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Interview with Mr. James Molyneux on "Inside Politics"  
Radio Ulster, Saturday 12 September, 1992

Interviewer Was the decision to issue this statement yesterday a sign that your Party is uneasy at the way the row over Articles 2 and 3 is developing?

Mr. Molyneux We are uneasy about the general conduct of the talks in all Strands. I myself of course am bound by undertakings in regard to confidentiality but you know that the general public are beginning to feel that the whole process is somehow going off the rails. They are wondering why we have spent some four months now in the political philosophy debates on abstract topics like aspirations, perceptions, identities and allegiances and I have to say that we ourselves are beginning to wonder why we are wasting time on these circular discussions and not delivering something of substance because inside or outside Stormont people see no evidence of any real achievement in firm terms and I think that the time has come when collectively without apportioning blame collectively we have to mend our ways and start delivering something.

Interviewer Are these talks going off the rails?

Mr. Molyneux In many respects they are because my attitude always was that it was a great mistake to take the five-week holiday break. Various things happened in the interval, pressures increased in various ways, the whole backdrop internationally all changed. For example away back five months ago we were told to model ourselves on the civilised relationships which had been built up within the former warring nations of Europe and now we have the Germans enthusiastically burning out foreign workers in their own territory and all of those things. So I think there has got to be a real re-think even as far as the background is concerned.

Interviewer Right, in your view of how the future of Northern Ireland might be structured how important is the removal of the territorial claim?

Mr. Molyneux Well, its all important because the Secretary of State I think himself would confirm that on the 11th of June he was on the point of admitting that the talks were deadlocked and that possibly the shutters would come down. On the morning of the 12th of June the four Party Leaders cooperated in a compromise which enabled Strand Two and Strand Three to commence forthwith and that formula was agreed and approved afterwards, later that day, by the two Governments. Now the effect of that was that the two sovereign Governments were given three months, ending exactly on today Saturday just as we talk, to discuss and decide that breach of international law be terminated, namely the breach being the territorial claim. Now to do this they didn't require to find a solution, produce a form of words or engage in negotiations. It only required that the decision to terminate the breach of international law, in conflict with the Treaty of Rome and the breach of what is now standard United Nations practice, should be taken forthwith without any argument.

Interviewer When you say it should be taken, what should be done? What did you expect to happen by today?

Mr. Molyneux A parallel with Maastricht. The Irish Government should give an undertaking as they did at Maastricht to adhere to what was agreed by the Twelve nations. That's what they did at Maastricht, they actually signed a treaty to that effect, subject to ratification by their own electorate as did all the other nations. In the UK situation it was vote in Parliament, in Denmark it was a referendum, in the Irish Republic it was a referendum, now we are going to have a referendum in France so there is no problem in their initialling a statement or signing a statement to the effect

that they, the Irish Government on behalf of the Irish State which they represent is going to withdraw Articles 2 and 3 subject, of course, to a satisfactory conclusion of the talks as a whole.

Interviewer And what do you think of the failure to do that. I mean you say that you expected the Governments to sort this out by today?

Mr. Molyneaux I would have hoped that yesterday realising that they had been granted, courtesy of us, I might put it that way, because if we hadn't agreed to allow them to go into Strand Three, well then they would have been in serious difficulty. The talks in fact would have ended up on the 12th June. The fact that we have facilitated them means that there is a moral obligation on them, first of all on Her Majesty's Government to apply pressure to the Irish Government and say now look here you cannot in the face of all that is happening in the international world go on being the only nation sustaining a claim against our territory and against anybody else's territory and its up to the Irish Government then to recognise that fact of life, take that simple decision subject to the provision that it would have to be ratified by its own electorate. That's fair and reasonable.

Interviewer But they haven't done that, why are you still at the talks? The DUP have left until they at least discuss it.

Mr. Molyneaux Well, we are still at the talks because we are going to come on to that hopefully by the end of this week or early next week so given that we have said in the statement yesterday invested a fair bit of political and financial capital in this campaign against the territorial claim, it might not be generally known that the McGimpsey/Maginnis operation in the Supreme Court in Dublin cost us somewhere in the region of £80,000. That's not something which we are going to cast away lightly.

Interviewer Mr. Molyneaux, if you get to the point of discussing this claim and the Irish Government does not say that they will give an undertaking subject to final agreement to hold a referendum, can you realistically stay there?

Mr. Molyneaux We can stay there for a limited length of time but we will have to be making it clear that if there is a point blank refusal of the Irish Government to honour what after all was an undertaking made in 1985 when the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed, before it was signed, that if they do not give that clear undertaking then they will automatically have brought the talks to an end themselves.

