



Allister blasts Belfast Agreement in Brussels

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister carried his continuing opposition to the Belfast Agreement to the floor of the European Parliament. On the eve of its 10th anniversary the Ulster Euro MP used an adjournment debate to denounce the Good Friday deal as destructive of both justice and democracy in the Province.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"Tomorrow is the 10th anniversary of the Belfast Agreement.

Some find much to celebrate. I do not. Why? Because it was the Belfast Agreement which rewarded 30 years of terrorism in Northern Ireland by undermining both justice and democracy.



Justice, by granting an early release amnesty to all duly convicted terrorist prisoners and democracy, by prescribing that unrepentant terrorists must be in the government of the region they had ravaged with terrorism. This is achieved by the inequity of mandatory coalition.

The region which I represent is the only region in all of the EU where citizens are denied the fundamental democratic right to vote a party out of office. Why, because the Belfast Agreement by law stipulates all parties must be in government, if there is to be a government. That is the Belfast Agreement and that is wrong. It is something to be denounced, not celebrated, to be thwarted, not operated."

MEP says repatriate fishing powers

During a debate in the European Parliament in Brussels on fishing issues Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister called for the repatriation to Member States of fishing powers ceded to the EU.

The Parliament was debating a report on a Commission proposal for a possible EU effort management system, which could see quota traded on an EU basis, thus opening up the prospect of loss of local control to foreign operators. Whereas there is a need for changes to the present discredited TAC & Quota system, the Ulster Euro MP is opposed to fresh opportunities for Brussels control and is particularly anxious that any new plans should not be managed and controlled by the EU.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"Representing a region whose overall

experience of the CFP has not been positive, my natural inclination is strongly against the imposition of an EU based management system. Rather, member states should be able to decide what management systems works best for them. Moreover, maintaining stability could be severely jeopardised if unregulated transferable quota was embraced, with particular threat to single or small-scale operators.

Better by far, in my book, to repatriate real powers over fishing to the member states and concentrate on getting in place viable local management systems, capable of enjoying the confidence of those affected.

I also fear that this new Commission study will prove another protracted excuse for putting off real and helpful change."

Allister reviews Powell's Peace Process History

An inescapable conclusion from Jonathan Powell's book on "the Peace Process" is the wholesale lack of morality which characterised government dealings with the terrorist IRA. With barely a passing thought of how heinous were the crimes committed by the IRA, Powell's dedication was to do whatever it took to keep them on board. Even when IRA/Sinn Fein reverted to fresh episodes of terror, it barely caused a flicker in the full thrust engagement with physical force republicanism. It is also striking just how much Powell and company were at the beck and call of Adams and McGuinness. Scores of meetings took place, as and when sought; such was the dedication to keeping Sinn Fein sweet.

A peace process built on such desperate pandering to terrorists in time created a climate where even those most hostile to republican terrorism, themselves embraced positions which at the outset they had eschewed, not least on moral and principled grounds. By the end of it all, even for them, that which was morally wrong was politically right. Never having been bothered by such a restraint, Powell himself was always ahead of the game. As an intriguing insight into how government diplomacy works, how ambiguity and double speak is the order of the day, this book is a most informative read.

I certainly learned a great deal more from the book about what the DUP was doing in the negotiations than I ever knew as a DUP Party Officer. I expect most DUP Executive Members will be as surprised as I was to discover from Powell that before the Party Executive's key meeting on 24 March 2007, the two Paisleys, Peter Robinson and Nigel Dodds had agreed with the Government that the DUP would meet face-to-face with Sinn Fein later that day.

Certainly such a plan was carefully concealed from the Party Executive as was a back channel with Sinn Fein, which Powell claims existed from 2004, even though publicly the Party was threatening expulsion of any member who talked to Sinn Fein. Powell refuses to name those involved with the back channel but claims it produced such "results" as the DUP amending the policing motion which went before Sinn Fein's Ard Chomhairle and reassuring Sinn Fein that the DUP's real stance was softer than proclaimed!



The book contains many tantalising insights into the Government's all-seeing control. None more so than the account of Ian Paisley reacting badly to Sinn Fein's Ard Fheis, where they talked about "putting manners on the police". Powell says they "heard" Paisley was preparing to put out a negative statement calling the whole thing a "confidence trick" (the closest he'd come to the mark in a long time). Tony phoned to try and stop him, but Paisley said he had already put out the statement.

