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LOCAL NEWS



Monday 27 October 2008 17:53

**Parade protest `hardens stalemate` - Robinson**

Sinn Fein opposition to a parade for RIR troops returning from Afghanistan has damaged efforts to secure political agreement, Peter Robinson claimed on Monday.

Mr Robinson told a Northern Ireland Affairs Committee hearing at Stormont: *"I think it is hard for people to envisage how we can devolve powers for policing and justice, when one of the parties in the Assembly behaves in such a reckless way as Sinn Fein are proposing to do."*

Mr Robinson said a protest could have been held on an alternative date and added: *"Bringing large numbers of people into the centre of Belfast where undoubtedly there will be thousands of people coming to welcome home our troops is a recipe for disaster."*

He said he had discussed the issue with Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness and Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams.

The first minister repeated his offer to hold an Executive meeting with an open agenda, adding that he would be happy to hold a meeting dealing only with economic issues.

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Sinn Fein, meanwhile, has branded the planned homecoming parade a *"catwalk"* for the Ministry of Defence.

Sinn Fein MLA Alex Maskey said the army parade was also offensive to victims of state violence and accused the First Minister of making excuses for the political stalemate.

*"Hundreds of families who have lost loved ones directly or through collusion between the British Army and Loyalists still have many unanswered questions,"* Mr Maskey said.

*"There have been hundreds of thousands of people killed in Iraq and Afghanistan and undoubtedly many families there will be asking exactly the same questions."*

*"Peter Robinson needs to stop grasping for excuses not to make progress."*

Both the homecoming parade and the republican protest will take place next Sunday.

NEWS ARCHIVE

- 15:30 Security alert at school a hoax
- 15:30 SDLP calls for parade review
- 15:17 RUC murders to be re-examined
- 13:30 Irish woman wins harassment case
- 12:52 Two catholic churches robbed
- 11:50 Man attacked with crow bar
- 09:07 What the law says on assisted
- 07:51 Man and woman attacked at home
- 00:08 Turmoil leaves US consumer
- 00:08 Rivals slug it out in battleground
- 00:08 Obama stock is overpriced, and a
- 00:08 Stress or in the genes - how did
- 00:08 Two hanged in Japan despite UN
- 00:08 Official fined for leaving
- 00:08 Obama, inshallah!
- 00:08 Top private schools in Scotland
- 00:08 Getting the kids in shape
- 00:08 Mathematician Du Sautoy takes
- 00:08 White working class need help in
- 00:08 Jury shown picture of gun

YESTERDAY

- 18:04 Petrol bomb injures teenager
- 18:00 Hospital worker is jailed
- 17:45 Calls for parade to be called off
- 12:52 Service for aircraft crash victims
- 12:17 Man arrested over farmer`s murder
- 11:50 Man charged with motoring offences
- 08:26 Executive deadlock may delay reform
- 00:08 More than 30 arrests at
- 00:08 De Menezes marksman insists he
- 00:08 Driver describes M-way murder of
- 00:08 BBC says sorry for prank phone
- 00:08 Sir Arthur Franks
- 00:08 Country diary
- 00:08 MPs hit out at government over
- 00:08 Polls show Livni pulling ahead as
- 00:08 Obama tempers optimism with
- 00:08 McCain prepares his last stand in
- 00:08 I think I made a mistake, admits
- 00:08 Democrats train their sights on
- 00:08 Religion: the resurrection
- 00:08 How these gibbering numbskulls

YOUR COMMENTS

- N** Goggins clarifies justice portfolio  
11 comments
- E** The X Factor: Eoghan`s story  
78 comments
- N** Dispute over school closure deepens  
20 comments

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On 27 Oct at 18:23 - colin from monkstown said:

i quite frankly find alex maskeys comments disgusting , belfast city centre is a neutral venue and this parade could not offend anybody , so these so called protesters have to go a long way from home to be offended ! and if he wants to talk about families justice what about the thousands of families all over the uk affected by republican violence ? do they not deserve the same justice as the ones mr maskey refers to ? did collusion not happen in republican circles?

On 27 Oct at 18:44 - joe from east belfast said:

maskey is a hypocrite,no brits in belfast city centre. yet he expects us to accept republicans in the government of northern ireland. if sinn fein go ahead with this protest, the dup should quit stormont.all you hear is that we all have to move on, this applies to us all except republicans.

On 27 Oct at 21:23 - Ciambhn from Derry said:

As an Irish citizen I am embarrassed and angered by the actions of Sinn Fein here. When are they going to realize that there are two communities trying to live in peace on this Island. They should be more receptive instead of antagonizing.

On 27 Oct at 22:36 - no longer fooled republican from belfast said:

What a ridiculous load of old you-know-what from Robison. My hearts bleeds for him that we dare protest against his marching boys. By the way, Peto. This isn't a SF protest. This is a protest by all descent-minded people against the war and the atrocities carried out by these 'brave' boys coming back from Afghanistan. I don't care if SF hold a protest or not. I will be, regardless of what they do or how it hurts poor Peter's feelings. See you on Sunday, lads!

On 28 Oct at 08:42 - no longer fooled from belfast said:

What a red heron (or is that orange heron?) Robison is waving now. So, if nationalist don't allow the DUP and the loyalists to have their way, Robison sulks about sharing power with strong nationalists. Dear Peter, this was tried in their bad old days of pre-69 when unionists and Orangemen ruled the roost. Those days are long gone, old chap. Wake up and smell the aroma of democracy. The City belongs to everyone now – not just loyalists, Orangemen and unionists...

On 28 Oct at 14:21 - Brian from Belfast said:

The DUP nor Sinn Fein have any interest in soldiers or victims. They are just doing what they have always done and that is winding each other up instead of doing the jobs that they are overpaid to do.

On 28 Oct at 17:28 - david from BELFAST said:

Same old Republican story - any excuse to be anti-British. Its disgusting to oppose a parade for people who have risked their lives for their country. How can it be right to protest against the very people who are fighting for human rights on various battlefields in the middle of nowhere? Its convenient to forget the Somme when British and Irish fought alongside - whats next, ban Remembrance Day? As long as NI remains in the UK the British Army will be supported on the streets by more people than protestors will ever manage to gather together.

#### VOTING POLL

 Teachers at a Co Down school walked out following an alleged assault on one of their colleagues by a pupil. But is strike action the answer?

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