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BBC RADIO 4

INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN MCGUINNESS

INTERVIEWER

Mr McGuinness it is very simple isn't it? Mr Major said he wanted an unequivocal condemnation by you particularly of what had happened. Can you offer me that?

MARTIN MCGUINNESS

Well the people of Derry have waited unsuccessfully for the last 25 years for successive British Prime Ministers, including Mr Major, to condemn the killing of 14 people on Bloody Sunday and he has refused to do that. I see condemnation as a British propaganda word game in which the British Government attempts to get everyone else to say things that they are not prepared to say themselves.

INTERVIEWER

Well somehow I knew you would say that. So you won't condemn it basically?

MARTIN MCGUINNESS

Well I've just explained my position on the politics of condemnation we need to move past that.

INTERVIEWER

We could play this game for ages couldn't we. All I'm saying to you is that we are in

MARTIN MCGUINNESS

Well let's not play the game, let's move past that and let's recognise that what is required is a credible process of substantive peace negotiations against a background of a peaceful environment and let's all recognise that only a combined effort between the British Prime Minister, the Taoiseach in Dublin, John Hume, Gerry Adams and Irish America is going to rebuild the peace process which was destroyed by the British Prime Minister, John Major.

INTERVIEWER

That's exactly what was happening of course until bombs started to explode in London. But I mean

MARTIN MCGUINNESS

Well I contest that. I contest your view that that's what was happening because many people in Nationalist Ireland have looked at John Major giving the two fingered salute to Nationalist Ireland's

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attempts to bring about a resolution to this conflict over the course of the last two years.

INTERVIEWER

Let me then raise with you the point about the democratic role which you seek to play in the British politics. You will be going to the electorate on May 1st as part of an organisation, or attached to an organisation, which carries out these acts. In other words on the one hand you seek our votes and on the other hand your colleagues seek to destroy people and equipment and to cause disruption on the mainland. How are people to square those two things?

MARTIN MCGUINNESS

Well I disagree absolutely with your attempt to link Sinn Fein with the bomb explosions in England this morning. The reality is I am going forward in the election against a background of recognising that the Nationalist community, which I hope to represent, does not live in a democracy. Democracy is government by the people for all of the people, and unfortunately since the foundation of the Northern state the Nationalist community have not been able to live in what is really a real and true democracy.

INTERVIEWER

The very fact that you're not able to offer this condemnation suggests that your own democratic credentials must be questionable. What are you to say to people on the doorstep who say do you or do you not think this is a wise action that has been taken by members of the IRA and if you do not think it is an unwise action how can you purport to represent them in a democratic institution? I don't understand it.

MARTIN MCGUINNESS

Well let me try and help you understand it. John Major has refused to condemn the killings of 14 people on Bloody Sunday, he is going forward on the election and I presume, if you use the logic of your argument, he cannot hope to call himself a democrat either. The reality is we all have to recognise that the politics of condemnation are not going to resolve the conflict because there is so much that can be complained about by all sides. The question is when are we going to move past that in to recognising that it's only when we agree that the key to all of this is dialogue, that the process must be about conflict resolution, that it must be about bringing about an inclusive process of credible peace negotiations and to do that against the background of a peaceful atmosphere. That's what's required, very simple.