

The International Body

Meeting with Representatives of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)
January 15, 1996
Belfast

Participants: David Trimble, Ken Maginnis

Summary

Representatives of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) told the International Body that the recent spate of "punishment beatings" is the work of the IRA; claimed that 75% of Roman Catholics find the RUC to be an acceptable police force; asserted that there must be actual physical evidence to back up a verbal commitment to decommissioning; stated that inventories of paramilitary arms would be an integral component of a decommissioning process but expressed skepticism that the paramilitaries would provide such inventories; assumed that the IB would comprise a monitoring commission to oversee decommissioning; and noted that the UUP accepts the Downing Street language on consent but considers the Framework Documents to be unrealistic.

Account of Meeting

Trimble said recent "punishment" killings and beatings were clearly the work of the IRA, undertaken to maintain control in local communities, to bail the organization out of financial problems, and to demonstrate that "we are still here." Maginnis said the IRA, in carrying out such actions, wants to portray itself as a viable alternative to the police. In fact the RUC is acceptable to 75% of Roman Catholics.

Maginnis stressed the centrality of decommissioning. Trimble said a commitment to decommissioning is not enough. There must be evidence of actual decommissioning. Maginnis said that Sinn Fein's initial statement that there would be no decommissioning until all-party talks began was unsatisfactory. Now they say decommissioning is possible only when a political agreement is achieved. The Sinn Fein/IRA agenda remains the same: Brits out and a united Ireland. There will never be agreement to that. That is why we have to be hardnosed. Hume, Spring, etc. are in fact moving the peace process backwards.

In response to General de Chastelain's question on the utility of an inventory of paramilitary weapons, Trimble said a significant effort in that direction is necessary as part of a program that will cover the whole picture. Maginnis thought it unlikely that paramilitaries would agree to provide inventories.

In response to Senator Mitchell's question about verification of decommissioning by an independent commission, Trimble said people are thinking that it would be you (the International Body). Maginnis said we will recommend a degree of continuity.

In response to Prime Minister Holkeri's question about consent and the Downing Street Declaration, Maginnis said the UUP accepts the DSD. Trimble said unionists are very firmly committed to the principle of consent and paragraph ten of the DSD and focus primarily on the paragraph four language (the British Government language). Unionists are uncomfortable, however, Maginnis said, with any suggestion that the DSD language on consent represents an interim stage. We are content to have a good working relationship between Ireland and Northern Ireland, but do not want to tolerate direct input by Dublin into our affairs. The Framework Documents are not part of the DSD. The Framework Documents are simply not realistic.

Trimble and Maginnis asked for a final meeting on January 18 in London.