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24 November, 1981

Brian Farrell:

The latest Provisional murder campaign was designed to drive the North into all-out civil war. It has already pushed thousands out onto the streets and it has pushed DUP leader, Ian Paisley, into a further bid to become the overall Unionist supremo. That's driven him into direct confrontation with the British Government - in effect to make the North ungovernable. It has also forced many others in the Loyalist camp to look again at the man who has become the universally accepted symbol of their position - the man who, in the words of the Taoiseach, has been working in tandem with the Provisional IRA. It has also forced other Unionist leaders, both political and para-military, to challenge his claims to leadership. After all yesterday's rallies, as criticism mounts, has Ian Paisley any second thoughts? Can he yet pull back from the brink? Does he want to or is he now determined to go for broke and exchange the union with Britain for his own particular brand of leadership? Just now in a Belfast studio he faces Barry Cowan with questions on that point.

Barry Cowan:

Could we talk about last night in Newtownards first of all? Do you accept the fact that last night you broke the law?

Ian Paisley:

No, I didn't break the law at all. In fact anybody who says I broke the law doesn't know the law. Notice was given to the police that we would be having a parade of men through the town of Newtownards. The police cleared that notice. If we had been breaking the law it was the duty of the police to ban an illegal parade. No notices were served on us and in fact at the end of the parade I met the Chief of the Police in that area and he said to me "Mr Paisley, there wasn't even a bottle broken in Newtownards". It was a law-keeping, law-abiding and law honouring

Barry Cowan:

You would not deny that certain people in that procession last night were wearing para-military uniforms, were carrying what could be construed as offensive weapons and in one photograph I saw today one man was carrying a holster. Now there may or may not have been a gun in that but that was a private army, was it not?

Ian Paisley:

If I have a certificate to carry a personal weapon I can carry that personal weapon either concealed or about my person. That is covered by the certificate. If you have a personal weapon and your certificate says you're to carry it for your personal defence you can wear that weapon anywhere and that man, if he had a gun, although I am told there was no gun in the holster, but if he had a gun in the holster, I was not of course speaking to him, if he had a gun in the holster and had a certificate he was entitled to do that and it was breaking no law.

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Barry Cowan:

But do you accept the general point that I am suggesting to you that in fact that show of strength last night, be it 10,000 or 15,000 men in para-military uniform, men who were determined to do your bidding, which is what you said last night, does in fact represent a private army and private armies have been banned in the U.K. since the beginning of the 19th century so therefore it was against the law?

Ian Paisley:

Well, if Lord Carson's UVF force was against the law, then if you want to interpret that way, then what happened last night was against the law. But in my opinion, and I have had very good advice on it, no law was broken and it was not our intention to break the law and I don't think we did break the laws. I must be very firm on that. As far as I am concerned there was no-one there broke the law and you would need to define what para-military uniform is and of course if people want to mask their faces because they come from areas where the IRA is operating and murdering their fellow Protestants I am not going to say to them don't mask your faces. I prefer men to be open but I know the situation I am in and it's alright for people sitting at home who are not going to come into any danger to say things but remember every man who walked last night put his life on the line.

Barry Cowan:

Well, let's pursue this question of the law for the moment because you said last night when you were questioned and it may have been in the heat of the moment so if you want to retract it now feel free to do so. You say when these people are deployed in the Border - these 10,000 to 20,000 men, and if they come across an IRA man they will kill that IRA man. Now that surely by any standards is breaking the law.

Ian Paisley:

Yes, but I am afraid you didn't get the context. I said if these people were defending and giving confidence to a Protestant home and the IRA man came to attack that home it would be the duty of these men either to capture the IRA man or to kill him. It was in that context. I did not say that they would be judge and jury for I am totally opposed to that. It is only when an IRA man comes to attack people that you know he is a terrorist and you have got to deal with it.

Barry Cowan:

But even if you have a legally held weapon, as I understand it in the law in Northern Ireland, you can have it for agricultural and pest control purposes, you can have it for sporting purposes or for personal protection. A member of your force, your Third Force, is not entitled surely to use that weapon against someone else unless he is being directly threatened.

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Ian Paisley: Well, he is. He is entitled to use that weapon to defend himself under common law. I am entitled under common law to use whatever force is needed to protect my person and my property.....

Barry Cowan: But you are ^{not} entitled to use it to defend other people surely?

Ian Paisley: Oh, yes. If you are there and other people are being attacked you are entitled to come to their aid. In fact that's what the common law is, that I can come to a man's aid who is under attack and I can use what force it is necessary to keep that person from being hurt or mortally injured. Let me say this, in these circumstances.... Let me make it absolutely clear in these circumstances that if I was in a house and had not a gun certificate and that house was being attacked and there was a gun available I would use that gun. Let me spell it out absolutely clear. We are not standing on niceties. People's lives are being attacked. Men and women are being murdered and in those circumstances I personally would have no compunction to let the weapon that I had no authority to use, to use it to repel people who are trying to murder either myself or any other person in that house. Now if the law is going to come in afterwards and take us to court and imprison us well the law can do that.....No I would be prepared to go to prison if I had saved a person's life by doing what was technically an illegal act.