Powell writes, "Fortunately, since we knew the statement had not, in fact, gone out we managed to put some spokes in the wheels to stop it damaging what was otherwise a momentous day." How did the Government know such a statement was intended but hadn't in fact already gone out? Was it the ability to monitor outgoing DUP emails or co-operation from someone within the DUP which stood them in good stead? Just which channel was in play? As to the spokes which Powell managed to put in the wheels, we are left to speculate.

This blip from Paisley was the only time he gave Tony's crew any trouble. The overwhelming message from Powell is that the Leader was by far the most eager in the DUP camp for power sharing with IRA/Sinn Fein. He regretted the opportunity lost by the Northern Bank robbery, at St Andrews he was ready for a January election, he was willing to use a government form of words to amount to designation as First Minister on 24th November 2006 and he was up for government by 26th March, when others sought delay.

Continued on Page 3...

Allister reviews Powell's History continued...

The picture which emerges of Ian Paisley as a negotiator is unflattering, with references to him being flattered by the PM's attention and phone calls from Bush. Likewise, at private meetings Powell claims more flexibility from Paisley than he ventured in front of colleagues. I have long held the view that Ulster was ill-served by the series of one-to-one meetings between Blair and the DUP leader. What I hadn't heard till now is the allegation by Powell that it was Robinson and Dodds who actually suggested this stratagem. Odd, considering that I often heard them complain about such meetings.

A distinct pattern emerges in the Government approach. Hot house negotiations are preferred to put on the pressure; suggested texts are withheld till the last minute; confidential comfort letters are despatched to each side to smooth difficult issues - like the last minute, still unpublished, letter from Blair to Sinn Fein on the Irish Language Act on the morning Paisley first met Adams; agreement kept to ambiguous texts capable of differing interpretations and, if necessary, resort to what Powell calls political blackmail by orchestrating such events as water charges, RPA reform and educational changes. Such is the grubby politics that brought us what Powell sees as the triumph of unrepentant terrorists at the heart of government.

McGuinness attended Rome installation in official capacity, and at tax payers' expense

Martin McGuinness attended the installation of Cardinal Brady in Rome in November 2007 in his official capacity as deputy First Minister, at the expense of the public purse and with the agreement of the First Minister.

Under a Freedom of Information request, MEP Jim Allister has been informed that McGuinness attended in this capacity as deputy First Minister, accompanied by a Special Adviser and a Private Secretary at a cost to the tax payer of £2460.

Commenting Mr Allister said: "By letter of the 5th October 2007 OFMDFM explicitly confirmed to

me that "Any official engagements by either First Minister or deputy First Minister takes place with the knowledge and agreement of the other."

Thus, since McGuinness was representing OFMDFM and attended in Rome in his official capacity, it follows that it was with Ian Paisley's agreement as First Minister.

"The use of tax payers' money to pay not just for McGuinness, but also an entourage of Special Adviser and Private Secretary does not seem prudent or appropriate."

Allister condemns Republicanisation of the Police

Traditional Unionist Jim Allister has condemned the placing of a PSNI recruitment advert in a Donegal newspaper which carried the strap line, "It's your community. This is your chance to help make it safer". Commenting the MEP said:

"I am appalled that the Police Service of Northern Ireland are advertising in newspapers in the Republic. The advert even expressed the salary of police offices in Euros.

"I have written to the Chief Constable asking how

widespread the practice of advertising for recruits in the Republic's press is and what the response has been to this campaign. I have also highlighted the fact that it is inaccurate to claim that citizens of the Republic will be serving "their community" if they join the PSNI. Northern Ireland remains part of the United Kingdom.

"However, this is yet another telling example of how our constitutional position is threatened by the all-Ireland harmonisation process of the Belfast/St Andrews Agreement".

