



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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**BPM:** Hi, Bertie

**T:** Hi Tony, how are you

**BPM:** I'm fine, I'm just in the middle of my EU Canada summit

**T:** How is that going?

**BPM:** Its going easier than the one in Brussels did

**T:** Good luck anyway for the weekend, you've an interesting weekend ahead

**BPM:** Yes, I'm afraid most of my mind is directed

**T:** Directed North

**BPM:** Places nearer to home

**T:** Ah well.

**BPM:** Now, Bertie, I mean, what I'm anxious to do here is to give myself as much flexibility, not to get myself impaled on a hook, but to try and stem what otherwise I'm afraid at the moment is a runaway train amongst the Unionist community, which is not saying we would not get a yes vote, but if we get a yes vote without at least a substantial minority of Unionists, you know what I can see is, we get over that hurdle and then just crash into the Assembly

**T:** Sure, I know that

**BPM:** Now, I really am trying to do this with the utmost care, so that I am putting all this stuff in terms of things we can take into account. I have to say something about these factors being listed in legislation. I very carefully said legislative expression rather than I am going to put them in as absolute criteria because I would resist that. But I have a feeling, frankly quite apart from the referendum, that if I didn't do that in some form, I'd have the Tories, probably with our media lined up, and some of my side hesitant, trying to do it in a far harder form for us, and I'm going to speak to Gerry Adams soon as well. But I'm just trying to get myself as much flexibility, while answering the concerns, so I can turn this around, really before the weekend and before people harden, because at the moment we've been doing intense internal polling. Its a bit of an uphill struggle in the Unionists community quite frankly.

**T:** What is it looking like, what are the latest figures.

**BPM:** Well, its looking at the moment like, marginal or evens, yes and no. But this is the rub, there is a huge percentage still undecided and the movement, I mean you know what these bloody well things are like, I mean its like a campaign. The movement has been all one way, all going towards Paisley. But before the weekend we sort of began to turn it back a bit, the Major stuff and myself went quite well I think, I mean I know

all the reasons for it, I mean please don't tell me I'm wrong sort of criticising anyway at all but the sight of all of those blokes out there on the platform, I mean it sunk the Unionists, I mean Paisley was like a guy who rediscovered his youth.

**T:** Was that reflected in the figures Tony.

**BPM:** That to them reflected in quite a sharp drop in the Yes vote and an increase in the No vote and the don't knows, you know just coming down by the same percentage. So the worry is, and this is the Focus Group evidence, as they are strong as well, and I, again between ourselves, we've been doing Focus Groups virtually every night and its actually better than an opinion poll because you get a sense of where people's sighting is. What they are really saying is this, I mean the irony of this is that you and I have put together a deal that on the institutional structures most people can accept. That's not actually the issue in this campaign at all. The issue is, its not specifically prisoners, it is have the IRA genuinely given up violence, how do we test it. And you see, when you get the IRA saying no decommissioning in a statement and then you get what people regard as terrorists up on the platform with Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness also, holding hands and shouting, its like hold on a minute, how do we tell that they have actually stopped. You and I know that the reality is that these processes happen and that Gerry Adams is managing his political protest too, and he's got his activists that he's got to bring about in time. To the average Unionist, watching it on the telly, they are thinking, go on, you know

**T:** This isn't good.

**BPM:** I'm going to have these blokes back on the streets.

**T:** Is the no vote still up at 30%, or not the no vote, the undecided?

**BPM:** Yes the overall no vote is in the early 30's at the moment, the real problem is the number of undecided. The Nationalists community is virtually solid. You see, my worry is, and Paisley's really on to this now, its McCartney in fact, and McCartney who's proved far more effective in many ways than Paisley because he's a QC sounds reasonable guy sort of thing. My worry is that you get, lets say 60% Yes, OK but say in the Unionists community only 25% are supporting it

**T:** Yes its not good enough

**BPM:** Now if you get that, what Paisley will claim, is the only way for the 75% to make their voice heard is to back him and McCartney and the other 5 Unionist MP's. What I would like to do, if it were possible is put Trimble on the front foot a little with possibly someone like Donaldson, saying well you know he's got his doubts and everything but not as bad as he thought. My anxiety is to slam the breaks on the band wagon. If I could turn it around a bit, that would be tremendous, but at the very least, halt it going in the opposite direction.

**T:** Well you're going to say that with these issues, that your going to give them pledges of expression

**BPM:** Yes, I'll say legislative expression, and what I'll say is that, you know, I'll put it all in terms of the Agreement clarifying it, rather than anything else. And then I'll say that these are the factors to take into account. Now what I'm actually putting first and foremost, actually saying first and foremost is some statement that the violence is gone and is over and done with

**T:** Yes, well I said that yesterday so I've no problem with that one.

**BPM:** Now, if we can get, and this is where I want to leave myself the room to move. But if we can get a situation where let us say, after the Referendum that there can be some statement that is reassurance in words, that allows me as we are progressing to say, ah well, they've done the first and foremost, even if they haven't yet done all the other things. You see what I mean

**T:** Yes, exactly

**BPM:** And therefore it just gives me that, I mean I have tried to give myself flexibility. If I don't say something on this, then I think that Donaldson and probably Jim Molyneux. as well, and we may as well come out against it and then I think we're really sunk.