Barry Cowan: Can we talk for a moment about the operations of the Third Force? Are you in fact the Commander in Chief of it?

Ian Paisley: No.

Barry Cowan: Then who is the Commander in Chief of the Third Force?

Ian Paisley: That is the business of the Third Force.

Barry Cowan: Do you politically direct the Third Force? You called them on to the streets last night. They presumably turn to you for direction

Ian Paisley: I have the same relationship to the Third Force as Carson had to the UVF. I give them political leadership. We have aims and objectives to attain. We want to have security for those who have been left defenceless by the British Government. We are going into a united Ireland. We will resist that to the death and we want a devolved parliament and government for our people.

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Barry Cowan:

You said very clearly that you would be prepared to take up a gun to defend a Protestant home if you happened to be in that Protestant home. Aren't you then backing down from your responsibilities if you are not prepared to take over as Commander in Chief of the Force that you formed and the person to whom the members of that Force turn to for guidance?

Ian Paisley:

No. I have the same relationship to that Force as Lord Carson had. The UVF had its own Commander in Chief. I am not a military man. I don't have the experience and that is not my objective and that is quite clear and everybody knows that I am not backing down. If comes to and I have to defend my person and defend my wife and family or defend my neighbour or if I was wanted on the Border to defend then I would be there with them doing the job. But I am not responsible for the individual strategy operation of the Force. That's a matter for local commanders - the same way as the B-Specials was a matter for the local commander.

Barry Cowan:

But is that argument sustainable because after all two members of your own Church, the Rev. William Mc and the Rev. Ivan Foster, are already identified as in the command structure of this Third Force? - ?

Ian Paisley:

I am absolutely identified with the Third Force and I am the originator of the Third Force but I am sustaining the same relationship as Lord Carson had to the UVF and that is a sound relationship. We have learned from history. History is being repeated and we are going to learn the lessons of history and especially history that was so successful for the Ulster people.

Barry Cowan:

But history that was geared to something different from the situation today, surely?

Ian Paisley:

It is not really because the conspiracy which had to be defeated in Carson's day was a conspiracy of the Westminster parliament and government and that is the same today. The conspiracy we are facing is a conspiracy of the Westminster parliament and government. The UVF was not directed against the Roman Catholic populace. Neither is the Third Force. The Roman Catholic populace have nothing to fear. What have they to fear from a force that is protecting their Protestant neighbours. Surely they don't want their Protestant neighbours to be slaughtered?

Barry Cowan:

With the greatest of respect if I, who happened to be driving my car from, let's say, Caledon to Tynan or Tullyhana to Crossmaglen or where ever on the Border and I ran across a patrol of civilians with arms stopping traffic I for one would not want to stop - would not be inclined to stop and therefore presumably if your force is to operate on the

orders and instructions you are giving they would open fire on me.

Ian Paisley: Surely the IRA are doing the very same thing.....

Barry Cowan: But why should you do their work for them?

Ian Paisley: The IRA are doing the same thing and there is no hullabaloo from you or anybody else. In this city on Saturday the IRA set up a road-block at Etna Drive at 5.40 in the evening. Men armed, there were four rifles present, and people were stopped. They reported it to the police and the police got leave and I hope that people ... got leave at 8 o'clock to move into the area.

Barry Cowan: But one wrong doesn't justify another surely?

Ian Paisley: No, no. I am not saying that. But what I am simply saying is you say you wouldn't be happy in stopping. Well it might be in that area you are running into an IRA road-block and I am sure you are not so foolish as not to stop. If you knew it was an IRA road-block you would be stopping.

Barry Cowan: I think you would accept, and I think it is now generally accepted both by the British Army and the British Government, that in fact the IRA is one of the most efficient killing machines in Europe and has been for a number of years. Now you would seem to be intent on deploying 10,000 amateurs into that area. What possible hope, with the sophistication that the IRA have, do you have of in any way competing and exterminating them, which presumably is what you are about.

Ian Paisley: Well, let me put this on the line to you. This is a defensive organisation. It is to defend the defenceless, to give comfort to those who are in isolation, those that never see a member of the security forces, those that live in areas where many of their areas are no-stay areas for the security forces and some of these homes when the people have rung the security forces the security forces have told them we cannot go to you because we probably would be ambushed. These people lie with their shotguns at their bedsides. They barricade their doors. They do their work under constant and continual and desperate fear. These people must have the assurance that there people who are prepared to sacrifice to give them the confidence that they need.

