



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/95/5

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Accession Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland.
May only be reproduced with
the written permission of the
Director of the National
Archives.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW GIVEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE, SIR PATRICK MAYHEW, TO JIM DOUGAL, BBC, "INSIDE ULSTER" PROGRAMME, STORMONT CASTLE - 11 JANUARY 1993

Jim Dougal:

Secretary of State, what is your prediction. You have been talking today about the economy, so what is your prediction for the economy in Northern Ireland in 1993?

Sir Patrick:

Well, I'll tell you what my hope is. I don't think I'm in the business of making predictions, but those like the CBI who are in tune with what's happening in the shops and in the businesses, they point to the fact for example that retail sales are up over the last three months. They point to the fact that there's much greater business confidence and I point to the fact that unemployment has fallen, only slightly, but fallen in each of the last three months, so I think the prospects are better, rather than worse for 1993.

Jim Dougal:

You said, Sir Patrick, in your speech that 1993 also offers the prospect of good news in terms of inward investment. Now what do you mean by that?

Sir Patrick:

I think that IDB, the Industrial Development Board, have had a lot of success in encouraging overseas companies to come to Northern Ireland to invest. I don't want to pre-empt what may be on the stocks by something premature, but I think we shall see an increase in the numbers of jobs created by companies coming here on quite a significant scale.

Jim Dougal:

One thing of course which would help the economy greatly would be an end to violence. Now given the threats by the IRA and by Loyalist paramilitaries, isn't that an end to violence most unlikely?

Sir Patrick:

You're quite right in saying that an end to violence would do more for the economy of this part of the United Kingdom than anything else. It would do more for the people of Northern Ireland than anything else and in particular it would do more for those people whom the terrorists, the principal terrorist organisation, PIRA, pretends to work for; of course you're right. I'm not going to say that violence is going to come to an end in this coming year; what I will say is that the RUC and the Army with the full support, and unstinting support of the Government, will continue to oppose terrorism from any quarter with all the power at their command.

Jim Dougal:

Isn't there, though, an acceptance by the Government and by the security forces that there is no military solution and isn't it time therefore that other ways are found of persuading these people to stop the violence - other ways like talking to them?

Sir Patrick:

I never respond to questions about what other people may have said in different interviews and in different contexts. The Government has always made it clear that it puts the defeat of terrorism at the top of its list of priorities, and it has always gone on to say that it has policies for political advance, for economic advance and for social advance, which all make a kind of seamless robe whose purpose is to contract those areas where terrorism is still tolerated. Now all these policies are good in themselves; we all want to see a decline in unemployment; we want to see more jobs; we want to see fewer areas where there is special deprivation and that's why we have these policies such as Making Belfast Work, where money subscribed by the taxpayer is put to work to help people get into jobs where they are disproportionately unemployed. That's the kind of thing.

Jim Dougal:

Are you saying to me, though, that the IRA can be militarily?

4

sir Patrick:

I say that the policies that are needed to defeat terrorism from whatever quarter have many facets to them. First and foremost is implacable opposition to the use of violence. That requires intelligence in the military sense as well as in the ordinary intellectual sense. It needs will power and there's no lack of that; it needs resources and it needs the help of the ordinary community. That's the first thing and I emphasise that last bit because whenever there is a terrorist outrage it is always ordinary people who suffer whether their homes are lost, their bodies are maimed or their jobs are destroyed, and there is always somebody, and often more than somebody, who knows who did it. And people have increasingly to have the confidence and courage to tell the RUC. There's that. But next to it, there are those policies that I have already described that reduce the sense, if you like, of grievance in some parts of this Province which make it easier for a youngster, for example, to fall for the attraction of the paramilitaries and the money that they bribe them with, make it easier perhaps for somebody to tolerate a terrorist action when they don't support it and deep down inside themselves they are revolted by it. Now all of these make, as it were, what I think I have called a seamless robe, and the Government's policies will continue to apply all of these.

Jim Dougal:

You see, you have said that some terrorists want to stop. Now wouldn't it be more of an incentive to them if you said that once they stop you will talk to them or people who represent or support them?

sir Patrick:

I think the people of this Province are very rightly sceptical about what somebody who has been a terrorist or somebody who has supported terrorist violence for many years may say. And therefore they will of course welcome it if PIRA and if Sinn Fein say we no longer support terrorism; we no longer support violence for political purposes. They would welcome it but they will want to see that it is for real and that's why I have said that there has to be a sufficient period after

5

that to allow reasonable, sensible and sceptical people to be sure that it's for real. Then anybody can sit down, so far as the British Government is concerned, and advocate any political policy provided they do so by democratic means.

Jim Dougal:

How long would that period be?

Sir Patrick:

There is no time that I put upon it in measurement; I describe it as I have, enough time for sensible, sceptical, reasonable people to be sure that what they say is for real.

Jim Dougal:

Secretary of State, without finding a way of talking, don't you leave yourself open to the accusation of operating a policy which will simply see a continuation of violence?

