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## CRUEL CONFLICT

Now I want to address one problem which is a constant personal grief to me, and that is the conflict in the North of Ireland. It is a cruel, chronic conflict.

A conflict without nobility.

A conflict leading nowhere but to mistrust, despair and bitterness.

3,000 deaths. 3,000 lives stopped. 3,000 families scarred forever. 30,000 people injured — some of them for life.

The people of the North deserve a better way of life. They deserve a political resolution of the conflict which would transform our relations with each other, a resolution which would release the powerful potential for development on this entire island, which has been imprisoned for over 20 years. We must create a new path to peace.

We must stop thinking so much in the past and start thinking in the future. That is what Seán Lemass did 30 years ago when he initiated a good and generous policy of détente and co-operation. He recognised that the ultimate achievement of a united Ireland could only be the final fruit of a fundamental improvement in relationships between the people who live on both parts of this island.

Wolfe Tone spent his life trying to overcome sectarianism, which for him was the principal obstacle to national independence. Those who fought for the Republic in 1916 and 1922-23 knew when to stop — to prevent unnecessary suffering and bloodshed. No one lost by their decision. The attempt by Republican paramilitaries to coerce the Unionist people has no historical sanction, and many of our leaders in the 1916-1921 period publicly acknowledged the futility of any such attempt. Participation in violence, or defending the right to engage in it, precludes involvement in any comprehensive dialogue on legitimate political aims, or grievances which can only happen once the use of violence is definitively renounced.



*An Taoiseach, Mr. Albert Reynolds T.D., Leader of Fianna Fáil at a recent meeting in London with Prime Minister The Right Honourable Mr. John Major M.P.*

## ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

We have a valuable foundation for future progress in the whole Anglo-Irish process established since 1980. Both Governments are totally committed to the Agreement, until we can transcend it with something even better. We are also committed to the holding of regular Summits at least twice yearly.

Because of the priority I attach to the North of Ireland, I held my first Summit with Prime Minister John Major, just 15 days after coming into office. I also had a good meeting with Mr Neil Kinnock. I am glad to say that the problems of the North of Ireland are very high on the Prime Minister's agenda, and that is a very important first step on the road to peace.

Both Governments will give a firm and positive lead in re-establishing new political dialogue, the resumption of which will be widely welcomed.

The role of the two communities in the North of Ireland, and of their elected political leaders, is also of the utmost importance. The democratic leaders of constitutional nationalism know that we fully support their untiring search for dialogue and for political structures based not on domination but on an honourable accommodation between both traditions on this island.

We know what the Nationalist people have been through. We will assist them in combating all manifestations of discrimination, injustice or intolerance. We will uphold their right to pursue their rights and aspirations through peaceful democratic means.

Nothing can call into question the fact that Northern Nationalists, and indeed Unionists to the extent they themselves choose, are as fully and unquestionably Irish as any person in this island. The policies of this Government will always start from that reality.

I am personally committed to exploring every avenue in order to try to put an end to this aching national misery. Because ultimately, this misery is the misery of people: people who happen to live on this island. For that reason, I would like — from this forum and on your behalf — to speak, tonight, to the Unionist community. To speak directly to them. Because they are a community that I know can make a magnificent contribution to the fuller development of this island once peace is restored.

I know that these last twenty years have been a time of cruel suffering. I understand your anxiety about the future. Your political anxiety, and your day-to-day anxiety about the very quality of life for young people surrounded by continuing violence.

Sadly, at different times, each tradition in Ireland has tended to ignore the other for political purposes, creating a feeling of isolation, siege, bereavement and loss.

Now and again, though, an example from one community stops both communities in their tracks and teaches a painful but powerful lesson.

One of those lessons was taught us recently, when a widow, freshly bereaved from Teebane, reached out to victims in the other community. An earlier lesson was taught us by Gordon Wilson.

Forgiveness. No retaliation. That was the lesson from both of those good people.

## PSYCHOLOGY OF RESPECT

To call for forgiveness and for no retaliation demands huge courage and grace. And it shows the quality and character of all the people of the North of Ireland, Nationalists and Unionists — a quality and character often obscured by stereotypes and slogans. The task facing all of us on this island is a vast and complicated one. It is about transforming a psychology of mutual rejection into a psychology of mutual respect.

Please, let us try to do that.

We are all perhaps wiser now than we were twenty years ago about what we can and cannot demand of each other.

We have learned the hard way that without agreement and consent on both sides, there will be no lasting stability. Nothing to build on. The lessons have been hard in the learning. Hard in the learning... But it is time to turn to dialogue and put those hard-learned lessons to work. In a practical way that will liberate us from the mistakes of the past.

I welcome the wish of the Unionist representatives to raise Constitutional issues with me. Let them all be on the conference table. Articles 2 and 3 as well as the Government of Ireland Act, 1920 — the one that partitioned this country in the first instance. At that time a United Ireland was the ultimate aim of British policy to be brought about by agreement. But in the meantime it always envisaged that the effects of partition would be minimized by close political links and economic co-operation between North and South. The European Community offers a new framework, new possibilities, free of the connotations of the past. It offers a context in which we can build on the assets of this island — free up the human potential of this island, while recognising differences and diversity.

In particular I welcome contacts between the CBI Northern Ireland and the CII. I am very interested in ideas that have recently been put forward by the Chairman of the Ulster Bank to create a single economy in Ireland, vis-a-vis Europe, agriculture, tourism, export promotion, and in due course investment.

Because of the new widespread interest in the subject, I propose to publish shortly a study on the prospects and possibilities of North-South economic co-operation against the background of the Single Market, as a stimulus to intensified contacts and discussions.

Constant, creative and open contact we must have if we are to stop the grief and the pointless, fruitless suffering of the twenty years. If Europe offers us a larger context within which to explore our national problems, it also offers us an environment within which we can express ourselves and influence the future.

## EUROPEAN BREAKTHROUGH

The last five years have seen a dramatic breakthrough for the European Community but also for Ireland's relationship with it. Across our continent, fundamental democratic values, economic freedom and the social rights that go with it have triumphed. Ireland is part of a great historic enterprise. The most advanced form of international organisation the world has ever seen. A force for stability in a rapidly changing and volatile world. 1992 is the year of Europe. The date set for the completion of the Single European Market of 340 million people, and for the ratification of the Treaty of European Union signed in Maastricht. We have refused, regardless of short-term considerations, to opt out of political, economic or social progress. We will not be content with a place in the second division. Later this year, the people of Ireland will be asked to approve the Treaty on European Union. The Government will shortly publish a White Paper describing the provisions of the new Treaty and assessing its impact. A more popular guide will be