**AMERICAN BREXIT COMMITTEE**

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**ENGLAND’S GREAT ‘TRIUMPH’**

**OR AMERICA’S GREAT CHALLENGE**

Britain’s exit from the European Union (EU) will soon take a troubling turn that will challenge America’s leadership role in promoting democracy and the rule of law around the world. Pressed by the militant wing of the Conservative Party, Prime Minister Johnson will propose a ban on prosecutions, inquests, court proceedings and all criminal investigations of as many as 1000 killings in Northern Ireland. This is not a magnanimous gesture of compassion but a desperate cover-up of security forces lawlessness; denying truth and justice to victims and their families. The Prime Minister then expects to secure a new US-UK trade deal desperately needed to cope with the costs of Brexit. Why would America want to be a part of flouting international law, undermining the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), betraying democracy, and violating the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR)?

I first witnessed the British Army in action in London in 1974 during the TROOPING OF THE COLOR pageantry that celebrates the British monarch’s birthday. Battalions in regimental dress march with flags unfurled accompanied by the blare of trumpets, the thunder of drums and skirling pipes. It is a feast for the senses complete with programs depicting great military moments of Empire. A month earlier, a secret British Army unit and loyalist murderers detonated bombs in Dublin and Monaghan killing 33 men, women and children and wounding 500. That crime is one of those that a British Parliament will find too “vexatious” to investigate or prosecute.

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement, an international treaty, is America’s bi-partisan response to the pleas of constituents. For decades, Irish citizens traveled across America appealing for help. People like **Eileen Kelly**, mother of plastic bullet victim 12 year old Carol Ann Kelly; **Bernadette Devlin,** the fearless civil rights advocate; **Paddy McIlkenny,** fighting the false imprisonment of the Birmingham Six; **Oliver Kearney**  advocating the use of the MacBride Fair Employment Principles; **Caoimhe O’Caolin**, a Sinn Fein T. D.;  **Rev. Des Wilson,** the voice of hope and dignity for impoverished Catholics; **Dr. Sean MacBride**, Nobel Laureate and world recognized human rights and peace activist, and **Gerry Adams**, President of Sinn Fein. One voice proved particularly poignant. **Mrs. Kathleen Finucane,** mother of attorney Pat Finucane spoke at the John Boyle O’Reilly Club in Springfield, MA. “My Pat, “she stated,” was going to beat them at their own game. He fought the corrupt legal system and won.” The British responded with his murder in 1989. Another troublesome crime being buried by Parliament?

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Unfortunately for the British, Richie Neal, Chairman of House Ways & Means Committee from Springfield was listening in the audience. Neal is known for his skepticism of British interest in truth, justice or the rule of law.

Boris’ Brexiteer Brigade fear further disclosures of military and police collaboration with loyalist murderers. Can an amnesty statute erase the stain already on the reign of Queen Elizabeth II? She has showered NI Army regiments with military honors and granted OBE’s for those in Whitehall who managed the mayhem. More to the point, is that many of the killings were of targeted unarmed Catholics or who were Sinn Fein elected officials, campaign workers and their friends, neighbors, relatives or casual acquaintances. One could not imagine a greater smear on the mythology of British support of the rule of law and democracy! Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry commented thus on the proposed measure stating: *“…it would prevent too much prying into the dark corners of a dirty war. ..it seems the government is set on ensuring that it doesn’t ruffle the feathers of the establishment or cast any aspersions on their wonderful military.”*

The United States should oppose this amnesty scam and, if adopted, be prepared to hold Britain accountable for claiming triumph where there was only treachery.

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Michael J. Cummings, a native of Springfield, Mass. is a graduate of St. Anselm’s College (B. A., 1968) and New York University (M. P. A., 1970) . He established the American Brexit Committee in 2016 and served as Secretary from 2016-2021. **He is a former member of the National Boards of the** **Irish American Unity Conference (1996-2013), the Ancient Order of Hibernians (2001-2008), and the Irish Northern Aid Committee (1988-1996).** He also served as Chairman of the Capital District Irish National Caucus (1979-1982). He worked for the State of New York for 36 years in various capacities including as Assistant Deputy State Comptroller and Director of the Justice Court Fund. He served on the Peace and Justice Commission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

Cummings has appeared on American, English and Irish television and radio and his commentary and letters has appeared in major American, Irish-American, and Catholic print media. He is married 48 years to Nuala Hogan, a nurse and native of Ireland. They have five children and 7 grandchildren.