AM: Can I ask you first of all is the removal of Arlene Foster as First Minister next time round an absolute red line for you?

GA: Well we’re not saying that she can’t come back. You may know Andrew, that the institution’s collapsed on the back of a scandal on a renewable energy scheme in which it’s alleged that up to potentially half a billion pounds Sterling has disappeared or been wasted and there are allegations that that was caused by corruption or fraud. Now we’re not making those allegations, they come from within the DUP, about the DUP. So we’re simply saying that that needs cleared up. Arlene Foster in fairness says she’s not guilty and she wants to be vindicated, so what we have said is that there needs to be an inquiry into all of this and pending the outcome of that inquiry, without prejudice to that outcome, that Arlene Foster should not be in the position of First or Deputy First Minister, so.

AM: But if she’s cleared she could come back?

GA: Of course, and we’re dealing with Arlene Foster and Michelle O’Neill has been meeting and I have met with Arlene myself in the past week. The tipping point in the current crisis came because of this scandal, but there was also difficulties with agreements which had been made, not been honoured and Martin McGuiness for over 10 years in that office has demonstrated how much Republicans want those institutions to work, so we want them back in place, but your government, Andrew, the government in London on the back of Brexit and on the back of its own policy wants to dismantle lots of the Human Rights aspects of the Good
Friday Agreement. Brexit will drive this part of Ireland out of the European Union, the people here voted to remain. The parties returned in the last election the vast majority of those parties are also for remain and Sinn Fein have been arguing for a special designated status for the North within the European Union to stop the return of a hard economic border.

AM: I want to come onto that. Just before I do you’ve only got – you’ve got less than two weeks now to have these negotiations with the DUP and the British government and so forth, what happens if you haven’t got an agreement after two weeks? Do you have another election?

GA: Well, we have been threatened with another election and I’m saying half-jokingly that that’s a sign of how much progress has been made, that we’ve been threatened by a British government into an election. We used to be threatened with internment and all sorts of other coercions.

AM: Being threatened by an election is better, I’m sure but you’re against it are you?
GA: No, no. If there’s another election we will contest that election. Of course the election just over, this election, no one wanted it. We didn’t want it but the position was totally and absolutely untenable. What we need – and this is what our focus is ‘cause this an implementation process that we’re involved in – those agreements, the different elements of it, the (Gaelic), the human rights elements of it, the Bill of Rights, these different commitments which have been made but not kept need to be delivered on, and if that happens then the institutions will go back in place and we will continue to do our best to work for the people.
AM: Mr Adams, you mentioned Brexit just now. We've got a committee of MPs in the UK here saying that if Britain leaves without a deal the border goes straight back up between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Do you think this is the moment when Ireland starts to look again at uniting?

GA: Yes and Sinn Fein have always been looking for Ireland to be united, but I consider the partition of this island to be totally and absolutely illegitimate and immoral. Now in the Good Friday Agreement we agreed and the government in London is obliged when the majority of people here want to see an end to partition, want to see Irish unity then the government is obliged to legislate for that, so we have argued for some time that that's what should happen.

AM: But at the moment most people in Northern Ireland want to stay inside the UK, don't they?

GA: Yes and that's why we have a job of work to do to persuade them and no one should be threatened by this. But even without Brexit we've been badly served by the divisions on our small island. With Brexit, and this has been my firm conviction from the referendum result, with Brexit we're going to see a hard economic border, the frontier between the European state and the British state is going to be on the end of Ireland and that's why we have argued for a special designated status for the North. That doesn't infringe upon the Constitutional position but it does guarantee that we won't have the type of misery that's going to be inflicted on our farming, on our dairy farmers, on our agri-food industry or on our enterprises.
GERRY ADAMS

AM: Well, we'll talk about all of that later on in the programme with David Davis, but for now Gerry Adams, thanks for talking to us.