

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2015/89/76
Creation Date(s):	15 November 1985
Extent and medium:	1 page
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
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The Speaker's Rooms
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Statement of Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
November 15, 1985

THANK YOU MR. PRESIDENT FOR INVITING ME TO JOIN YOU IN EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE HISTORIC ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT REACHED TODAY. I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE.

I CONGRATULATE THE LEADERS OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN FOR TAKING THIS IMPORTANT AND COURAGEOUS STEP OF CONSTRUCTING A FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AGREEMENT TODAY DEMONSTRATES IN UNMISTAKABLE FASHION THAT THE WAY FORWARD IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS NOT THROUGH THE BULLET AND THE BOMB BUT RATHER THROUGH DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE FREELY ELECTED LEADERS OF TWO GREAT WESTERN DEMOCRACIES.

I AM HOPEFUL THAT THIS AGREEMENT WILL PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR BUILDING A BRIDGE OF HOPE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO GREAT TRADITIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND. WE KNOW FROM OUR EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA THAT DIVERSITY CAN BE A SOURCE OF STRENGTH IN A SOCIETY RATHER THAN A SOURCE OF DIVISION.

BEGINNING TODAY MUCH MUST BE DONE TO BUILD A LASTING PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND. BECAUSE OF THIS, I AM PLEASED TO HEAR THE PRESIDENT REAFFIRM THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO HELP PROMOTE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN A CONCRETE WAY.

I CAN ASSURE THE PRESIDENT THAT AS SPEAKER I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO SEE THAT SUCH A COMMITMENT, INCLUDING APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, IS HONORED BY THE CONGRESS AS SWIFTLY AND AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE. I AM SURE THAT MY COLLEAGUES SENATORS KENNEDY AND MOYNIHAN AND CONGRESSMEN BOB MICHEL, TOM FOLEY AND JOE McDADE WILL JOIN WITH ME AND THE MANY FRIENDS OF IRELAND ON CAPITOL HILL TO HELP MAKE THIS IMPORTANT AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

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