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Interviews with Rev. Ian Paisley, Mr. John Hume and
Mr. Gerry Adams on "Newsbreak", Radio Ulster,
Friday 20 March 1992

(NOTE: Parts of the discussion between Messrs. Hume and Adame were inaudible as both talked across one another. Where this occurred, it is indicated on the text.)

Interviewer:

Why is there still a need for the parties to challenge each other?

Rev. Ian Paisley:

Of course, we all know what happened to Northern Ireland when the Official Unionists were the governing party and we were sold out because there wasn't an Ulster Democratic Unionist Party. If there had have been two wings to the Unionist family at that time they wouldn't have been sold out. The second thing is that we have had various other emphases and everybody knows that as far as Dublin is concerned and as far as a United Ireland is concerned that the strength of the Democratic Unionist Party is unquestioned. Whereas we have members of the official Unionist Party like Dr. McGimpsey who talks about he wouldn't worry if they gave away part of Northern Ireland and like others so there is a Constitutional issue. But of the main issue of the Anglo-Irish Agreement will get rid of it we are absolutely at one.

Interviewer:

Why are you only standing in seven constituencies?

Rev. Ian Paisley:

We are standing in seven constituencies for the simple reason we have a pact with the Unionist party that we are not going to contest constituencies whereby contesting them we would hand them over to Ulster's traditional enemies and they have a pact with us of on that and, of course, we are not fighting Mr. Molyneaux because we have been in joint leadership with

him and in fact it was thought that the Unionist party would not be fighting us in North Antrim but the North Antrim Unionists felt they wanted to fight me. I have no objections to that.

Interviewer:

But shouldn't you give DUP voters in places like East Londonderry and Lagan Valley a choice? You are not giving them a choice are you?

Rev. Ian Paisley:

Let me tell you, you might as well say that the Unionist party should give the people of North Down a choice and should give the people of East Belfast a choice. These are matters between the parties not to be dictated by you saying you must give everybody a choice

Interviewer:

But doesn't the pact appear to be in tatters if they are standing against you in North Antrim?

Rev. Ian Paisley:

Of course not, because they know they are going to be hammered into the wall.

Interviewer:

If there is a hung Parliament, are your demands different from the Ulster Unionists, do you think in negotiations

Rev. Ian Paisley:

Well let us have the hung Parliament first and then let Jim Molyneaux and myself and our teams get around the table and we will produce our shopping basket.

Interviewer:

So you would do it together?

Rev. Ian Paisley:

Oh yes, it has to be done together because we are in a pact that neither of us will negotiate on our own.

Interviewer:

Well, how subtle do you think the differences might be between yours and the Ulster Unionists?

Rev. Ian Paisley:

Well, I don;t think that on the issue of the Anglo-Irish Agreement there is any difference between us

Interviewer:

... and that would be your number one priority ...?

Rev. Ian Paisley:

As long as Jim Molyneux is leading them.

Interviewer:

Would you not accept John Hume's suggestions that if the IRA laid down its arms it would effectively demilitarise the whole situation?

Mr. Gerry Adams:

The reality is, and he knows this as well as anyone else, that the IRA or any other group aren't going to lay down their arms until the political conditions which cause the conflict are ended. We can do this debate in two ways. John can rehearse his argument and I can rehearse my argument or we can use the debate to try and tease out is there a democratic resolution. We have been told now that the violence, the conflict in this society is what is creating the society. We used to be told, and this remains our consistent position, that it is the society which has caused the conflict. What sort of a society, an apartheid State, a partitioned State, a State where democracy is denied people in all realms of our lives. What is the centrality of the British Government in this whole position. Can they not be asked? Can they not be appealed to? Can they not be told by the SDLP, by anyone who has an interest in bringing about peace to get the Government of Ireland ^A Act up on the table, to move from the current position of upholding partition into a new position of allowing the Irish people to resolve democratically the conflict which has damaged all of us, every single one of us, and Republicans are no strangers to tragedy.

Interviewer:

At the same time you say that the IRA has the right to exercise

Mr. Gerry Adams:

Well, that is our opinion, I mean that is our opinion, you see. John has the position, I think, that the RUC are a legitimate police force. I have a position. I don't advocate that people should join the IRA. I don't advocate that people

should be involved in violence. I accept the reality. Now what I want to see, I can put it no better than this, is an end to the IRA, an end to the RUC and the UDR, an end to Loyalist terror squads, an end to British troops. That is what I want to see, and us shouting slogans at each other will not bring

Mr. John Hume:

Well, I am not shouting slogans. Nobody denies that we have serious political problems. I am not denying that at all. What I am talking to you about is a method of solving them and what I am saying is that anybody who uses armed struggle, as you call it, or violence as other people call it, in this society are only making the problem worse because one I am not lecturing you but could I reply conversation inaudible

One of the major elements in our problem is that we are deeply divided people and there is no doubt in anybody's mind who goes out onto those streets that the violence is deepening that division and is increasing the tensions in this society. Now, I agree that we have to seek a democratic solution and I have been working on that and we have made progress in that direction in the sense that for the first time ever, ever, the two Governments and the two Parliaments, the British and Irish parliament, and the Unionists and ourselves have all agreed, for the first time ever, that everything is on the table affecting all of the relationships which go to the heart of those problems. Everything is the word I am using Gerry. Everything is on the table. That is an acceptance that nothing has worked up until now. We all know that or we wouldn't be working to get something new and that is major progress in itself. It is not going to be easy moving on from there. We know the problems but it will be the atmosphere would be an awful lot easier for real dialogue and real agreement if there was no violence

Interviewer:

..... that in fact according to the Irish Government and apparently according to Mr. Brooke includes what you just said, the Government of Ireland Act.

