

Jim Allister MEP - *Leading for Ulster*

BRUSSELS BRIEFING

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'Peace' Priorities anti-Unionist

Scandal of £10 million for ex-prisoners

Jim Allister has launched a blistering attack on the roll out of the EU Peace III Programme, saying its priorities reflect a clear anti-Unionist bias.

The MEP said, "After the poor focus of previous Peace Programmes on tackling disadvantage within Unionist communities, I highlighted my concerns to the Managing authority, the Special European Union Programmes Body. In particular, I raised my concerns over the lack of assistance given to innocent victims of the Troubles, particularly when compared with the funds lavished upon groups linked to paramilitaries".

"In January of this year, I wrote to then Finance Minister Peter Robinson, expressing my concerns at the lack of Unionist representation on the Peace Steering committee, which has responsibility for assessing project applications and approving funding. Only in October have the authorities decided it might be an idea to include representation from the Unionist community, despite a number of deeply objectionable projects having already been recommended for funding".

"The Steering committee has approved funding amounting to £7.5 million to be directed to 'current and former republican prisoners, their families and displaced persons'. In addition, a further £3 million has been approved for loyalist 'ex-prisoner' groups. Of course, 'ex-prisoners' is one of the priority areas for funding under the Peace III Programme, which has been approved by our very own Northern Ireland Executive."

"I am deeply concerned at the lack of equality within the allocation of funds under the Peace III Programme, and the objectionable manner in which funds are being prioritised towards combatants, rather than innocent victims. This is simply another case of airbrushing history and appeasing paramilitary thugs, facilitated by an unwillingness on the part of DUP Executive Ministers to rock the political boat."

I have followed these matters up with both Commissioner Hubner and with DFP Minister Nigel Dodds, whose approval is required for these allocations. I have called upon him to refuse to sanction the waste of £10 million on ex-prisoners. I await his response.

"Here we go again, it's bash the fishermen time in Brussels" - Allister

"The publication by the EU Commission of its annual Quota proposals shows again Brussels intent on suppressing our fishing industry, without cause or scientific justification. The science on prawns, haddock, plaice and herring is positive, yet only with haddock is there a proposal to increase quota. With everything else it is the usual dismal proposal for savage cuts. It is the pursuit of such unwarranted "cut now, think later" mentality which shows Brussels so unfit for this task. Last year, in face of evidence from the fishermen the Commission insisted in cutting the North East Atlantic mackerel quota by 9%, now,

having got it so wrong, they have to concede a 33% increase for 2009. This random trial and error approach is imposing unnecessary pain on the industry, which stands to be repeated this year in respect of prawns, plaice and herring.

I, therefore, strongly support the stance of our local fishermen in exposing the lunacy of Brussels and commend our POs for their reasoned analysis of the proposals.

Radical changes must be made to these proposals and I certainly will be lobbying hard to this effect."



One year on from the Quinn murder

“One year ago an IRA gang brutally bludgeoned a young man to death in the most horrific manner. Had this happened during the UUP’s leadership of Unionism the outcry from DUP representatives for immediate action against Sinn Fein/IRA would have been deafening. Yet today they are mute. Why? Because the Democratic Unionists have bought into the so-called “peace process” where a blind eye has been tuned to murder for years.

“Shamefully the Independent Monitoring Commission allowed itself to become a tool in the political process when in May they issued a report which amounted to a total whitewash. However, even they conceded that:

“Amongst those involved were people who had in various ways been associated with the PIRA at a local level, including as members of the organisation.” This was a flat contradiction of Conor Murphy’s claim that rumours of



“any republican involvement” amounted to “wild and baseless allegations”. But the appeasement process carried on regardless.

“Ignoring murder is in stark contrast to the DUP behaviour in the past. On Friday 4th May 2001 Patrick Daly, a Roman Catholic father-of-four from south Belfast, was murdered. On Tuesday 8th May 2001 Peter Robinson blamed the IRA for the murder on the floor of the Assembly and said it made Sinn Fein’s continued presence in government untenable. Today that same Mr Robinson sits alongside Martin McGuinness as joint First Minister while Paul Quinn is forgotten about.

“The murder of Paul Quinn tells us many things about the new Northern Ireland and, indeed, about the new DUP who now overlook killings which they find politically inconvenient.”

Monica McWilliams should resign - MEP

Statement by TUV Leader Jim Allister MEP:

“When the highest court in the land, the House of Lords, makes a stinging criticism of a publicly funded body and finds it guilty of time-wasting, then public accountability should dictate that heads should roll. So instead of trying to defend the indefensible, Monica McWilliams should resign as Chief Commissioner following the denunciation of the Human Rights Commission in the Holy Cross case. I call on her to do so.

