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**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

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**For :** Mr. Gerry Corr/mr. Michael Collins  
**From :** Conor O'Riordan  
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**Subj :** Loyalist Delegation in Boston

1. **A loyalist delegation comprising Messrs Hutchinson, Spence and Ervine of the Progressive Unionist Party and Messrs Adams, English and McMichael of the Ulster Democratic Party, participated in a discussion hosted by the New England Circle in Boston College today. The event programme is attached.**
2. **About 300 people attended. The audience was a mix of mainstream Irish and Irish-Americans and students and faculty of BC. The discussion began with opening statements from Mr. John McMichael and Mr. David Ervine followed by Q&A. Detailed direct speech reports on both are attached for information.**

Opening Statements (direct speech not verbatim)

**Mr. John McMichael.**

*We are here to redress a perceived imbalance in how Irish America views the situation in N.I. due in part because people from the Unionist community chose not to come here to tell their side of the story. You'll be surprised by our views. Politics in N.I. has for too long been about conflict and polarisation. After 25 years of pain and suffering we welcome the peace. Everyone has been a victim of the conflict. Now everyone must try to find a solution. We all hope for compromise. We want to build a new and modern democracy within N.I. based on peace and reconciliation. After 25 years it's hard to explain the the extent of the lack of interaction between the two communities. We have been polarised by the conflict. Now the main protagonists on either side have come to the same conclusion. Peace and a settlement can only be achieved through non-violence. It doesn't matter how long you fight at the end of the day talking has to begin. We want to be part of the peace process. We must not allow N.I. to slide into another 25 years of conflict. My father was killed in 1987 but I am prepared to sit down and negotiate peace with those who killed him. I don't want another family to go through what my family went through. Suffering is the same whether its catholic or protestant. The problem of N.I. is so complex even people there have difficulty understanding it. All I would ask is that you take us at face value. Accept our genuine willingness to build a working and a lasting solution. What is past is past. We must look to the future and begin to live and work together.*

**Mr. David Irvine.**

*I am delighted to have this opportunity to articulate a Unionist viewpoint. Times have changed. We are no longer in the bunkers shouting expletives at each other. We want to enter the modern world after 25 years of hell. Our society has been brutalised. It has become acclimatised to violence. Real issues such as housing, inward investment and drugs have been ignored. We have concentrated only on our constitutional differences and on how to stay alive. That is why we formed the PUP and the UDP to better the lot of our communities and to articulate a unionist philosophy. We want to focus on the social issues and the economy. Our desire to end violence is consistent with this. We are delighted that peace has broken out but this is only the beginning. We want to build a democracy for, of and by the people. Class issues have been neglected in the face of simplistic nationalist or Unionist attitudes. The two communities have had little opportunity to get to know each other as neighbours. We want to create new government structures in N.I. based on proportional representation and a special relationship with the people and the government of the Irish Republic. The new N.I. will not be a majoritarian society. Not 51 per cent. That is not workable in a divided zero sum society. We are prepared to turn democracy on its head. We are resolved not to allow our political battles to degenerate again into bloody warfare. We want a wholesome society. We want our children to know the meaning of true reconciliation.*

Q&A

Q. What is your understanding of the constitutional position of N.I. within the U.K.?

A. (Spence) The constitutional position of N.I. within the U.K. is guaranteed by PM Major and by Albert Reynolds. The Joint Declaration accepted that there would be no change in that relationship without agreement. This is accepted by the two governments. Bill Clinton also accepts that. We believe N.I.'s position within the U.K. is safe. (Ervine) The status of N.I. as part of the U.K. is recognised by all the nations in the U.N. Violence has now ended and talks are beginning. We must acknowledge the real world and remember that grandiose ideas will not work in a divided society. Small and reasonable steps should only be considered.

Q. Would it not be a positive step if the government released say a quarter of the republican and loyalist prisoners? Would the integration of the Protestant and Catholic school systems in the North be a positive step?

