

ALDI/2/6/10/2/2

# The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland Alliance

East Belfast Office

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Maureen | Debbie

Please find following (6 pages) an amended copy of the Alliance News article from John. It needs to get to London today(!) if at all possible.

Would there be any chance? I have included on the last page a title, introduction and two paragraphs to be inserted at the appropriate places.

Thanks,

Richard

*The future will belong to democracy*

## The Ideal must not become the Enemy of the Good

*The Atlantic leader,  
John Hume,  
gives his analysis of  
the peace process to date,  
and says it should  
go from here.*

*drop*

~~The shock felt by most of us when we heard of the end of the IRA ceasefire has naturally been followed by waves of anger, and a powerful desire to return to the status quo ante. It is important however to reflect on what has happened, for a careful analysis may help prevent future mistakes.~~

The current phase of the process, brought to an end by the IRA bomb at Canary Wharf, began in late 1992. Prior to this it was believed that no agreement could span the parties from Sinn Fein to the DUP. Peace and stability would only be constructed by negotiating a settlement supported by a majority on both sides. The strength of the settlement and its overwhelming support would marginalize the extremists, and a stable peace could be created, albeit with some difficulty. In late 1992 however a new proposition was introduced by Albert Reynolds, and subsequently John Hume. This strategy suggested that the Republican Movement <sup>with</sup> ~~was~~ tiring of terrorism, and while the resources remained to prosecute an almost endless campaign, there was no <sup>the violence could be brought to an end permanently</sup> ~~indication of imminent victory or defeat.~~ It was said ~~that~~ if Republicans were assisted to find a route into democratic politics, ~~the violence could be brought to an end permanently.~~ When I discussed this approach with Mr Reynolds at the time, he was very clear, <sup>that</sup> ~~The 'principle of consent', as it was later outlined in the Joint Declaration of 1993,~~ was the only basis on which a settlement could be built. While entirely agreeing, I found it difficult to be persuaded that Sinn Fein could sign up for what they would describe as a unionist veto and an acceptance of partition. Mr Reynolds

was adamant that this was the only realistic prospectus on offer, and Sinn Fein would have to accept it.

I believe that the understanding of the Republican Movement was rather different.

They were persuaded that there was now an alternative strategy for achieving a United Ireland. This prospectus read as follows. The violence is the major dividing feature within nationalism. End the violence, and a Nationalist Consensus can be built which will encompass all the nationalist parties in Ireland, and Irish-America.

Together this consensus will be powerful enough, especially with the incipient threat of a return to violence, to pressure the British who can cajole or coerce the unionists into Joint Authority, on the way to a United Ireland.

At first all was well, but <sup>through</sup> when the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation was established in Dublin it became apparent that few others shared the Republican aim, <sup>when when S.F. were unable to sign up to the Forum report</sup> and <sup>when the Forum produced its report recently Sinn Fein was unable to sign up.</sup> <sup>became clear that</sup> The Nationalist Consensus could not be constructed on the <sup>their</sup> Sinn Fein agenda. The Mitchell Commission Report dealt a <sup>demands</sup> further blow when it required commitments to dismantle the IRA, destroy its arsenal, and accept the outcome of All-Party Talks, <sup>dealt a further blow</sup> whatever the result. This was too much for the Irish Republican Army Council.

Replace with \* 1

For them the Peace Process was about achieving <sup>can</sup> a United Ireland in short stages with the assistance of other nationalists. It was not about accepting the reality of the Joint Declaration, the Frameworks Documents, or any other accommodation with partition.

On this analysis the bomb at Canary Wharf was always coming. ~~The Forum Report and the Mitchell Report explain its timing, and the row which followed John Major's~~

speech in the House of Commons gave it the best possible political context, but, <sup>now</sup> if the IRA was not going to see the Irish Peace Process deliver its aims, then a return to violence was always an option, and the threat of the return to violence was always more powerful than outdated Republican argument. <sup>now</sup> Coming to the table in Dublin with only the strength of their mandate and their argument, it did not work. Why wait until the end of the political track and the possibility of All-Party Talks, where the added input of the unionists and the British Government would bring an even worse outcome than the Forum. Post-Mitchell they would also be under pressure to De-commission at the same time as seeing their arguments being unstitched at the All-Party Talks.

keep

For Republicans the aim can be achieved by any means, political, violent, or a combination. The aim of a United Ireland is fundamental, and perceived likely effectiveness, not morality, is the arbiter of the method. <sup>now</sup> This informs their decision-making structure, their discipline, and their methodology. For a democratic politician the method is important. Undemocratic structures or methods, cannot be justified simply on the basis that they deliver a particular outcome.

