

FROM EGMG FOR COI RADIO TECHNICAL SERVICES

TRANSCRIPT OF JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE

GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR JOHN MAJOR

AND THE IRISH PRIME MINISTER, MR HAUGHEY,

IN DUBLIN

ON WEDNESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 1991

MR HAUGHEY:

It is my pleasure to introduce to you the British Prime Minister and the first thing I want to say is that this is his first visit to Dublin and for that reason he is particularly welcome. We have just had a very useful, constructive, discussion about matters of mutual interest, bilateral, European and international. And it is now my pleasure to introduce John Major, the British Prime Minister, to you.

PRIME MINISTER:

Taoiseach, thank you very much indeed. Can I just echo what has been said a moment or so ago. We have I think this morning and over luncheon had a very valuable discussion following on the discussion we had at Downing Street earlier in the summer. It has given us a very useful opportunity to exchange views on current developments in the European Community, on other international issues, and of course on a range of bilateral matters including specifically the Anglo-Irish relationship.

In my view in the past the meetings between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister perhaps have taken place too rarely. And one matter we have decided upon this morning is that in future we will meet twice a year, alternating those meetings between London and Dublin. And in those meetings we will cover the whole range of issues, bilateral matters, international matters, Community matters and any other events that it seems necessary for us to discuss and I think those will prove to be most useful meetings in the future.

I believe it is pretty hard to see how we can make progress on the difficult issues before us without more regular contact. And if today's meeting is anything to go by, I have no doubt that a continuing dialogue will bear fruit in time.

We both are of the opinion that we need to set an example in this respect, we need to show everyone that democracy is strengthened and not weakened by dialogue and the sooner everyone commits themselves to dialogue rather than violence the sooner we will begin to solve the problems in front of us.

In our discussions this morning on the Community, the Taoiseach and I have discussed the position on a number of matters likely to arise at the European Council next week, which both of us of course will be attending. We share many similar views on these issues - common foreign and security policy, defence, the social area and powers for the European Parliament are areas where there

is a substantial similarity of view between the two governments, not on every dot and comma of the discussions but a broad and welcome similarity.

Some very useful progress has been made at the meetings in Brussels on Monday and Tuesday, but I do not think anybody attending the meeting next week has any doubt that a number of very important issues still remain to be sorted out. We will be doing our best in Maastricht to reach an agreement on Monday and Tuesday of next week.

We also had a very useful exchange on the Uruguay Round and I emphasised in particular the importance of reaching agreement on that round before the end of this year. This will require flexibility on all sides, by the United States, by the Community, by the Cairns Group, but the prize of being able to liberalise world trade is a very valuable prize for every country in the world.

The Taoiseach and I also had the opportunity of discussing the important aspects of the unique relationship between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, and following on from our meetings in London and in Luxembourg in the summer, and those other occasions we have been able to meet, on occasions when we have been together at European meetings, we have again stressed today the very great value of close cooperation across a whole range of issues between our two countries. We both welcome that.

We also in our discussion this morning affirmed yet again our joint unreserved condemnation of terrorist violence, including the tit for tat killings by both Republican and by Loyalist terrorists. And I think the joint message of our discussion this morning is quite simple, quite unequivocal, their campaigns are futile and we are determined that those who commit terrorist crimes should be brought to justice.

We have agreed this morning to keep under review a whole range of measures on cross-border security cooperation, we have reiterated the importance we attach to the arrangements for ensuring that fugitives are brought to justice, we welcome the very valuable and constructive political talks which took place in Northern Ireland earlier this year and we have reaffirmed the commitment of both governments to do all we can to help with the early launch of fresh talks.

I believe it has been a very refreshing and a very worthwhile exchange of views. And it is for that reason that I look forward very much to continuing this dialogue both informally and in the formal bilateral contact that I announced a few moments ago. I am sure that is in the interests of both our countries and I know the Taoiseach and I both look forward to it. I think if I may I will leave opening remarks at that.

QUESTION:

In relation to Northern Ireland the communique does speak of the need to get fresh talks under way, but it seems to be weak on what you as the heads of two sovereign governments can do in relation to encouraging the parties in the North to get together round the table and indulge in dialogue. What initiative do you propose to take to encourage them to do that?