The wanton support of the Commission of a case rejected not once, nor twice but three times, as it progressed up through the hierarchy of the courts shows gross lack of judgment and suggests the Commission, blinkered by its own prejudice, was playing politics. Every court involved has rejected the Commission’s jaundiced view of human rights, demonstrating that the Commission, supposed experts, are utterly unsuited to their task.”

Funding Opportunity: Maximising Community Space

The RDC has opened a new programme entitled “Maximising Community Space Crossing Borders”, which is designed to facilitate the development and wider usage of existing community halls infrastructure and foster good relationships within and between communities.

This programme has 2 strands:

- Strand 1 - up to 50 places are available for a tailored programme of development support.
- Strand 2 - Awards of up to £50,000 and associated project implementation support for minor works.

The opportunity to apply to Strand 2 will only be open to organisations completing Strand 1, which will need a separate application form.

The Closing Date for the programme is Friday, 9th January 2009 at 4pm.

Applications are available to download from www.rdc.org.uk or alternatively you can contact:

Northern Ireland Rural Development Council
17 Loy Street,
Cookstown,
BT80 8PZ
Telephone: +44 (28) 86766980
Fax: +44 (28) 86766922

Commenting Jim Allister said “I would encourage community and orange groups to avail of this funding, which again includes the possibility of getting support for capital works in Orange Halls.”

Opinion piece by Jim Allister as published by the Newsletter on the day of the TUV Conference

Today the first conference of Traditional Unionist Voice will provide hope and confidence to Unionists across the Province who rightly reject IRA/Sinn Fein in government and the system which put them there. It will also resonate with tens of thousands of ordinary families who are deeply disillusioned by the latest failing attempt at Belfast Agreement devolution.

The shambles at Stormont makes the case against unworkable mandatory coalition better than any words of mine. The reality versus the fantasy that was promised could not be more striking.

We were all assured that never again would Sinn Fein hold government to ransom and if they did there'd be in place a workable default mechanism to put them out. That is how St Andrews was sold. How different the reality has turned out to be: a can't meet, won't meet Executive, utter despair brought to pupils and parents by the chaos visited on education, a Stormont increasingly irrelevant to the massive economic pressures on every family and nothing to show for the huge public cost of this experiment. Have we ever experienced worse government?

No one should be surprised that when you clutch to the bosom of government those with no interest in good government for Northern Ireland - for such would undermine their central tenet of the unworkability of this political entity - they will do exactly what it says on the Sinn Fein tin.

In face of such predictable wrecking the First Minister is impotent to act, because the office which he holds only has power when Marty agrees. The unchanged republican veto allows Sinn Fein to wreak havoc as they please.

At the heart of the problem is the crazed system of mandatory coalition, which implants every Party for ever in government, with no need to reconcile their contradictory policy demands. So little wonder it plummets into deadlock.

This week the greatest democracy in the world elected a new President. If mandatory coalition applied there the loser, Senator McCain, by law could say, "never mind the voters, I'll be Joint President". That is how ridiculous the concept of mandatory coalition is.

Why should we be the only place in the western democratic world subjected to this absurdity? We wouldn't be if those still propping it up had the courage to kick away the props.

Voluntary coalition is the workable route to shared government. No party is strong enough to form a government on its own, so a coalition is inevitable. But it must be a coalition which will work. Those who can agree and command a sufficient majority and those who cannot form a vibrant opposition, with the option of voting one coalition out and another in at the next election.

That is democracy.

The argument against voluntary coalition is "oh, you can't have devolution without Sinn Fein in government". Why not? Because, some whisper, we might go back to "the bad old days". Who would take us there? Surely not those we are assured have given up violence for good? If Sinn Fein are only playing the role of democrats so long as they stay in government, then we are being blackmailed as well as conned!

Now is the time for Peter Robinson to face reality and go to HMG and say, "We tried your mandatory coalition, it doesn't work, will never work and if you want devolution in Northern Ireland, then it must be, as elsewhere, on the basis of voluntary coalition."

In that he would have the support of all Unionists - those who thought Sinn Fein was fit for government, those who thought it was worth giving them a chance and those of us who said they were never fit for office. Therein is the route to unionist unity.

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Allister leads women into battle in Brussels

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has led a deputation in Brussels from the Women's Sector in Northern Ireland to meet with top personnel in Commissioner Hubner's Cabinet to discuss the severe funding crisis particularly affecting training for women.

