

close to the various paramilitary groups, it was clear to us that getting mind-sets changed would be no simple task. As Billy Hutchinson, the Loyalist politician told us, lack of trust existed at many levels of Northern Ireland society. It seemed clear to us that changing that situation would require not only confidence-building among the participants but risk-taking by them as well.

To engender what we hoped might be sufficient trust to get the talks started we included in our report to the two governments six principles of democracy and non-violence which we proposed the political parties should be required to endorse if they were to join the talks. These included the requirement to:

- Agree to democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues;
- Agree to the total disarmament of all paramilitary organizations;
- Agree that such disarmament must be verifiable to the satisfaction of an independent commission;
- Renounce for themselves, and to oppose any efforts by others, to use force, or threaten to use force, to influence the course or the outcome of all-party negotiations;
- Agree to abide by the terms of any agreement reached in all-party negotiations and to resort to democratic and exclusively peaceful means in trying to alter any aspect of that outcome with which they may disagree; and
- Urge that "punishment" killings and beating stop and to take effective steps to prevent such actions.²

Although in setting up the International Body the two governments stipulated they were not obliged to accept its recommendations, both endorsed the six principles and made their acceptance a requirement for each of the parties wishing to take part in the talks.

We also proposed six principles of arms decommissioning which we believed might give the paramilitary groups both the trust and the willingness to engage with us. Included in the latter was the potential need for confidentiality in the process, if that were deemed necessary to avoid suggestions of humiliation, surrender or defeat. None of the paramilitary

² *Report of the International Body on Arms Decommissioning*, 22 January 1996, Mitchell, Holkeri and de Chastelain, para 20. CAIN Web Service. [http://cain.ulst/ac/uk](http://cain.ulst.ac/uk).