

# BELEAST TELEGRAPH

ADVERTISEMENT

**Belfast Telegraph - IPR Website of the Year**

Search Site

Advanced Search

- Loadzacars.co.uk
- Loadzjobs.co.uk
- Propertynews.com
- Belfast Telegraph TV
- Family Notices
- Ads For Free

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Opinion](#)

## Opinion

**Belfast Telegraph**

- Home
- News**
  - Local & National
  - World news
  - Politics
  - Environment
  - Education
  - Letters
  - Opinion**
  - Technology
- Breaking News
- Business
- Business Telegraph
- Sport
- Health
- Features
- Columnists
- Entertainment
- Homefinder
- Weather
- Archive
- Calendar 2008
- Telegraph Travel
- Shopping Directory

**Inside Belfast**

- Jobs
- Training
- Dating
- Casino
- Bingo
- Reader Offers
- Diners' Club

**Services**

- RSS
- Media Kit

**Other Titles**

### Viewpoint: Uncomfortable reminder of the past

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

There is widespread disappointment rather than surprise that Sinn Fein wants to use International Womens' Day, next week, to honour IRA member Mairead Farrell, who was killed in Gibraltar 20 years ago, at Stormont.

Predictably, the DUP has reacted by planning a celebration of the role of the SAS, evening up the score, but the losers are all the people of Northern Ireland.

Less than a year after the political compromise that put Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness into government, this is no time for their parties to go head to head over controversial historical events. It is natural that they should disagree about a foiled IRA bomb plot but there was no necessity for the commemorations to be planned for the Long Gallery at Stormont, in a shared space.

Clearly the two parties are appealing to some supporters who have reservations about the deal on devolution. Dissidents have never accepted the compromises necessary for power-sharing and so, first Sinn Fein, and then the DUP, are saying "Don't worry; we haven't changed."

Since the republicans raised the issue, by choosing the venue for the commemoration, they deserve most of the blame. They could have the ceremony anywhere else but they chose Stormont to have the maximum effect.

They have succeeded but only in emphasising the differences between unionists and republicans, and in angering people of all political persuasions and none. An unarmed Ms Farrell was killed by the SAS when an IRA bomb was intercepted. She can be honoured by republicans, for giving her life for their cause but unionists could not and should not be expected to respect her contribution.

At the same time, nationalists of all kinds have no respect for the SAS, who operated a clandestine campaign against republican paramilitaries - often by questionable means - which resulted in many deaths and injuries. The proposal of Jeffrey Donaldson, MP, that they should be honoured, in retaliation to the Mairead Farrell event, is also divisive.

Since the return of devolution, all participants have been showered with praise for swallowing their pride and accepting their roles in a unique power-sharing government. It would be tragic if all the good work were to be sacrificed and long term prosperity endangered by a failure to deal sensibly with the past. Politicians must be sensitive to opposition opinion and seek accommodation even when Sinn Fein campaign to "neutralise" the images in public buildings.

All eyes should be focused on the international conference in May that hopes to attract investment and jobs. Arguments over the merits of controversial actions, 20 years ago, have no relevance today.

- Email Article
- Print Version
- Search
- Most Emailed
- Most Read

#### Related Articles

- Decision on IRA woman's commemoration delayed
- DUP to rethink memorial for SAS

ADVERTISEMENT

#### Don't Miss . . .

**Brave new worlds**  
 In-depth guide to the secrets of our solar system

**Mum rock!**  
 The artists that are top of the Mother's Day pops

**Eco-friendly flights**  
 Virgin runs plane on mix of coconut and babassu oil

**Bush dance**  
 President's David Brent-style gyrations in Africa

**Pure genius**  
 Inventors' hall of fame: great minds and great designs

**Secret disservice?**  
 Police told 'stop weapons checks' at Obama rally

**Victoria Square**  
 Preview of Belfast's newest retail complex

**Michael Schenker**  
 Gary Grattan interviews one of his rock idols

ADVERTISEMENTS

3 Sunday Life

3 Ireland's Saturday Night

3 Community Telegraph

- Viewpoint: Building for the future
- Do we need our rights set down in writing?
- New Catholic Church chiefs face hard test
- Could unionists unite after the Big Man rides off into history?
- Why Martin needs to act the minister

ADVERTISEMENTS

World in Pictures 07

- [Jan & Feb](#)
- [March](#)
- [April](#)
- [May](#)
- [June](#)
- [July](#)
- [August](#)
- [September](#)
- [October](#)
- [November](#)
- [December](#)

Video

**BT Woman of the Year**



Applauding  
Ulster's most  
exceptional  
women

**Omagh blaze tragedy**



Special report on  
Northern  
Ireland's worst  
house fire

**Belfast Telegraph  
Property Awards**



Celebrating  
excellence at the  
inaugural awards  
gala

**Best view in town**



Special  
multimedia  
report on Belfast  
Wheel

In Pictures . . .

**News**

- [Ulster Fry event](#)
- [The Twelfth](#)
- [Bull Run](#)
- [Award-winners](#)
- [Flooded Ulster](#)
- [Sunny Northern Ireland](#)
- [Devolution Day](#)
- [Assembly Elections](#)
- [Maze tumbles](#)
- [Blair quits](#)
- [Last watchtower](#)
- [Carrick-a-rede](#)

**Events**

- [Derry Xmas](#)
- [Boss is back](#)
- [Xmas: what a turn on](#)
- [Property Awards](#)
- [50 Cent](#)
- [Enrique Iglesias](#)
- [Halloween](#)
- [Fantasy Fest](#)
- [Rolling Stones](#)
- [Oxegen 07](#)
- [Beach Party 07](#)
- [Balmoral Show](#)
- [Razorlight](#)
- [St Patrick's Day](#)
- [Mardis Gras](#)
- [Justin Timberlake](#)
- [Brit Awards 07](#)

**Sport**

- [Spain 1 Norm Iron 0](#)
- [Win over Denmark](#)
- [Windsor win](#)
- [Golf: Rory McIlroy](#)
- [British Open](#)
- [Copa America Final](#)
- [N Ireland v Sweden](#)

