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By Lesley-Anne Henry
Friday, 31 October 2008

A 40 metre zone will separate soldiers taking part in an army homecoming parade from republican protestors in Belfast City Centre this Sunday.

People across Northern Ireland will be holding their breath amid fears that violence could break out as large crowds of demonstrators and supporters descend on the city.

There are concerns that dissident republicans, who are expected to stage illegal protests, or loyalists,

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could ignite serious disruptions.



What are these?

Last night the head of the Parades Commission defended the decision to allow the Sinn Fein protest demonstration near the Army event. Roger Poole also called for calm.

"We would ask that those who intend to come to the city on Sunday review their own positions and redouble their efforts to take tension out of this issue in advance of the parade," he said.

"Belfast deserves a peaceful weekend and the citizens and traders in the city are entitled to a trouble-free day. Anyone intent on causing or contributing to civil unrest should stay away.

"Now is the time for an effort to be made to reduce rather than heighten tension around this parade and protest. There is an onus on those political and community leaders in a position of influence to demonstrate leadership between now and Sunday through their words, their actions and their commitment to non-violent actions."



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Sinn Fein and there supporters once again show they are sectarian bigots who don't want a Brit/Prod/Unionist about the place. They are continuing with their efforts to make Ulster a cold house for Unionists.

Shame on you Sinn Fein

Posted by steve | 31.10.08, 10:40 GMT

sean from co down.... its the Royal IRISH regiment- clues in the name

Posted by duh | 31.10.08, 10:39 GMT

The soldiers from Northern Ireland deserve this parade to welcome them back and thank them for their committment to the effort in Afganastan.

Northern Ireland is still part of Britain is it not? and therefore they are regarded as part of the British Army, which of course, Sinn Fein, their followers seem to detest. The Republican dissidents will do anything to interupt the parade, whether it is supposed to be peaceful by the parades commission.

Citizens do have a right to a peaceful parade, but give me a break, this is Northern Ireland and the parades commission should know better.

Posted by Daniel Scott | 31.10.08, 10:39 GMT

I can't see any way that this is not going to get out of hand. No matter how much work is done by people on both sides to keep the peace, there will always be those who are looking for trouble.

Really hope this doesn't unravel the good work that has been done on all sides in the past few years.

It's kind of depressing - it looks like there could be massive repercussions from this which will affect all of us. I feel totally powerless in this - as I suspect a lot of people do.

I've never voted SF/DUP, and never intend to, but I hope that next time we have elections people look at where we have ended up and vote a bit more sensibly.

Posted by Sharrie | 31.10.08, 10:38 GMT

Why a parade, the country is full of heroes, policemen, fireman, doctors etc, they just did their job. Let them go in peace to their family like we do in my country (NL), no paradas, no more military shows. Yes they did a good dangerous job.

Let them keep also the peace in your own country by avoiding provocation to violence.

Posted by Kees | 31.10.08, 10:35 GMT

you ever been in belfast on a sunday afternoon? its dead, empty there is NEVER any one there! but all of a sudden there is a parade for soldiers and all these people get out of their pits and houses and head to Belfast to be offended.

Jim the parade was organised to welcome home soldiers, which is why there have been loads of parades in other cities in the UK. sorry to disappoint you but belfast is part of the UK

Posted by Bored | 31.10.08, 10:34 GMT

Roberta douglas should just have said that she and people like her dont want a fenian about the place. That's what it all boils down to. How dare us catholics/nationalists speak out of line!!!

Posted by Brave One | 31.10.08, 10:32 GMT

To big Janet - No disrespect but it's your son's very being there that disrupted the peace in Afghanistan in the first place!!

I'm not saying it's your son's fault because it's not, it's the fault of Bush/Blair/Brown and others who sent all the troops there and to Iraq under false allegations about WMD etc. I know the reason for the Afghan war is to try and defeat the Taliban and to weed out Osama Bin Laden but the fact is that nobody knows where Bin Laden is and there are innocent civilians, and innocent soldiers, being killed for no reason at all and hopefully the new US president will realise that it is time for a change if plan.

Posted by Liam | 31.10.08, 10:29 GMT

The protest should definitely be allowed. The protest is for everyone who opposes the war first and foremost. Everyone is finger pointing at SF here...