Feel free to contact my offices regarding any European issue:

139 Hollywood Road,
Belfast,
BT4 3BE

Tel: (028) 90 655011
Fax: (028) 90 654314

European Parliament
Rue Wiertz
BD4 5M 073
B-1047 Brussels

Tel: +0032 2284 5275
Fax: +0032 2284 9275

Allister slams Robinson's "audacious and deceptive" claim

"It used to be that the Ulster Unionist Party had cornered the market within Unionism for spin and deception. However, just as they've been dethroned in the electoral stakes, so too they've been outclassed in the spin department by the DUP. Seldom can there have been a more audacious and deceptive claim than the assertion by Peter Robinson that the Belfast Agreement is gone and is buried. If it were, then its statutory incarnation, the Northern Ireland Act 1998, would have been repealed. Instead it continues to decree how we are governed.

I wish Peter Robinson's claim was true, but sadly the fundamentals of the Belfast Agreement live on and continue to give us, as originally intended, unrepentant terrorists at the heart of our government. St Andrews did not alter its basic architecture. The essential structures of the Belfast Agreement were, and are, these:-

- government by mandatory coalition, so that a party can never be voted out of office and Opposition is denied. The purpose, of course, is to guarantee IRA/Sinn Fein a permanent place in the government of the state they are dedicated to destroy.
- the dysfunctional office of Joint First Ministers, OFMDFM, whereby equality is guaranteed for republicanism and the right of veto is enshrined by reason of the First Minister being unable to do anything - even sign a letter - without Sinn Fein's agreement.
- entrenched north/south executive bodies to

advance harmonisation on an all-Ireland basis.

Nor has the intended trajectory of the Belfast Agreement been altered. It was, and is, eventual Irish unification. Hence the continuing pledge of the British Government to legislate for Irish unity, as and when the people agree - with the only proposal on the constitution which can ever be put in referendum being one for unification. The essence of the referendum provision is to permit the people to be asked, after sufficient all-island harmonisation, "Are you yet ready to join the Republic of Ireland?" This is the indisputable scheme and objective of the Belfast Agreement.

So despite all the red-faced re-branding and repackaging, the iniquitous Belfast Agreement is still with us. It was all but gone, but tragically those who were instrumental in seeing it almost done to death have themselves breathed new life into it. Make no mistake, without the DUP volte face the Belfast Agreement was dead, but thanks to the resuscitation skills of Peter Robinson its very much back in all its ill-glory."



Allister rejects Bill of Rights Forum Report

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has slammed the report published by the Bill of Rights Forum.

"Back in February I met with Chief NI Human Rights Commissioner, Monica McWilliams to express my opposition at the direction in which the proposed Bill of Rights appeared to be headed. This report has confirmed my worst fears.

"The suggestion that the age of criminal responsibility be raised to 18 is outrageous. This will mean that a young adult who is considered old enough to pay taxes, get married drive a car and join the armed services will not be held liable for breaking the law.

"I am gravely concerned by the suggestion that

women be given "reproductive rights". This has the potential to threaten the most vulnerable of our citizens, unborn children whose right to the most basic and fundamental human right - the right to life - is threatened by what sounds dangerously like doublespeak for abortion.

"It is also distressing to see that the Human Rights Forum is following the lead of the Office of the First and deputy First Minister in failing to draw a distinction between innocent victims of the Troubles and those responsible for atrocities.

"It is my firm belief that Northern Ireland does not need a separate Bill of Rights, distinct from the Constitutional safeguards already in existence in the rest of the United Kingdom."

MEP welcomes Ombudsman's finding against DARD

"I greatly welcome a recent finding by the Ombudsman of maladministration by DARD in refusing "Tie-Up Aid" to whitefish boat owners in 2006, during the annual enforced closure, under the Cod Recovery Scheme, of the fishery from mid February until the end of April.

It will be recalled that having paid Tie-Up Aid in 2004 and 2005 Lord Rooker in January 2006 announced further aid was not possible under EU legislation. Believing this to be wrong, I obtained written confirmation from Commissioner Borg that there was no such legal bar in the EU regulation. Lord Rooker was forced to revisit his decision, having obtained legal advice that I was correct. He maintained his decision, but on different grounds, something which still raises its own suspicions.

A local fisherman, with my assistance and that of Jim Wells MLA, then made a formal complaint of maladministration by DARD to the Ombudsman. After lengthy investigations the Ombudsman in a written decision has ruled in his favour and against DARD. He has ordered DARD to pay him

compensation equating to 5% of what he could have expected in Tie-Up Aid in 2006.

