

Sinn Féin backs NATO's war against Russia ahead of Biden's planned visit to Ireland

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A planned five-day state visit next month to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland by US President Joe Biden has been welcomed enthusiastically by all sections of the establishment in both parts of the country.

Biden is due to fly into Belfast April 10 for five days to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), signed in 1998, which ended decades of armed conflict.

Sinn Féin, now the main bourgeois nationalist party in the north and south of Ireland, has also welcomed Biden's visit.

Michelle O'Neill, Northern Ireland's First Minister-designate and the party's deputy leader, was first out of the gate saying she would be "delighted to welcome President Biden to Belfast. The US has been a key partner for peace in Ireland and such a visit demonstrates its continued commitment, which is deeply valued."

Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald tweeted, "President Biden's support for the Good Friday Agreement and the protection of Irish interests remains consistent and unequivocal."

Biden's visit to Ireland will seek further compliance from the local ruling elite and their political representatives with NATO's escalating war with Russia in Ukraine. The invitation to Biden to visit Northern Ireland came from British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at the AUKUS summit in San Diego last week, which was attended by Australia's Anthony Albanese. The AUKUS pact is a deal to enable Australia to eventually buy nuclear-powered submarines from the US and UK, and to immediately open up Australia as a base for US and UK hunter killer submarines targeting China.

Washington's particular interest in Ireland is centred

on normalising relations between the British ruling class and the European Union (EU) post-Brexit, to pursue US global imperialist interests and NATO's proxy war with Russia. As there are over a thousand large global American companies with production and financial operations in Ireland, maintaining stability on the island is an enduring geopolitical aim of every US administration.

In line with this, Biden has voiced support for the "Windsor Framework" the latest deal worked out between the EU and Sunak's Conservative government. The agreement amends post-Brexit trading rules in Northern Ireland to allow for two routes for goods being traded from the UK into Northern Ireland, seeking to minimise paper work on goods not being forwarded to the South.

The agreement is also intended to pressure Jeffrey Donaldson's hardline Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) into allowing the Northern Ireland Assembly to be revived. The assembly has been suspended since early 2022, when the DUP walked out in protest at then Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Brexit deal, which effectively put a customs border in the Irish sea.

The new framework proposes to give members of the Northern Ireland Assembly a say on any changes to EU law. The so-called "Stormont brake" will allow the UK, at the request of 30 members from at least two parties in the assembly, to oppose updates to new EU goods law, in exceptional circumstances.

Nevertheless, March 20, the DUP announced it intended to vote against the Windsor framework deal when it comes before Westminster. How this plays out remains to be seen, but it is imperative for British and American imperialism that the Northern Ireland Assembly is reconstituted. This is to intensify Northern Ireland's transformation into a low tax investment

platform for American companies with access to both the EU via the Republic of Ireland, and UK markets.

The working class on both sides of the Irish border have nothing to gain but increased levels of exploitation and deprivation.

Sinn Féin, which will be the largest party in a revived Northern Ireland Assembly, has welcomed Sunak's deal with open arms.

On its announcement, Mary Lou McDonald said it would be an "incredibly foolish lost opportunity" if the assembly was not restored by the GFA anniversary and Biden's visit. McDonald pledged to make the agreement work: "The reality is, we have to share power... communities in the north of Ireland need, deserve and want government and proper political leadership. There's no dodging that, that's just an immutable fact." The party is reported to have its sights set controlling the Department for the Economy, currently run by the DUP.

Sinn Féin is bending over backwards to display its loyalty to the geopolitical aims of American imperialism. The corporate media and all political parties, including Sinn Féin, have seized on the humanitarian crisis generated by the war in Ukraine to whip up anti-Russian hysteria and bring Ireland closer to the military aims of NATO and the European Union.

McDonald obscenely used the first anniversary of the Russian invasion, 24 February, to make a speech outside the famous General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin—centre of the 1916 Easter Rising against rule by British imperialism, at the height of the First World war. The party portrays the US and NATO backed corrupt puppet regime in Ukraine, backed with billions of dollars and awash with NATO weaponry as, in McDonald's words, standing "against Vladimir Putin's attack on sovereignty, self-determination and international law."

McDonald endorsed NATO imperialist militarism, stating, "Putin must immediately withdraw his army and end the invasion. Standing resolutely against the Putin invasion, the international community and international diplomacy must use all its muscle to end the war and begin the journey to peace." The "muscle" to which McDonald refers are the Leopard and Challenger battle tanks, light tanks, missiles, fighter jets and drones being poured into Ukraine by NATO.

By offering total support for the geopolitical aims of

Biden's administration and its proxy imperialist war against Russia, Sinn Féin is offering itself as a safe pair of hands in both parts of Ireland against the working class.

Across Ireland workers of all ages are having to make the stark choice between heating their homes and feeding their families. In the South, the number of parents using food banks doubled last year. There are now 671,000 people living in poverty according to Social Justice Ireland, including 188,000 children. The population of the Republic of Ireland is just 5 million. The cost of food and energy bills has soared as inflation pushes beyond 8 percent.

While the number of people homeless has reached close to 12,000, a ban on evictions introduced by the current Fine Gael/Fianna Fáil/Green Party government in 2022 will be abolished at the end of March. Homeless charities are predicting an avalanche of evictions. The Irish Simon Community has detailed that as many as 290,000 people in Ireland are experiencing hidden homelessness, as friends or family are now relied on to provide accommodation for others.

The humanitarian crisis in the emergency departments of Irish hospitals continues unabated. Ireland has now the same number of hospital beds it had in 2010, despite a 600,000 population growth. Dr. Chris Luke, a consultant in emergency medicine in Cork for over 20 years elucidated last month that due to the lack of hospital beds "We estimate that hundreds of people in Ireland are dying every year unnecessarily."

Sinn Féin's social policy is in line with its support for imperialist militarism. Despite occasional left rhetoric, Sinn Féin is neither socialist or anti-imperialist and represents the economic interests of the affluent middle class, bitterly hostile to the social interests and aspirations of the working class. The party is increasingly indistinguishable from Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, the long-established bourgeois nationalist parties who dominate the ruling coalition.



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