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Now in those circumstances the man who must at the moment be feeling he's drawn the short straw, he's got Belfast on one hand and Burundi on the other, he's not likely to continue with, you know, inconclusive talks. So possibly that might be work to the advantage of talks, of course he might just come back and sort of galvanise everything into activity and try and knock heads together but post-Drumcree all bets have to be off.

**Jim Dougal**

Now I'm joined here in the studio in Belfast by the leader of the Alliance Party, Dr John Alderdice, soon to be Lord Alderdice, and from our studio in Radio Foyle by the SDLP's Mark Durkan. I'm going to ask you about criticism from the business community in a moment, but first of all, Tim Pat Coogan there doesn't seem to believe that there will in the short term be a renewed IRA ceasefire. What's your view on that, John Alderdice?

**John Alderdice**

Well of course I don't have any particular insight into the thinking of the IRA Army Council and I would have thought it unlikely that they are going to produce a real and committed cessation of all violence for the future. I think it is clear that any cessation now has to be considered very much of a tactical matter almost using peace as a weapon and I must say I wouldn't have ruled out the possibility that some time during the autumn there might be such a tactical ceasefire calculated to put pressure on everyone else to make the republican movement look internationally as though they were the ones who wanted peace and everybody else was creating the trouble, but I think one has to see any move from the IRA very much in those terms.

**Jim Dougal**

What's your view on that Mark Durkan?

**Mark Durkan**

Well I don't know that there's a pile of point in speculating whether there will be or there won't be one. All I can state is our view is that there should be, it's what's needed for the situation, if there was a ceasefire it would help restore some faith in the peace process and that in turn could help to restore some purpose to the political process. It's going to be hard to avoid all the sort of drift and drag and stand-off that we have without a further ceasefire. That doesn't negate the opportunity and the responsibility that the rest of us have within the talks, even in the absence of a ceasefire, but a ceasefire would, we believe, make a very strong contribution to the situation without sacrificing or losing anything from a republican perspective.

**Jim Dougal**

But is your party leader, Mark Durkan, still working with Mr Adams to that end?



**Mark Durkan**

The SDLP are trying to address all our efforts towards the end of maximising the opportunities that we now have and trying to ensure that everybody makes a contribution to that end and we believe that one of the main contributions that the republican movement can make is through securing an IRA ceasefire and by so doing allowing themselves to make a very direct and substantial contribution to the political process. Equally, we want to see other parties that are currently in the political process making more of a contribution there.

**Jim Dougal**

Well now you were both listening earlier to the chairman of the CBI, Bill Tosh, being very critical of politicians and their attitude to the economy. John Alderdice, what's your reaction to this criticism from the business community?

**John Alderdice**

Well, I think he said very clearly that irritation has now been replaced by downright anger and when people get angry they very often spray the anger all round everybody. I think that it has to be said that there are those politicians who maybe haven't made a big effort and there are others who have made a considerable effort, have met with various organisation, have tried to do all they can internationally and so on, but I think the basis of the anger is really that politicians have failed, in that sense all of us have failed, to reach the honourable compromise, the political agreement, that will provide stability for Northern Ireland, because that is the key base for any business development, it's the understanding that there is a stable present and a stable future, and we haven't achieved that and we all bear some responsibility and there are some who perhaps by their actions bear a particularly large responsibility for that, and there's no question that the events of the last two or three months, have been a total disaster for anybody in any business in Northern Ireland, particularly of course those in the hospitality and tourism industry but indeed for anyone who was looking for inward investment and international business co-operation. It has been a disaster and all of those who took the lead in the public street troubles and difficulties of the last two or three months, have to bear, and especially onerous responsibility for that and I suppose then all of us as politicians tend to get tarred with the one stick.

**Jim Dougal**

Mark Durkan, are politicians, as Mr Tosh said, too busy talking about parochial and party issues to do something about the economy?

**Mark Durkan**

Well I don't think that's true. As John Alderdice has indicated, there are politicians who have taken a direct and very active role in relation to economic development, in relation to promotion of this place for inward investment and indeed for economic partnership purposes and certainly we can point to that in the SDLP. I mean it was politicians who actually contributed to creating the ceasefire, it was politicians who then took various risks to help keep the ceasefire going and to try to convert that ceasefire opportunity into a phase of



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economic development and so I think Bill Tosh needs to be a bit more discriminating in the criticisms that he offers of politicians at large, because he makes points for instance in his interview, he said, for instance, about the privatisation of electricity, he said what did the parties do. I think most parties made very clear, very, very strong opposition. The issue was what did the Government do in relation to what the parties were saying, not just at the time of the electricity privatisation, but since. Indeed, the Northern Ireland Select Committee at Westminster has done a very critical report on precisely what has happened in electricity. The problem is it seems to have no impact on Government and I would have to say to Mr Tosh there are many of us who are active in politics, who wonder about why so many people in the business community seem to be so privy to so much of what goes in Government, they seem to be furnished with so many different appointments and consultations in a whole lot of public policy areas, that politicians don't get next or near.

Jim Dougal

Would you be as critical of the business community, John Alderdice, as Mark Durkan?

John Alderdice

Well, one of the things that has denuded politics of some of the best skills in the community has been the fact that many business people have stayed away from politics for a period of time, but I think it's not helpful for us to get into a situation where the politicians are slanging the business community and the business community are slanging the politicians. That's like the sort of divisions that are right across this community in every area - religious, political and so on. We have got to work together on these things. Now there is the frustration within the business community. Some of the criticisms I think maybe are a little bit ill-founded. All the parties were quite strong in their opposition to electricity privatisation, water privatisation and so on. But there is a key question for politicians and it's this - if you want to have a big impact on the governance of Northern Ireland the best way is to actually have the power to make these decisions yourself and that power is only going to come to us if it is shared power and that's only going to come if we have got an agreement and so there is a criticism by the business community of politicians that is justified. The fact that we could be having control of these affairs in Northern Ireland if we could only reach agreement and that's what we must commit ourselves to.

Jim Dougal

As we come to an end of this discussion, can I ask both of you to be brief on this. You're both going back to Castle Buildings on the 9th of September to engage once again in talks, aren't you going back in a situation where those talks after this marching season may well be more difficult than they were before you left them at the end of July, Mark Durkan?

Mark Durkan

In many ways there will be more difficulties, but I mean let's face it, we have had a very, very difficult summer. There have been very ugly situations and



many people read an awful lot into what has happened, but let's be clear, nothing that happened this summer has actually changed the nature of the underlying problem that we're trying to solve, nor has it changed what is the only way of solving it, ie that we stay stuck in dialogue to try to reach an agreement.

Jim Dougal  
John Alderdice?

John Alderdice  
I think that what Mark says is right, that it is a much more difficult environment but the problems are the same, the crucial question is this, are Nationalists going to be insatiable in their demands and are Unionists going to be intransigent in their position, because then there is not a hope for Northern Ireland or for a future for any of us? If however we have looked into the abyss and we draw back and we have the courage to compromise then there is hope for all of us.