Two important matters now arise.

1. DARD should also pay equivalent compensation to every other whitefish fisherman affected by their maladministration. Mr Allister called on DARD to do so, and welcomed the fact that they agreed to do so.

2. DARD must learn the lesson of showing due diligence in interpreting EU legislation. It is not acceptable that civil servants make "on the hoof" decisions on legal issues, as happened here, without seeking legal advice. EU legislation at times is complex and must be properly interpreted. I note in his findings the Ombudsman says, "It is clear to me that without the intervention of Mr Allister MEP this error of interpretation of the EC State aid rules would have persisted." One wonders on how many other occasions injustice has been done to citizens through misinterpretation of legislation."

Allister demands Union Flag parity with GB

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has called for a change being introduced in GB, which will permit the Union Flag to be flown the year round on any government building, to be extended to Northern Ireland.

The move follows the publication of the White Paper, The Governance of Britain: Constitutional Renewal (CM 7342-1), and the Consultation Analyses Document (CM 7342-3) on 25 March 2008.



Currently the rules restrict the flying of the flag to just 18 designated days - with a similar provision in Northern Ireland. The change will restore the option of the Union Flag flying 365 days per year, but only in GB. The move is part of attempts to boost the sense of Britishness in the UK.

Commenting Jim Allister said:-

"This sensible and desirable provision should extend throughout the whole of the UK. We followed GB into the foolish restriction to 17 days per annum in Northern Ireland, now that the year round option is being restored, why is Northern Ireland being excluded? If GB precedent was good enough to restrict the flying of the flag, it certainly is equally a good enough basis upon which to restore it.

It is both political and appalling that Northern Ireland is now to be treated differently. I see it as part of the process of marginalising Northern Ireland within the Union and preparing it, under the Belfast Agreement, for ever closer affinity with the Republic of Ireland.

I am writing to the Secretary of State demanding that parallel reform is introduced for Northern Ireland. We require and must have parity with the rest of the Kingdom. If we had an Assembly and Government worthy of the name, they would be leading on this issue, particularly since some would have us believe the Union is stronger than ever. Well, let's see some evidence of it by being able to fly the flag on government buildings on a par with what is being introduced in GB."

Allister challenges DUP to publish details of deals with Sinn Fein on RPA

Speaking at a TUV meeting in Portrush Town Hall, Jim Allister attacked Sinn Fein as still evincing the same old hatreds and bile towards all things British, as characterised the terrorist phase of their unending push for Irish unification.

In the course of his remarks the Traditional Unionist MEP said:-

“Though the ballot is today achieving more for them than the bullet, it is not their only weapon - the murder of Paul Quinn is striking enough evidence of that, but in addition they are waging a cultural war, motivated by the same obsession of eradicating every last vestige of Britishness from Ulster. Hence the concerted campaign in local councils, from Banbridge to Limavady. Now, to be followed by the same insatiable republican agenda in Stormont. At the same time they republicanise our public roads and spaces with odious monuments to butchering terrorists. And all this from those some foolishly acclaim as having “bought into the British state”. Knaves and fools are always a dangerous combination. But when they are joined in government it brings the sort of spectacle we’ve had for the past year.

Now, I fear, we are poised to see the same visited on local government. The DUP promised 15



councils, but, post Dromore, in order to avoid elections in 2009, they hurriedly struck a deal with IRA/Sinn Fein for 11, but the full price extracted by the Shinners has not yet been revealed. It is concealed by the wrapping that is called “equality measures”. You will note Minister Foster has been deliberately vague on what conceding this Sinn Fein demand entails. I call on her to be upfront and clear on exactly what has been agreed. My suspicion is that we are going to see the institutionalising of mandatory coalition under de Hondt throughout local government, so that republicans are guaranteed places of importance in every council, even the most unionist. At the same time I suspect punitive measures will be put in place to deal with unionists who reject such rigged arrangements, all in the name of Sinn Fein inspired “equality measures”.

If mandatory coalition is indeed institutionalised in local government it gives the lie to the pretence that in time it will be phased out at Stormont. How could the DUP hope to deliver voluntary coalition at Stormont if DUP Minister Foster imposes mandatory coalition in local government? Such a diet of false promise is for the fairies.”

