

Most PopularMost Emailed

[Breaking](#)[Sport](#)[Business](#)[World](#)[Gossip](#)



Issue Changer:



[HOME](#) | [EDITORIAL](#) >

Progress made amid adversity

Pro fide et patria

Editorial

16/03/09

Although it is sometimes wrongly suggested that nothing ever really changes in Northern Ireland, the speed with which events have developed over the past week has actually been breathtaking.

On this day last week, we were still considering the full implications of the callous weekend murder of two

BRITISH SOLDIERS BY DISSENTING REPUBLICANS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Before the night was out, another outrage followed with the murder of Constable Stephen Carroll – the first PSNI officer to be killed by terrorists since the launch of the force.

Those responsible for the bloodshed plainly intended to destroy the power-sharing structures at Stormont and escalate sectarian tensions across the community.

However, the response from our politicians and even more importantly from ordinary citizens was truly heartening as people took to the streets in significant numbers at short notice to support vigils and peace rallies that made clear that any attempt to turn the clock back would not be tolerated.

As we have already noted, this was followed by the unprecedented image of republicans and loyalists attending the funeral of a murdered police officer.

The message from our elected representatives at all levels was equally unequivocal, beginning with a particularly dignified debate in the assembly.

The senior figures from the DUP, Sinn Fein, the SDLP, the Ulster Unionists and Alliance were able to set aside their policy differences to present a united front on a basic issue.

Perhaps the most important contribution came from our first minister and deputy first minister, Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness.

They displayed leadership qualities when they were most needed and as a result there will be a growing belief that the post-St Andrews Agreement devolved administration has finally come of age.

Given Mr McGuinness's own past involvement with the IRA, which also previously maintained an appalling campaign of violence, the deputy first minister's trenchant declaration that those responsible for the murders of the past week were "traitors to the island of Ireland" was a powerful intervention.

There were sporadic disturbances in Lurgan over the weekend of the kind that have been seen previously in the area but other nationalist districts have remained calm as security operations have taken place.


It remains essential that full cooperation be given to police efforts to bring those responsible for the recent murders to justice and it is equally important that all our politicians continue to display a mature approach.

In the middle of adversity, we have managed to find not only hope but also an understanding that is capable of evolving into a blueprint for long-term progress.



[back to top](#)

Bookmark: [Delicious](#) [Digg](#) [Reddit](#) [Facebook](#) [StumbleUpon](#)

 [Email this story](#)