



News

from Congressman

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FOR RELEASE: July 11, 1996

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REP. KING CONDEMNS BRITISH ARMY AND R.U.C. FOR CAVING IN TO ORANGE MARCHERS

Congressman Pete King (R-Seaford, NY), Co-Chairman of the Congressional Ad Hoc Committee for Irish Affairs, today strongly condemned the British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary for reversing themselves and caving in to pressure from the Orange Order and the Ulster Unionist Party. According to wire service reports, troops and R.U.C. riot police last night brutally cleared the streets of counter-demonstrators to allow the Protestant marchers to parade through a Catholic neighborhood in Drumcree, Northern Ireland.

"After purportedly acting as fairly impartial referees for most of this week, the British Army and the R.U.C. have returned to their old ways," Rep. King said. "They've shown their true colors. Instead of working to defuse an explosive situation, the army and R.U.C. are pouring gasoline on the fire."

The marching season-inspired violence has included vicious attacks on minority Catholics, including the burning of several Catholic homes. "To make matters worse," King said, "the army and R.U.C. now seem to have taken sides."

The renewed outbreak of sectarian violence in occupied Ireland was set off by the start of the traditional "marching season" during which Protestants in the north of Ireland celebrate the victory of William of Orange over King James II in the 1690 Battle of the Boyne. Protestant fraternal orders, in particular the Orange Order, routinely lead triumphal processions through Catholic neighborhoods to deliberately antagonize the residents.

"With the Irish Peace Process at this crucial and critical juncture, what is needed now, more than ever, is calm and restraint," King said. "Unfortunately, individuals and parties opposed to a peaceful, negotiated settlement to the Irish question and in favor of maintaining the status quo seem to be using the marching season as an implement to derail the peace process."