Mr. Gerry Adams:

Well, first of all, let us get into the centrality. John says we are divided. Of course, we are divided. This State was founded upon division. We are divided in where we live. Discrimination divides us between those who work and those who don't work. We are divided even in political discussion. There is no real political talk, what John was involved in up in Stormont was a charade. (Dialogue inaudible)
What I am arguing for is this, this is what I am arguing for. I am arguing that there is a conflict. There is no point in us trying to wish it away. It has been there for twenty five years and it has withstood every effort to remove it except for one of facing the central issue, the central issue of the British Government's involvement in our country. The partition of our country, the denial of democratic rights arising from it now. That is unless in an active way, a very active way, European assistance, UN assistance, let us ask Dublin, let us ask London, to come together to agree on how they can bring about unity in consultation with everyone in the country and to bring a stable and peaceful Ireland, because it has been twenty five years. Now, we could be sitting here in five years and John could rehearse the same argument in every election he goes in to, he claims everything that has happened.....

Interviewer:

John, your argument.

Mr. John Bums:

Well, of course, nobody would deny that the problems that we face are difficult problems but we have been the party that has never, never campaigned on slogans or instant solutions.

Mr. Gerry Adams:

Excuse me, that is not true- conversation inaudible -
 that the Hillsborough Treaty was the beginning of the
 process, that this was going to burst the orange boil, that a
 new pragmatic leadership - conversation inaudible ... -
 excuse me, that the Irish language would have a new status
 that the UDR was going to be disbanded, that the Diplock
 Courts were going to be reformed. Tell the people out in the
 streets what you are on about.

Mr. John Hume:

Well, first of all there is not a single slogan in what you
 have said. What there is there are commitments that we make
 for the policy of the - conversation inaudible - no, no
 sorry first of all, the British and Irish Governments
 conversation inaudible.

Mr. Gerry Adams:

Let us find out what we agree upon. Can we agree that all
 past efforts have failed?

Mr. John Hume:

That is self evident.

Mr. Gerry Adams:

Well, let us then move on.
 The violence isn't going to go away, no more than the other
 issues are going to go away unless they are tackled -
 inaudible

Mr. John Hume:

We all know the problems that this society face. The heart of
 the problem is that we are a deeply divided people. That deep
 division comes from our history in very many ways. The answer
 sorry hold on, let me talk for a minute

In terms of the British Governments position in all of this.
 The British Governments position has in fact changed everybody

knows that because twenty years ago they wouldn't have sat down with the Irish Government, in fact, before Sunningdale Ted Heath told Jack Lynch to get lost. The British and Irish Governments now accept, the British and Irish Parliaments now accept, the Unionists now accept, we now accept that everything is on the table for discussion that affects all of the relationships that go to the heart of this problem. The British Government has declared that Irish unity is a matter for those Irish people who want it, persuading those who don't, and if they do, they can have it. The British Government has declared that it is no longer here as it used to be in the past, defending their interest you referred to Europe a minute ago I believe that the unity of Europe has changed everything inaudible. Nineteenth century nationalism created imperialism and two World Wars..... inaudible.

Mr. Gerry Adams:

Let us look forward

Mr. John Hume:

What we now have is a Europe in which Britain and Ireland are pooling their sovereignty along with all the other sorry, can I finish?

Mr. Gerry Adams:

the two Governments, Irish and British, to get an agreement on how to move into a democratic resolution and let us ask them to do that, let us ask the UN to do that and let us use all of those processes. You cannot condemn violence when there is no alternative to violence.

Mr. John Hume:

It is nonsense to suggest that no alternative to violence is there. First of all, you know, as I have already said, I am the one person who has talked consistently about the European ^{rel} contacts changing the whole ball game and it has changed the

ball game over the sovereignty argument which is at the heart of the historic argument between Britain and Ireland but the legacy of the past is still there and that legacy is a deeply divided people and I believe what we must get the two Governments to do is to commit the resources to create the atmosphere in which that healing that division can be healed by agreement and that we use the European model in doing so because the European model in ending conflict which was far worse than ours was to respect difference, not to fight about it.

Mr. Gerry Adams

The British Government is not a thing of the past. The British Government involvement in our country is a thing of the present. We want to make sure that our future is without that and that all of our people, catholics and protestants, all of us can live together in unity and stability and without violence of any sort.

Mr. John Hume:

And the peaceful way to solve it is to get the British and Irish Governments to work together and not to work apart.

Mr. Gerry Adams:

And the peaceful way to solve it is to put those issues very, very clearly on the agenda at Downing Street, at Stormont, in front of Mr. Paisley, Mr. Molyneaux, and everyone else, not just here in the mouth of an election.

Mr. John Hume:

And create a better atmosphere by ending violence.