Devolution failing our fishermen

“Devolution is showing distinct signs of letting our fishermen down. 5 weeks ago, the desperation of their plight was laid before MLA’s at Stormont. Despite promises of a package of new measures, embracing help with harbour dues and fuel assistance, and despite reports that the Executive invited DARD to submit a business case, nothing has happened, other than the predicament of our fishermen worsening day by day. Frankly, things would not have been treated any more indifferently by Lord Rooker than they have been by Gildernew.”

“The inaction of the Minister and her Department is shameful. I am therefore calling for an urgent package of measures. DARD has it within its power to meet the bill from the NI Fishery Harbour Authority for harbour dues. Likewise, under EU rules, they can grant up to 7500 Euros of aid, without Brussels authority, to each effected fisherman. Its time the Minister woke up and that this was done.”



All editions of the monthly newsletter ‘Brussels Briefing’ are available to download at my website, www.jimallister.org

There, you can also sign up to receive each new edition, either by post or by e-mail.

It's time for Ian Paisley Senior to come clean

STATEMENT BY TRADITIONAL UNIONIST MEP JIM ALLISTER

“It will be recalled that when I exposed the fact that Ian Paisley Junior had wasted valuable negotiating leverage at St Andrews on lobbying for mere constituency and semi-commercial issues, I called specifically on Ian Paisley Senior to clarify any involvement or role which he had. That call was met by a deafening silence from Ian Paisley Senior and spin from the DUP that Junior was “on a solo run” and had no authority to raise any such issues.

I have now obtained a further document under a FOI request, which implicates Ian Paisley Senior in the raising of these issues. It is a memo from a senior Civil Servant in David Hanson’s office to the Permanent Secretaries of various Departments, on the Monday after St Andrews finished, which says, “At last weeks talks, Rev Ian Paisley and Ian Paisley Junior took the opportunity to raise with the Prime Minister a number of issues on which they were seeking a positive outcome....” The memo then recites the 6 issues raised and asks for a speedy response.

I, therefore call upon Ian Paisley Senior, and the DUP, to finally come clean on this issue and explain how a very senior civil servant, in the week after St Andrews, could be emailing

colleagues in these terms if the DUP Leader was not directly involved and present when it was decided to waste negotiating leverage with the PM on such irrelevant issues. Moreover, what depth of inquiry did the DUP conduct into this issue, which permitted it to spin the “solo run” line, if in fact the Leader was involved?

This documentation strongly suggests that contrary to DUP assertions and spin this abuse of St Andrews and taking the eye of the ball, went to the very top of the Party. Little wonder, the constitutional and political outcome for Unionism was so disappointing. If the target had been getting rid of the iniquity of mandatory coalition, rather than getting advantage for Sweeney, then Ulster would have been much better served. There were so many issues on which Unionism required a positive outcome, but instead it seems key players were focused on distracting irrelevancies.”



Farming News

Allister rejects EU ban on British Mince

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has vowed to fight against an EU Regulation requiring meat used to make mince to be cut less than six days after an animal’s slaughter.

The MEP said,

“I utterly reject this latest interference by EU bureaucrats on an integral aspect of British culture, namely our right to consume mince from beef hanged for between 14 to 28 days according to tradition. While the new regulations are apparently designed to offer added consumer health protection to French consumers of raw steak tartare, a blanket ban on matured mince is without scientific basis or logic.”

“While the new rules are set to be implemented imminently, it is ultimately British consumers who will suffer, not only in mince being less flavoursome and tender, but in the added production costs which will inevitably lead to higher prices.”

“This is simply the latest manifestation of a European nanny Superstate, where bureaucracy is employed to erode many of the liberties and traditions we in the United Kingdom have enjoyed for centuries. Last year, the milk pint came under attack by the men in grey suits, I suspect the definition of ‘mince’ is the latest victim for the sake of ‘an ever closer Union’.

Animal cruelty find poses serious questions for authorities

Jim Allister QC MEP has said tough questions will be asked of the authorities with the latest discovery of animal cruelty, at a farm at Katesbridge.

The MEP said,

“The recent revelation of animal cruelty at a farm at Katesbridge is extremely disturbing. Moreover, I am alarmed as to how 300 farm animals can be in the possession of individuals who, it is alleged were already banned from keeping livestock as a result of previous convictions for animal cruelty.”