Barry Cowan: So are you saying that it's a defensive force and on no occasion will you ever go on the offensive. Now what I am thinking of here, for example, is you would never see a situation in which your Third Force might possibly pursue a terrorist across the Border into the Republic?

Ian Paisley:

Well, I cannot say that. If the Council of Ireland continues and if the British Government are going to force us as they tried to force us before in 1912 down the united Ireland road and it seems likely that that could happen then of course it would also have an aggressive role.

Barry Cowan:

So the force is not just for the defence of Protestants under threat. It is for the defence of Protestantism. It is therefore a sectarian force.

Ian Paisley:

It is for the defence of our constitutional position. It is the same as the UVF, Carson's UVF. It's modelled on the same thing. So everything that the UVF said they were prepared to do, the Third Force would be prepared to...

Barry Cowan:

So it is a private army prepared to be directed by your political dictates, because that's your political will. You are prepared to use that force to achieve that political will.

Ian Paisley:

I am saying that when the British Government rejects the ballot box, when the Southern Government encourages them and exhorts them and says this is the way you must go for a solution, when the Prime Minister of the Republic insults every Protestant by saying they are no better than the IRA - these Unionists who will not go with these Summit talks - then I say to the Prime Minister of your country and to the Prime Minister that was the Prime Minister of that country and to the whole Dail and the people of the South of Ireland - the Protestant people of Ulster will not be pushed into a united Ireland. The ballot box must rule. If you don't accept the ballot box and you are going to over-rule it by armed force, we will resist you to the death.....

Barry Cowan:

And that resistance is via the Third Force that you have set up?

Ian Paisley:

That resistance will not only be via the Third Force but it will be via every able-bodied Protestant in Northern Ireland. There will be no united Ireland. You can't get it by the ballot box and you know it and you think you will get it by the IRA bomb and the bullet and by your diplomacy and the treachery of the British Prime Minister. Well, it's simply not on. Let the people of the 26 counties sit up and take notice, that it's not on and will not be on.

Barry Cowan:

Let's pursue this question of treachery because on two occasions, once inside the House of Commons and once again outside the House of Commons, you called Mrs Thatcher a traitor and a liar.....

Mr Paisley:

That's right.

- Barry Cowan: One is to presume from that that your view is that she is set on a course that will take Northern Ireland out of the U.K.
- Ian Paisley: Yes.
- Barry Cowan: So presumably the action that you have taken since that have been preparing for some kind of eventuality of that kind. Now are we talking about Ian Paisley preparing for an independent Northern Ireland of which you will be Prime Minister?
- Ian Paisley: No, not at all. No. 1, no-one can be the leader of this country who is not elected. I am a democrat. I believe in the ballot box and that's why I have submitted myself to the ballot box and if the ballot box rejects me, then I am rejected. If the ballot box accepts me, I am accepted. Now the situation in Northern Ireland is this - that even - and call them what they like, they call themselves moderate Unionists, people think I am an extreme Unionist. I am a Carson Unionist, a traditional Unionist, I hold the principles of Carson. Some people quote him but they don't even know the principles that he held. Well, moderate Unionists believe the very same. They believe that Mrs Thatcher now has no intention of protecting Unionists. That's the view held even by the Official Unionist party. That was the heart of their proclamation that they made yesterday. So Unionists, all Unionists, believe that Mrs Thatcher has committed an act of treachery and in the House of Commons today she had an opportunity, put to her by a Tory member, who said Mrs. Thatcher, will you tell the people of Northern Ireland that as far as you are concerned you want them to remain forever within the United Kingdom' and she wouldn't
- Barry Cowan: But if you accept that, if that's within the nature of your political philosophy and political foresight at the moment, that some day Mrs Thatcher is going to say to you 'Ian Paisley and Protestants of Northern Ireland, goodbye, we don't want you'. That's the end of the union because a union has to have two ends.
- Ian Paisley: Well, the trouble with Mrs Thatcher is that she is not able to do that for the simple reason that the British Government did this before and actually put through an Act of Parliament to do it and were foiled and I think that we will foil Mrs Thatcher.
- Barry Cowan: How?

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Ian Paisley:

I think that in the coming days you will see how. We have only had the start of our protest. If she is not going to heed them we have many, many other pieces of equipment in our armoury.....

Barry Cowan:

But if she doesn't heed any of those arguments and she is the Iron Lady. She is the lady who is not fraternising both in terms of monetary and a number of other

Ian Paisley:

That is absolutely untrue, because she said she wasn't fraternising and as far as Northern Ireland was concerned it was a matter for the people of Northern Ireland, her Government and parliament and then she turns and she can turn again and I wouldn't call her an Iron Lady. I would call her a tinfoil cutting. I don't think she is an Iron Lady at all. I think that she has been overcome by madness and she is pursuing a course of madness on the economy and even the people that are shouting about the economy say if she hasn't got it right Britain is doomed forever.

