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Press Conference Held after Talks Between
The Taoiseach Mr. John Bruton, T.D., and Mr. Gerry Adams
at Government Buildings on 2nd November 1995.

We had a very thorough meeting Mr. Adams and I, we covered in depth all of the outstanding issues that divide the parties and are preventing us from reaching the point we wish to reach which is all inclusive all party talks, all the parties around the one table. Working towards a settlement of the problems that have existed for so long in the North of Ireland. Obviously, there were remaining differences of position but it is my view having listened very carefully to what was said at today's meeting and also looking at what has happened over the last few days, that the respective positions of the parties concerned are becoming clearer, and on a certain number of important issues there has been movement of a kind that is constructive; parties' positions coming closer together. So I believe that the meeting was very useful.

Journalist:

Gerry Adams, not referring to the meeting specifically, said he believed that the peace process is on the point of failure. Have you any comment to make on that?....

Taoiseach:

I think the peace process is obviously going through a difficult phase at the moment, I think very often before you reach the point where decisions have to be taken, you do go through a phase that's particularly difficult. At the end of the day the governments are going to have to decide how to move things forward, we as a sovereign government will be dealing with the British Government as a sovereign government. We will have consulted as exhaustively as we can with everybody, and we will reach a point where a decision will need to be taken to move things forward. We are not at that point yet, we want to take all the time that is necessary to insure that everybody has reasonable grounds for taking part in the process, that it would be unreasonable for them not to take part in the process, that's obviously a very time consuming process to allow time to establish exactly what are the needs of the various parties,

addressing those and coming forward then with a proposal that in our view would represent the best way forward.

Journalist:

Can you tell what the response of the government and yourself is to the propositions which Mr. Hume and Mr. Adams has put to you and which he told us a short time ago had the potential to serve both the obstacles to the peace process?...

Taoiseach:

These propositions were actually put to the government earlier in the month and were discussed in very great detail by the Tánaiste and Mr. Martin Mc Guinness at a meeting they had on the 11th of October, and the governments views and concerns about certain aspects of the document were conveyed very fully to the Sinn Fein Party on that occasion. I was able to reinforce what the Tánaiste has said on that matter, on the 11th of October today.

Journalist:

But will you tell us what your response is ?....

Taoiseach:

No I won't go into any detail on the nature of the detail of the proposals that were put forward. We identified a number of positive features in the proposal, but we also identified a number of areas where we felt the proposal didn't address all of the problems and all of the concerns that needed to be addressed.

Journalist:

So you share the view of Mr. Ancram's view about these?.....

Taoiseach:

I would always express the view on behalf of the Irish Government. We come to our own independent judgement on this matter. In this instance the Irish Government's views were conveyed to Sinn Fein as far back as the 11th of October by the Tánaiste himself, quite authoritatively, I was able to discuss that further with Mr. Gerry Adams today.

Journalist:

Is it still your view that Sinn Fein must be prepared to give an inch, to get us out of this log jam as indeed Britain must also be prepared ?...

Taoiseach:

Everybody is going to have to give ground if we are to move forward.

Journalist:

And are you disappointed that Sinn Fein hasn't given ground?...

Taoiseach:

I think that Sinn Fein has been making a genuine effort on a number of issues, and as I said in the course in my initial statement, I believe I have identified at today's meeting a number of points where in fact there is constructive movement. There is no going backwards, there is constructive movement on the part of Sinn Fein and I think on the part of others who haven't reached the point yet where we can actually go forward with an agreement between the two governments. Some more time will be needed but I hope it won't be too much time will be needed to get to that point.

Journalist:

Is there a possibility Taoiseach, that you may go ahead with the summit if you don't have Sinn Fein and others locked into discussion.?....

Taoiseach:

Well as you know what we are looking for at the end of the day is to have all party talks; with everybody at the table, Unionists, all the Unionist Parties, Sinn Fein, SDLP, all of the parties and the two governments. Now we are going to do everything possible to make it reasonable for everyone to turn up and unreasonable for them not to turn up. At the end of the day the governments are going to make the decision, we as the Irish Government will, if we believe the people are not being reasonable in their attitude will be willing to say that. We may have to go forward as Governments without having got everybody signed up on every aspect of the

thing as I did indicate myself in a statement I made at Dublin Castle shortly after the postponement of the previous summit earlier in September, we may have to do that. It is our sovereign right as two Governments to do that, but we would prefer to be in a position where we actually had everybody signed up before hand, but if they don't we may have to make a judgement and hope that on reconsideration they will join in the process.

Journalist:

When will you be meeting Mr. Hume and Mr. Adams together.. He requested a joint meeting That the joint meeting should finally take place?....

Taoiseach:

The Irish Government will make a decision on that request along the lines of the statement I made in the Dáil on that subject very quickly.

Journalist:

Taoiseach can I ask one question on the prospect of the summit because I think it is important, I mean you were talking about having a summit in early September it was put off it was spoken about maybe later the beginning of October, we are now into November, people are talking about it being held before President Clinton's coming, people are entitled to know are we moving toward a summit?....

Taoiseach:

We are moving towards it but I can't say exactly what date the summit will take place, and I'm not proposing to set a date for the summit until everything is agreed. The lesson of the previous summit is that there is a risk involved in setting a date before you have everything agreed, so we want to have between ourselves and the British Government at least, an agreement not just on the terms on the communiqué but on the terms of all the answers that we might give to critical supplementary questions that might be put by people like yourselves. We want to have all of that agreed between ourselves before we actually go ahead with the summit, but the summit itself can take place at quite short notice once the agreement has been reached. We are working through that process at the moment, obviously there are exchanges going on between ourselves and the British, but critically there is also exchanges

going on between ourselves and all the other parties in Northern Ireland who we need to have at the table if the exercise is to work.

Journalist:

You talked about stating your position where it is unreasonable for people not to turn up for talks. Are you prepared to risk waiting that some party that has already signed up for the talks may pull out of the process because you are waiting for another party to sign up... Are you prepared to meet that gamble?...

Taoiseach:

Well that's the sort of judgement we have got to make as a government all of the time. This is the art of government, that you judge the timing, to maximise the response of a favourable kind from all of the people you need at the talks. We will be making that judgement as a government all the time and we will have the decision at the best possible time from the point of view of getting the maximum number of people to the table.

Journalist:

Gerry Adams indicated when he was here that he wasn't really very happy with some of the approach the Government has adopted ?...

Taoiseach:

Well as I have explained in the Dáil, we're working towards a position of getting all the parties to the table because at the end of the day you need an agreement involving all of the parties and therefore we can't simply take the policy of one of the parties and say well that's the only policy we are going to advance. We have got to be concerned with the views and concerns of other parties as well. I think it is not a matter of surprise that all of the parties at some stage in the process, each one of them is going to have a reservation about the position we are taking because what we are trying to do is to include everybody.