

NORTHERN IRELAND FORUM

UUP TALKS BULLETIN

Today, three hours were spent in Plenary while the DUP's 'Notice of Indictment' against the PUP and the UDP was discussed as well as their defence of themselves. This took the form of all the other participants asking questions as to the fringe loyalist parties' commitment to the Mitchell Principles in the light of the Combined Loyalist Military Command's threat against Billy Wright and Alex Kerr. The PUP and UDP also presented a joint paper which attempted to rebut the charges made by the DUP. The PUP and UDP reaffirmed their commitment to the Mitchell Principles and their opposition to "the use or threat of violence from whatever source".

In our own contribution, the UUP noted that the PUP/UDP's paper acknowledged the relationship between the parties and the CLMC and stated that we hoped the PUP/UDP would make explicit what was implicit in their paper, namely their opposition to the threats in question. We further noted that the CLMC threats, it could be argued, did not involve a breach of the Mitchell Principles in that the threats were not aimed at influencing the course of negotiations but to restrain persons who sought to end the loyalist ceasefire. Yet, the threats are in clear contravention of the spirit of the Principles and, therefore, it would be wrong to turn a blind eye to threats of violence. We received some satisfaction in the verbal responses by the PUP/UDP. The British and Irish Governments have given no indication as to when they intend to deliver their own verdict and their intended course of action.

The Women's Coalition has lodged a trivial complaint against UUP member, John Hunter, on the basis of remarks in the Sunday Tribune to the effect that the unionist people have the power to bring the administration in Northern Ireland to its knees. The Alliance are maintaining their position that they intend to lodge a complaint against the UUP and DUP for the events at Drumcree.

The UUP delegation was then involved in bilateral meetings with the Alliance and SDLP.

10 September 1996