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# Alliance

The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

## Headquarters

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10 September 1996

Senator George Mitchell

Talks Chairman

Block B

Castle Buildings

Belfast

✓  
PST: PSS, Ministers Owen,  
de Rosa & Taylor; Attorney  
General; Minister of State  
Coveney; Messrs. Teahon,  
Donlon & Dalton; Ambs.  
London and Washington; Joint  
Secretary; Counsellors A-I.

Dear George,

Before the summer break we made formal representations to you, as Chairman of the Talks, that in our judgement leading figures in the Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party had breached the Mitchell Principles upon which the Talks were based. We requested that you convey these concerns to the two Governments. In our discussions with the two Governments we further confirmed our views. This matter was of course raised in advance of the adoption of the Rules of Procedure.

Subsequently we were requested to provide a written note.

I may point out that we have been prepared to continue with the Talks while this matter was being processed and we hope that others will take this constructive approach to current and any subsequent allegations. Any other approach would leave the Talks open to continual obstruction through the presentation of allegations - whether well-founded or specious.

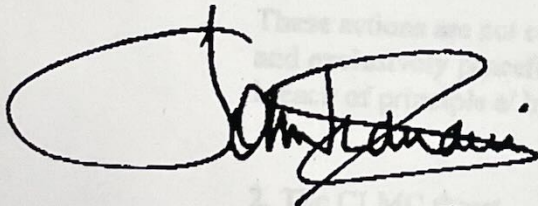


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Subsequent to our earlier expression of concerns, there have been further breaches, in our view, of the Mitchell Principles. We refer to developments in respect of the Democratic Unionist Party, and the two Loyalist Parties (the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party).

We therefore accompany this letter with a written expression of what we regard as these various breaches of the Mitchell Principles. Our wish of course is not to see anyone evicted from the Talks, but to see all parties proceed with serious Talks, and to conduct themselves in accordance with the Mitchell Principles. The conduct and outcome of this matter however lies not with us, but with yourself, and with the two Governments. All that we can do is bring to your attention what we see as serious breaches of the Principles.

Yours sincerely



PARTY LEADER



**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 though 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.