



Energy Performance Certificates Northern Ireland



Sort IT problems 24/7 with BT Business Support.
To find out more [click here](#)

BT
Bringing it all together

ADVERTISEMENT

Search Site

Advanced Search

• [niCarFinder.co.uk](#)• [Loadzajobs.co.uk](#)• [Propertynews.com](#)• [Belfast Telegraph TV](#)• [Family Notices](#)• [Ads For Free](#)• **Belfast Telegraph**

Home

News

Local & National

World news

Politics

Environment

Education

Letters

Opinion

Technology

Breaking News

Business

Sport

Health

Features

Columnists

Entertainment

Homefinder

Weather

Archive

Calendar 2008

Telegraph Travel

Shopping Directory

Competition

Home Delivery

Inside Belfast

Jobs

Training

Dating

Casino

Bingo

Reader Offers

Diners' Club

Services

RSS

Media Kit

Other Titles

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

Opinion

Viewpoint: Don't let Libya off, Mr President

Monday, June 16, 2008

At its most basic, today's brief visit to Belfast by President George W Bush should be a reminder that the world can still see the wood — the massive achievement that is the power-sharing government at Stormont — while we see the dreary trees of an occasionally inept and often stagnating administration.

It's also a chance too to acknowledge the role Mr Bush's administration has had in fulfilling the peace process. While the current president did not have the same personal involvement of his predecessor, Bill Clinton, Mr Bush has done more than was expected or required.

One of his special envoys, Mitchell Reiss, played a critical role in ensuring Sinn Fein would support policing. Mr Bush has also continued to receive our leaders' representatives of a small, out of the way place distinguished mainly by its recent, horrific past — at the White House. It was such a meeting last December with Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness that led directly to today's return visit.

Northern Ireland's fifth presidential visit, coming at the very end of what appears to be Mr Bush's final European tour, is a reflection of the long and frequently rehearsed links between the two countries.

Nor have those links been forged in a single direction. In living memory American boys passed through Northern Ireland on their way to fight real fascism in Europe — a fight they were obligated to take part in, when our boys were not. Many never returned. So where we have debts of gratitude — historical and right up to today — it is right that we acknowledge them. Which is another way of saying to the protesters who greet Mr Bush today, if you don't respect the man, at least respect the office.

For it would be useless to pretend Mr Bush does not come without controversy. He knows it better than anyone.

In many ways, the protests are a reminder of the demonstrations that greeted Ronald Reagan when he travelled in Europe in the 1980s.

Mr Reagan suffered many of the criticisms and insults hurled at Mr Bush — simplistic, uncaring, even stupid — yet now Mr Reagan is widely acknowledged to have been instrumental in destroying the Iron Curtain and on the right side of history.

This is not to say history will vindicate Mr Bush. It may or it may not. But it is too soon to say with any certainty. The invasion of Iraq, for example, offers massively changing hues. Just as the now infamous proclamation of 'Mission Accomplished' was wrong, so too have current events in Iraq suggested that those who rushed to declare failure are also almost certainly as wrong.

There is one historic certainty that is being mentioned today: Libya's role in arming the Provisional IRA. Efforts to get compensation for death and injury caused by Libyan-supplied weapons are in danger of being hamstrung by American efforts to restore full democratic relations with that country.

A proposed deal with the Libyans may pay out only to US citizens. But Libya's state terrorism also cost the

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

ADVERTISEMENT

Independent Singles
Online Dating

Take the free compatibility test >



Don't Miss . . .

In Pictures: Euro 2008



Fans keep partying as the tournament continues

Fist-gate



Was Obama's gesture 'Hizbollah hand jabbing'?

Going GAA-GAA



Win £3000 in our pick the score' competition

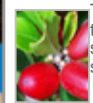
In Pictures:

Emmerdale bash



Stars turn out at Cultra for soap opera charity event

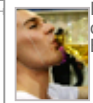
Miracle berry



The magic fruit that can make sour foods taste sweet

In Pictures:

Underground party



Revellers go wild on Tube before Boris's booze ban

In Pictures:

People that hid from the world



Plane captures first images of Amazonian tribes

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISEMENTS

Sunday Life

Community Telegraph

Ireland's Saturday Night

lives of British and Irish citizens.

They should not be forgotten.

Mr President, we won't forget America's role in securing peace here. Don't you forget Libya's in waging war.

More articles in Opinion

- [Maurice Hayes: DUP cashed in on Brown's desperation](#)
- [Bush: The reluctant Irishman](#)
- [Bush trip to be last chance to influence our future](#)
- [Viewpoint: Treaty back to drawing board](#)
- [Ellie Levenson: Such cheap snobbery about Wayne's wedding](#)

1608
BUSHMILLS
100% IRISH WHISKEY

CLICK HERE TO TAKE THIS CHANCE

TRIP BEGINS IN...

124 13 02 00
DAYS HR MIN SEC

Enjoy BUSHMILLS' Sensibly
Visit drinkaware.ie

Letters to the Editor
[Click Here](#)

LOCAL HEROES
Grass Roots Sports
[Click Here](#)

ADVERTISEMENTS

World in Pictures

2008

[January](#)
[February](#)
[March](#)
[April](#)
[May](#)

2007

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

Video

Video: Titanic town



Ship's Belfast beginnings celebrated in exhibition

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

[Ian & Marty in US](#)
[Crown Bar](#)
[Police chase](#)
[Belfast Marathon](#)
[Bertie at Boyne](#)
[Rangers fans riot](#)
[Quake wedding](#)
[China quake](#)
[Burma cyclone](#)
[Robert Dunlop](#)
[Paisley quits](#)
[Victoria Square](#)
[Building collapse](#)
[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

[Business Awards](#)
[US:NI conference](#)
[Viking race](#)
[Lads' Night](#)
[Culture Carnival](#)
[Agent Provocateur](#)
[Wacky races](#)
[Top 10 Sexiest women](#)
[St Patrick's Day](#)
[Derry Xmas](#)
[Xmas: what a turn on](#)
[Property Awards](#)
[Halloween](#)
[Fantasy Fest](#)
[Balmoral Show](#)
[St Patrick's Day](#)
[Mardis Gras](#)
[Justin Timberlake](#)
[Brit Awards](#)
[Animal Olympics](#)

Concerts

[Bruce Springsteen](#)
[Boyzone](#)
[50 Cent](#)
[Enrique Iglesias](#)
[Rolling Stones](#)
[Oxegen](#)
[Beach Party](#)
[Justin Timberlake](#)
[Brit Awards](#)
[Live Earth](#)
[Razorlight](#)

Sport

[Euro 2008](#)
[Celtic: SPL champs](#)
[Man U v Chelsea fans](#)
[Man U Euro champs](#)
[Rangers fans](#)
[Euro 08: Norn Iron](#)
[N Ireland v Georgia](#)
[Spain 1 Norn Iron 0](#)
[Win over Denmark](#)
[Windsor win](#)
[Golf: Rory McIlroy](#)
[British Open](#)
[Copa America Final](#)
[N Ireland v Sweden](#)
[Six Nations](#)
[X Games](#)
[World in Sport](#)