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AN RÚNAÍOCHT ANGLA-ÉIREANNACH
BÉAL FEIRSTE

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT
BELFAST

FAX

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The following preliminary reaction was given by Sinn Fein representative, Mitchell McLoughlan, on PM Ulster, BBC Radio Ulster.

Interview with Mr. Michell McLoughlan, Sinn Fein
BBC Radio Ulster, 15 December 1993

Presenter: Sinn Fein has responded to the joint Declaration. The Party's response cast against the background of a British/Irish belief that a framework for peace has been created was given by Mitchell McLoughlan, Sinn Fein's Northern Chairman. He spoke just a short time ago to our Security correspondent Brian Rowen because of Government restrictions Mr. McLoughlan's words are spoken by an actor.

Mr. McLoughlan: Well obviously your position is a matter of record. We have already said that we would study very, very carefully any alternative that came as a result of the discussions between the two Governments and we intend to do that. First impressions are that I am disappointed. I think that the document obviously has been prepared over an extended period by the Government so it will require minute discussion and examination. Our party will do that but already in talking to people there is a sense within the Nationalist community of letdown and disappointment.

Presenter: Do you think there is enough in it for the IRA to call off their campaign.

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Mr. McLoughlan: Well as you know we had the position that the Hume/Adams proposal and position have in fact been supported by the IRA. We will compare this document against the document we have from the Hume/Adams process and we will make that judgement in those circumstances.

Presenter: The Government is saying that three months after an end to IRA violence, Sinn Fein could be allowed into exploratory dialogue. How do you react to that ?

Mr. McLoughlan: Sinn Fein has a mandate to represent a very significant section of the community and Sinn Fein will continue to do that. We don't need the permission of the British Government and we certainly don't need the permission of anybody other than the electorate.

Presenter: What the Government is proposing would require unilateral IRA move. Now the IRA has said that's not possible. Martin McGuinness has said that's not possible so do you see any potential for the situation to be advanced by what's on offer today ?

Mr. McLoughlan: Well I can only refer you to my initial comment. We will study this document very carefully. I think we are obliged to do that but we will compare it also against the existing position that we have with Hume/Adams which has had on three occasions now support from the IRA.

Presenter: But isn't Sinn Fein in a take it or leave situation ?

Mr. McLoughlan: I think Sinn Fein will examine it in the context of its own politics. The mandate it has to represent people in Ireland and their state of programme of trying to achieve peace and the end of conflict in our society.

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Presenter: But there is no immediate prospect of an IRA ceasefire ?

Mr. McLoughlan: Well I can't speak for the IRA. But I am sure that those within the IRA and those with responsibility for the IRA will also study today's statement very careful.

Presenter: You said the Nationalist community is disappointed. What lacking ?

Mr. McLoughlan: Well, what I have indicated is that in the initial response, and bear in mind that we are talking just a matter of hours, the initial response from people in this district for example, the people who know what conflict is all about, the people who have suffered at the sharp end of that conflict what a sense of disappointment from the process that has emerged.

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