht nó muinín ag aon duine ar an gcoiste chun alt mar sin a scríobh. Dá bhrí sin, táimid ag brath ar sibhse, ár léitheoirí, go háirithe an chuid díobh go bhfuil an Ghaeilge ar thoil agaibh, sliocht a scríobh. Má chuirfidh sibh ábhar oiriúnach chughainn, beidh an teagarthóir thar a bheith sásta é a fhoilsiú.

The INC supports the development of the Irish language. We would love to be in a position to include an article (or even a short paragraph) in Irish in each issue of *INC News*. The main problem is that none of our regular contributors feel competent to tackle such an article. The editor would be overjoyed to receive items in Irish for publication in future issues of *INC News*.

## INC TELEPHONE NUMBERS

If you need to contact the INC by telephone, you may do so through the numbers below. Both numbers have playback, so if your call is not answered immediately, you may leave a message and, if necessary, the INC will return your call

061 44 07 54 / 087 62 87 065



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE  
INC, FILL IN THIS FORM AND  
RETURN IT TO:

Irish National Congress, PO Box 2814, Dublin 7.  
MEMBERSHIP FEE €10 WAGED / €5 UNWAGED

Address.....

e-mail.....

Irish National Congress  
Comhdháil Náisiúnta na hÉireann

ANNUAL  
GENERAL  
MEETING

SATURDAY  
MAY 24<sup>th</sup> 2003

Club na Múinteoirí  
36 Parnell Square  
Dublin

Time: 1pm