Under the Peace II Programme TWN (Training Women's Network) was an IFB (Intermediate Funding Body) charged with the distribution of funding for training women back into work. It excelled in surpassing all its targets, both in terms of returning women to work and attaining accredited qualifications. Measure 1.5 which it administered was the most successful of all the measures. Yet, bizarrely under Peace III this special focus on women's needs has been abandoned, with economic delivery replaced by peace and reconciliation goals. In consequence numerous women's training programmes are facing the end of the line.

The situation is compounded by the fact that though £2.7M of funding has been approved for TWN, under Peace III, not a penny of funding has flowed, nor has even an official letter of offer been furnished, leaving TWN and the groups under its umbrella starved of funds and facing imminent closure. This blockage in funding, almost 2 years after Peace III was scheduled to start, was one of the issues pressed home with the EU officials.

The gross disparity in funding was also raised, in particular the fact that ex-prisoners groups have

been gifted a staggering £10M of Peace III funding. Ex-prisoners represent less than 2% of the population but are to get a handout which equates to £300 each, while women, who make up 51% of the population get what equates to 32p each. This scandal was forcefully drawn to the Commission's attention. When the neglect of the victims sector under Peace III is added to the mix, then there is indeed a scandalous abuse of this funding afoot.

Speaking after the meeting Jim Allister said, "I congratulate Norma Shearer, Chief Executive of TWN, and her colleagues on the tenacious and persuasive way in which they presented their case. To me it is unanswerable, but we wait to see what action the Commission can force on SEUPB both to speed delivery and bring equity to the distribution. I will now be raising the issue of the unacceptable ratio of funding distribution with the DFP Minister, Nigel Dodds MP, particularly the monstrous over-provision for ex-prisoners, the neglect of victims and the derisory treatment of the women's sector. I will be urging him to block the £10M handout to ex-prisoners."



Allister speaks on internet danger

Welcoming the publication of a report on the Safer Internet Programme TUV MEP Jim Allister said in Strasbourg:

"While the internet is a wonderful tool it also creates moral, physical and social dangers for our young people. It is therefore right that this report focuses on what can be done to thwart abuse of the internet, particularly with regard to child pornography, online grooming and incitement to self-harm, one of the most chilling aspects of which is sites which actually encourage suicide.

"It is my hope that the Safer Internet programme will go some way to tackling these problems. For me there are three key issues. Firstly, improving the facility for effective police cooperation and I think that the European child pornography images database must be encouraged. Secondly, better traceability of the financial movements which are linked to child pornography, and thirdly, a properly advanced common kite safety mark, so that parents can know with confidence what is safe for their children to look at."



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.

Allister welcomes timeshare report

For many families, time-share deals that allow buyers to purchase holiday accommodation according to their use of the property are a good alternative to renting or staying in hotels. According to data from the Organisation for Timeshare in Europe (OTE), the timeshare industry generates revenues of over \$9.4bn per year.

This legislation aims to strengthen consumer confidence and legal clarity, which are essential to the growth of this sector. It will do so by simplifying EU-wide rules and strengthening consumer protection measures. The cross-border nature of time-share makes this particularly important. Whilst the British and Germans are amongst those who use timeshare most, the majority of holiday centres are located in Spain, Italy, France and Portugal.

The EU directive of 1994 on this topic failed to properly harmonise time-share rules across the

EU and foresee the obvious loop-holes. The emergence of new forms of timeshare came about that were not covered by the directive, including holiday clubs giving holidaymakers reductions in the cost of their stays if they take out a subscription. Some of the contracts clearly circumvented consumer protection rules. As a result, litigation between operators and holidaymakers is rife, notably about conditions and quality of service.

I welcome this new piece of legislation that finally aims to make genuine timeshare easier to buy and will also put an end to fraudulent discount travel clubs. This new legislation is a victory for the consumer and better protects the time-share holiday rights of some 1.5 million European families. It enables people to invest in time-share with much more confidence and security.

Allister warns against Trojan candidates

“Tucked into the NIO Consultation on *“Improving the Administration of Elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly”* was a radical and dangerous proposal to change how a vacancy from Northern Ireland would be filled in the European Parliament.

Since direct elections 30 years ago, any vacancy would be filled by the electorate through a by-election. Under the new proposal the electorate would be bypassed and the “nominating Officer” (Leader) of the Party to which the resigning or deceased MEP belonged, when elected, would name his/her replacement, without any recourse to the voters, nor would the name of that person ever have to have appeared on a reserve list, as occurs in Stormont Assembly elections.

