



Mistakes of 20 years ago must not be repeated – Campbell



09 April 2018

East Londonderry MP Gregory Campbell said,

Gregory Campbell MP

DUP Spokesman on International Development and Cabinet Office



“It's now twenty years since the Belfast Agreement was negotiated. Many people are marking the event in different ways. In the intervening two decades, the truth has been lost or obscured. The narrative that is now peddled is that the Belfast Agreement was an historic document which brought peace. The facts are that both the IRA and Loyalist paramilitaries had declared ceasefires some four years previously. An Agreement flowed from those respective ceasefires but despite the hyperbole, it was fundamentally flawed.

The Agreement was supported by the vast majority of Nationalists but had approximately a 50/50 split in and against it in the Unionist community. Voting for it was presented as voting for Peace and a New Start, I was then and remain glad now that I campaigned against it, not on the basis that I was opposed to Peace. Indeed, I and my community had more to gain than most from peace, but that it was the wrong basis on which to build a solid and peaceful future.

The roots of our current problems go back to 20 years ago, as it was then that vicious killers were offered 'get out of jail free' cards. They concluded that negotiations could bring more concessions for them and their political surrogates when they forced the democrats to give while the terrorists did the taking.

There are solid lessons we can learn from the mistakes of 20 years ago.

Those who supported murder back then and now glorify it, have to understand that peaceful progress and mutual respect is a two way process.

We, as Unionists cannot rest on our laurels even with an extra hundred thousand votes for the DUP last year, we must continue building the peace and pressing for a better future for all.

In a country where there appears to be competing demands for Irish / British recognition, it is incumbent upon us to demonstrate that just as an Irish State doesn't and cannot contemplate our British identity, we can rise above that exclusiveness and show that we have already demonstrated that this British State can and does include an Irish identity.

That will be the ultimate success of present and future generations.”

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