“It is ironic, that at a time when most farmers have witnessed an increased number of animal welfare inspections under cross-compliance, a repeat offender well known to the authorities has gone unnoticed for so long. Obviously, questions need to be asked of DARD about the manner in which farms are prioritised for inspection. Indeed, the public will want assurances that any bans on individuals from keeping livestock will be properly enforced in the future. Lessons must be learned to avoid this very sad state of affairs from happening again.”

Allister prepares for EP Brazil visit

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister will travel to Brazil on a fact finding visit, as part of a European Parliament Agriculture Committee delegation.

The Ulster MEP said, “Numerous FVO Reports have detected gross inadequacies in Brazil’s beef production standards, while until recently the Commission has sought to downplay these failings. The committee wanted the opportunity to go and see for itself the issues around Brazilian beef production which have been the

subject of such controversy in recent years.”

“I expect the Brazilian officials will want to present a rosy image of Brazilian beef production to the delegation. However, armed with the findings of the FVO’s Inspection trip in November, I will be under no illusion about the systematic failings in holding registration methods, animal ID and movement controls, combined with the Brazilian Government’s less than forthright approach, which, I believe justifies a complete ban on Brazilian beef from entering the EU.”

MEP makes Tayto visit

Jim Allister MEP has made a visit to Tayto, the most recent of regular visits made by the MEP to key businesses across Northern Ireland.

Commenting on his visit, Mr Allister said, “For decades, Tayto has been a well-known and much loved potato crisp brand in Ulster. Recent years have seen the company embark upon a major growth strategy involving acquisitions of some of the biggest snack brands in the UK, including Golden Wonder in 2006 and most recently Red Mill Snacks. It is particularly encouraging to see an established Northern Ireland company perform well, not only in the local market, but to emerge as a key player in the UK as a whole - such has been the success of Tayto.”

“Talking to the Tayto Management team afforded me the opportunity to hear about some of the challenges the company faces, such as rising energy costs, but also about the opportunities they see for the future. Tayto urgently requires new growers to meet demand. I trust the weakening of the Pound against the Euro will deliver new opportunities for local



potato farmers as they consider entering into contracts for this year’s season.”

“According to management, local farmers are at a disadvantage by not having adequate cold storage provision for their potatoes, particularly vis-à-vis growers in the Republic of Ireland. There should be capacity within the new Rural Development Programme to offer assistance to potato growers for cold storage, and this is something I intend to raise with DARD in the coming days.”

Now Ahern heads for the exit

“With Blair, Hain, Paisley and Ahern gone, or going, within the year, the revived Belfast Agreement has not for them proved very propitious. Their shared legacy of unrepentant

terrorists at the heart of a rigged form of government is not something in which any of them should take pride.”

Allister attacks Cowen’s ‘Softly, Softly’ All-Ireland agenda

Extract from a speech by Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister at a TUV meeting in Newtownards:

“Having cajoled those who once vehemently opposed the Belfast Agreement to now enthusiastically operate it, I suppose it is no surprise that Dublin, in particular, should become more forward in setting out its stall. The comments of Brian Cowen, following his election as Fianna Fail leader, bear useful scrutiny.

He said, *“The revolutionary concept that is part of the Good Friday Agreement really is about embarking on a common journey without insisting upon the ultimate destination. That is the change of mindset that modern nationalism and modern unionism have to provide for the people of this country, North and South. We are very willing partners in that enterprise”*. I bet they are, because it is the sure route to attainment of their constitutional assertion in Articles 2 and 3 that **“it is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland...to be part of the Irish Nation”(Art 2) and “it is the firm will of the Irish Nation...to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Ireland...”(Art 3)**. This still offensive Constitution makes it very clear what the only destination can be for this “common journey”.

Thus, just who does Cowen think he’s kidding when he talks about “embarking on a common journey without insisting upon the ultimate destination”? Only a fool sets out on a journey, not knowing where it will lead. He knows the destination perfectly well. It’s a unified Ireland. That is still the constitutional imperative for the



Republic.

