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IMC whitewash won't do

01 May 2008

This morning's Independent Monitoring Commission's report amounts to a total whitewash designed to let the IRA's political wing and their partners in the DUP off the hook. It is preposterous to argue that because the murder wasn't supposedly "sanctioned" then it wasn't an IRA killing. No one will find an IRA Army Council Minute sanctioning specific murders.

The report is a complete insult to victims and offers no protection to future victims because it gives terrorists the green light to operate as they like as long as the leadership is supposedly kept in the dark.

The IMC have conceded that IRA men killed Paul Quinn and that makes it an IRA murder. No if, buts or maybes.

For months we were told by senior Sinn Fein/IRA figures that their movement had nothing to do with it. On 22 October Gerry Adams said; "I do not believe that there was any republican involvement in this murder." Similarly, Cornor Murphy described rumors of "any republican involvement" as "wild and baseless allegations" on 25th October.

It is now clear that this was patently untrue. Although the IMC attempt to sanitize the leadership even they concede that: "Amongst those involved were people who had in various ways been associated with

the PIRA at a local level, including as members of the organisation.”

Doubtless those who partner the IRA’s political wing in government will seize upon the attempt to let the Provos away with murder.

However, back in October of last year Jeffrey Donaldson and I appeared on Radio Ulster. Responding to probing from myself he said the following:

“I speak on behalf of my party. If the IRA is involved – whether it’s individuals or – and there was a gang involved here – if there were a number of IRA members involved in this murder then that’s the actions of the IRA. We are not here to dance around this issue”.

It has now been officially confirmed that Paul Quinn’s murder was, by Mr Donaldson’s standards, the actions of the IRA. This demands immediate action.

One of the key flaws in the Belfast Agreement is that “Regardless of the behaviour of republicans there are no adequate provisions for the removal of Sinn Fein/IRA from the Executive in the current Assembly structure” (DUP Fair Deal manifesto, 2003). This remains the case. Due to the DUP’s failure to secure a default mechanism to remove the Provos from government the only honorable course of action now is for them to collapse the institutions.

However, it seems that justice for Paul Quinn, just like justice for Robert McCartney, will come a poor second to maintaining terrorist inclusive government.

The due strategy of armalite (or baseball bat as the case may be) in one hand and ballot paper in the other continues.

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- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [January 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)
- [August 2007](#)
- [July 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)
- [February 2007](#)
- [January 2007](#)
- [December 2006](#)
- [November 2006](#)
- [October 2006](#)
- [September 2006](#)
- [August 2006](#)
- [July 2006](#)
- [June 2006](#)
- [May 2006](#)
- [April 2006](#)
- [March 2006](#)
- [February 2006](#)

- [January 2006](#)
- [December 2005](#)
- [November 2005](#)
- [October 2005](#)
- [September 2005](#)
- [August 2005](#)
- [July 2005](#)
- [June 2005](#)
- [May 2005](#)
- [April 2005](#)
- [March 2005](#)
- [February 2005](#)
- [January 2005](#)
- [December 2004](#)
- [November 2004](#)
- [October 2004](#)
- [September 2004](#)
- [August 2004](#)
- [July 2004](#)
- [June 2004](#)
- [May 2004](#)
- [April 2004](#)
- [March 2004](#)

- [Top](#)
- [Home](#)
- [Accessibility](#)