

UNCHECKED - I have indicated suspect wording - e.g. (?....)

**Transcript of Chris McGimpsey
on Morning Ireland
on Friday 29th November 1996**

David Hanley:

Further reaction to yesterday's statement to the British House of Commons by John Major. Dr. Chris McGimpsey, Ulster Unionist Councillor for West Belfast is on the line, Dr. McGimpsey good morning. I assume that you welcome the statement, but let me put this to you that it lacked a lot where timing was concerned. It didn't help the peace process in it's timing.

Chris McGimpsey:

Yes, well I don't know why the timing, why it took place exactly when it did because unfortunately the majority community in Northern Ireland, the *mini* (?) Unionist community is kept in the dark in all of these things. I mean we are still unaware of the contents of the first Hume-Adams document, now it seems there is a second Hume-Adams document, we are unaware what's in it as well and I simply do not know why John Major responded to it yesterday rather than the day before or next week or whenever.

David Hanley:

The belief down here is that it's "real politics", has to do with keeping all of you on side?

Chris McGimpsey:

Well certainly within the Unionist party, certainly the people I talked too, I mean it was clear something was happening, because of the IRA conventions and Adams and McGuinness going back on (?) the Army Council and so on. So it was clear something major was happening. But I mean no one was really aware, with the exception of the Party Leader perhaps, no one was really aware of what was going on. I mean it has taken most of us by surprise.

David Hanley:

Well now your leader has welcomed it and has said we would have to have a genuine ceasefire etc., etc., but then he went on to say there would also have to be a process in which assurances by Sinn Fein and the IRA will have to be tested against their actions. What did he mean by that do you know, a process?

Chris McGimpsey:

Well I mean I think what David Trimble, the point he is making, and I think he is quite right on this, is that, if you have been murdering people for 25 years and this relates to the Loyalists as well as to the Republicans, you can't suddenly say right we have eschewed violence we are now in favour of democratic politics and have your bonafides accepted in the same way as for example the SDLP, or the Ulster Unionists and the process will be one in which a continual evaluation of their commitment to peaceful means can be made. I mean over the last two years, the IRA so-called ceasefire, I mean they have continued to target people, more frequently (recently ?) they have broken it and murdered people in Lisburn. They have continued to torture young nationalist youths. They continued to expel people from the country and the racketeering has continued. I mean all of that sort of stuff will have to stop, you can't ride two horses in this, you have got to be either in favour of democratic and constitutional change, or in favour of violent change. Now the IRA I think have been trying to ride both horses and I think that really what David Trimble is saying is that they are going to have to get off one of those horses and be seen quite clearly to have dismounted.

David Hanley:

Very well, but you said that all of these comments of your apply equally to Loyalist Paramilitaries and the IRA, but I wonder whether your party is at one on this because John Taylor is quoted this morning from a letter to the newsletter, the UUP accept that participation of the fringe loyalist parties in the real negotiations without any prior decommissioning?

Chris McGimpsey:

That's right. Now the difference between the Loyalist position and the Republicans position is quite clear. First of all in October two years ago when **the Loyalists called their ceasefire, apart from apologising they also indicated there would be no first strike.** Now a number of people tended (? attempted) to get the IRA to make a similar commitment and unfortunately were not able so to do. **The Loyalists have indicated that they will decommission and they have made that quite clear, they have said they will not do it unilaterally which also sits in with the Mitchell Principle's,** but if the IRA are prepared to decommissioning they will also. We have got no commitment whatsoever from the IRA, **the Loyalists have also of course indicated that they are prepared to abide with the wishes of the community in Northern Ireland** both sections of the community where as you discovered in the forum, when that principle was put in the Dublin forum, that Sinn Fein they represented the IRA were not prepared to commit themselves. So the

Loyalists have gone further, lets see the IRA go as far as the Loyalists and I think the position changes.

David Hanley:

Nevertheless as it stands now the UUP would accept participation without prior decommissioning on the part of Loyalist Paramilitaries, but not on the part of the IRA, it's that simple?

Chris McGimpsey:

Within the current process the Loyalists have been admitted and been accepted, their admission has been accepted not only by the Ulster Unionists, because it's not our process, but by the Irish Government and by the British Government because of the assurances they have been given. Now the IRA/Sinn Fein will have to give similar assurances to those of the Loyalists. I mean lets us not forget this is not a Unionist process. The Unionists are not in control of this process nor do we have any power. I mean this process has been set up jointly by the Government of the Irish Republic and the Government of the United Kingdom and if they are happy to see the Loyalists participate on the basis that they are, we are agreeing with that.

David Hanley:

Dr. McGimpsey, thank you for taking our call.

