

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

ULSTER UNIONISTS v SINN FEIN

Mr Chairman, I understand that I have 30 minutes to present evidence and that after any response from those who stand indicted there may be a period of questioning. It may be helpful if, at this stage, I indicated that we will not require to question the IRA delegation present but that we may seek, by directing questions elsewhere, to render intelligible the reasoning of those who dared to bring 'unreconstructed' murderers to the 'table of democracy'.

By our actions in bringing our accusation against IRA/Sinn Fein we will seek to prove that Sinn Fein is not qualified to participate in the Talks Process insofar as The Organisation has for many years been strategically and actively committed to an "Armalite and Ballot Box" philosophy, from which they have not withdrawn.

We intend to:

- (a) establish the link between individual delegates for Sinn Fein and the IRA.
- (b) establish that Sinn Fein is already committed to frustrating the objectives of the Talks.

Mr Chairman, we realise that this is not a court of law. If it were we would be obliged to produce witnesses to the crimes of IRA/Sinn Fein and to produce forensic evidence but that is not the case here today.

We are a political conclave, charged with the responsibility to sustain the process of democracy as it has evolved throughout the Western world; to represent, what in practice and by necessity becomes effectively 'best compromise', the democratically expressed wishes of society and to act with propriety to protect the interests of all including the weakest elements within our society.

We must make our judgements on that basis. If we are to meet our obligations then we must repudiate the presence here of the IRA in the guise of a political party. Sinn Fein, is a monstrous deceit condemned out of the mouths of virtually every other party here; with no commitment to work, as other parties at the table must do, within the accepted constraints which apply to the rest of us; that is.... **strictly committed to the Mitchell Principles.**

(Option to read the 6 principles).

These principles are what each party here has been required to endorse and accept....not the Mitchell Report as a whole. The Mitchell Commission was sadly constrained in terms of being permitted to clarify its Report but it has always made it clear that it had no mandate to decide by what method disarmament should take place; within what timescale and by what methodology.

What is called the 'Mitchell compromise' was no more than an observation, one which Ulster Unionists most reluctantly accepted as a possible basis for progress **but** one which in no way overrides or ameliorates the basic principle that "total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations" should be accomplished.

That, Mr Chairman is the background to today's proceedings.

We intend to draw Plenary's attention to the fact that the leadership of Sinn Fein is drawn from the IRA; that Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams have for over 25 years been active within that terrorist organisation as activists, commanders and presently as 'Godfathers'; and that the presence of the Sinn Fein delegation here is in line with the IRA's declared strategy....the 'Armalite & Ballot Box' approach.

(Option to explain the philosophy of terrorism....structured approach based on infiltration, consolidation, exploitation of the institutions of society supported by whatever level of violence is appropriate at any time).

I want to remind delegates of several other constitutional parties represented here of either their own, or their party leader's, previously declared assessment of Sinn Fein and simply to ask then whether this honestly reflected their knowledge of that organisation/party. It is important for the record that, in this respect, we invite each participant to demonstrate its integrity in this matter.

Particularly significant must be the words of Government parties who will have based their verdict on advice from their own security advisers; a facility not available to many of the rest of us.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT

Is it true that you, Secretary of State, on 16 July this year, expressed the view that "***Sinn Fein and the IRA are inextricably linked***" and that on 15 September you authoritatively and accurately quoted Prime Minister Blair as having said on 13 September, "***No-one should be naive about the IRA and Sinn Fein. The two organisations are inextricably linked. One could not credibly claim to be acting independently of the other***".

Now I don't want the Minister of State to think he is being neglected....can I draw his attention to Hansard, Col 919, 9 July, 1997...I have circulated copies. Do his words convey his conviction that Sinn Fein is synonymous with the IRA. I particularly draw his attention to, "***Sinn Fein knows exactly what to do if IT wants to join the talks process. IT must renounce violence and go back to the situation of an unequivocal ceasefire***".

My question is whether the SoS was sincere in her opinion; if she believes that the P.M. is a man of integrity and intended what he said, and whether the Minister of State stands by his declared position in this matter. Do they believe that, in the light of the IRA's repudiation of the Mitchell

Principles in Sinn Fein's An Phoblacht that 'unequivocal' is what they have got? (Await & press for answer).

We would be right then, if the Government is correct in its opinion, to assert that the IRA is here sitting at the 'table of democracy'? Is that not so, SoS?

