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TRANSCRIPT OF DOORSTEP

GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR JOHN MAJOR,

AND THE IRISH PRIME MINISTER, MR ALBERT REYNOLDS,

IN LONDON

ON THURSDAY, 26 MAY 1994

PRIME MINISTER

The Taoiseach and I have taken the opportunity this afternoon of running through a range of matters of mutual interest, we have spent some time of course discussing the continuing improvement in our security cooperation, we have done a certain amount of work in preparing for the summit that we will have in July.

Both of us share a disappointment that the violence continues, both the IRA violence and the Loyalist violence, there is no shred of justification for it whatsoever. What is clear though is that the work that is going on both on improving cross-border cooperation and the constitutional discussions between the two governments are not waiting for an end of violence, they continue and they are making substantial progress.

We were both delighted with the discussions we were able to have today, the Taoiseach may wish to say a word or two, and then we will take one or two questions.

MR REYNOLDS:--

We had a very useful and informal meeting indeed at which the range of issues, as already listed by the Prime Minister, were discussed at length. There is one message quite clear that we want to give, and that is that neither paramilitary organisations are going to gain anything or bolster their position by a continuation of violence. It is quite clear that the next logical step if the peace process is to move forward is to have a cessation of violence and we are all waiting for that definitive decision by both the paramilitary organisations to desist from violence. There is no single vestige of justification for the loss of one single life on either side or on either community, it is not going to help their own cause and it is certainly only going to postpone the day when re-reconciliation between the two communities can take place and indeed when the progress of the political talks, which we have made quite a lot of progress at so far, will be coming into play so that all democratic parties can join the political democratic process.

QUESTION:

Do either of you see any value in the comments from Mr Adams today?

PRIME MINISTER:

I have not seen all the details in his news conference yet so I will withhold judgement on that. As far as what he said this morning, I see nothing new in what he had to say this morning.

What was quite striking was what he did not say. He made no indication this morning that he was going to give up violence and take the offer that has been open to him for some time and I think that is what people in every part of Ireland, north and south, that is what everyone wishes to hear from him. There is an opportunity for him to give up violence and then in a short while to enter the constitutional talks. Now that constitutional avenue is open to him and I do not believe any amount of talking and waiting will please anyone until such time as he says the violence can end and we can begin to talk, that is what I am waiting to hear from Mr Adams and I believe everyone else is as well.

MR REYNOLDS:

If they want a couple of weeks for further debate, we do not mind that as long as the cessation of violence takes place now, there should not be another single life lost, if internal debate takes another few weeks, so be it, as long as the violence stops as and from today. And I would also say that I firmly support James Molyneaux' statement for a cessation of violence on the Loyalist Paramilitary side as well.

QUESTION:

Have you set a deadline for a decision from Sinn Fein and the IRA on the declaration?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, it is not a question of deadlines in that sense. The joint declaration stands as a set of principles that will guide both governments towards a constitutional settlement, it is not a question of saying if they have not answered by a certain date the joint declaration falls, that is not the case at all. Our discussions, the constitutional discussions between the governments and the constitutional discussions with the constitutional parties in Northern Ireland, they continue, and the joint declaration remains as the essential back-drop to those discussions.

QUESTION:

Taoiseach, did you discuss the recent violence in Dublin and how important that is to the Irish government?

MR REYNOLDS:

We discussed all violence, let alone the violence in Dublin which is regrettable, but indeed all of the violence that takes place and we again repeat the message that there is nothing to be gained, there is no success for either paramilitary side going to be gained out of the continuation of violence, and another message that we want to make quite clear is that the two governments are not going to wait around or are not waiting around for any more prevarication on either side to stop the violence, we continue with our own business and it is a matter for them to make up their minds in their own time. But in the meantime, we would ask them

to respect the will of the vast majority of the Irish and British people to stop the violence straight away and not have any more killing.

QUESTION:

Isn't Sinn Fein just stringing you along, you say you are not waiting for them but you have been waiting for months and months since the declaration?

MR REYNOLDS:

That may be your view, we are not waiting around for anybody, the work continues in the Liaison Committee and between the two governments and that is why we are here today to review our progress so far and to get ourselves into a position to move forward indeed before our next meeting. It is not a question of us waiting around for Sinn Fein, both governments have been working for quite some time now on the framework document which is grounded in the Downing Street declaration where the ground rules are set, that document is here to stay whether or not Sinn Fein or anybody else supports it or otherwise.

PRIME MINISTER:

Let me just emphasise that point if I may. There has been a great deal of progress over the last couple of years particularly in cross-border cooperation on security matters, I very much welcome the dramatic improvements that there have been. But beyond that, the point the Taoiseach made is exactly right, there is no delay,

there has been no delay and there will be no delay in the continuing discussions with the constitutional parties and with the government of the Republic of Ireland on the framework document we are producing, a great deal of progress has been made, there is more to be done, but it is not awaiting an answer from Sinn Fein.

QUESTION:

Is that document going to be ready for your summit in July?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, no-one is going to put a deadline on it, I cannot promise you that.

QUESTION:

Are you agreed on what should be contained in this framework and if you are agreed why have we not seen it or heard of its completion?

PRIME MINISTER:

When we have finished it you will hear about it.

QUESTION:

[inaudible].

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PRIME MINISTER:

We have been in constant discussion with them, those discussions remain, Michael Ancram is in discussion with them on a day by day basis, and gradually we are moving to a set of circumstances where we think we can reach the objective that we all seek. I do not propose to go into details of that with you this afternoon, I do not think it would be appropriate. Often these discussions are a slow and painful process, but progress is being made, and if one were to look back for example 12 months ago, I think few people would have imagined the progress that has been made over the last 12 months, yet it has been made and we are determined to take that progress still further.

QUESTION:

Is peace still achievable?

MR REYNOLDS:

Both governments are fully committed and will continue to be committed to the achievement of peace, we have not changed our mind one iota in that pursuit of peace.

PRIME MINISTER:

I entirely agree with that.

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