That’s why within the Belfast Agreement the British Government is pledged to legislate for Irish unity, once the people of Northern Ireland answer positively the only constitutional question which can ever be put to them in a referendum, namely, “Are you yet ready to join the Republic?” - a question which must be put once the Secretary of State believes the answer will be “Yes”.

And how do they hope to get to popping the question? Through implementing the all-Ireland harmonisation which is the body and soul of the Belfast Agreement. Hence the furious pace of north/southern under devolution. Putting in place the all-island economy is key, it **being a short step** from economic unity to political unity. How do you get a united Ireland? “It’s the economy, stupid!”

In every field we see manifestation of the all-island template - all island initiatives abound, be it education, agriculture, health, tourism, trade, infrastructure, or energy. You name it, there’s an all-island programme.

Day by day the modalities are being put in place to ease us out of the UK and deliver an all-Ireland, remembering that every new socio-economic alignment with the Republic diminishes our reliance on and affinity with the British connection.

So Mr Cowen needn’t talk smugly about a common journey with an unspecified destination. He knows perfectly well where he’s leading us and, sadly, so do those now working the Belfast Agreement, because they once saw it as the Dublin-trundling vehicle which it still undoubtedly is. If their analysis was right in 1998, and it was, then they are wrong in 2008!

That is why those opposed to Irish unity are still opposed to the Belfast Agreement. And that is why we need TUV, in this and every constituency, to give vigorous voice to traditional unionist principles.”

Allister disappointed Task Force didn't address 'Additionality'

In noting the publication of the EU Task Force Report, it is important to stress that no additional funds will, as a result, become available to Northern Ireland, other than what was already possible. The Report merely assists in better identifying existing funding opportunities. Though this, in itself, is a worthwhile exercise, an opportunity to press President Barroso last May into a commitment to a new Infrastructure Fund for Northern Ireland, was missed by OFMDFM.

The Peace Package - whatever its defects - was the product of an "on the hoof" commitment by the Commission President in 1994. Technically it was not possible within EU policies and programmes as they then existed, but it was achieved virtually by presidential decree and the policy and budget framework was then put in place to accommodate it. Similar pressure on Barroso, at a high point of EU goodwill, could have produced a special programme to meet our infrastructural deficit, particularly on roads and water & sewerage - which continue to be our greatest need.

The justification was obvious: such necessary expenditure over the years had got squeezed out by the prioritising of security spend and the fact that we missed out in qualifying for such aid under Cohesion Policy when it was available. Sadly, however, OFMDFM failed to secure such a meaningful package and instead we got a Task Force, which sounded good, but amounted mostly to a triumph of form over substance.

The Report is certainly strong on historical recital, but, frankly, it amounts to little in terms of future benefit.

One of my biggest criticisms and regrets is that the report failed, at all, to address the vexed issue of "additionality", which has long blighted regional aid from the EU.

EU funding is supposed to be additional to national spending in Northern Ireland. Article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) 1260/1999 stipulates such when it says, "In order to achieve a genuine economic impact, the appropriations of the Funds may not replace public or other equivalent structural expenditure by the Member State." This is the essence of additionality.

That is the theory but the practice in regard to Northern Ireland is shamefully different. Upon challenging the Direct Rule Finance Minister, Lord Rooker, on this issue, back in 2006, he replied as follows:-

"Your fourth point asks whether the EU funding to Northern Ireland represents additional funding to Northern Ireland or if it goes to reduce the burden on the UK Exchequer. The level of public expenditure that takes place in Northern Ireland is determined by the bi-annual spending review process for the UK as a whole and changes to Northern Ireland total spending are determined by the Barnett formula. The total amount of public expenditure available in the UK is determined by the revenue available. One of the factors determining this total revenue is the level of EU income. Other factors include tax revenues and borrowing. Northern Ireland benefits from the fact that higher levels of EU income to the UK enable higher total levels of expenditure throughout the UK including Northern Ireland."

Thus it is very clear that Northern Ireland and its needs are used as the means of attracting EU funding, but when it is received it goes directly to the UK Exchequer to the benefit of the UK as a whole, rather than for the singular benefit of Northern Ireland. EU funding, when received in the UK Exchequer, is then used to reduce the balance of UK-wide tax revenue and borrowing which is necessary to meet the UK's public expenditure demands.