MR HAUGHEY:

That is primarily a matter for Secretary Brooke and Minister Gerry Collins and as you know Secretary Brooke in particular has been making very dedicated efforts to get the process restarted. He has had discussions, particularly with the representative of the Unionists and with the other parties in Northern Ireland and he is personally committed to resuming the process and will make every effort he can. So far as the Prime Minister and myself are concerned, what we can do is lend the weight of our respective authorities to the process and we do in the communique urge everybody concerned to make an effort to get the process under way again and indeed to promote harmony and agreement, not just through the process of the talks but in every other way possible.

PRIME MINISTER:

I think there is no need to add anything to that, I agree with it, I think that says it all.

QUESTION:

a whole range of issues that need to be determined by Prime Minister, how are you hoping to get this dialogue going again before the British general election?

PRIME MINISTER:

Irrespective of the British General Election, the need for political progress in Northern Ireland remains. We think there is still an opportunity for talks before the election if the basis of them can be agreed. And that, as the Taoiseach has just said, is what Peter Brooke is working for and I hope it will be possible to bring that about. We certainly see no reason for an interregnum between now and the other side of the election, that is just time wasted. The sooner they can start the better.

QUESTION:

It seems that other European countries would like you to give something in return for the federal phraseology coming out, do you think you should give something in return and if so what?

PRIME MINISTER:

We have given a great deal, we have given a great deal in the discussions and we put a great deal into the discussions, and a good deal, as you will see when the latest draft of the Treaty is produced, actually incorporates British suggestions. So I think the suggestion that because on a particular issue there has been movement that there needs to be reciprocal horse-trading of that rather blunt kind is not something I accept.

There are a whole range of issues that need to be determined by agreement, by agreement, the political union treaty goes ahead by the agreement of all Twelve, and we have to reach agreement and respect the areas of particular concern to individual countries. A number of countries have reservations about different aspects of the treaty. The Community, to be successful, will have to respect those and reach an agreed position wherever that is possible.

I have made it clear from the beginning of these negotiations I want an agreement in Europe, but I cannot have any agreement, it has got to be an agreement that I think is in the interests both of the United Kingdom and of Europe and if I can get an agreement on that I will be very pleased and I will come back, I will place that agreement before Parliament and I will fight very hard for it. But that does mean that there will need to be movement from the situation as it has been over the last few days.

QUESTION:

Inaudible.

PRIME MINISTER:

I do not take at all lightly the views of people who have to face terrorist activities from whatever community they come from and whether they are in Northern Ireland or whether they are in the United Kingdom itself, in the mainland of the United Kingdom, it is very serious. It is because of the concern that we have about security matters that we have taken so much action over recent

years to try and end it, it is for that reason that Peter Brooke is engaged perpetually in trying to bring talks about and political development about. It is for that reason that he and Gerry Collins meet regularly and the inter-governmental conference meets every six weeks. It is for that reason the Taoiseach and I have begun a series of dialogues.

What we are concerned about is to stop the circumstances in which some people think they have a right for an aggrievance they feel to murder other people and to blow them to pieces, that is not acceptable. That is what we are here talking about to stop and will go on talking about it and seeing what we can do stop it. And when we catch the people who do that they must face the requisite punishment.

QUESTION:

So I feel very strongly about it and I want to see that violence brought to an end. That is the Taoiseach's view too, that is why we are talking.

MR HAUGHEY:

QUESTION: responsible for what the Irish Times publishes.

Do you recall a similar commitment back in 1980, it did not happen, can I ask both of you why you think it is actually going to become a reality now, eleven years later?

MR HAUGHEY:

I left office shortly after that, but I am back in office now.

PRIME MINISTER:

And I am not proposing to leave office.

MR HAUGHEY:

I think you can take it we are both firmly committed to this, it make common sense. No two countries in Europe have more interests in common today, we have a shared history, not all of which is to our mutual benefit, but certainly today we are partners in the Anglo-Irish Agreement, we are members of the European Community together, and the two countries have at personal, social, economic level enormous ties. So it makes sense that we should meet regularly and discuss matters of mutual bilateral interest, but also matters of European interest and international matters.

QUESTION:

Mr Haughey, the Irish Times says you have a new initiative on Northern Ireland, can you tell us what it is?

MR HAUGHEY:

I am not responsible for what the Irish Times publishes.

QUESTION:

Do you have a new initiative on Northern Ireland?

MR HAUGHEY:

We have agreed, the Prime Minister and myself, to meet regularly to discuss all aspects of Anglo-Irish relations, including political progress in Northern Ireland.

