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AN RÚNAÍOCHT ANGLA-ÉIREANNACH
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ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT
BELFAST (27)

Interview with Mr. John Taylor MP and Mr. David Trimble MP
BBC 1. Wednesday, 15 December 1993

Presenter: at Westminster who's got some Northern MPs with him. With me a Conservative James Gran, Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Backbench Committee, Northern Ireland and two of the Unionists, John Taylor and David Trimble, both brandishing their own copies of the Declaration. Mr. Trimble, you first, give us the flavour of what it contains.

Mr. Trimble: The Declaration is actually a rather curious document. There are long passages in which the Taoiseach says something, passages on which the Prime Minister says something and not very much that's actually joined between them. What I like to see in the document is that there is a very clear statement on the question of the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. It is quite clear that the British Government are not going to become persuaders, they have not endorsed the legitimacy or otherwise of a United Ireland objective. What is disappointing in the document is that Albert Reynolds has not risen to the challenge and he has not in fact removed the obstacles to dialogue with the Irish Government. The statement on Articles 2 and 3 is of no value. It is so hedged-round with qualifications.

Presenter: Mr. Taylor what is it in the Declaration what bothers you ?

Mr. Taylor: Well, it's what's not in it that bothers me. Personally it is this point about Articles 2 and 3, we must remember what is the reason for the problem in the island of Ireland. It is first of all that Articles 2 and 3 which mean that the Dublin Government is under an imperative to take over

Northern Ireland. That that is what has given the encouragement to the IRA murder campaign and that is what has

been the obstacle to the kind of cooperation which we generally want to see (C) between Northern Ireland and the Republic. The Dublin Government has failed to show the imagination and courage which people hoped would come from Dublin in this document and that I think means that the obstacle which we had over the last few years is going to continue to run with us and to that extent I would not be hopeful. However, as a Unionist I am delighted that the British Government is not going to try and persuade Northern Ireland to leave the United Kingdom, that it has not accepted the legitimacy of a United Ireland and it certainly has not accepted the Dublin idea that a United Ireland would be of value to us because it certainly would not. A United Ireland would indeed devalue everyone in Northern Ireland, Catholic and Protestant, including...

Presenter: As long as that constitutional veto is in place for the people of Northern Ireland, you have no worries ?

Mr. Taylor: You always have worries in politics. Yes, we have the constitutional veto and for that we thank everyone involved and the Lord Almighty and everyone else, but nonetheless this is only the first part of an on-going process and we have got to watch it very carefully indeed.

Presenter: Mr. Trimble, what phrase in the Declaration do you object to mostly ?

Mr. Trimble: Well I think a lot of the passages which are the Taoiseach's passages, these paragraphs which are written by Mr. Reynolds which I think are absolutely wrong-headed. He does not acknowledge the British identity and the British aspiration of the greater number of the people in Northern Ireland and he hasn't come to terms once with the reality. I think there is an awful lot of smokescreen and waffle in this. We actually boil it down there is not very much but what I think may happen is an attempt will be made perhaps to draw us into talks on a false basis as if it were we were talking about arrangements solely within the island of Ireland and of course that is simply not acceptable. But what we need to do and what this document doesn't do, is it doesn't address the

British dimension, it doesn't address the democratic deficit to Northern Ireland, it doesn't address proposals for trying to get a better system of Government in Northern Ireland which is urgently needed.

Mr. Taylor: Could I just say that the document is not as bad as I had feared it might be. I am one who had expressed quite a few anxiety and concerns over the past few weeks and if I could say this as a rather outspoken Unionist and Loyalist to our people back in Northern Ireland read this document very carefully and don't jump too quickly to conclusions. There will be some people trying to misrepresent it, some people trying to scare you. *Note*

Presenter: Dr. Paisley ?

Mr. Taylor: I am not mentioning names. All I am saying is if I am concerned about it I will say so but at the moment I am saying read it carefully before you commit yourselves.