Thus, within days/weeks/months after being elected an MEP he/she could resign their seat and their Party could then put in his place an individual who has never previously been advertised to the electorate. Such invites abuse and the unseemly prospect of “Trojan” candidates, which ultimately will bring the political process into disrepute. Additionally, the practice in Northern Ireland of at least one party

seeking to tie its candidates to contractual terms could result in the spectacle of the elected member who “falls from grace” within his party being trundled out and an unelected placeman substituted. It is the electorate, not a cabal who should elect. Thus a proposal that someone whose name never appeared before the electorate, even on a B List, could end up being foisted on the voters is not acceptable.

There is an importance and relevance to the nexus and relationship which exists between the elected and the electors. Once the unelected can squat in the seat of the elected then that essential relationship is breached. Such would not be thought good enough for Westminster, nor is it satisfactory for the European Parliament.

I am not surprised to hear that the DUP has been urging this scheme upon the Secretary of State. As they struggle to find a high profile candidate for Europe, the option of replacing him/her, if elected, by a lesser known placeman - to allow the Trojan candidate to return to Westminster - will have its attractions. So whoever they select will have to face the question if they are pledged to see out their term, or will a slight of hand be worked upon the electorate?”

Allister raises persecution of Christians in Vietnam

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has used a debate in the European Parliament on a proposed agreement between Vietnam and the EU, to raise the high level of religious persecution in the south-east Asian country.

Mr Allister frequently pursues the issue of persecution of Christians in oppressive countries when such reports come up for consideration in the European Parliament. This time he focused on a relentless campaign by the Vietnamese authorities against evangelical house churches, pressing that human rights should not be sacrificed for the sake of increased trade with these offending countries.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-
"Despite the pious protestations from the Vietnamese Government that they guarantee religious freedom, the reality is very different,

particularly for isolated Christian groups. While confiscation of church property has been rife, those linked to unregistered evangelical house churches have been particular targets for persecution.

Just months ago a young tribal man who refused to repudiate his Christian faith died from injuries inflicted under official interrogation. Hundreds remain in prison for their faith, where the ill-treatment is appalling. I salute their courage, condemn their persecutors, but above all appeal to this EU not to put improving relations and trade with North Vietnam above defending and demanding basic human rights for these human beings of great faith.

We must not for the sake of trade or other short term gain sanitise the outrageous human rights record of Hanoi."

Stop crucifying our fishing industry - Allister

During a debate in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on Cod Stocks, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister challenged the sense and logic of the basic EU policy which yearly drives down allowable catches and thereby drives up discards of fish caught above quota. Describing it as a "self-defeating and eco-crazy policy", the Ulster MEP called for a radical reversal of policy in the Irish Sea, where we not just have a reducing quota and cuts in "days at sea", but a Spring closure which is not working.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-
"The constant refrain of the Commission, and indeed this report, is ever declining cod stocks, yet this year within the EU we will dump €50m worth of dead cod back into the sea. Why, because of our crazed policy on discards. The TACs (Total Allowable Catch) have been driven so unrealistically low that massive discards are being produced, probably 1 discard for every cod retained. Yet, year on year, we drive down TACs and in consequence push up discards, and so we perpetuate this self-defeating and eco-crazy policy. Whether a cod is retained or discarded it reduces the biomass.

Increase the TACs and you'll correspondingly reduce the discards and swell the food supply,



without depleting the biomass more than we do through discards. This, I believe, along with Cod Avoidance Plans, is the sensible way to go."

Mr Allister went on to comment specifically about the situation in the Irish Sea:

"Finally, a plea for the Irish Sea, where uniquely in the EU we have not just diminishing TACs, constant cuts in days at sea, but also for 9 years a complete spring closure - a supposed temporary measure, but one which has become as permanent as it is ineffective. We can't go on with this crucifixion of our fishing industry. We need realistic TACs and no more cuts in days at sea."

Two years on from St Andrews

Extract from a speech by Jim Allister MEP to a TUV fund-raising dinner in Cookstown:-

“Two years ago this week the St Andrews Conference took place and the process which delivered IRA/Sinn Fein into the heart of our government was set in motion. As soon as the conference was over, a mighty propaganda operation swung into action, first within the DUP and then within the wider Unionist community. Peter Robinson was the chief architect of that operation. Its essence was to so grossly exaggerate the St Andrews tinkering as to pretend the iniquitous Belfast Agreement had been superseded and to reassure doubters that Unionists were so in control that devolution was the answer to all our prayers and that Sinn Fein would never again hold government to ransom and if they did, the promise of an effective default mechanism was there to put manners on them.

How different it has all turned out! The same and

essential structures of the Belfast Agreement rule over us, IRA/Sinn Fein can still run amok in government, without sanction, and mock the First Minister’s impotence of being unable to even sign a letter without McGuinness’ permission.