IRISH REPUBLIC

I know that Minister Burke is a member of a comparatively new Government and that he may protest if I ask him about the words of ex-Taoiseach Bruton who said before the May 1st Westminster election, *"A vote for Sinn Fein is a vote of support for the IRA and the IRA's campaign of killing and murder. ...Currently Sinn Fein is part of a movement which also consists of another element which is the IRA, and the IRA is engaged in a campaign of violence which includes the killing of people to pursue a political objective. Political support for Sinn Fein is support for that campaign.That's the truth, and the cause of peace is never served by failing to tell the truth or engaging in hypocrisy. It would be hypocrisy to pretend that a vote for Sinn Fein is anything but support for the IRA, because they're part of the one movement"*

But the Minister can tell us whether he shares Mr Bruton's desire for openness and honesty in politics and if believes that those words from an Irish Taoiseach, uttered in the presence of John Hume and Eddie McGrady, were in line with his own and his party's opinion at that time. If fact John Hume endorsed the Taoiseach's remarks on the spot when he agreed that he had *"absolutely no doubt"* about the veracity of what John Bruton had said. In Minister Burke's opinion, are John Bruton and John Hume men of integrity or does he think this was just a pre-election gimmick?

Will he tell us what was the opinion on this issue of his own party leader and if anything has substantially changed to alter Mr Ahern's assertion on 18 June, that *"it is now next to impossible for Sinn Fein to convince people of their good faith"*.

(Await & press for an answer).

SDLP

I turn to the SDLP; first to John Hume, its leader. Would John tell us if he was being sincere when he, on the same occasion as ex-Taoiseach Bruton, stated, *"There is no doubt they are one movement"* and added that it was an insult to the intelligence of people in the street to suggest that a vote for Sinn Fein was not a vote of support for the IRA? If he was, will he explain what external pressures have constrained him to sponsor Gerry Adam's interests and to virtually ignore the existence of Unionism over the last few years since the IRA allegedly 'bugged' his offices.

Seamus Mallon has adopted, in the opinion of many a more realistic and consistent view of IRA/Sinn Fein. Can I draw attention to his April statement in the Irish News when he said, *"Peace is not something which Sinn Fein and the IRA can confer on the Irish people as one*

would dole out dolly mixtures to children". Central to the talks and to the Westminster election is the choice between the right to peace and the illegitimacy of political violence.

Peace does not belong to the republican movement and is not an electoral expediency to be promised or bartered with or withheld depending on what way the political wind is blowing.

Sinn Fein must accept that to live in peace, free from violence or threat was a fundamental human right which no one can usurp or infringe.

It is a core responsibility of governments and the political process to protect and defend that right. It is a principle that the SDLP has never wavered from in 25 years of soul destroying carnage.

Peace was wilfully and murderously blown away at Canary Wharf. Since then Sinn Fein has blamed everyone in sight as a smokescreen to cover their own lack of moral and political courage in not disowning and not moving away from those who plan it (sic violence) and who carry it out".

These we would all agree are courageous words just as Seamus's words following the Markethill bomb were courageous. Can I ask John Hume whether his party is prepared to endorse the frank and unequivocal arguments of his deputy?

(Await & press for answer)

There Mr. Chairman are the words (and the affirmation of those words????) by three of the four main parties to these deliberations of ours. I have little doubt that much that I have quoted would also be endorsed by other parties like the Alliance, for example, but time constrains me.

IRA/SINN FEIN

In contrast to these views we must now look at the position of IRA/Sinn Fein. If we are to make political progress around this table we must be clear, beyond reasonable doubt, that we are witnessing the beginning of a metamorphosis which will take those who depend exclusively or mainly on the use of political violence, to a position where they commit themselves exclusively to democratic politics.

All of us remember the words of President Clinton when he said to the people of Northern Ireland, and I have little doubt to the two governments, *"You must stand fast against terror. You must say to those who still would use violence for political objectives - You are the past; your day is over. Violence has no place at the table of democracy; and no role in the future of this land".*

Well Ulster Unionists believe that our government, in collusion with the government of the Irish Republic, has betrayed Mr Clinton's advice insofar as it has ignored the reality of Sinn Fein's accepted links with the IRA and its ambivalence on democratic principles.

It has ignored the words of Gerry Adams in the *Anderstown News*, "*My own position on the armed struggle is that it is a necessary form of resistance in the six county area against the British presence and in pursuance of Irish independence. Armed struggle becomes unnecessary only when the British presence has been removed.*

In the course of that armed struggle there will be ups and downs, but it ill begets anyone to criticise the IRA, to criticise IRA volunteers, or to criticise the IRA leadership when they, collectively, have pursued at tremendous cost, this struggle in an unprecedented way and for the longest time ever. Anyone who uses the term 'sticky' or tries to draw a parallel between '69 and today is guilty of an obscenity.

