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PRIME MINISTER JOHN MAJOR AND IRISH PRIME MINISTER ALBERT REYNOLDS  
STATEMENT - DOWNING STREET - 19 FEBRUARY 1994

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FROM JAMES LEE FOR COI RADIO TECHNICAL SERVICES

TRANSCRIPT OF STATEMENT BY

PRIME MINISTER JOHN MAJOR AND IRISH PRIME MINISTER ALBERT REYNOLDS  
DOWNING STREET

SATURDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 1994

PRIME MINISTER MAJOR:

We have had a very useful discussion this morning. We thought the opportunity of our joint attendance at Twickenham this afternoon was a suitable opportunity to take stock of where we are. We have had a very useful review this morning of where we stand both on the Joint Declaration and on the continuing talks process.

Let me make it quite clear at the outset that we are wholly united in our approach, wholly united in our determination to proceed to try and find a solution to the problems of Northern Ireland. We see the Joint Declaration as a foundation stone for the future approach of both governments; we are committed to it, we believe it has lasting value and we see it as a balanced statement of principles for the future. It is our judgement that its value has already been clearly shown in the way in which it has been received both in Ireland and abroad.

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It is of course impossible for either of us to say whether the Provisionals will decide to give up violence in the near future.

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What we are utterly agreed about is that there is no justification for the continuance of violence either by the Provisionals or indeed by anybody else. What must be fully understood is that we are not waiting for the Provisionals or for anybody else. We have taken further steps in the talks process and we have this morning reaffirmed our joint commitment to that process. No-one should be able to veto progress on the talks.

We have made clear what Sinn Fein needs to do to join the constitutional process; they are free to come in, they are free to stay out if that is what they choose but what they can't do is hold up our determination to continue with the talks process and endeavour to find a solution.

We have agreed this morning that we will continue to cooperate closely on security and do all we can to oppose terrorism and I would like to say that the improved security cooperation between the Garda and the security forces in Northern Ireland has been of immense help over recent years and that is going to continue.

The intention that we both have is peace. We would like it soon but however long it takes, our determination is to continue a search for that peace. We believe that is what the people of Northern Ireland wish to see, what the people in the Republic wish to see and what people in other parts of the world, including the

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United Kingdom, wish to see. We have no intention of surrendering any of our principles to violence. Those principles are clearly set down in the Joint Declaration and we reaffirm them very firmly this morning.

PRIME MINISTER REYNOLDS:

We had a very cordial and fruitful meeting here this morning. The match did give us an opportunity of coming together two months after the Peace Declaration was published here in Downing Street on 15 December. It is a declaration that both of us and both governments are fully committed to; it is a declaration that will endure; it is indeed a formula for peace because it sets out the principles on which a lasting peace can be built. We aim to take that Peace Declaration and make it the anchor for the resumption of the three-stranded talks process; they will be grounded on the sets of principles that are outlined in the Peace Declaration.

We want to proceed with these as soon as possible; we never saw them in competition with each other, we see them as complementing each other and we believe that a very solid basis has been agreed upon in the Joint Declaration that has commanded widespread support not just in these islands but indeed throughout the world as well. Indeed, the Irish people at home and abroad fully subscribe and support the Peace Declaration and believe, like us,

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that there is no justification for continuing with violence once those sets of principles are laid out there for everybody to see and for every to participate in. We deplore and condemn violence and death from wherever it comes and we deplore the seeming resumption in some quarters of the violence that has indeed plagued our island for the last twenty-five years.

This is a new hope, a new direction to provide the opportunity to get a lasting peace in Ireland and a broad-based agreement based on the sets of principles that we agreed on here on 15 December. We will continue at a very high level our very successful cooperation in relation to the security arrangements between North and South and between our two governments and I think that they have served us well and they will be very helpful on both sides.

I haven't anything further to add to what the Prime Minister has laid out very clearly here about where we come from, where we are at this morning and where we go on from here.

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