**T:** Yes then we're into trouble, yes I accept that. The only one, I mean there is a series of things I've seen. We've had our joint press conference here this morning we had 5 party leaders well actually there's 6, we've all party agreement, but you know we had a lot of the media and a lot of your media were over here as well and I kept it fairly tough on decommissioning and they were on about the decommissioning issue back and forward but I was sticking very much to what is clause 3 in the Agreement. Then we had the one page statement, I think we sent over to you about 10 days ago which was fairly strong, you know. Your people liked it and I used that again and then again I talked about the war being over in that statement. We covered all of that. The only one, now I'm not saying that other ones wouldn't cause us problems, but I know what your at and I think its worth it. Now I don't know if its changed but the one that I saw earlier this morning about the progressive dismantling of the paramilitary capacity, I think that will jump up into all kinds of rows, because I think people think that that means that Sinn Féin are out totally and they'll never get in

**BPM:** Well, let me tell you what we'll try to do to sort of soften that. What we are going to say, is that we are going to define the structures which are actively directing violence

**T:** Define the structures actively directing violence

**BPM:** Yes, so in other words, what I want to get in is a situation to be able to say, look if they're withering in the sense that they're not being used and they're being effectively progressively abandoned, I think we'll put the word abandonment in as well, progressive abandonment, so if it were, I can argue when we come to the time, look they're not being used, they're not targeting people anymore and therefore they're not actively directing violence.

**T:** Yes, yes

**BPM:** You see what I mean, if we don't make it, that means the difficulty is, you see we've already got language on decommissioning that frankly is pretty weak for them, because it is simply saying that there has to be co-operation with the independent commission. If we don't do something about the structures, then I think we've got a problem the other way, but I am desperately trying to calibrate in a way that allows us to distinguish between, as it were, active units and the actual structure that can be used for a political party.

**T:** Sure, well what I did today, one thing I didn't want to do is come out before you've said anything or after you've said anything saying we don't agree. You see I want to avoid that, so I was saying listen this is what is in the Agreement and every time they were trying to get something or link something that was in two statements, I kept quoting the Agreement, saying well its quite clear what the Agreement means, because you see, the one good thing about the Agreement, like all other Agreements - very few have read it - and the language is quite good, so when you are actually quoting it they don't really know so, I mean and one that I find very useful, well I was using a lot with your media today, it was quite obvious that they had never really looked at it, was the reference and its a very handy one, its page 10 and, its Annex A, clause B where anyone, the wording is that its a commitment to non-violence exclusively peaceful and democratic means, now its very short but its clear, how if somebody isn't exclusively committed to peaceful means, they cannot be in there, that is their pledge to be in the executive, so it is a good one

**BPM:** Yes, yes right, that is very helpful because that allows you to say

**T:** And then you can say a whole lot on to it, how can a fella have a gun, how can he be targetting and how can he be bombing, sure he's ruled out if he does, if he's not committed to non-violence, so I've been using it very usefully, in the last few days trying to help the Unionists

**BPM:** Ok well I will do the same then Bertie

**T:** Yes, because if you've a commitment to non-violence exclusively, it means then you can't be targetting and you can't be going around with bombs in your hay barn so it allows a bit of flexibility, rather than just bluntly saying you know like progressive dismantling of paramilitary capacity, which then could be read entirely differently. Well its worth the effort, I don't know that in the course of, you know, some of our people want to do more to try to help and I think Liz O'Donnell would go back up there and try and say some useful things to the Unionist community, if that was thought helpful. I've been staying away because I think that would be helpful.

**BPM:** I think the most important thing is for people to keep saying, which is true, I mean the reality is that if the IRA don't give up violence for good, then there is a breach of the Agreement and the more people say that, the better, you know you can't pick and choose part of the this package. People have got to go for the exclusively non-violent democratic means. Our concern, actually, is that the political reality is, that the IRA

as it is, will wither rather than they all turn up at the police station on Monday morning and hand everything in and you know what I mean.

**T:** Well you see that's what won't happen, your absolutely right. And if we went too much of the way at jumping at them, it wouldn't be Adams/McGuinness we would have a problem with, it would be some guy down the ranks who's saying "we'll show these bastards" and that's what they do

**BPM:** And that's why, what I'm trying to do is to give myself sufficient flexibility and sufficient time, you see as this progresses, the truth of the matter is that people will make a judgement that isn't about whether they hand in 20 rifles at a police station, its about whether genuinely people are making this thing work.

**T:** That's exactly it. Its just that we don't get ..... on the front of this but at the same time I know its not easy, I agree that we have to try a few risks