Sir Patrick:

I leave myself open to accusations every day of the week when I say anything. You have only to address one particular anxiety in this sorely tried Province for a lot of other deeply anxious and sincere people to jump to the conclusion that you have sold out or you have been persuaded or whatever, taken in by that particular interest. It's my job to use my best judgment to achieve the right balance and to secure the right course in Government. Now it lies with the terrorists as to whether there is more terrorism or not. As I said this afternoon to the Rotarians, there are many within the leadership of PIRA in particular I believe, who wisely want to stop the violence, because they see that there is nothing but misery for them and for other people, for their families as well as other people. But I think that they, to some extent, feel themselves driven by their dead and by those who they describe as being behind the wire. But unless they give up violence, unless they give it up and show that that is for real, there are going to be more dead, there are going to be more people living behind the wire, and there's going to be another generation that is blighted, including the generation of their own children.

Jim Deugal:

How can you though, as Cardinal Daly suggested a few weeks ago, encourage them to give up violence?

Sir Patrick:

I think that they must have pointed out to them the futility of their present cause, the futility which the Cardinal has himself pointed out. They will achieve nothing by going on except more deaths, more lives behind the wire, more misery. Nothing, and there is no way out for them because Mr John Smith, leader of the Labour Party, when he was in this Province the other day before Christmas said no Labour Government will speak to any terrorist organisation or to any organisation which advocates terrorism or violence for political ends. so there is no way out. Now I think that does need to be spelt out and equally I think it's perfectly fair to make the point that this is a free region, in a free country, in which it is open to anybody to advocate any political objective of any kind provided that they do so in a democratic way. Now, if they're not prepared to recognise where common sense points them, then they know that the Government will support the Chief Constable and the RUC in implacable opposition and with the increasing support, it seems to me, of the ordinary people right across this community. That's what they face and I believe increasingly they know it.

Jim Deugal:

Secretary of State, when the political talks ended in November you said that you wanted the parties to build on what up until then had been achieved. So far nothing has happened. Now how do you see that potential being developed?

Sir Patrick:

Well, I don't think it's right to say nothing has happened. I believe that in this gap which has taken place between half way through November and now, I think quite a lot of informal discussions have been going on between the parties here in Northern Ireland. Of course there has been a difficulty with the Irish Government because although

a
there is caretaker Government, we know that as yet the new Government has not been informed. I believe that when we have a new Government in Dublin then the momentum will resume. I think, speaking for myself, I think it is likely to be less formal than previously and I think that it will take place in a structured way, but not in quite such a formal way. I don't think we're going to see this round table conference taking place at least all the time, I know there'll be a place for it so I'm rather confident that quite a bit has been happening privately quietly, during these last weeks, and rather more is going to be happening before too long.

Jim Dougal:

In what sense?

Sir Patrick:

In the sense of picking up where the talks finished. You will remember that when they finished in the middle of November all the participants agreed that it was necessary that there should be talks in future. The chairman of those talks, Sir Minian Stephen, said that in his view the objective was capable of being attained and nobody disagreed with that. So I think it will take quite a time but after all these problems have been around for a very long time, and nobody should feel dismayed that they have not been solved in six months.

Jim Dougal:

There will from tomorrow be a new Government in Dublin, a Labour and Fianna Fail coalition. Do you hope for more flexibility from that new Irish Government on Articles 2 and 3 of the constitution?

Sir Patrick:

There will plainly, won't there be a new look, a new Government means a new look. I wouldn't be surprised, no one can tell, but I wouldn't have been surprised to learn that the outgoing Government felt a bit inhibited by the imminent prospect of a general election; I don't know; it's not for me to say. But we can all of us be sure that a new Government will bring a new eye to bear upon an old

8

problem, and one of the matters which it was quite plain was seen right across the board to be of importance in the last talks was the question of what is seen as the territorial claim made by Articles 2 and 3 of the constitution. Now I'm sure that a fresh look will be taken at that. It's too early for me to say of course what the new Government will decide to do about it.

Jim Dougal:

You say a fresh look. Would you like to see more flexibility?

Sir Patrick:

Well I have said, as my predecessor said, that the British Government believes that Articles 2 and 3 are an unhelpful ingredient in this political scene. They are. And I think that therefore all that can be done to make something which is unhelpful turn into something which is fruitful should be done. But all of this is part of an ongoing process which we will be taking up again quite soon, and I think, much as I would like to speculate with you, I think it would be premature to do so and to coin a phrase, probably rather unhelpful.

Jim Dougal:

But finally, you would like to see some movement on the part of the new Government on Articles 2 and 3?

Sir Patrick:

I'm sure that Articles 2 and 3 will be central to this future process of talks; I'm sure it will to the extent that they are seen to be a territorial claim upon the six Counties that comprise this region of the United Kingdom in international law and in our own national law. To that extent they are plainly unhelpful and therefore I hope that they will be looked at with a fresh eye, but more than that we can't see or say at the moment.