I contend that this use of EU funding does not deliver true additionality and is not how it should be deployed. I had hoped that under devolution the DFP Minister would have ensured that the Task Force focussed on this issue, with a view to bringing real benefit to Northern Ireland. To find the Task Force silent on the issue is a major disappointment.

In considering Northern Ireland in the context of EU funding, it is also relevant to recall that the UK as a whole is a net contributor to Europe. Even with the UK rebate our net annual contribution is habitually of the order of £4billion, and rising. Northern Ireland's taxpayers play their part in funding this subsidy to Brussels and therefore it is wrong to suggest that our region is solely a net beneficiary of...

Additionality continued...

...funding from Europe. Two things are clear: we do, through our membership of the UK as taxpayers, contribute substantially to the funding of Europe and that which we get back is not transparently additional to other public expenditure within the Province, as it ought to be.

While the Report rehearses many of the infrastructural weaknesses regarding our water, transport and waste management systems, no extra assistance is offered specifically to help target regional deficiencies. While the Report centres on the six EU funding Programmes for 2007-2013, these were earmarked for Northern Ireland regardless of Commissioner Hubner's Task Force Report.



Jim Allister MEP with members of Ballybeen Women's Group during their recent visit to the European Parliament in Brussels.

Allister raises discrimination in Strasbourg

During Question time in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Jim Allister raised the continuing discrimination against Protestants in recruitment to the PSNI. Highlighting that such was only possible because the Commission permitted derogation from EU legislation banning such discrimination, the Ulster Euro MP pressed Commissioner Spidla on when the Commission would put an end to "this preposterous situation" and restore the rights which all other Europeans enjoy to his constituents.

In the course of his questioning of Commissioner Spidla, Mr Allister said:-

"Mr President, I would like to direct the Commissioner to religious discrimination and to the amazing fact that, despite the EU's protection against religious discrimination, there is one place in the EU where religious discrimination is permitted. Sadly it is my constituency of Northern Ireland where by reason of a derogation from EU legislation - permitted by the EU - it is expressly declared that it is lawful to discriminate against Protestants when it comes to recruiting to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Can the Commissioner tell us when this preposterous situation will end and the rights which others enjoy will be restored to my constituents?"

Withdrawal of RAF in Northern Ireland a major blow

"The withdrawal of the RAF from NI is not just a huge economic blow but also a massive political blow. For all the denials, it smacks of delivery of a further instalment of the disengagement by British services from Ulster. Just as "demilitarisation" was promised to IRA/Sinn Fein, no one should be surprised if the end of the RAF

in the Province was also on the republican shopping list. I remind people that there were several side letters at and after St Andrews to individual parties which HMG has still refused to reveal under FOI, because it could "destabilise" the Executive. I strongly suspect this announcement today is further delivery to Sinn Fein."

**Jim Allister MEP
attending the
opening of the '40
Years On' Exhibition
at Altnaveigh
House, Newry.**



Commenting Mr Allister said, 'This exhibition is a timely reminder of the deep suffering of the minority Protestant community in South Armagh at the hands of terrorists.'

I commend the ten community groups, who under the guidance of Altnaveigh House, undertook this valuable work and produced this impressive exhibition.'

MEP's response to BBC2's expose of Enniskillen Bombing

"The further revelations about McGuinness by Peter Taylor raise both policing and political issues and require action on both fronts.

The Enniskillen massacre was one of the most genocidal and cruel attacks of the IRA. The revelation of McGuinness' knowledge and approval means he should be questioned forthwith by the PSNI about conspiracy to murder.

This further expose of the real McGuinness confirms to many that he may be more deserving of gaol than government. Those who put him, and sustain him, in the position of Joint First Minister should bury their heads in shame and should never again have the audacity to parade as champions of victims."

MEP welcomes more money for Rural Halls

"I greatly welcome the fact that an underspend of PEACE II Extension money within RDC is to be spent by giving additional money to recipients



under the Maximising Community Space, rural halls Programme. They are to receive £300,000 extra cash to purchase equipment for use within refurbished halls.

The Rural Halls Programme is one I had campaigned long and hard to achieve and was pleased that so many Orange halls qualified for refurbishment assistance. A few weeks ago I discovered this underspend existed and, therefore, I am pleased that RDC has responded positively to representations to direct it into these halls."