

Thursday 28 February 2008

**NORTHERN IRELANDS LARGEST POLITICAL PARTY**

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**DUP NEWS****Latest News:****HAMILTON CALLS ON DURKAN TO CLARIFY POSITION ON AMNESTY FOR TERRORISTS**

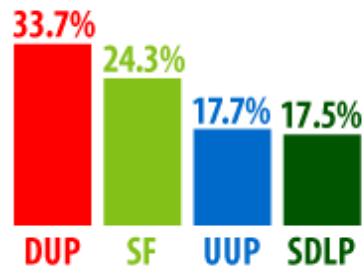
Strangford DUP MLA and Ards Borough Councillor Simon Hamilton has called upon the SDLP leadership to clarify its party position on an amnesty for terrorists and the reclassification of the 30 year terrorist campaign in Northern Ireland as a “war” after its Councillor on Ards Borough Council, Joe Boyle, voted against a motion condemning the mooted proposals of the Eames Bradley Consultative Group on the Past. Ards Borough Council overwhelmingly backed a proposal sent to it by Ballymena Borough Council which unequivocally opposed the suggestion for an amnesty for those who perpetrated terrorist atrocities. Commenting after he seconded the adoption of the motion, Simon Hamilton said,

*“I am utterly appalled that on what should have been a simple and straightforward motion for any self-respecting democrat to endorse failed to receive the support of the SDLP on Ards Borough Council.*

*Joe Boyle’s refusal to stand with the DUP, the UUP, the Alliance Party and Independents in condemning an amnesty for paramilitaries of all hues and a reclassification of the dirty 30 year terrorist campaign as a war, is a slap in the face for innocent victims from all sides of our society.*

*His declaration that he is keeping an “open mind” on these issues, raises the*

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*question is he speaking for the SDLP or is he on a “solo run”? This is a matter that the SDLP’s leadership must speak out on. Whenever the Government despicably proposed an amnesty in the past in order to placate republicans, the SDLP rightly joined with victims and parties including my own to oppose the Government’s plan of appeasement.*

*Thankfully, the case of the innocent victims was heard and I would have thought that the SDLP would wish to remain consistent and fight against an amnesty again. Why they would change their mind on letting the perpetrators of some of the most heinous crimes imaginable go free, I can’t quite fathom.*

*It is bewildering how Cllr Boyle could not bring himself to oppose the reclassification of the campaign of various paramilitary organisations as a war. Is he confused about what happened in Northern Ireland during our Troubles? Does the SDLP now consider the shooting in the back of off duty police officers or soldiers as an act of war? Do they believe that the slaughter of people as they worshipped in church or shopped on the streets of Belfast as an act of war and not a terrorist atrocity? Only the deluded would be so confused as to consider the murder and mayhem caused by the IRA and so-called loyalists as anything other than the terrorists campaigns they were.*

*I believe that Joe Boyle’s behaviour has let himself down and it is incumbent upon the Mark Durkan, as SDLP leader, to clarify their position so that we can all see if they are letting innocent victims down."*

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