QUESTION:

Do you regard the Anglo-Irish Agreement as merely a foundation which should be built upon?

MR HAUGHEY:

Yes, certainly.

QUESTION:

In what way would you like it built upon?

MR HAUGHEY:

I would like to see, and the British Prime Minister agrees with this, that we should extend it to have other Ministers present, and as your communique in front of you says, we would see the advent of the Single Market next year as offering a wide range of opportunities for greater north-south cooperation in areas like energy, agriculture, tourism and so on. So the inter-governmental conference could play a part in encouraging that sort of cooperation.

QUESTION:

Could I ask you a little bit more about your hopes for the Maastricht summit, where do you stand now, is the issue of federalism off the table, do you think you have achieved something on that and at what cost?

PRIME MINISTER:

As far as I was concerned the issue of federalism was never on the table, a federal destiny is not our view of the European Community, we have made that perfectly clear right from the start. As to where I stand across the whole range of issues, I invite you, Neil, to read the speech I made in the House of Commons last week, very comprehensive, very clear and has not changed.

QUESTION:

(END OF TRANSCRIPT A, CONTINUED ON TRANSCRIPT B)

also say you want to see further movement before the treaty is acceptable to you. Does that mean that you are now less optimistic of a settlement?

PRIME MINISTER:

It was always going to be the case from the very beginning that many of the things that I hope will form part of the final settlement at Maastricht would not be agreed until the Heads of Government got round the table. Until everything is agreed, a great deal will not be agreed. That has always been the position.

FROM JAMES LEE FOR COI RADIO TECHNICAL SERVICES

TRANSCRIPT OF JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE

GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. JOHN MAJOR,

AND THE IRISH PRIME MINISTER, MR. HAUGHEY,

IN DUBLIN

ON WEDNESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 1991

TRANSCRIPT B - (CONTINUED FROM TRANSCRIPT A)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (CONTD)

(NOTE: SOME QUESTIONS INAUDIBLE)

QUESTION:

You say that you are rejecting any kind of horse-trading; you also say you want to see further movement before the treaty is acceptable to you. Does that mean that you are now less optimistic of a settlement?

PRIME MINISTER:

It was always going to be the case from the very beginning that many of the things that I hope will form part of the final settlement at Maastricht would not be agreed until the Heads of Government got round the table. Until everything is agreed, a great deal will not be agreed. That has always been the position.

What I said a moment ago about horse-trading is that it is a very simplistic way to conduct negotiations to say: "If you happen to make a concession here, there must be a corresponding concession there!" That is not the way to conduct extremely complex negotiations of this sort where national interests are at stake across a whole range of issues.

We must take the negotiations in the round. We must look at them and then we must make a decision when the negotiations are completed as to whether the whole package collectively is in the interests of Europe and in the interests of the United Kingdom.

Let me make one further point: there is no single country in the European Community who at the end of Tuesday if we reach an agreement will be absolutely satisfied with every aspect of that agreement. All of them will not be. All of them will have something in that agreement that they for preference would not have had and we will all have to make adjustments: is the balance of the package right and is it a package that we can go back and present to our individual domestic parliaments as a package we should sign up to? That is what we have to consider, looking at the whole thing collectively.

QUESTION:

Are you more or less optimistic that that can be achieved?

PRIME MINISTER:

I don't know yet whether it can be achieved. I have set out what I believe needs to be done in the House of Commons. As to whether it can be achieved, I will know that when we have the discussions at Maastricht - I can't make judgements of that in advance.

We don't agree on everything. We have different priorities going
What I have said consistently is that it is in the interests of Europe to get an agreement. That is not just my view; that is the view of every Minister who will actually be at the Maastricht Summit. With that collective will, I would hope we can reach agreement.

MR. HAUGHEY:

I can confirm that the Prime Minister in my conversation with him is quite clear that he wants an agreement in Maastricht and so do I - there is no doubt about that.

QUESTION:

Could I ask you a question based on the communique? Since believing things to be full of sweetness and light, what did you disagree about?

PRIME MINISTER:

That is a new definition of optimism! I absolutely agree on each part of every aspect of that. There is a broad measure of agreement and of objective in many of those areas but it would be very difficult to say one agreed with every dot and comma and I

MR. HAUGHEY:

Unfortunately, Prime Minister, this man was here with us in Dublin for a long time and then he went over to London and he learned these bad habits.

