

An Alliance Party submission on breaches of the Mitchell Principles.
September 10th, 1996.

1. Drumcree:

Principle a/ in the principles set out in the Mitchell report, which is the fundamental and essential first principle from which all the other principles flow, requires parties taking part in the talks to affirm *'their total and absolute commitment to democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues'*.

The Secretary of State has described the Drumcree crisis as "a week in which the rule of law was violently, deliberately, and, it has to be said, successfully challenged". During that week members of the Orange Order, with the support, encouragement and active involvement of senior members of the Ulster Unionists and the DUP, engaged in a systematic and politically motivated campaign which challenged the rule of law and the authority of the RUC. This campaign, which had been planned over a considerable period and which is now the subject of investigation by the RUC, sought to overstretch police resources and threaten the complete break down of law and order in the province through the organisation of mass demonstrations and widespread disruption of public order. The campaign went well beyond the specific issue of the march route at Drumcree and was consistently portrayed by those taking part as a challenge to overall government policy.

The campaign was organised by senior members of the Orange Order. The Orange Order is constitutionally linked to the Ulster Unionist Party. Its head is Martin Smyth, a Unionist MP and senior Party spokesman, and its deputy head and chief spokesman during the crisis was Jeffrey Donaldson, a leading member of the Ulster Unionist team in these talks. It is not possible to suppose that this campaign of defiance of the rule of law could have proceeded without the knowledge and approval of the Ulster Unionist leadership.

The campaign was further endorsed, strongly and often in angry and violent language, by leading members of the Ulster Unionists and the DUP.

These actions are not compatible with a total and absolute commitment to democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues and must constitute a breach of principle a/ by the Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party.

2. The CLMC threat.

As has already been raised in the plenary session the Combined Loyalist Military Command has issued a threat to Mr Billy Wright and other dissident members who oppose the involvement of the loyalist parties in political talks. Failure to condemn these threats would place the loyalist parties in breach of Principles a/ and d/ (*to renounce for themselves, and to oppose any efforts by others, to use force, or threaten to use force, to influence the course or the outcome of all-party negotiations.*)

3. The DUP and Billy Wright.

On Wednesday 4th September Mr William McCrea MP of the DUP took part in a public rally in Portadown in support of Mr Billy Wright. Mr Wright, to whom the nickname "King Rat" has been attributed, has been widely identified in the press as a militant loyalist and a supporter of the Mid-Ulster UVF, whose banner was displayed on the platform at the Portadown rally. Mr Wright and his associates took an active part in the Drumcree protest, where Mr Trimble of the Ulster Unionists met him in what Mr Trimble described as an attempt to avoid violence. He is described in the press as a strong opponent of the leadership and policies of the Progressive Unionist Party and of the Combined Loyalist Military Command and an opponent of the loyalist ceasefire, and has been linked to the emergence of a hardline break away faction of the UVF in the Portadown area. Mr McCrea's support for Mr Wright at the Portadown rally, his failure to condemn the policies and actions with which Mr Wright is publicly associated, and the failure of the DUP to condemn or in any way disassociate themselves from Mr McCrea's stand, can only constitute a breach of Principles a/ and d/ by the DUP.

1) The UUP fully accepts the principles of democracy and non-violence set out in the Report of the International Body.

2) We do not consider that the Alliance party submission discloses any breach of these principles or any action by the UUP contrary to them. The characterisation of those events in the second paragraph of that submission is inaccurate overheated political hyperbole, unworthy of serious consideration.

3) The UUP, before during and after this Summer, has consistently condemned violence from whatever quarter.