



ARLENE FOSTER

Former first minister of Northern Ireland joins GB News

GBNEWS.UK

DOUBLE ACT: I don't remember Nigel Farage making a sustained argument against the inclusion of the NI Protocol in Boris Johnson's final Withdrawal Agreement

Foster should tell Farage uncomfortable Brexit truth

ARLENE Foster's decision to become a 'contributor' to GB News didn't really surprise me. Anyone leaving party politics at a youngish age usually wants to find a new role and platform.

Arlene has had a very high profile across Great Britain since the DUP cut its confidence and supply deal with the Conservatives in June 2017 and she certainly appeals to the 'right' end of the Conservatives, as well as to some further right elements of English nationalism and former Brexit supporters.

But her double act with Nigel Farage a couple of weeks ago did surprise me.

I don't remember him making a sustained argument against the inclusion of the NI Protocol in Boris Johnson's final Withdrawal Agreement.

I don't remember key members of the Brexit Party urging rejection of the protocol on the basis that it treated one part of the UK very differently from the other parts.

But I do remember opinion polls indicating substantial numbers of Brexit Party voters (along with the ERG end of the Conservatives) believing letting NI go was a price worth paying for a clean-break Brexit.

Although how it could be described as a clean break when it didn't include the entire UK is beyond me.

The other thing that surprised me was Arlene's hint that her presence on the show would bring NI politics (and the challenges facing the union) to a much bigger audience.

Maybe so, but is she the best person to take on the role?

Under her watch unionism, for the first time, lost its overall majority in a NI parliament or assembly.

Under her watch – and while the DUP held the balance of power – NI unionism was serially shafted by two Conservative PMs and the entire ERG.

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Alex KANE



a century ago.

Under her watch NI unionism was caught in an elephant-trap between GB and the EU.

So yes, unionism has a long list of challenges, but most of those challenges happened under her watch.

She chose to put her trust in the Conservatives. She chose to put her trust in the ERG. Some of her parliamentary party (over whom she seemed to have no control whatsoever) chose to put their trust in the extreme end of the Leave campaign based in London's Tufton Street.

She chose to trust Boris Johnson, even when just about everyone else outside the DUP was urging her not to.

She was instrumental in ensuring the DUP wasted every available opportunity to keep doors open after June 2017 and opted, instead, for the utterly bonkers, self-defeating strategy best described as 'uber-unionism'.

Will she take any responsibility for her own

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actions and the actions of her party for the mess unionism now finds itself in?

Will she explain to her GB News audience (and I've no idea how big that audience is) that the roots of unionism's present dilemma can't simply be dumped on the doorstep of the Irish government and EU?

Indeed, will she face the fact that Johnson's dangerous, anti-NI unionist policy owes more to the pressure exerted on him by a regenerated English nationalism (steered by people like Farage) than to anything or anyone else?

Put bluntly: Johnson was prepared to undermine NI to get English nationalism off his back and into the polling booths in his favour in December 2019.

He and Lord Frost are making a great deal of noise about forcing change, but (and feel free to call me an old cynic) I've been on 'Fool me once...' territory when it comes to Johnson for a long, long time.

And I'm going to stay there until he actually does something to make me change my mind. I won't be holding my breath.

What she could do on GB News is challenge Farage and others to explain their actions from 2016-21, as well as explaining to their 'followers' (and I think GB News sees its audience as followers of particular presenters rather than a necessarily coherent whole) how they view NI within the UK and how Johnson could best protect the entire union at this point.

Blaming the EU, the Irish government and even Joe Biden is far too easy; particularly when the real blame lies with Johnson, his 'over ready' deal and his electoral imperative of keeping on board the new generation of English nationalists stirred up by Farage over the past two decades.

They are the greatest threat to the union: and Foster mustn't be afraid of telling them that uncomfortable truth next time she's perched alongside Farage.

ON THIS DAY

AUGUST 6 1971

Hume on Partition

THE Partition problem was based on a basic misconception because to many people in the Republic, Partition had been a purely territorial problem and the real human divisions associated with it had been ignored, Mr John Hume, MP told the Social Studies Conference in Kiltegan, County Wicklow.

Speaking on 'The Last Fifty Years: What did the People of the Republic Think?' Mr Hume said that today, fifty years later, the total failure of the experiment stared them in the face and the reality of the failure was to be found in the streets of Belfast in 1971 where Irishmen was separated from Irishmen by barbed wire and a line of British soldiers.

There could be no greater monument to the failure of the Northern state than the failure of political leaders in Ireland and Britain to produce a condition for peace, justice and stability in the North and to produce a basis for a solution to the 'Irish Question'.

Many considered the seeds of that failure were inherent in the 1920 settlement itself.

To say so, Mr Hume said it was not to absolve all those who had opposed the very existence of the Northern statelet, for in spite of the extent of the problem, its opponents failed to produce policies or attitudes which made the slightest impression on it.

It was not unfair to say that many people in the North believed that there had been very little real interest among the people in the rest of the country over the years in the Northern problem.

Police Injured in Newry

EIGHT policemen were injured in Newry last night in clashes which followed a Civil Rights protest march. At the same time an explosion damaged a number of shops and a bank in Belfast's Royal Avenue while in Derry two bombs went off, the first at British Army married quarters in Clooney Park and the other at the City Cinema.

MP Attacks 'Green and Tans'

'GREEN and Tans' was the name given by Mr Paddy Devlin, SDLP MP for Falls, to units of the British Army in the Catholic areas of Belfast when he gave several instances of what he described as 'people being badly beaten up by the military without reason or justification' Mr Devlin said.

AS THE IRA bombings and street clashes between nationalists and British troops escalated, John Hume (34) voiced his long-held view that Irish unity was about uniting people, not territory.

He was equally critical of Nationalist abstentionism, Southern indifference and British moves towards a military solution as well as the use of violence for political ends.

EDITED BY ÉAMON PHOENIX
e.phoenix@irishnews.com