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News



Controversial 'Dirty War' motion adopted

A CONTROVERSIAL Sinn Fein motion calling on the British government to acknowledge collusion between Loyalist terrorists and RUC Special Branch has been passed at the second attempt at Limavady Borough Council.

The motion, submitted by Bellarena Councillor Paddy Butcher, called on council to 'express deep concern' over revelations contained in a report published by Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan, which highlighted collusion between UVF members and intelligence agents in the murder of Raymond McCord Jnr.

Sinn Fein also demanded that the government 'acknowledge its role in employing this policy during its 'Dirty War' in Ireland.'

Last month, a meeting of Limavady Council was adjourned by Deputy Mayor, UKUP Councillor Leslie Cubitt, who revealed he had received an amendment to the motion by the UUP's Edwin Stevenson, which accused a prominent republican of involvement in the killings of 12 republican informers, the Claudy bombing and of setting-up IRA volunteers for assassination by the SAS in the Loughgall ambush.

Furious row

A furious row erupted and Colr Cubitt adjourned the meeting, ruling the motion was "out of order" and stressing that he had the authority to bring the meeting to a close.

He left the council chamber followed by members of the Ulster Unionist Party, while members of the DUP left a short time later. After consulting council's Standing Orders, Sinn Fein's Cathal O hOisin, took the chair and after a vote it was ruled that the motion would be withdrawn and re-submitted at council's monthly meeting.

At this meeting on Tuesday evening, Colr O hOisin said that he wished to distance his party from the UUP amendment proposed at the previous monthly meeting. "That amendment may be subject to litigation and I wish to have it recorded in the minutes that we distance ourselves from that amendment."

Proposing adoption of the re-submitted motion, Colr Paddy Butcher said: "The ethos of this motion is on human rights and it has nothing to do with party politics."

Colr Cubitt said that in light of the recent pledges made by Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley to work together towards a brighter future for the people of Northern Ireland, he found the motion "very inappropriate."

"Sinn Fein has now totally endorsed the PSNI and this motion is divisive. I would like to see an investigation carried out into collusion between (top republican] and MI5 and the collusion that saw (Robert] McCartney murdered in Belfast.

"We shouldn't be selective in what Nuala O'Loan investigates. I would move that this motion be withdrawn."

Councillor Anne Brolly said council had a duty to condemn the 'Dirty War' in Ireland and added that

those involved should be "made accountable."

"What we are talking about is the 'Dirty War' of the British in Ireland. If the PSNI step out of line then it is up to us to ensure that there's accountability.

"It has relevance to council and we as a council should utterly condemn what was done, in the name of the people."

Her party colleague,

Colr O hOisin, added: "I totally concur with this. We have witnessed an historic day, but we have to make sure that the deeds and actions carried out by each side within the 'Dirty War' is never allowed to happen again.

"If we don't address this issue then there's the possibility that it could be revisited again. If we are to move on we have to look at what happened, address it and move on."

SDLP Benbradagh Councillor, Michael Coyle, said that the Police Ombudsman's report into the McCord Jnr murder only provided a "snapshot of all dirty deeds carried out by means of collusion."

"No matter who the victims are or why, we need a process to protect their interests. We need this not to open up the wounds of the past, but to ensure that the same mistakes are never made again in the future."

Divisive

DUP Alderman, George Robinson, described the motion as "divisive." The East Derry MLA added: "This motion is divisive and I made that clear the last time. It is the same as quite a lot of other motions that have come before us in recent years.

"As far as collusion goes, it's been around for the last 35 years in all types and descriptions. It's a very selective motion and I won't be voting for it."

The motion was adopted following a recorded vote, with eight for and six against.

30 March 2007

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