If at any time Sinn Fein decide to disown the armed struggle they won't have me as a member. I don't say that out of any fixation with physical force.

Sinn Fein candidates throughout the 32 counties have adopted a position of support for the IRA. If they get elected they will adopt exactly the same attitude. Involvement in the mainstream of political life in the 26 counties means a popularisation of the armed struggle and means, actually, a shortening of the war".

22 November, 1986, Mr Chairman. I believe that you, Sir, have an obligation to us all to ensure that our government, through the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who, sadly has deceived and sought to mislead us....I refer you to my article in the *Belfast Telegraph* of 18 August....comes back to this chamber having considered all the implications of Mr Adams unequivocal declaration of support for violence. And Mr Adams must be able to repudiate in letter and in spirit these damning words.

Let me say, at this stage that it is not enough for the Secretary of State Mowlam or anyone else to plead that the IRA currently in a ceasefire mode. Ceasefires are, as we have seen again and again, tactical operations with the IRA. Eamon Collins in his book *'Killing Rage'* writes, "*Sinn Fein were going to be participating in the European elections in July and Danny Morrison was hoping to be elected as an MEP. All IRA units received an order from general headquarters to 'take a holiday' during the period of the election*".

We know that happened not infrequently, that it happened for the visit of President Clinton, that it happened for 17 months from August '94 to February '96 concurrent with a quiet reorganisation of the IRA and with the putting in place all the requirements for Canary Wharf, Manchester, Osnabruk and a host of other atrocities.

But most of all we know that Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams have been actively involved in the IRA's terrorist campaign since the beginning....as activists, as commanders and now as

Godfathers. Let them deny what everyone knows....what Roger Cooke, Peter Taylor, Sean O'Callaghan, Eamonn Collins, Kevin Toolis, every Chief Constable and GOC and every previous Secretary of State and every self-respecting journalist like David McKittrick know.....and make greater liars of themselves than they already are.

What makes you, Secretary of State believe these terrorists have changed? You don't, do you!

Sean MacStiofain has said quite bluntly that those who accompanied him to the meeting with William Whitelaw at Cheyne Walk in 1972....Twomey, O'Connell, McGuinness, Adams, Bell.... I'm not sure about Myles Shevlin...were members of the IRA.

Secretary of State, it is your responsibility for bringing these people to the 'table of democracy' you can ignore reality....you can sacrifice the freedom and democracy for which thousands have died or you can ask the question, "When was Martin no longer exercising the power of life and death within this society, including Rose Hegarty's son Frank who had tried to break links with the IRA"? Then she must decide whether she believes McGuinness's denial or Rose Hegarty.

You, Secretary of State, decided to admit the IRA in the guise of Sinn Fein to this chamber on the basis of what you knew in your heart would be a tactical ceasefire but backed up by words and deeds. Did you listen to the words of Martin McGuinness on Newsnight on 12 August when he said "NO" to consent (and the verdict of the Ballot Box); "NO" to disarmament; "NO" to local administrative participation in our own affairs, even through a Responsibility-sharing Assembly; Basically "NO" to any democratic process?

You sought to convey to us that words didn't matter and that all would be fine **after** the IRA was admitted to Talks and signed up to the Mitchell Principles. Are you seriously reassured after the debacle of assent and repudiation? How far do you expect us to travel on a diet of deceit, sleight of hand and downright lies?

Mr Chairman, the Secretary of State cannot be allowed to discard the entire democratic process which has sustained the hard-pressed people of Northern Ireland through some of their darkest hours. She wants Peace; so do I; so do we all. But there is nothing to be constructed that can survive the difficulties we all must face if it is built on the sands of deceit.

I could fill the rest of today and of days ahead with the catalogue of structured evil that has been and continues to be the IRA's strategy.....but I have made my point.

It may be seen that Sinn Fein are on trial because of their proven affinity with the IRA but that is not the whole story. Today begins the trial of New Labour on the charge that it has diminished democracy, sacrificed the freedom of the people of Northern Ireland to the terrorist and elevated an evil Mafia to a status that would shame any other country in Western Europe and, indeed, farther afield.

2 Ulster Unionists have come here today assured by people from every walk of life that we are presenting a case where the verdict has already been written. That is likely to be so but that verdict will be the epitaph on the memorial to New Labour....it is already being written.