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PRIME MINISTER - DOORSTEP - 11 FEBRUARY 1992

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FROM EGMG FOR COI RADIO TECHNICAL SERVICES

TRANSCRIPT OF DOORSTEP INTERVIEW

GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR JOHN MAJOR,

IN LONDON

ON TUESDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 1992

PRIME MINISTER:

Good Afternoon. Could I say to you that this afternoon we have had an excellent meeting, it was held in an extremely good spirit and I believe everyone who took part in it regarded it as thoroughly worthwhile.

The discussions we have had were frank and they were wide ranging. Points of agreement were aired and so were points of disagreement by all the four party leaders. We have discussed all these and we will return to those matters later.

As a result of the excellent dialogue we have had this afternoon, I have indicated to the four party leaders that I am prepared to hold further meetings with them in order that we can discuss the matters of relevance to Northern Ireland and in particular to the security situation that prevails within Northern Ireland. We have all agreed that further meetings of this sort would be worthwhile.

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In our meeting this afternoon everyone present was unanimous in condemning terrorist attacks, whatever their source may be. Terrorists who claim to be acting on behalf of one community or the other were in fact acting against the interests of all the people in Northern Ireland. That was the unanimous view of everyone attending this meeting. Everyone at the meeting gave their support to the security forces in bringing those responsible for terrorist atrocities to justice.

I confirmed to the party leaders that the government would continue to devote all the resources necessary to security. An increase, requested by the Chief Constable, in the strength of the Royal Ulster Constabulary by over 400 men and women had recently been agreed and I was able to confirm that recruitment was proceeding rapidly and satisfactorily.

I also confirmed this afternoon that the number of troops deployed in Northern Ireland, which had been increased in January, has been further substantially increased.

The meeting agreed this afternoon on the importance of the closest possible cooperation with the government of the Republic of Ireland in the fight against terrorism. I told the party leaders that I have already spoken to the Taoiseach, Mr Reynolds, and that we have agreed to meet in the near future. That meeting will of course discuss security and all other matters relevant to our current agenda.

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The people, I know, in Northern Ireland will recall on 27 January that the party leaders agreed that at the invitation of Peter Brooke they would meet to consider matters of common concern including in the economic field in the interests of all the people of Northern Ireland.

They also agreed on 27 January to respond to an invitation to field party teams to take part for information in intensive factual briefings under the Chairmanship of the Minister of State. That would deal with present financial and other administrative arrangements affecting the people of Northern Ireland.

This afternoon, at my specific request, the party leaders agreed to extend that agenda, they will also meet now to discuss obstacles in the way of further political dialogue in the hope that that political dialogue might be able to recommence at an early date.

The party leaders this afternoon all expressed the hope that by continuing to work together, and by making representations together on matters of common concern, they would contribute to the growth of mutual trust and confidence within the community in Northern Ireland, we all believe that that would eventually aid the talks process.

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I think I can say therefore that it has been a very satisfactory afternoon, it is possible the four party leaders may wish to make further statements later on this evening, but for the moment that is all we have to say.

Thank you very much indeed.

(END OF TRANSCRIPT)