Weeks ago Peter Robinson promised “serious consequences” if Sinn Fein persisted with their wrecking policies. With every day that passes government descends into deeper chaos, Sinn Fein rejoices in the instability it has been permitted to induce and the First Minister looks more and more foolish, first for championing the return to failed Belfast Agreement devolution and second for issuing empty threats.

It’s time for those who got us here to pull back and realise that mandatory coalition cannot and never will work and, instead, build a consensus across Unionism, and beyond, that only voluntary coalition has any chance of delivering a devolution that works. We can’t go on with the present Stormont charade.”

Commission committed to treating terrorists as victims - Allister

Following a protracted battle with OFMDFM which resulted in the intervention of the Information Commissioner, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has obtained documentation which raises serious questions about the Victims’ Commission. Commenting Mr Allister said:

“Way back in February I submitted a Freedom of Information request to OFMDFM. Following a complaint to the Information Commission, the Department has finally disclosed some of the information I requested. The reason for the delay is obvious.

“Those who interviewed candidates for the post of Commissioner - and it was still a commissioner at that stage - in November 2007 were provided with a list of “Points to look for at interview”. Among these was “A commitment to the broad definition of victim and survivor provided by the

Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006”.

“This Order defines a victim or survivor as someone who is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident, thus equating the terrorist injured by his own bomb with the innocent victims of Enniskillen and La Mon.

“It is nothing short of outrageous that a Department jointly under DUP management should be complicit in propping up this obscene definition - a definition which DUP spokesmen, from time to time, have publicly claimed to oppose. How can innocent victims how have confidence in the proposed Victims’ Forum which is supposed to consider the definition? After all, the Forum must “act in accordance with principles laid down by the Commission as to the conduct of its business” (Outline Draft Strategic Approach for Victims and Survivors).

“Additionally, interviewers were instructed to look for an ability to “work with different political parties”. Of course this includes Sinn Fein/IRA - an organisation most innocent victims would have nothing to do with.



The positive side of the credit crunch

In recent times positive stories about the economy have been few and far between. However, I am sure I am not the only Unionist to have derived some pleasure from the news that the IRA's ill-gotten gains have lost a significant amount of their value. Republican sources have been quoted in the press as saying that the IRA had moved large amounts of money into a number of Wall Street institutions which were devastated by the sub-prime market collapse. I hope their losses have been huge.

Of course, this money was never lawfully the IRA's to lose in the first place. And, had the DUP's preconditions of the return of the Republican movement's ill-gotten gains been adhered to, they would have been handed back before they assumed the position of coequal partners in government.

So, no bonuses for IRA managers this year!

MEP attacks EU's corporation tax plans

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has welcomed the publication by the 'Bruges Group' of a thorough study analysing the EU's attempt to control the taxation of businesses through a policy known as the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB). This is something which the EU Commission has been peddling since 2001 and which it hopes to advance in a legislative proposal in the coming months.

Commenting Jim Allister said, "It is a classic EU policy, which the European Commission hopes will create a pan-European tax authority, a one-size-fits-none approach that benefits the bureaucrats at the cost of the ordinary taxpayer.

As the Bruges Group have pointed out, the EU's latest tax power grab would reduce the GDP of the fragile UK economy by £73 billion over the next 10 years, equal to each UK inhabitant paying £1,200 each or the equivalent of British taxpayers having to pay an extra 1.5p in the basic rate of income tax for each of those years.

Brussels plan to control corporation tax would also harm the business environment in the UK. It would force up corporate tax bills, greatly add to tax complexity and massively increase the administrative burden that British businesses are forced to deal with. Forcing UK industries, as the Bruges Group says, to join the 'Taxodus' and leave Britain. Furthermore, the CCCTB would mean that the UK would lose a total of £58.4 billion of investment over 10 years."

The Bruges Group, formed to mark Margaret Thatcher's famous speech in 1988 in Bruges, against EU centralisation, spearheads the intellectual battle against the notion of "ever-closer Union" in Europe.

For the full analysis online see:
<http://www.brugesgroup.com/CorporateTax.pdf>

Sinn Fein could ensure Northern Bank heist convictions - Allister

"Sinn Fein, above all others, could ensure convictions of the Northern Bank robbers, because it was their IRA which carried it out. But, of course, their phony, selective and supposed support for the rule of law is secondary to their determination to protect their own. Likewise, in the brutal murder of Robert McCartney.

I have little doubt but that senior Sinn Fein figures could greatly help the police, if they told all they knew about these high profile crimes.

