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EDITED TRANSCRIPT OF A DOORSTEP INTERVIEW BY THE
PRIME MINISTER, JOHN MAJOR, AND IRISH PRIME MINISTER, JOHN BRUTON,
DOWNING STREET, LONDON, TUESDAY, 20 DECEMBER 1994

PRIME MINISTER MAJOR:

We will endeavour to complete the framework document as speedily as we can. We have agreed that our officials will meet in early January to take matters further. A few days after the officials meeting there will be a meeting at Foreign Minister level to see what further progress can be made.

There are important issues to be determined in those talks, many in relationship to Sinn Fein, many in relationship to the Loyalist paramilitaries as well. We share the view that substantial progress needs to be made on the decommissioning of arms not just with Sinn Fein but also of course with the Loyalist paramilitaries

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON:

Both governments have shown by the prompt arrangements of this meeting how determined they both are to move forward on the peace process and also towards bringing the communities closer together on the island of Ireland.

QUESTION (BELFAST TELEGRAPH):

Has the Taoiseach confirmed or denied to you the assessment made by Albert Reynolds about the state of negotiations over the joint framework document that already agreement has been reached on the issues that he claimed were reached to that stage?

PRIME MINISTER MAJOR:

I am not going to comment on what Albert had to say last week. The Taoiseach and I certainly looked at the extent of agreement that exists in the joint framework document. But rather more importantly, we were looking at the areas that remain to be agreed in the framework document. We also looked at how we might seek a way through those areas to find a final agreement. That is why we have agreed that we will have officials meet to carry on our discussion in early January.

QUESTION:

Are you in trouble?

PRIME MINISTER MAJOR:

No. Our negotiations on the framework document are not in trouble. I think both the Taoiseach and I are optimistic about the prospects of reaching agreement on these other matters but they do have to be discussed.

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON:

A great deal of progress has been made by the outgoing government and the British Government on that matter. There are a number of issues remaining to be resolved but this meeting shows the

determination on both our parts to resolve those issues quickly.

QUESTION:

Are you any clearer now on the way in which decommissioning of arms and explosives is going to take place and what are both your assessments of yesterday's bomb in Enniskillen? We have no confirmation yet of who was finally responsible for the Enniskillen incident.

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON:

The decommissioning of arms is a very important issue, it is important to build confidence in the peace process as well Enniskillen?

QUESTION:

Taoiseach, what are the outstanding disagreements with Mr Major on the question of the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons?

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON:

There isn't an area of disagreement here.

QUESTION:

How soon do you think there might be all-inclusive talks?

PRIME MINISTER MAJOR:

We cannot get all-inclusive talks unless we clear some of the difficulties that stand in the way of them in the preliminary talks. The speedier we can do that, the speedier we can have inclusive talks.

QUESTION:

Prime Minister, do you both agree on the point that Sinn Fein cannot be involved in those all-inclusive talks until the issue of the arms has been from your point of view satisfactorily resolved and the weapons are destroyed?

PRIME MINISTER MAJOR:

We do need to see some substantial progress made on this issue and I very much hope that we will get it.

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON:

It is important to point out that the preliminary discussions with Sinn Fein are at a comparatively early point at this stage.

ENDS