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The head of the Parades Commission today warned splinter republicans over a second protest parade against the Army's homecoming parade in Belfast next Sunday.

As tensions over the city centre event continued to rise, Commission Chairman Roger Poole said any illegal demonstrations would be dealt with by the PSNI. He was referring to a planned protest by the socialist republican group Eirigi which has called for a demonstration at Divis Tower shortly before the Army parade.

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But the commission in turn also came under fire from the DUP after allowing a Sinn Fein protest against the demonstration to go ahead.

North Belfast MLA Nelson McCausland accused it of "pandering to bigotry" and called the decision an insult to those who had served in the Army and their families.

Describing the verdict — which came after DUP leader Peter Robinson and deputy Nigel Dodds met the commission earlier this week — as indefensible, Mr McCausland said: "The Parades Commission has simply caved into the demands of Sinn Fein and their decision is a recipe for disaster.

"Members of the general public, Protestant and Roman Catholic, will be rerouted away from Donegall Place and shunted down side streets to accommodate republican bigotry."

But Mr Poole said Mr McCausland was "wrong" because the commission had a duty to those who wanted to see the Army parade and also "in a democracy" to those who want to peacefully protest can do so.

In its determination the commission said the Sinn Fein-led protest must not leave Bank Square before 11.30am with the Army parade to start at 11.45am.

"Sinn Fein's willingness to co-operate and engage with the Commission and the PSNI has been a positive contribution to the planning for the event," the determination said.

"In the same way the MoD has shown a willingness to plan their event in a sensitive manner."

Sinn Fein West Belfast MLA Paul Maskey said: "We made the commission aware of the fact that the protest rally will highlight the legacy of the RIR and their predecessors the UDR here in Ireland as well as opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq where thousands of civilians have been killed."

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Well said Dave and boy dont these hypocryts love to spend the Queens Money, British Money. That most of the spongers get off of the British Social Security, and the British family allowance to buy even more beer, oh and of course the British Health Service (NHS) all these lovely things they get for free.

They hate the British so much, they forget these things they take for free from British, if SF asked them not to



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claim these benefits how big a following do you think they would have then.

Total bunch of tossers and thats from an Irish Catholic in the Bog, in Derry.

Some of us can forgive and move on, you will always get your bigots.

Posted by Gerry | 27.10.08, 23:13 GMT


 Niall

I hardly think that you could be classed as respecting all opinions here in Northern Ireland, when you clearly show your own view as Quite Blatantly Nationalist or Republican by avoiding the use of Northern Ireland (the correct and Official term) and instead using "the north" (very feeble), then stating that as a Nationalist community "We can't just forget", hardly a balanced view.

I also feel that i should point out that anything which allegedly offends so called Nationalists regarding the soldiers would have been carried out as you plainly state (albeit incorrectly spelled) by the soldiers "predecessors" not these soldiers. Ask yourself if your grandfather had murdered someone would you like to be protested against and treated with contempt because of his crimes ?????? Or in that case would you expect other people to just forget.

Bottom line is it is Sinn Fein propoganda and nothing more, it is being used to divide people and Stir up Republican sentiment again. Disgrace

Posted by sean | 27.10.08, 21:02 GMT

 I try to respect all opinions here in the North but is it not the right of republicans to protest against something that they disagree with?(as it is the right of unionists also).

Looking at these comments I see people going on about how we should support and honour these "Heroes" but these people have to understand that only one half of the community is likely to have this view point! And for some unionists to expect the nationalist community to forget the past (ie what happened at the hand of these soldiers predessors)is unthinkable. We cant just forget.

That however is not to say we cant all move forward..this petty bickoring over who should be allowed to protest where and whenever etc needs to give way to more important political problems


Posted by Niall | 27.10.08, 15:09 GMT

 well what about the shutting down of the city centre on the twelfth?

We are told its a family day out, and everyone is welcome from all sections of the community. Well if that is true then, sure ill walk down the city centre on the twelfth with my celtic top on, and see how family friendly it is. my point is, on the twelfth very little, if not any catholics can go down the city centre for fear of safety and not to watch their sectarian parade.


As a democractic state, we have every right to protest at this parade and this PSNI view that any 'illegal' protests will be dealt with, shows the un-democratic PSNI/RUC view.

Posted by Joe | 26.10.08, 11:02 GMT


 As an exile, and a Catholic, I have no problem with this army homecoming parade. But MLA Nelson McCausland's comment " Members of the general public, protestant and catholic, will be rerouted away from Donegall Place and shunted down side streets to accomodate republican bigotry",has left me scratching my head.

Is'nt that exactly what the Orange order does every single year with their own brand of bigotry? Thank God I don't live there anymore


Posted by P D Whistle | 24.10.08, 22:07 GMT

 I totally agree with the decision to honour the brave young men and women who have served in any conflict around the world,those so called human beings who intend to disrupt this affair should be ashamed,stop liveing in the past and let decent poeple get on with thiers,both catholic and protestant serve in the RIR and both sides should be proud of thier efforts and thank god they've come home safe.


