

FROM

(WED) 12. 18' 96 18:36/ST. 17:42/NO. 3580102367 P 7/19

PRIME MINISTER DOORSTEP AT RYOBI, CARRICKFERGUS

18.12.96

INTERVIEWER

Could I just ask you against the backdrop of what President Clinton said yesterday, in terms of the whole peace process etc, he said that following a ceasefire Sinn Fein would be invited to participate in the talks fairly soon thereafter. Would you concur with those remarks?

PRIME MINISTER

I think the President made it clear that words and deeds were necessary. That is exactly the position I have made for some time. We need to see both words and deeds. Once we are satisfied that the deeds support the words then there is no need for undue delay.

INTERVIEWER

Would you use the word 'soon' though?

PRIME MINISTER

Well I think we would have to see how soon we could determine that the deeds followed the words. I am not going to put a timescale on it except to repeat what I have said in the past. No one is looking for undue delay. I would wish for us to get to a position where we can have inclusive talks, but they must be genuine inclusive talks and we need to know that any future ceasefire is a genuine ceasefire, so we first need to see what is said about it, secondly we need to monitor the deeds to make sure it is genuine. Providing that is so let us get on with the talks.

INTERVIEWER

Are you disappointed that the talks are now stuck?

PRIME MINISTER

Yes of course. I would like the talks to make progress. But we always expected that there would be moments when it would be stuck. I don't think anybody believed that this was going to be a smooth easy passage from beginning to end, so of course whenever it is stuck it is a disappointment and when there is a disappointment we have to try harder to see whether we can unblock whatever is causing the stoppage, that is what we are seeking to do.

INTERVIEWER

Can I ask you given the breakdown of the pairing arrangements at Westminster, is Derek Conway's job as a whip now safe?

PRIME MINISTER

FROM

(WED) 12. 18' 96 18:36/ST. 17:42/NO. 3580102367 P 8/19

Well I gather that the pairing arrangements broke down last night and so far as I hear, though I have no corroboration yet large number of Labour pairs were just withdrawn, so I don't really know what is happening. We will have to wait and see when we get back after Christmas.

INTERVIEWER

Do you regret the action of your Whips Office though in double pairings?

I think we must get back after Christmas and look and see what's happened. I certainly regret we didn't get the bill through last night that we hoped to get.

INTERVIEWER

Do you see this as a farewell visit?

PRIME MINISTER

No I shall be back many times Eamonn, I look forward to answering your questions on this and many matters on many future occasions.