**BREXIT SURPRISE TO END IRELAND’S**

**PARTITION?**

Since the 2016 British referendum vote in favor of leaving the EU, revelations as to how that is to be achieved and it implications have been sparing and couched in propaganda. What was promoted by the ‘Brexiteers’ as the dawning of a new era of prosperity is looking more like a sunset on the United Kingdom. It is widely believed that the Irish Republic (26 counties) will be most directly and negatively affected. The remaining 6 counties of Ireland---variously referred to as statelet, colony, territory, province or garrison---will retain its title as the economic basket case of Britain. The one possible unintended consequence of the Brexit folly is the re-unification of Ireland; divided by England along strictly sectarian lines in 1920. Optimism for this view requires two flawed political leaders----Theresa May and Donald Trump---to step out of character. However, an assist from Members of Congress could change hearts and minds.

First, a Brexit status report. Ireland’s Simon Coveny states the goal “…is to have a set of negotiating parameters by the end of October and the draft text of a withdrawal agreement.” Theresa May bemoans her divided party and Parliament to any EU leader who will listen. It is a carefully scripted sympathy scenario to cover her backing away from the Irish border ‘back-stop’ agreement and her support for amnesty for British security forces involved in killing civilians in NI. The latter undermines the US- backed Good Friday Agreement. President Trump, a Brexit supporter, added some comedy by publicly berating May’s Brexit White Paper. Two separate studies by economists Paul Gosling and Dr. Gunther Thumann supporting Ireland’s re-unification are released. In Washington, D. C. Members of Congress are briefed on Brexit by Irish Ambassador Dan Mulhall.

Let’s recap the purpose of Brexit as explained by British MEP Daniel Hannan in the Wall Street Journal. Britain’s hope for Brexit lies in “… a comprehensive trade deal between the world’s largest(US) and 5th largest (UK) economies.” In other words the richest countries want more. Hannan added that the UK was seeking greater freedom from EU regulators, standards, financial oversight and for the greater ‘trust’ by the US. This from the nation that gave us Mad Cow Disease, the Thalidomide tragedy, and British banks that have been fined for laundering drug cartel and terrorist money. And as for trust? The EU is in the process of punishing the UK for purposely undervaluing a Chinese commodity depriving the EU of duties. What about Ireland caught in the cross-hairs of Brexit? He says nothing and could care less. The British did put a former Irish Ambassador to Canada on the payroll of Politiea.co.uk to spout the cause of Ireland leaving the EU!

What the UK post-Brexit bailout will consist of is anybody’s guess. It will include trade proposals, contracts, investments and purchases which, because they involve a foreign nation, will require approval of Congress. Here Rep. Richie Neal (MA-D), the Ranking Minority member of the House Ways and Means Committee and Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-R)Chairman of the Committee for the Security and Cooperation in Europe will be key. Of course questions must be answered about the benefit to the US taxpayer and the justification for rushing a bi-lateral deal with a trade surplus nation, the UK, when more important NAFTA and EU pacts have been waiting. But addressing the economic harm to both parts of Ireland by Brexit, particularly in light of the North vote to remain in the EU, will be difficult to justify. Support from Members of Congress could spur Britain’s full compliance with the Good Friday Agreement obligations like the Dublin/Monaghan bombings, the murder of Pat Finucane and the killings of hundreds of innocent Catholics by British security forces. But why stop there? Given the compelling evidence of the Hubner, Thumann and Gosling reports, why should Americans support a UK Brexit rescue when Brexit harms all of Ireland and the British economy by ignoring the costs of partition. Theresa May and Donald Trump might show some leadership here but only if they have the cover of Members of Congress.

Michael J. Cummings,

201 W Evergreen Ave

Philadelphia, PA 19118

267-766-5028

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) and 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 served six National AOH Presidents, 5 IAUC National Presidents and two National Chairman of INA primarily in public relations capacities. He is the only person to serve on the national policy making bodies of all three major Irish American organizations. He also served on the Commission on Peace and Justice of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. He served 36 years with the State of New York including as Assistant Deputy Comptroller.

Cummings has appeared on American, English and Irish television and radio and his commentary and letters and those of the organizations’ Presidents have appeared in major American, Irish-American, and Catholic print media.