

Meeting with the Secretary of State – 15th April 2002

John Reid's position on the OTRs – he will not be able to sell the amnesty of people on the run to his own party, let alone the Government, if it is

a) One-sided – i.e. not including the British Forces *v. enquiries*

b) Not including the exiles.

yes, want to get truth, but shouldn't do true because of historic context

As SOS, he is being given names of people asking to return home; it is a painstaking process finding out whether they are in the frame for crimes committed here, but then, if they are in the clear, he also has to make sure that they didn't commit any other crimes in any other part of the UK, so that when they do come back, they aren't hauled in front of a court and sent to jail for some petty offence.

He seems to like the APNI / UUP idea of an admission of guilt in a court, before release with a stain on one's character.

What do we do?

Exiles – help them, problems with communities, with themselves, shouldn't be used as a political football

May – no problems OTRs being treated as early release prisoners – i.e. license, problems with general amnesty shouldn't be linked with exiles.

OTRs new hobby horse for unionists

Royal Prerogative → amnesty, general, no license, no categories.

OTRs potential dissidents, as they have no stake in peace process

Other 'exiles' members of the armies, RUC, etc.

*extension of this debate → Truth + Reconciliatory process
unionists equally suspicious of SF and police!*