

FROM

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NORTHERN IRELAND Information Service

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MINISTER, ADAM INGRAM SPEAKING AT MARKETHILL 16.9.97

ADAM INGRAM

I thought it important that I come up to see the site of the incident and quite frankly it is quite appalling what has happened. You can see the effects of it yourself. And it has got to be completely and utterly condemned. Those who have carried out this action have two purposes in mind I would suggest. It clearly was to try and cause as much damage and possible and perhaps even loss of life. Fortunately no one has been injured as a consequence of it and also to effect the talks process and that is.....

MEDIA

Does the Government still accept the validity of the IRA ceasefire?

ADAM INGRAM

No one as has yet claimed responsibility for this action so we have got to take all of that, in the round. We have got to judge on the basis of facts and not on suppositions. It is important that we get the facts of the matter established first of all.

MEDIA

Do you accept the IRA statement that they were not responsible?

ADAM INGRAM

Well I haven't heard that statement. That is news to me but as I say we have got to establish the facts first of all. We will act on the basis of facts.

MEDIA

Do you think it will have a disruptive effect on the talks?

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ADAM INGRAM

Well all of those who have signed up from the Mitchell Principles have got to continue to abide by those principles and we have got to try and move forward those talks as best we can and every effort will be made by the Government and hopefully by all the participants to the talks to take this process forward.

MEDIA

The Ulster Unionists say that Sinn Fein should be thrown out of the talks as a result of this what is your reaction?

ADAM INGRAM

Clearly they speak for themselves. I am speaking for the Government in this and we will be talking to all the participants to the talks process and those that we hope to get around the table to examine just what has happened here.

MEDIA

Security Minister have we been told where actually this van has come from?

ADAM INGRAM

I am saying to you that we have no evidence yet all of that is still in the process of being established and clearly we will take advice on the basis of the information which we get and then advise my colleagues involved in the talks process.

MEDIA

And the types of explosives that were used?

ADAM INGRAM

None of that has yet been established.

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MEDIA

After the briefings that you have been given is it fair to assume that the republican family, some part of the republican family are responsible for this?

ADAM INGRAM

I think I have made it clear that we want to establish the full facts. I think it is wrong to try and attribute blame when nothing has yet been claimed and we do want to fully establish the facts before we make judgement on this.

MEDIA

Do you think this is a fatal blow for the talks process given the fact that the Unionists have more or less accepted that this has been carried out by the IRA?

ADAM INGRAM

Well again that is coming to conclusions that are not yet based on the full facts of the matter and what I have said and what I will repeat is that we do want to establish who has carried this out. If we can. If someone is prepared to take responsibility for it I think that clearly is indicating what their motives were and from which part of the paramilitaries organisation has carried this out. But that has still got to be established before and then we will move to conclusions based upon it.

MEDIA

Generally speaking how serious is the situation given the fact that this bomb has gone off on the day when you are hoping to have the multi-party talks taking place at Stormont?

ADAM INGRAM

Well we have always said that the terrorists have not gone away. That is quite clear and that we have not dropped our guard. We will continue to ensure that we

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maintain a very active watch on what is going on and we are going to try and stop this kind of event happening in the future.

MEDIA

But surely some republican groups are responsible for this. You must face it.

ADAM INGRAM

Well we have been trying to establish the facts before we face of facts and that is what we are trying to do at this very point in time.

MEDIA

But if no one claims responsibility are you confident you will be able to determine who is responsible?

ADAM INGRAM

Well you should talk to the Chief Constable and those who will be carrying out that type of detailed investigations. They obviously advise us on the basis of various evidence which they can find and then attribute possible blame for this but we are not at that stage yet.