What a scandal that the IRA got away with £26million and their political acolytes sit

smirking in government - put there by those who at one time made return of all their "ill-gotten gains" a pre-requisite to Sinn Fein getting anywhere near power in Northern Ireland. On the very first day of the St Andrews Conference Ian Paisley beat this drum and William McCrea and others oft repeated it in the House of Commons and elsewhere, but now Sinn Fein don't even have to work government, and they still enjoy every penny of their ill-gotten gains.

Little wonder the Northern Bank robbery still epitomises the unfitness of Sinn Fein for government and the roll-over weakness of those who let them in."

What a pitiful story



Statement by Jim Allister
MEP in answer to Mervyn
Storey MLA:

"So today when the DUP
Press Office spun its
propaganda wheel it chose
Mervyn Storey as the
purveyor of its latest single
transferable diatribe
against me.

If I am so "out of step" with the electorate, as Mervyn would like to pretend, then why is he so concerned with me defending my seat in Europe. Of course the DUP would like to avoid being called to account at the polls over their partnership with IRA/Sinn Fein, but I'm afraid, if they enter this race, they will be disappointed because, if spared, I'll be there not just to defend my record in Europe but to ensure the Unionist electorate has the opportunity to give

its verdict on their clutching of Sinn Fein to their bosom in government.

It is utter hypocrisy for the DUP to pretend concern about Sinn Fein topping the poll when they put them right to the top of government, as their equal. It's Mervyn who should be asking himself searching questions as to how, without blushing, he will daily prop up Sinn Fein in government in Stormont and then go out at night in North Antrim to knock doors to exhort a vote for the DUP in order to defeat Sinn Fein! What a joke!

The reality of the European Election is very simple. There are two sitting unionist MEPs defending their seats and if a third party enters the race then it is they who will be splitting the vote. It's not too late for the DUP to pull back, if they genuinely care about retaining two unionist voices in Brussels."

Time for Nelson to walk away from the Executive - Allister

I wholeheartedly support Nelson McCausland right to say what he did in the Assembly about Adams. It seems a strange view by the Speaker of what is unparliamentary language when he rules that because Adams (who, of course, would have us believe he never even belonged to the IRA) denied allegations, then they must be withdrawn. What sort of cosset chamber for Sinn Fein is Speaker Hay creating?

However, while Mr McCausland was prepared to be excluded from the Assembly for a day he was not prepared to denounce the DUP's alliance with Adams' party.

The question for Mr McCausland and indeed his fellow MLAs who applauded him is why they continue to sustain the party of Adams, Sinn Fein/IRA, in government. If the DUP genuinely believe what Mr McCausland says why are they in coalition with them? These events are mere bluster and empty grandstanding unless the DUP are prepared to walk away from the failed and dysfunctional executive which they continue to prop up.

Time for DUP to break its link with Sinn Fein

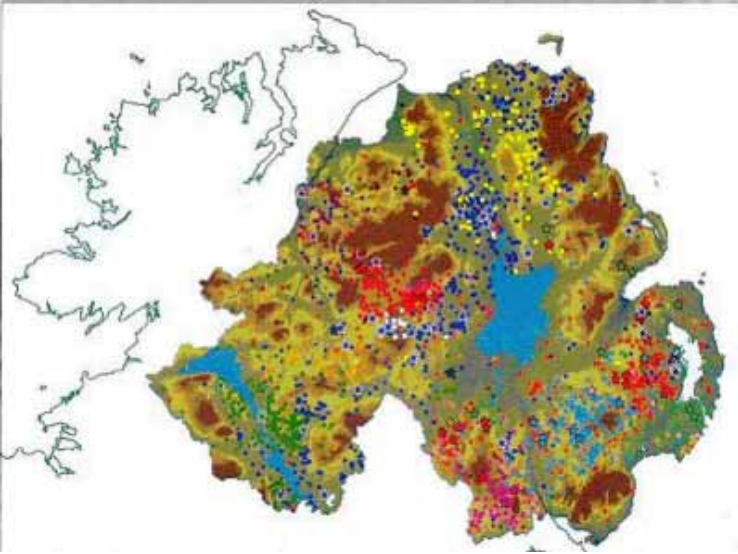
Responding to Peter Robinson's comments on the Sinn Fein protest at the parade to welcome home our troops Jim Allister said:

"It should come as no surprise that a party which justified the murder of Her Majesty's troops over a thirty year campaign of terror should seek to disrupt this parade. I wholeheartedly concur with the joint First Minister when he says that Sinn Fein's demonstration is "a recipe for disaster" but the question of why he maintains in a political union with this party remains unanswered.