Interviewer If that doesn't happen next week, will you be talking in Dublin on Monday week?

Mr. Molyneaux It's not so likely that they are going to get to the conclusion of that particular part of the Strand Two discussions and then there is Strand Three still to come and I understand there is going to be another one in a fortnight, but I am not dodging the question that if it becomes clear in a few weeks time that the Irish Government has no intention of removing its illegal claim to Northern Ireland then we cannot be expected and we simply will not continue with discussions. They will have given the clear signal that the shutters have come down, not us.

Interviewer So there is a possibility that you will be pulling out of these talks?

Mr. Molyneaux We will be indicating that it would be a sheer waste of everybody's time to pursue them if the Irish Government is going to retain its claim over part of the territory which the talks have been designed to design a new type or new form of Government and administration in Northern Ireland, yes.



Interviewer Let me just get this right, if Dublin doesn't, when this subject comes up, give that commitment you cannot stay at the table?

Mr. Molyneux We cannot realistically stay at the table because we would simply be conning everybody because we would know by that time, we would know then that even when we get to the end of the talks, because of the understanding that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, that the Irish Government says in advance that they are not going to agree to our modest request and the request which I hope is being made by the British Government, then it would be a con job to continue spinning out talks when we know perfectly well that nothing is going to come of them in the end, yes.

Interviewer Mr. Molyneux, is there a split coming between yourself and Ian Paisley? I mean since 1985 there has been a pact between the two parties, since the Brooke process began the DUP and you have adopted a joint approach, indeed on numerous occasions I have interviewed both you and Dr. Paisley together and yet last night he said that all the other parties in these talks caved into Dublin and obviously he is talking about your party. Are we witnessing the beginnings of a split?

Mr. Molyneux I don't think so because our two parties remain absolutely united on principles, but being two separate parties we are entitled to employ different tactics and that's precisely what is happening at the moment. As party leaders the two of us remain on good terms and retain the practice of daily contact. In regard to the point which you say that Ian had made about all the parties caving into Dublin, as I understand it, the entire Committee on that occasion invited the Chairman Sir Ninian Stephen to draw up an agenda. Our team felt themselves honour-bound to accept his decision and though they did express reservations but anyway I think that

hiccough will be overcome within about a week and I have to say that if anyone is fearful of our caving in that fear will be dispelled in coming weeks as our team faces down the Irish Government even in its own capital.

Interviewer Are you in these talks being supported in your demands that the Union is maintained, are you being supported in that by the British Government?

Mr. Molyneux There is a slight difference between the British Government and the Northern Ireland Office. The Northern Ireland Office tends to cling to the neutral position it occupied in Strand One and I have said the Northern Ireland Office, as distinct from the Government, because that machine, the Northern Ireland Office, has been basically anti-Unionist from its formation in 1973 when it was the off-spring of the Foreign Office which as Norman Tebbit said, looks after the interests of foreigners as a priority. Not surprisingly therefore this offshoot, its child, is not particularly friendly to Unionists.

Interviewer I asked the question because there are rumours of a crisis caused by the Northern Ireland Office circulating a document last Wednesday which you regarded as a betrayal of your Strand One team and a repudiation of its achievements in all the previous discussions in Strand One. How serious is that development?

Mr. Molyneux Well, beyond admitting that it is very serious indeed, the confidentiality rule prevents me from making any further comment.

Interviewer But you did, did you not at least can you tell me have a blazing row with Northern Ireland Office Ministers?

Mr. Molyneaux Well, I can only say that I have a clear duty to protect my colleagues in all three teams and that duty I have and will continue to discharge to the full.

Interviewer My understanding is that there is a document in circulation which suggests a North/South committee, its a suggestion by the British Government which would give some kind of executive responsibility or even joint authority by others to a North/South institution or committee?

Mr. Molyneaux Well, as I have said I would find it very difficult to comment further beyond what I have said but I think you know and the whole Province knows what our position is in regard to proposals of joint authority.

Interviewer Are you unhappy with the way these talks are going particularly regarding the involvement of the Government?

Mr. Molyneaux I would like to see Her Majesty's Government being more robust and facing up to the reality that they are not neutrals and are not required to be neutrals as they were in Strand One. That was understandable because they were talking about a form of government in which they themselves would be a partner as the sovereign Government but in Strands Two and Three I say that Her Majesty's Government have a duty to look after those who, the greater number of people in this Province, Protestant and Roman Catholic, who simply want to remain citizens of the United Kingdom.

Interviewer Mr. Molyneaux there we must leave it. Thank you very much indeed for joining us today.