just

It had been hoped by SDLP, Fianna Fail and others, that with the benefits of financial assistance, democratic respectability, political alliances, and enormous publicity, the Republican Movement could compromise on that fundamental. It seems that this is not so.

keep

~~The Irish Republican Army Council makes the decisions, and tells the elected Sinn Fein politicians what they may say. In a democratic society it is the democratically elected politicians who tell the generals what to do, not the other way about.~~

cut

This implies that future ceasefires will be similarly tactical, and that Sinn

Fein is not in a position to deliver the dismantling of the IRA short of a completion of the aim. The evidence suggests that the analysis on which the last three years of work has been based, was faulty. In South Africa the White Right <sup>MSB</sup> were never accommodated to the new order. In the Middle East the negotiated settlement has left Hamas and the Jewish fundamentalists still using violence to try to bring it down. In almost every other circumstance the ideal of everyone being satisfied with the outcome has proved elusive. Why should we be different?

If we must return to the more solid ground of the previous analysis, how would this inform the next phase? Firstly, democratic politics must take centre stage again, after the diversions of recent times. We must complete the Twin-Track Initiative.

The Mitchell Report which addressed the Arms Issue <sup>MSB</sup> has been published. The Political Track whose purpose was to reach agreement on how we achieve All-Party Talks, is <sup>hearing</sup> ~~not yet completed~~. <sup>MSB</sup> The time can be made up by an urgent intensification of <sup>completion</sup> ~~discussions between the two Governments and the parties.~~

~~The example of Dayton is has unfortunate resonances, but the principles of intensity and urgency are very reasonable. John Major's up-coming paper arising out of his meetings with the Party Leaders needs to be shared with the Irish Government, and an agreed approach adopted between the two Governments. If it becomes clear that the only way to get to Talks, is to have an election, then all parties including Sinn Fein should be free to stand, but a commitment must be achieved in advance, perhaps in the context of the proximity discussions, that within two weeks of that poll, serious negotiations will commence.~~

4

insert  
\* 2

dump

4

~~It is said that an election would be more divisive than a referendum. I doubt if the experience of the Republic of Ireland in recent years would support that contention, or the notion that those who are on the losing side, feel bound by the result, to change their perspective. People have the right to differ. Those who support the aspirations of Sinn Fein and the DUP have the right to have those views expressed, but they must be prosecuted only by democratic means.~~

*dump*

~~We face the possibility at this point that there will be no further declared ceasefire. I can imagine a situation where after a period of bombing there is a de facto cessation for a period. That would trigger a cat and mouse game rather like the dispute over the word 'permanence'. Sinn Fein would demand admission on the basis that there was obviously a ceasefire. Unionists and the British Government would demand a Declaration by the IRA, which would not oblige, and so on. To obviate this we must agree that those parties which wish to participate in the post-election negotiations must do so in acceptance of the Mitchell Report in full, and this includes the two Governments.~~

*dump*

*1100*

It is possible that the All-Party Talks, ~~if and however they happen~~, will not reach a full agreement. In that circumstance it will necessary, either for the two Governments to proceed to implement the Frameworks Documents, or for what the South Africans called 'a sufficient consensus' of the parties to achieve a negotiated settlement, on which the future can be built. The ideal of unanimity is a good one, but in politics, clutching to ideals divorced from reality leads to fundamentalism, and the ideal then becomes the enemy of the good. It is time for the good to come together, and not to be seduced by what may be an unattainable ideal.

*1250*

# The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

# Alliance

East Belfast Office

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- \* 1 : At first all was well, but when the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation Report was produced, and the Mitchell Commission Report demanding a dismantling of the IRA, the destruction of its arsenal and acceptance of the outcome of All-Party Talks, whatever the result, it became too much for the Irish Republican Army Council.
- \* 2 : When the format of elections has been decided, and the elections have taken place, we must more speedily to serious negotiations. All Parties who wish to participate in those negotiations must do so in acceptance of the Mitchell Report in full, and this includes the two governments.

TITLE: "The future must belong to democracy?"

INTRO: The Alliance leader, Dr John Alderdice, gives his analysis of the peace process to date, and where it should go from here.

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## The Ideal must not become the Enemy of the Good

The shock felt by most of us when we heard of the end of the IRA ceasefire has naturally been followed by waves of anger, and a powerful desire to return to the status quo ante. It is important however to reflect on what has happened, for a careful analysis may help prevent future mistakes.

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**Dr John Alderdice, Alliance Party Leader**

**16 February 1996**