

FROM NIO PRESS OFFICE

(TUE) 02.11.97 10:53/ST. 10:37/NO. 3580112910 P 2/3

RADIO ULSTER 'GOOD MORNING ULSTER'

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN HUME

The relatives of some of those who died on Bloody Sunday are to present new evidence about the shootings to the Secretary of State later this week. They believe it should lead to a fresh inquiry into the events surrounding the deaths. They are to be accompanied by the SDLP Leader, John Hume, who told Paul McAuley of BBC Radio Foyle how the meeting came about.

JOHN HUME

Well the facts are that I contacted Downing Street and the Prime Minister's office and to seek a meeting, accompanied by representatives of the families, in order to present the new evidence with a view to seeking an inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday so that the full truth about Bloody Sunday can come out and relatives can have it made absolutely clear that their loved ones who died on that day were totally and absolutely innocent. I had a response from Downing Street today in which they asked me to contact the Secretary of State, Sir Patrick Mayhew, that he would meet myself together with representatives of the families and receive from us new evidence. I have received the new evidence which is very considerable from the lawyers that are working with the families and I am arranging that the meeting with the Secretary of State will take place later this week and I will go there accompanied by the families to present this new evidence to the Government.

INTERVIEWER

How strong do you think the new evidence is. Do you think it's strong enough to actually secure a fresh inquiry?

JOHN HUME

Well as I've often said people like myself and the people of Derry don't need new evidence, we know exactly what happened on the day and we know the people who were killed on that day were totally innocent people and indeed the Prime Minister has gone a considerable distance towards that in making it clear that they were innocent of holding any weaponry or any bombs or anything like that, and of course if they weren't then the obvious question is why were they shot dead. I believe that the evidence that has been given to me is very powerful evidence, I've gone through it. It is, in itself, very detailed and very lengthy and I have to say the lawyers have done a very good job of putting it all together and I naturally think there is a very strong argument there for the Government to accept the strong clear argument and declare the complete innocence of the people who were victims on that terrible day.

INTERVIEWER

*File with
HP on Bloody Sunday.
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Is this a shift in the Government's stance on Bloody Sunday because they have said in the past that the opening of a new inquiry wouldn't really serve any purpose?

JOHN HUME

Well of course John Major was the first Prime Minister, you know, who when he wrote to me in 1992 about the Bloody Sunday situation he admitted very clearly, and was the first Prime Minister to do so, that the families, that the people who were killed on Bloody Sunday were innocent and that was the word he used of being in possession of any weaponry of any description and that of course was a major step towards the final stage that we wished to get to which is the total and absolute clearing of their names. That can be done by a public inquiry or it can be done by a clear Government statement.

INTERVIEWER

But by the same token the Government could easily have said look we've read Don Mullan's book the same as anyone else and we don't think there's any significant new evidence in that. They're not saying that now are they?

JOHN HUME

Well what they have asked me to do is to meet with the Secretary of State together with representatives of the families. I have been in touch with family representatives already and they will be arranging the delegation to come with me and I am seeking to arrange the meeting to take place later this week.

INTERVIEWER

How have the families reacted to the news?

JOHN HUME

Well I spoke to John Kelly who is the spokesman for the families and he obviously welcomed the news but I also, of course I discussed with John before I moved at all to get in touch with Downing Street, I discussed with him and got his approval for it.

INTERVIEWER

So do you think this could be the first step towards a new inquiry?

JOHN HUME

Well I certainly hope it will be and I certainly hope it will be certainly a major step towards the absolute clearance of the victims of Bloody Sunday.