We don't agree on everything. We have different priorities going to Maastricht naturally. We in Ireland, a small peripheral country, have our own priorities and the things that we will be looking for but, as the Prime Minister pointed out, when agreement is reached, as we hope it will be, there will be things that we will not be all that enamoured about but by and large we hope that the overall balance of the agreement will be to everybody's advantage.

QUESTION:

Do you agree on defence and the social charter?

MR. HAUGHEY:

Not fully, not totally.

PRIME MINISTER:

There are very substantial areas of agreement in both those areas but I don't think when one runs down the Community that you find any two countries who would wholly and absolutely agree on each part of every aspect of that. There is a broad measure of agreement and of objective in many of those areas but it would be very difficult to say one agreed with every dot and comma and I

think that is true even of those countries who traditionally have been closer together on individual issues.

QUESTION:

Mr. Haughey, did you get a legal binding commitment by the richer countries to increase the structural funds for poorer countries from Mr. Major?

PRIME MINISTER:

It is not in my gift.

MR. HAUGHEY:

It is not in his gift.

QUESTION:

... the richer countries are opposed to binding legal agreements to increase structural funds... you are all in favour of political statements....

MR. HAUGHEY:

The shorthand we use there is "economic and social cohesion" and so far we have been able to have inserted in the treaty language a number of important principles which acknowledge the importance of economic and social cohesion and that certain steps must be taken in regard to it.

In the Maastricht discussions and negotiations, we will be looking for firmer guarantees as to the future of the implementation of the principles of economic and social cohesion but just as everything else, there is still a great deal of negotiation to take place.

QUESTION:

What was Mr. Major's view on the commitment to binding.....

MR. HAUGHEY:

Well I will answer for him on that one.

PRIME MINISTER:

I might say a word myself too!

MR. HAUGHEY:

Because he knows that this is a matter of great importance and significance to Ireland, he will be as favourably disposed as possible! (laughter)

PRIME MINISTER:

Perhaps I might add a word to that (laughter) We need to examine the details of what it means, how it would work and what can be done. I am perfectly content for us to look at the general principle of cohesion - I think it is quite wise for us to do so - and I am perfectly content for us to agree at the Summit the areas that we should actually look at but these are decisions that will

affect not just beneficiary countries, not just the relatively rich countries, but all the countries of the Community.

We do actually need some solid facts, some solid research, some solid background. We need to know what it affects and how it affects and in what time-scale and to what degree. None of that is yet clear and it is for that reason that you can't make binding agreements.

What I am perfectly prepared to say is that I understand the concern that is felt in Ireland about that. I understand that very clearly and other countries have the same feeling and I think it is right for us to examine the matter and make it clear that we will examine it but we cannot reach conclusions on it until that examination is over, not in advance of that examination.

If one wants to get the wrong answer not just for one country but for every country, then you start making commitments without having examined what those commitments might mean and for that reason I think we have to take this measure in detail when we have that information before us and when we have to discuss all the financial perspectives.

QUESTION:

Can I ask you please for your comments on the latest French proposal on this that if there isn't agreement by 1996, then the whole thing will go to majority voting by 1998?

PRIME MINISTER:

I haven't seen the text of anything the French may have produced. A new proposal on one or other aspect of the treaty emerges out of every 15 seconds at the moment from somewhere or other. I haven't seen it.

But nothing can change the position that I have set out before on economic and monetary union and that is the position that the British Government and the British Parliament will want to decide upon at the time Stage 3 looms and be able to decide on that without commitment at that time. That means we need to know not just when but whether we go into Stage 3 at that stage. No new commitments can change that.

At first blush, the French proposal is not attractive; I have not myself examined it, but in any event, even if people decided they would go forward by qualified majority vote, no qualified majority vote could take the British Parliament and the British Government into economic and monetary union unless the British Government and the British Parliament wished to go into it.

MR. HAUGHEY:

Our position is that we are different from Great Britain in that regard and again, that is because as a small peripheral country we have a different set of priorities. We are wholeheartedly in favour of economic and monetary union because we believe that it is in this way that we can best secure our economic future.

QUESTION:
We have been negotiating for 12 months on the details of economic and monetary union and so far we don't feel that at the end of the day we will have any particular difficulty with what will emerge.

QUESTION:

Mr. Haughey
In view of the recent in London, will you use that time to assess the success or otherwise of Mr. Brooke's purely political initiative and decide on whether or not.....