"Mr Robinson is deluded if he believes that only some members of Sinn Fein/IRA have not entered a new era. The Republican leopard has not changed its spots and remains the same revolutionary organisation dedicated to the destruction of the state it always was. This despicable protest was organised by the same people who prevented the Executive from meeting for 6 months and it's high time that the DUP woke up to the reality that they made a colossal mistake in buying into the Belfast Agreement".

Farming News

Allister wins battle over TB map release



Jim Allister MEP has won a victory with DARD over the release of a map which illustrates a clear correlation between TB strains in badgers and cattle. DARD-funded research has collated data of *M. bovis* isolates from cattle, and from badgers killed on the roads, while 'mapping' the different strain types. DARD initially refused to

disclose the map, quoting public interest grounds. However, this decision was subsequently overturned, after the MEP won an appeal.

The MEP commented,

"I believe it is in the public interest that this data should be published. This map illustrates the prevalence of various strain types of *M. bovis* across Northern Ireland. Crucially, the map confirms that there is a clear correlation in strain types being detected in cattle as in badgers."

"It speaks volumes that DARD would want to hide this information from the public, on the basis that this Department would rather bury its head in the sand than acknowledge there is a wildlife dimension to TB eradication. Farmers continue to lose out financially through disruption caused by an ineffective Government policy on TB control."

"Perhaps DARD will come clean on whether some form of badger cull/management strategy will go ahead".

Dairy Crisis taken to the top in Brussels

Statement by Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister, following meeting in Brussels with Commissioner Fischer Boel and representatives of the Northern Ireland dairy sector.

"We had a useful and serious discussion on the looming dangers for the dairy sector, following the unprecedented fall in the auction price of milk in October. I found the Commissioner more appreciative of the risks than sometimes. It is clear that other regions too are hurting with the spot price in Germany having fallen to 19 cents.

I reminded the Commissioner of the promise in her written reply to me on 27 October that the Commission would be ready to act "in the necessary targeted and responsible way" in the event that "market prices deteriorate in a more substantial way." With our 30% fall in the October auction I pressed her that the substantial fall had now happened and thus she must make good on her promise to respond in a targeted way.

The Commissioner's initial response is to look at bringing forward the start date for private storage aid on butter, but, as we pointed out, this will not really help the Northern Ireland situation. The date when intervention can open, 1st March, is set not by the Commission, but by a

Council Regulation, thus of itself the Commission cannot change this. This leaves export refunds. It is clear the Commissioner will need to be further persuaded on their ability to help. She believes such refunds would merely be discounted in the milk price. The processors take issue with this and say that was not our experience in the past. The processors will now communicate further with the Commission to demonstrate this. Thus, I have certainly not given up on export refunds and believe they would help put a bottom in the market.

There is no reason why export refunds could not be targeted on the specific sector of whole milk powder, where we are so dependent. I think we probably made some movement in opening the Commissioner's mind on this issue, but it remains a work in progress.

There are no immediate and magic answers out of this meeting, but certainly the Commission is now in no doubt as to the situation our producers face and as to the expectation of help from Brussels. I think it is possible the Commissioner will come up with a package of measures, ensuring they will be sufficient and in time is my new focus."

Chinese chicken under scrutiny

During Question Time in the European Parliament Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister pressed Commissioner Kallas on the import of heat-treated poultry meat from China and expressed concerns about the rigour of health tests to which it is subjected.

Imports of poultry meat from China to the EU were banned back in 2002 because of bird flu. At the end of July 2008 the EU agreed to re-admit treat-heated poultry meat from Shandong Province, on the basis that it now met EU health and welfare standards. Since then this meat has been flooding into the European market, causing concerns among indigenous producers of unfair competition.

Against this background Mr Allister pressed Commission Vice-President, Siim Kallas, as to just how rigorous the EU had been in allowing itself to be persuaded to re-commence imports from China. Though Commissioner Kallas was anxious to stress that public health rules applying to these exports from China ensured "an equivalent level of protection" to those in the EU, when pressed by MEPs on precisely how this was done some disturbing information emerged.

It turns out that exports to the EU have been recommenced on the basis of just 3 fact-finding missions and that the last one was back in 2006. "Here we are", said Mr Allister "opening our market in the latter half of 2008 on the basis of stale inspections and with no further inspection intended till 2009. This is not what I believe EU consumers would expect. But when I pressed the

Commissioner further I was disappointed to get no answer to these critical questions:-

- whereas imports are only supposed to come from plants in Shandong Province, how do we know that the imported meat in fact all originates there;
- will there be the same ratio of production tested for EU health standards as would apply within the EU in our own plants, or are we relying on self-certification;
- on welfare considerations, will the same requirements be placed on China as we are imposing on our own producers in terms of types of cages and the phasing out of cages?

