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Wu 8/8***REPUBLICAN PARTY PLATFORM: IRELAND**

1. The Republican Party is meeting this week in San Diego to draft the party platform in advance of the convention there next week. Yesterday the foreign policy sub-committee considered its part of the document. The full committee will vote on all parts of the draft today and tomorrow. Frank Lavin (a member of the sub-committee) called this morning from San Diego and read out the paragraph dealing with Ireland, the only paragraph to touch directly on the UK (my underlining):

"We support efforts to establish peace with justice in Northern Ireland through a peace process inclusive of all parties. At this difficult moment in Irish history, we encourage private U.S. investment in the North, wholly consistent with the MacBride Principles for fair employment, in order to address systemic discriminatory practices that exist, especially against Catholics, in the work-place and elsewhere. We call on all parties to renounce terrorism in the Northern Ireland conflict".

2. Having spilled the beans, Lavin claimed he was in no position to help: we had to get hold of someone senior quickly. I spoke to Charlie Black (Senior Adviser to the Dole campaign). I pointed out that Sinn Fein would seize on the unqualified mention of inclusive party talks: they would argue that the GOP supported their immediate inclusion in the peace talks, ie even in the absence of a ceasefire. The clause needed to be modified in order to be consistent with UK, Irish (and U.S. Administration) policy: something along the lines of "inclusive of all parties committed to the [Mitchell] principles of democracy and non-violence".



3. I also pointed out the symbolic importance of the reference to MacBride Principles. The reference was 10 years out of date; it took no account of the 1979 Fair Employment Act. As the draft language acknowledged, Northern Ireland needed investment to cement the peace process. Yet the MacBride Principles acted as a disincentive: why invest when there was all the extra hassle of MacBride? Sinn Fein was the only large political party in Northern Ireland to support the principles. In Britain and Northern Ireland, there was a danger that the GOP would be seen as adopting a wholly Sinn Fein-friendly platform. Did the GOP want to associate itself so closely with a party that was so closely associated with terrorists?

4. Black took the points and undertook to help. David Logan is trying to speak to Don Rumsfeld. We shall report again tomorrow.

Yan eis
Simon

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