MR. HAUGHEY:

The Brooke initiative or the Brooke talks are ongoing and of course there will be intergovernmental conferences to assess progress in that regard. Our bilateral, twice-annual meetings will be of a much wider scope; they will naturally review progress made in regard to Secretary Brooke's initiative or any other matters in Northern Ireland but they will also range over the totality of relationships between the two countries.

QUESTION:

Will you have to from both governments working to prepare for that first bilateral meeting?

MR. HAUGHEY:

That is the normal process, yes.

PRIME MINISTER:

No.

QUESTION:

Can the European Community tackle the problem of Northern Ireland? Does it have the scope for that? Recently, the European Office in Brussels referred to.....

MR. HAUGHEY:

I wouldn't see the Community becoming involved in anything purely political but I do see the whole evolution of the Community as having an enormous impact on the affairs of Northern Ireland and indeed the whole island of Ireland. In particular, the advent of the single market, for instance, is bound to have major beneficial repercussions on the possibilities for economic cooperation between the two parts of Ireland and I also believe that as Europe moves closer to real union - to economic, monetary and political union - that that general movement will have a beneficial effect on the community relationships in Northern Ireland. If all the people in Europe, particularly the nations of Europe who in the past have been enemies and gone to war with each other, can now sink their differences in a new exciting and forward-looking European union, surely that must have a message for all the people in Ireland and particularly in Northern Ireland?

QUESTION:

(inaudible)

PRIME MINISTER:

No.

QUESTION:

Taoiseach, one question. How is it compatible that you are asking in Maastricht for more political union but you are not prepared to accept that the EC be involved in political involvement in the case of Northern Ireland?

MR. HAUGHEY:

I was asked about the European Community getting involved politically in Northern Ireland. I don't think there is any possibility of that no more than the Community will be involved in political affairs in Dublin.

PRIME MINISTER:

Common foreign policy is for the Community to collectively use its weight externally - that is what it does very successfully.

MR. HAUGHEY:

I don't see what the contradiction is.

QUESTION:

You stressed the importance of dialogue and in Northern Ireland. Is it in any way a message also.....

PRIME MINISTER:

The prospect of getting together and talking about the difficulties that people face seems to me the only rational way to move towards areas of agreement. I believe in that prospect. I

want to reach agreement and I think a proper dialogue which enables a better understanding of the positions of people who may be quite sharply opposed on some things is the only credible and rational way to proceed so I do want to see such a dialogue.

I have watched with admiration the way in which Peter Brooke has brought together parties to talk - I think it is wholly admirable - and I think that principle is one that bears very wide application.

QUESTION:

The Deputy of the Peter Robinson said recently that the Union no longer existed in any recognisable form and that Britain was in fact slowly pushing Northern Ireland out of the Union. Would the Prime Minister like to comment on that?

PRIME MINISTER:

I didn't see the comment and I didn't see the context in which the comment was made but the British position has been perfectly clear for many years and it hasn't changed.

QUESTION:

Prime Minister, can I ask you a question about security? The communique talks about the two governments building on a high

level of security cooperation. One of your MPs, Ken Hinds, in Dublin with the British-Irish Parliamentary Group, did express reservations about cross-border security and suggested that failures on the southern side were costing lives in the north.

What have you got to say about that?

PRIME MINISTER:

There is good cooperation between the security forces and I welcome that but we do know that the terrorists do try and exploit the border - we have seen that over many years - and what we want to see is whether more can be done to deny them that resource but I do not believe that elaborating upon that would be at all useful.

QUESTION:

Mr. Major, the Unionists argue that you will have to restart these talks from scratch. Do you think that you should go back to the drawing board? What is your attitude to it?

PRIME MINISTER:

My attitude is that I wish to see the talks restarted. I want to see Strand 1 restarted. That is what we are working for. The sooner we can get that done the better and I think often it is better to stick to those propositions and make sure we get the talks started. That is the most important thing for us - by "us" I mean the British Government, the Irish Government - and for all

the communities in Northern Ireland and that is the direction in which we are working.

QUESTION:

(inaudible but would Mr. Major consider personally asking the political parties in Northern Ireland to come and see him if there were a breakdown of the talks so that they could be restarted)

PRIME MINISTER:

I think everybody knows - and if they didn't know they have certainly known from what we have put in the communique and what I have said today - that we actually want those talks to recommence. That is a general message.

(END OF TRANSCRIPT B AND END OF WHOLE TRANSCRIPT)