

# Looking to the future of a new and united Ireland

a Chara,

I was intending to write about the upcoming St. Patrick's day visit by the Sinn Féin leadership and the advanced plans for Easter Commemorations. As Irish republicans, we are proud of our heritage and optimistic for the future as we move from partition to Irish unity.

On Wednesday night in Omagh, County Tyrone, a group tried to murder a Police Officer. The Officer had been helping out at soccer training with his son's team. He was shot and injured. Suspicion has fallen on so-called republican dissents organizations.

While it is unclear if one of these organizations was responsible, what is clear is that the continued actions of these groups sully the name of Irish republicanism.

Born out of opposition to the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement, they are fractured, devoid of strategy, and infiltrated. Lacking popular support they have failed to mount any campaign beyond violent, pointless and sporadic attacks. They exist solely to perpetuate their own organizations.

For these groups, it is violence for the sake of violence. At times it is as cynical as we do this because we can. No one should be killed, injured, or lose years to gaol. This is not 1916, 1968, or 1981.

Twenty-Five years ago the Good Friday Agreement was signed. It brought to an end the longest period of conflict in Irish history. It

was endorsed by 91% in the South and 71% in the North. In this act of national self-determination, the people of Ireland overwhelmingly supported constitutional change by peaceful and democratic means.



The Good Friday Agreement is the will of the people of Ireland.

Irish unity is in the hands of the people north and south.

Ireland, North and South is changing. The Unionist majority, the very basis of partition, is gone. Sinn Féin is the largest party in both jurisdictions. More and more people are looking to the future of a new and united Ireland.

There remain some bar-stool republicans and internet warriors, willing to fight to the last drop of someone else's blood. Now is the time to challenge them. What is their strategy to bring about the Irish Republic? A military victory? Violence for the sake of violence?

If you believe in Irish Unity, and national self-determination, then you support the Good Friday Agreement and work through peaceful means to achieve unity.

We have an opportunity denied to all those Irish Republicans who came before us.

The future is in the hands of the people. A united Ireland will be built by the will of the majority not the actions of a violent fringe.

It is past the time for these groups to disband and let the people get on with peacefully building a new and united Ireland.

Is mise,

**Ciarán**

*Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America*