Posted by shirley | 24.10.08, 21:18 GMT

 Get a life Sinn Fein! Stop misleading your people. You cant fool the decent people of Northern Ireland that you are holding a so called peaceful anti war protest. Of course you are going to incite hatred into your young vulnerable followers and dear knows what the consequences of this will be. These soldiers are from both catholic and protestant communities and they deserve the full support of the people in Northern Ireland. Are we now seeing Sinn Fein for who they really are folks?

Posted by siobhan | 24.10.08, 20:55 GMT


 Maybe we could send Sinn fein over to Afghan they could have nice chats with Terry and his mates up the mountains,oh and take the parade commission with yous too,maybe be more useful there cause your crap here. Well said Graham you have hit the nail in the head their protest is anti BRITISH.They seem to forget we still live in N.IRELAND and its still very much BRITISH and all the good people of this country will be out in Support of our HEROS come the Parades. By the way our Lads worked hand in hand with American Soldiers out in Afghan,they are another great bunch of HEROS too. Lets pray these Lads also make it home to their loved ones soon.

Posted by Andrea | 24.10.08, 19:23 GMT


 Graham, well said sir! You hit the nail right on the head.

By the way, as one who has lived in the USA for some years, I can assure Sinn Fein that they are losing HUGE amounts of support from the Irish Americans. They previously supported Sinn Fein's participation in the so-called "Peace Process" but they certainly do NOT understand or appreciate this bitter resentment towards Irishmen who have served bravely coming home!


Posted by Centaur | 24.10.08, 18:08 GMT

 Billy for the truth - if you wanna know why there will never be a united Ireland - it's simple, we are still a very divided people in Northern Ireland. Behaviour like yours and Sinn Fein in holding and supporting this demonstration is an ungracious backward step that shows there is no accommodation for the Unionist majority in your little Ireland. Whilst Northern Ireland remains so divided, Ireland can never be united. Borders may go but division is in the minds of the people and is perpetuated by Sinn Fein's nasty little bigotry.

Posted by Honest | 24.10.08, 18:08 GMT

 Billy for the truth - your republicans have been marching all over Northern Ireland for years - legally and illegally. This is typical of republican efforts to return to street violence again. Reminds me of the late 60's I opposed the war and demonstrated numerous times against it. However, Sinn Fein are being totally hypocritical in having their demo. why don't they demonstrate at Shannon airport. Why not have their demo on Saturday. Why don't they sever their links with all those investment groups in the USA who have money invested in war. This isn't about anti-war, it is petty little sectarian bigotry on the part of a republican movement that is stuck up a cul-de-sac by entrenching the democratically chosen position of Northern Ireland as part of the UK.

Posted by Paedar | 24.10.08, 17:52 GMT

 Comment by Let them protest re George Bush. By all means you could protest about that man as he started it! This has nothing to do with the servicemen who risked their lives so they should be left out of it.


Posted by soarer | 24.10.08, 17:37 GMT

 Sinn Fein harped on about "moving forward" and making the Peace Process work".

Now look at them! Not only are they now going on about something that we are told BY THEM that we should leave in the past, but they are protesting against probably the only truly united Irish men on this island - the soldiers from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland who exercised their FREE WILL and decided to join the British Army!


Comments such as " and the protest rally will highlight the legacy of the RIR and their predecessors the UDR here in Ireland" show the true narrow minded bigotry of the smiling "politicians who met George Bush in the White House.

Posted by Centaur | 24.10.08, 17:31 GMT


 The hypocrisy of Sinn Fein holding an 'anti-war' rally beggars belief. Their parade is not 'anti-war' - it is 'anti British'.

If they really want to stage an anti war rally they should go to the Houses of Parliament and protest against the politicians who made the choice to go to war. The soldiers, some of them medics and nurses whose job is to save lives, had no say in whether they went or not. They simply did their job.


Posted by Graham | 24.10.08, 16:34 GMT

 i wonder what the "irish americans" would think of sinn feins stand against our brave troops.al quaeda , taliban, sinn fein ira call them what you want at the end of the day these people are just murdering terrorists that should now be shown the light of day never mind stand in the streets and berate our brave young troops.i wonder will marty or gerry make it to next sundays protest or perhaps they would not like that sort of press making its way across the pond


Posted by sppiro | 24.10.08, 16:33 GMT

 I think this is a disgrace, these troops are coming back, after serving a long, hard fought time overseas, this parade is to show how much we appreciate what they have done, you think the last thing they need when coming home, after them risking their lives, is a protest against it


Posted by danny | 24.10.08, 16:09 GMT

 i thought this was a free country. can people not protest to thing they dont believe in. when george bush visited recently there was plenty of people protesting to him coming and to starting the war.


Posted by let them protest | 24.10.08, 16:02 GMT

 I hope the American press are going to show SF/IRA to all the so called american irish they love their troops back home hopefully it will dent the purse strings of SF Half the world have troops over seas right or wrong its not the troops they should e protesting at so lets hope the US can see SF for what they are.

Posted by John | 24.10.08, 15:07 GMT

 Dry yer eyes, Nelson. Everyone has a right to march. It's no longer pre-69 days, ye know! Orange men, loyalists and that gang no longer have the run of things.

Posted by Billy for the Truth | 24.10.08, 14:55 GMT

 Let the lads who fought for their country, parade in their country and let the other people that want to complain do it another day in their own country.

Posted by Phil | 24.10.08, 14:45 GMT

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