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Interview with an Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, TD.,

RTE Radio News at 6.30 p.m., 4 May, 1982

- Fintan Drury : It was the sinking of the Belgrano and the heavy loss of life originally reported which prompted the Irish Government to issue a new statement about the Falklands this morning. That statement called for renewed efforts to solve the crisis diplomatically, with a special emphasis being placed on the chances of the U.N. settling the dispute. Furthermore, the Government asked that all EEC countries should have a fresh look at the economic sanctions imposed by the Community on Argentina. This evening the Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, told Leo Enright about how he expects the EEC to respond.
- Taoiseach : I think that is certainly so. Of course, in the different capitals there are different reactions but, generally speaking, I would think that our unease is undoubtedly shared in most of the European capitals to a varying degree. I believe that there is a universal reaction against the loss of life which is now occurring and a feeling of urgency that something must be done to stop this, what is really open war, escalating or continuing any further.
- Leo Enright : Britain says it isn't war, that it's acting in self-defence within the principles of the United Nations Charter, that this action particularly on the huge cruiser was an action of self-defence. Do you think that it's still acting within the spirit of

the United Nations Charter?

Taoiseach

: Well , I don't want to go into that. All I'm concerned about is the fact that fighting is actually taking place. Full-scale war activities are being engaged in, lives are being lost. Now, that's my only concern.. There are a number of issues involved in this whole affair which I think it is better not to go into them at this stage - sovereignty and so on. What I am concerned about, what my colleagues in the Government are concerned about is that there is a war going on in which lives are being lost and we feel in conscience that we must do something about that and, furthermore, we also feel that this is not something remote or academic, this is something which could affect us. I think it's absolutely valid to say that this is a situation now which is threatening world peace and if world peace is threatened that's something in which we all have a vital real self-interest.

Leo Enright

: What do you think the United Nations can do?

Taoiseach

: Oh, the United Nations can do a great deal. In fact the position now is that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with whom we are in touch, is putting proposals, we believe, forward to both sides. Now, as a result of his putting forward those proposals we have been asked to hold our hand just for the

moment and we intend, of course, to fully cooperate with the Secretary-General in that regard, but if the Secretary-General's proposals do not achieve any result then I think the next thing is certainly for the United Nations Security Council to pass a resolution which would urge both sides to cease hostilities, withdraw their forces, including withdrawal of Argentine forces from the islands, possibly the despatch of a U.N. mediation force, possibly the appointment of a U.N. representative. There is a scale of things that could be done, all of which would be directed towards achieving an immediate cessation of loss of life.

Leo Enright : Can I understand what you are saying? Since you issued the statement this afternoon calling for a U.N. Security Council resolution you have been asked to wait and you have agreed to do that, is that the case

Paoiseach : Almost, that's practically the case, yes. Naturally our Permanent Representative at the U.N. is in constant touch with the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General has explained to him what he is doing and as a result of that it is likely that we won't go forward with our proposal or our resolution until tomorrow.

Leo Enright : Will our resolution differ dramatically from the resolution that's already been passed, 502?

Paoiseach

: Yes it would differ to some extent. Naturally, it must differ because the situation has changed enormously since 502, but of course it would cite 502 as, more or less, a basis from which to go on and it would include, as I said, the cessation of hostilities the withdrawal of forces, the withdrawal of the Argentinians from the island and the possible intervention of some physical U.N. presence - either a force, a mediator, a representative or so on.

eo Enright

: With an Argentinian battleship sunk, several Argentinian planes downed, is it going to lay any blame?

Paoiseach

: No, no, no we are not interested in laying any blame at all at this stage. We want to help in the situation. We want to help both sides - we want to help our neighbour and friendly nation, Great Britain in this very difficult situation. We believe that the best way we can help is by doing, engaging in action now in the United Nations. After all, that's the peace forum, that's where all efforts to achieve peace in international relations should begin and end. We believe that that's the way we can make a very positive helpful contribution in this appalling situation.

eo Enright

: Looking towards Europe, you said in your statement that EEC sanctions are no longer appropriate. Does that mean you would like to see them ended immediately

aoiseach

: What we will do there is at the meeting on Saturday, an informal meeting on Saturday, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gerry Collins, will put forward our proposal in that regard and then we will discuss it with our partners in the Community and decide what action should be taken. But I want to make a point that I made in the Dail today very clearly, that we will act in conjunction and solidarity with our EEC partners. These sanctions were introduced originally to try and help to secure a diplomatic solution and to try and help avoid military action - that was their primary purpose. As it's quite clear that they haven't succeeded in doing that we believe that they are no longer appropriate or relevant in this situation.

Leo Enright

: On balance, would you prefer to see them removed before the 17th, I believe is the date they are due to come up for renewal?

aoiseach

: Yes, we would certainly be proposing to our partners that following on the informal meeting of Ministers they should be removed or suspended almost immediately

Press Section
Department of Foreign Affairs

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