Barry Cowan:

Well besides from the economy, we are not quite talking about that but if Mrs Thatcher decides to end the union and it is within her power and the power of the British parliament so to do what is your fall-back position?

Ian Paisley:

Well, I am very glad that you say to me she decides to end the union because we will not be deciding to end the union. We are fighting for the maintenance of the.....

Barry Cowan:

But that's what I asked you. I said if she ends the union where do you go from there?

Ian Paisley:

Let me finish. Please let me finish. I am glad you put it in that way so that there will be no misunderstanding. We want to maintain the union and are dedicated for its maintenance. If she says 'the union is finished. I am putting you into a united Ireland. I have the whole organisation set up and into a united Ireland you are going' then I am saying we will not be in that united Ireland and we would have no other option but to go independent.....

Barry Cowan:

Would you see yourself as the leader or Prime Minister of an independent Northern Ireland?

Ian Paisley:

The only person that can lead such an independent Ulster if it came about and it wouldn't be with my will or my blessing - I am opposed to it and always have and so is my party. I have no skeletons in the cupboard like other

Unionists parties and other Unionists leaders. On that matter I am above suspect. Let me say to you tonight, Barry, in this studio that if the union is broken it will be broken by Westminster and not by the Unionists of Northern Ireland. If there going to be a Prime Minister of such a state, brought about by the treachery of Mrs Thatcher, the Prime Minister would be decided by X's or 1's, I don't know which.

Barry Cowan: Would you be a candidate?

Ian Paisley: Certainly, I would be a candidate in any election for the good of the people of Northern Ireland.....
I couldn't be a candidate because I would hope that we would have a democracy and I would be elected for a constituency and if a major party won and that party happened to be my party then I could be a candidate.

Barry Cowan: So we are not then, certainly for the time being, in this part of the island heading towards what a Unionist, an Unionist, described today as a mini Geneva, headed by a ?

Ian Paisley: Well, of course, that person has no standing the community at all. He is even a member of a political party. He never submitted himself

Barry Cowan: He is Mr McCartly^{ne} ...

Ian Paisley: He never submitted himself to the electorate. I had no row with the man. He had a row with the President of the Unionist party, Sir Tony Clarke, and actually fought with him. I was attacked and I simply said I am not replying. As far as Mr McCartney is concerned he is prepared to desecrate the sanctuary of the dead. That man I treat with utter contempt.

Barry Cowan: Is there, aside from that, anything that any Government in the Republic of Ireland can do to convince you that Irish unity is a good thing?

Ian Paisley: No, Irish unity is an evil thing and no Ulster Protestant will wear it, full stop.

Barry Cowan: I mean if they dance naked in the streets you will still not be interested.

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Ian Paisley:

The only way that there could be unity is for them to rejoin the United Kingdom and then if they rejoin the United Kingdom then we will all be in one United Kingdom and then there might even be an accommodation back to the 1920 Act. But they are not going to rejoin the United Kingdom and as far as I am concerned our Protestant people are saying there is going to be no united Ireland and I do wish that the politicians of the South instead of being hypocritical because when they talk to people - I don't talk to them - but when they talk to people, people come to me and say 'oh, it will be a long, long time, maybe 100 years and couldn't we all live together'. They don't tell their people that. They are telling our people that maybe in 10 years it will happen. Mr Hume said its nearer than people imagine. Well, I want to tell him and I want to tell the southern Republic leaders its not on. Now if you want to kill us all and drive us into the North Atlantic then you will have a united Ireland.

Barry Cowan:

In your vision of the future of these 6 counties in the north-east of Ireland, in that vision that totally denies any possibility ever of a united Ireland, that is looking towards potential independence.....

(interrupting each other)

Ian Paisley:

No, we are not. We are going to defend the union.....

Barry Cowan:

In your defence of the union by whatever means what do you see as the future for the minority community here?

Ian Paisley:

I think the minority community have a very good future here and I make more of the minority community than perhaps any other politician and I work for them as they themselves have given me credit for so doing. And I would say to them, I would say to my Roman Catholic fellow countrymen, I have no evil intent towards you. I want you to have jobs. I want you to have houses. I want you to have your educational system as you have chosen. That is your business and you can have it but I want you to know that as long as the Protestants are in the majority there is going to be no change in the constitution. I would like on this island for the two parts of this island to develop along the way that they have chosen by the ballot box. I like to see good neighbourliness between the two but I absolutely say to the South of Ireland you can't be a good neighbour until you show neighbourliness and there can be no normality between North and South until we have extradition, until the obnoxious clauses of the constitution are read out *weel?* and until the leaders of the South of Ireland say 'look let's give up these plans for a united Ireland and let's let the North of Ireland go its own way in peace.

Brian Cowan:

Ian Paisley, thank you.