Sadly, the Commissioner was unable to answer these questions, suggesting to me that once more, with echoes of what happened with Brazilian beef, we are going down the road of allowing imports without them transparently meeting the same rigorous requirements that we place on our own produce. This is unfair to both producers and consumers in the EU.

With China pressing further export demands, with an application from Jilin Province pending, we are fast heading towards a flood of imports. Already having to cope with a huge scale of imports from Thailand, this does not bode well for our poultry industry.

I will continue to press the Commission on these issues, believing it is intolerable if our own producers are crucified by EU regulation while others can flood our market with inferior product."

Allister raises restrictions on calf exports with Commission

Ulster MEP Jim Allister has raised his concerns with the Commission over the disruption caused by some Member States to calf exports from Northern Ireland. The MEP said

"As a result of TB being detected from a consignment of English calves to Holland in July, the export trade for local calves has been severely affected. Despite Member States agreeing in SCoF-CAH that no additional Community measures were needed in relation to TB, it would seem certain Member States have subsequently taken a unilateral approach."

"Italian authorities are insisting that weanling importers carry out a post-import TB test 42 days after animals arrive at the distributors' premises. This extra requirement is over and above any Community legislation, and has effectively shut the door on Northern Ireland calves from the Italian market."

"I have written to Health Commissioner Vassiliou, highlighting my concerns at how Member States appear to be taking unilateral action, citing health grounds, but without justification. I have also asked Commissioner McCreevy to investigate if the action of certain Member States is in breach of internal trade rules."

Quote to note

When asked at Stormont about a letter from the First Ministers about how the Policing and Justice Minister would be appointed Murphy replied:

“We don’t consider the Good Friday Agreement as a settlement so therefore I can’t see how Sinn Fein would get into arrangements for all times. We have a different view of what the constitutional future of this island looks like and it’s not in this building”.

Where else in the world would a party dedicated to the destruction of the state be gifted a perpetual place in its government? What madness possessed Unionists who acquiesced in putting them there?

Murphy’s comments underline once again that the Belfast Agreement is not just morally wrong it is politically suicidal for Unionism.

Eames-Bradley suggestions amount to amnesty

With the IRA represented at the highest level in the Stormont government, the prospect of the Eames/Bradley Commission - itself peopled by the politically compliant - doing anything serious to advance justice for the thousands of victims of terrorism, was always remote. Now, as their thinking unfolds, it is clear the denial of justice and safeguarding of terrorist perpetrators will be the product of their deliberations.

Immunity is but amnesty under another guise. It might be politically convenient to trade selective information for amnesty, but it is not justice.

Increasingly since 1998 prosecution of terrorism has been viewed as unhelpful to "the peace process". Now, an attempt will be made to close the books through the Eames/Bradley proposals by sweeping everything under the immunity/amnesty table. Meanwhile McGuinness and his IRA can keep their secrets, pursuant to "the republican code of honour", and at the same time rule over the land the IRA so viciously terrorised. Such is how justice has been trampled in the Ulster of the Belfast Agreement, and just to rub it in McGuinness has joint and equal responsibility for victims - what a farce.

Allister welcomes Irish action against “good Republican”

I commend the Southern authorities for succeeding in recovering some of the IRA’s “ill-gotten gains” from Thomas Slab Murphy. Many Unionists will wonder how much could be recovered on this side of the border if there was the political will to pursue paramilitaries who obtained money through dishonest means in Northern Ireland.

Let’s not forget that Gerry Adams - whose party at will



can hold the government to ransom because of the veto they secured at St Andrews - described Murphy as **“not a criminal, but a good republican and a long-standing supporter of Sinn Féin’s peace strategy.”**

Few statements could illustrate a more warped sense of what constitutes criminality yet some Unionists now foolishly claim that Republicans support the rule of law!

“Even Chamberlain had a piece of paper!”

“How pitiful that the DUP Leader has been reduced to peddling republican-friendly spin. How else could you describe the claim, “IRA Council ‘has gone away’ - DUP”.

Even Chamberlain had a piece of paper, all Peter has are “private assurances” from the republican leadership - the same leadership which assures us Gerry Adams was never even in the IRA! Now, Peter Robinson is reduced to a plaintiff,

desperate plea that Marty says publicly what he claims he has told him in private. How pathetic!

The sad truth is that the DUP has got so entangled in the web of Belfast Agreement devolution that it will say anything and do anything just to cling to power. And if that requires rolling over on Sinn Fein’s demands on policing and justice and pretending the wicked Army Council is gone, then so be it. In their parallel world it’s another victory for Unionism!”