

Ulster Unionist Party

Friday 30 May 2008

## Reaction to Eames Bradley Report



Speaking after the joint presentation given today by Lord Eames and Denis Bradley on behalf of the Consultative Group on the Past, Deputy-Leader of the Ulster Unionist Assembly Party Danny Kennedy MLA has urged political leaders and all in society to carefully reflect on the Group's emerging findings. The speech outlined the thinking of the Group ahead of the publication of its report later this year.

Mr. Kennedy said, "The emerging findings of the Eames-Bradley Group require careful consideration by all in our society. They raise difficult and challenging issues for all sections of our community. No doubt some commentators will focus on what Eames-Bradley said with regards to rogue security force elements. In fact, Eames-Bradley noted that security force penetration of republican and loyalist terrorist groups 'undoubtedly saved lives and prevented further atrocities'. They challenged the Republican movement to think long and hard about the State fully disclosing all details regarding informers in view of the significant numbers of Republicans who routinely passed intelligence information to the security forces.

"The UUP - as a party committed to law and order - has no hesitation in saying that the rule of law applies to all members of the security forces. We are confident that the overwhelming majority of security force personnel acted with courage and within the law throughout the Troubles. As Lord Eames himself said today of the security forces, 'I have walked beside too many coffins and comforted too many families, to allow those stories of dedication to go untold'. This is an experience I have shared and cannot forget.

"Today's emerging findings also laid the foundations for an honest approach to our past - the recognition of the 'horrendous stories' of the murder of off-duty security force personnel; the duty upon society to meet the welfare needs of victims; the 'raw sectarianism' of the PIRA campaign along the border; the 'primal sectarian violence' of loyalist paramilitaries; questions surrounding the commitment of successive governments in the Irish Republic to act against Republican violence; the call for Loyalist decommissioning; and the need for assurance that servants of the Crown in seeking to protect life acted within the law.

"The Eames-Bradley statement ended with a call to 'avoid the past being used as a weapon'. Sinn Fein's decision to boycott today's event is a sad indication of its determination to continue using a false view of the past in order to prevent progress to a shared future. If we are to have a truly shared Northern Ireland, then we do indeed need to find a means of honestly addressing the legacy of the Troubles. Allowing myths and propaganda to go unchallenged will only ferment future hatreds and condemn our children and grandchildren to re-living our painful past. They deserve better. That is why the UUP will continue to constructively engage with Eames-Bradley in the hope that a way can be found to honestly address the past".