

Friday 27 March 2009

NORTHERN IRELANDS LARGEST POLITICAL PARTY



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We mustn't take our circumstances for granted - Dodds

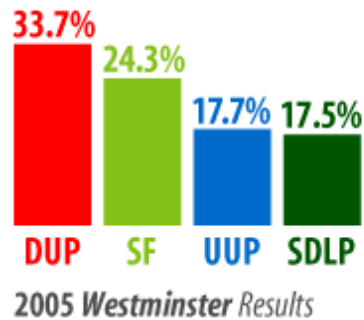
Below is an extract of a speech given by DUP European Candidate, Diane Dodds to party members and supporters in North Antrim:



“Those who lived through the worst days of Northern Ireland’s history will have been disgusted by the recent efforts of violent and murderous men to drag us backwards. Many people will remember the 1970s and 1980s and what those evil times were like. We have no desire to go back to those days. Sometimes, I think that people forget what it was really like in the past. Sadly in recent weeks we got a glimpse.

The terrorist murderers responsible for the brutal slaying of Constable Stephen Carroll and Sappers Mark Quinsey and Patrick Azimkar are determined to destabilise Northern Ireland and make it an abnormal place in which to live, work and raise a family. They will not succeed. I can rarely recall an occasion in Northern Ireland when there has been such a broad consensus of opinion right throughout our community. As our Party Leader has indicated, the murderous criminals will not succeed – we will not be going back.

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Those of us who remember the Troubles want better for our children and grandchildren. We do not want to see army patrols on the streets. We have no desire to see our town centres closed off or people being searched going into shops to see if they are carrying incendiary devices. Those who use violence or politics to take us back there are acting in defiance of the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland. They have no support within the community.

Those in our community who are too young to remember what happened in the past in all its brutal detail are revolted by the attempts of these criminals to bring death and destruction on to our streets. I recently spoke to a group of young people at my old workplace of Laurelhill Community College. Looking around that room I saw a group of teenagers who, had they been born fifteen or twenty years earlier probably would have been looking at a future career outside Northern Ireland. They would have done so because employment prospects were better elsewhere or because it was simply too dangerous for them to live here in Northern Ireland. The DUP worked to achieve our own local government so we could lead Northern Ireland into better times and make the so-called 'Brain-Drain' a term of the past.

I am glad that young people now want to live, make their start in life, get a job and raise their own families in Northern Ireland. The recent murders have perhaps taught us not to take our new circumstances for granted – to ensure that we stamp out terrorism in all its forms. We owe it to young people, like those in Laurelhill to ensure that Northern Ireland is not allowed to slide backwards into the death, destruction and despair which characterised our experience growing up here.

That is the challenge facing those of us involved in DUP politics – creating a better society, at ease with itself, free from terrorism, inside the United Kingdom. With the support of the people we can see that challenge met head on and resolved.”

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