Posted by bob | 31.10.08, 10:26 GMT

Jim, the majority of people in Northern Ireland and wider afield don't like to see Sinn Fein parade justification of the IRA murder campaign at their rallies in Belfast, but we have had to accept it. It is about time that you and others started to acknowledge the 1,771 murders committed by the IRA for the crimes that they are and try and accept that ALL in this country have to move on. It would be good to see Sinn Fein afford the same rights to the soldiers as THEY are afforded when they march into Belfast City Centre. There are currently no protests against them when they hold their rallies, despite their glorification of the IRA. Drop the bigotry Sinn Fein. Let the parade pass in peace.

Posted by Cliff | 31.10.08, 10:26 GMT

As Sinn Fein mayors lay wreaths for fallen soldiers of both communities who died at the Somme fighting for Britain why are they being hypocritical now. This is purely an attempt by Sinn Fein to stir up sectarian street violence to get it out of the cul-de-sac it finds itself in. It wants to go back to doing what it does best - violence. Worst of all the idiots of the Orange Order have fallen into the trap. This soldiers parade isn't a march about religion or nationality but about a global conflict in which the Irish Republic also plays a part. The protest is certainly not anti-war - just straight forward trouble-making. Have your protest by all means but do it at a time when you won't aggravate a precarious political situation.

Posted by Paedar | 31.10.08, 10:26 GMT

Well Jim, its very easy to point the finger of blame..

You don't see too many DUP or protestant community counter-parades these days do you? They don't get all annoyed when the nationalist community want to celebrate the suicide of some "martyrs" that happened 30 years ago?

To go out of our way to cause (or put in place the mechanisms) for violence and rioting is a crime - Its a shameful view I hope all the world will see (but not doubt the medic will hide the "poor historically unprivileged" part of society creating this tension..)

Get over it, time to move on and live together...

Posted by James | 31.10.08, 10:16 GMT

I've been told members of my family will be in attendance. I come from a Catholic family, 3 of my uncles were in the RUC, 2 of them were also PT UDR. I'm proud of them all.

Posted by Dave | 31.10.08, 10:15 GMT

People, stop trying to blame the other side.

When it comes to politics its always down to a he said, she said nature in this country with regards "the other side".

People try to blame Sinn Fein for inciting feelings of long ago in this parade, why not mention pictures of the RIR posing recent photos posing in Afghanistan with weapons and the Northern Ireland flag with captions of KILL ALL TAIGS under it, and SEE YOU SOON FENIANS aiming a gun at the camera ?

Sinn Fein should stay out of this parade, let the soldiers have it.

Posted by Daniel | 31.10.08, 10:09 GMT

If there is no parade there is no protest. Many people in the north don't want this parade and they are being ignored. Unionist politicians knew what would happen with the parade, that's why they wanted it in the first place. Now they can point the finger of blame at Sinn Fein and the nationalist community.

Posted by Jim Lynch | 31.10.08, 09:49 GMT

As a former member of the Royal Irish who took part in several parades to remember the fallen British and Irish soldiers at the Battle of the Somme, within the grounds of Belfast City Hall, (Not too far away from Sinn Fein offices) I can not help wonder why there were no mass protests at these events. Some of these events were held pre cease fire when opposition to the RIR was at its height. I believe that this protest has been organised by Sinn Fein in an effort to recapture the support of hard line republicans which has been lost since they signed up to power sharing.

Posted by d | 31.10.08, 09:46 GMT

Ridiculous. The protest should not be allowed.

Posted by ali | 31.10.08, 09:39 GMT


Everyone is jumping to the conclusion that there is going to be violence on Sunday. If people want to protest, let them. Everyone has the right to free speech, as long as its peaceful.

Posted by Pete | 31.10.08, 09:37 GMT

WELL SAID CLIFF YOU SHOULD BE IN POLITICS ALSO TERRI FROM SANDY ROW TOTALLY AGREE ALL SF ARE DOING IS

CAUSING TROUBLE.....IM REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE PARADE. I HOPE THE PARADE IS TELEVISED WORLD WIDE SO THINGS CAN BE CAUGHT ON CAMERA AND WE SEE THE TRUE SIDE OF SF FOR WHAT WE KNOW THEY REALLY ARE.

Posted by *roberta douglas* | 31.10.08, 09:35 GMT

 I totally agree with Michael the Parades commission should be held responsible if any trouble takes place Ifthe MOD suddenly changed their day I bet there would be NO protesters there on SundayThe parades commission just give in to IRA/SF .

Posted by *Bryan* | 31.10.08, 09:32 GMT

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