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AN RÚNAÍOCHT ANGLA-ÉIREANNACH

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BELFAST

PAGES: 4

FROM: DEREK FEELY

Interview with SDLP leader, Mr. John Hume
on "Good Morning Ulster", Monday 26 April 1993

Interviewer: Mr. Hume, the assessment is that you have given up, it seems, on trying to persuade Sinn Fein to use its influence with the IRA to bring about a cessation of violence and instead you are engaged in bringing about a joint strategy with Sinn Fein.

Mr. Hume: That's an appalling statement by Mr. Alderdice and of course it's a bit much that he would be playing electoral politics with a matter as serious as life and death, because that is what he appears to me to be going and I would be quite happy if the members of the public would read the full statement. He seems to forget what the word "peace" means. It means an end to all violence and that's what I am talking about and if he had taken the trouble to read the statement he would see that the statement made very clear that we do not disguise the different views held by our own parties, that is Sinn Fein and ourselves. And the statement also made clear that we have told each other that we see the task of reaching agreement, agreement, not victory, agreement, on a peaceful and democratic accord for all on this island as a primary challenge and both recognise that such a new agreement is only achievable and viable if it can earn and enjoy the allegiance of the different traditions of this island by accommodating diversity.

Interviewer: You say in the statement that you accept that the Irish people as a whole have a right to national self-determination but you say that this is a view shared by a majority on the island though not by all its people. You have emphasised all along the importance of giving both identities

X [Signature]

to Mr Feely

PST
Mrs J. Finlay
Mr. J. Murray
Mr. O'Leary
Anglo-Irish Secretariat
Amb. Lawson
Amb. Wilson
Counsellors AI
Mr. M. Collins

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equality and respect. However, could I suggest to you that perceptions of the continuing dialogue with Sinn Fein and particularly this joint statement, may have the effect, unintentional as it may be, but it may have the effect of increasing the distance between those two identities which you say you are determined to reconcile.

Mr. Hume: Again you were selectively quoting there because we made it very clear that not all the people of Ireland share the views that you quoted.

Interviewer: Well that's just what I said I quoted that

.....

Mr. Hume: and it also said that self-determination in Ireland could only be brought about by agreement between the people of Ireland. That's a very important statement. So look, I don't have to apologise to anyone for what I am doing. My party and myself have been in the frontline against violence for the last 20 years and the very home in which I am sitting has been subject to severe attacks because of my anti-violence views. My commitment in these talks has been made very clear. Mr. Adams has made his clear in the statement as well. The objective is lasting peace which is an end to all violence and let me say that an end of all violence would create a much better atmosphere for real dialogue, for the real dialogue that is necessary to bring about lasting peace and I am not engaged in negotiations because as the statement also makes clear there are other points of view other than ours that have to be involved. I have been involved with Mr. Alderdice over a large number of months in trying to reach overall agreement and I am quite willing to continue in that dialogue and I admit clear time out of number that in relation to violence I will talk to anyone on either side of the divide and the worst that can happen is that I will fail, but my job as a politician is to use all peaceful means in my power to bring about peace, which is an end to all violence.

Interviewer: Can we look at another of the issues that has to be addressed in those terms and that is the question of an internal settlement. The statement says an internal settlement is not and cannot be a solution. Now that's being interpreted by Unionists to mean that there can be no internal solution brought about by an internal decision of the people of NI and they say how can they therefore be expected to trust assurances that for example the Anglo-Irish Agreement guarantees that there will be no change in the position, the constitutional status of NI.....

Mr. Hume: You are being selective in your quotation again. The quotation actually says we accept that an internal settlement is not a solution because it obviously does not deal with all the relationships at the heart of the problem. That is no different from the basis of the talks in which we have already taken part and which will take place again if the SoS has his way, because the basis of those talks are the three sets of relationships that have to be discussed and agreed if we are to achieve lasting peace. Now all parties to those talks agree to that basis and all that that statement says is that sorting out one set of relationships isn't going to provide the basis of lasting peace and that is ordinary common sense.

Interviewer: Just a final point to you, as the dialogue continues do you have any sense that contrary to what resulted from the last series of exchanges that this time there is the prospect of the dialogue producing a lasting peace ?

Mr. Hume: I am involved in it because I believe that there is a prospect of producing lasting peace. If it had been said on the air this morning that Mr. Hume and Mr. Adams had been invited by a group of clergy to discuss the prospect of lasting peace because they believe that there was now a real prospect of it, but Mr. Hume had refused, Mr. Alderdice would have been on criticising Mr. Hume as would other people. I am engaged in this dialogue in the fundamental hope that it will

bring about lasting peace and an end of all violence and I hope that it will succeed. The worst that can happen is that it will fail, but it is my responsibility as an elected politician to do everything in my power peacefully to bring an end to all violence and I have made clear at all times, and of course the fact that there is an election in the air at the present time, if I was playing electoral politics I wouldn't have got involved until after the elections, but matters of life and death are much more important than elections, and I hope as I am quite sure that the vast mass of people out there hope as well that these talks will succeed in their objective of lasting peace.

Interviewer: John Hume, thank you very much.