A. (Spence) We already have a document in place on this. We want to sweep away the awful past. We are looking at the personal records of loyalist prisoners and the mechanics of a phased release. We want to see the development of a compassionate resettlement programme including grants. Resettlement into family and community life will be difficult. We need the necessary wherewithal. We need resettlement centres. This would involve the abolition of the Hurd principles which prohibit the giving of funds to a person or body with paramilitary connections. This is one of the proposals we have. I have an envelope here dated 13/12/84 with three pennies in it. I went to prison on 27/6/66 and served 18 years. On my release I was given back my three pennies and one pound to help me resettle. It didn't even cover my busfare from the prison. (Hutchinson) This is a chronic problem and we need money to settle it. On education the main opposition to integrated education is the catholic church. I will send my 11 year old son to an integrated school in September. This is not a problem for ordinary people. But the church talks about the evils of the border but you can't expect our young people to come together if there are borders in education. (Ervine) The greatest problem is the borders in the mind.

Q. Like SF you represent working class people. Down the road when only left right issues divide the political parties could you see yourselves on the same side as SF?

A. (McMichael) Look at the NILP which enjoyed considerable support up to 1969 when they were forced out. They ceased to exist as the two communities were forced to fight the politics of political sectarianism. We need to change our way of thinking. We have all suffered from bad government. The two communities should come together to determine their future. This won't happen overnight particularly after 25 years of polarisation. We look forward to a time when politics in N.I. won't reflect differences in religion.

Q. I would like to note the absence of women from party politics in N.I. What specific steps do your parties have to open the gates of opportunity to women?

A. (English) We recognise the major role played by women in N.I. They have suffered particularly these past 25 years. We support an enhanced role for them in politics in future.



(Spence) Women have been an oasis of sanity in N.I. Women have kept our society alive when the men went to prison or the graveyard. What we have now is the opportunity for all aspects of our lives to take on the notion of normality. Everything has been bastardised. Women are a sensitive barometer of developments in N.I.. If they begin to get edgy again I'll emigrate. (Hutchinson) I have been accused of being a feminist. I hope more women come forward to join political parties.

Q. The conflict in N.I. is often characterised as a religious war. Is there a role for the churches in the future negotiations?

A. (Spence) N.I. was never a wholesome society. Society was always divided. We were born in separate maternity wards. We played in different school yards. Our teachers went to different training schools. Teachers unions were split. The situation is often described in religious terms but that is only for identification, the real difference is one of ideologies. (Ervine) There is actually excellent work being done by Churchmen. They played a part in the ceasefire but they are only making up for the last 600 years. I am not sure the churches represent the working class. The four police forces in N.I. have created a degree of stability in that they have kept ordinary criminals in check. That is a plus for the long term. (English) My experience of the role of churchmen is very positive. I would mention Fr. Reid, Gerry Reynolds and Roy Magee. I have great hope for the future.

Q. What has to be done to win the trust of the minority community vis-a-vis policing in N.I.?

A. The RUC has a 93% protestant, 7% catholic makeup. Catholics have been discouraged from joining. The imbalance is not the result of discrimination. We need a police force that commands the acceptance of both communities. We no longer need a force to contain the terrorist problem but a community force. (English) There will be change. Don't push us too fast. We have to bring people with us. This is a fragile peace. It might not hold. We need time. (Ervine) Look at the Rodney King School of diplomacy. In Barcelona the police live in leafy land because they are paid more than the working class. We have 13,000 police and we need only 5000 or 6000. There's a problem about fair employment. We're not going to solve this overnight but push and shove makes people resistant to change. (Hutchinson) A name change won't do it. Accountability to the community is required.

Q. What of the role of the paramilitaries in the coming negotiations? Is there a role for the international community to move the process forward?

A. (Ervine) The British Government has agreed to meet SF bilaterally and eventually representatives of loyalist paramilitaries. The problem begins with the round table talks. Loyalist paramilitaries have no electoral mandate. They have radical and progressive ideas. It is dangerous for any section of our society to be left out of a debate on a new society. We would hope that loyalist paramilitaries would be able to test whether they could obtain an electoral mandate. (English) The views of the paramilitary prisoners played a major part in the ceasefire. They have to be consulted by their representatives all along the way. We have to be allowed to consult the prisoners. (McMichael) People involved in paramilitary activities have shown dedication to a political cause. They should be allowed to channel that dedication into political

debate. Extremists advance the most moderate views. It is wrong to exclude any section of society. Although any agreement will be put to the people, if crucial elements are excluded agreement is less likely. We hope to play a major role. Working class loyalism has strong support. Our electoral strength is not reflected in community support. People who vote for Paisley don't support him, they really vote against Hume. If we can agree a framework that commands support our real electoral support will be clear. (Spence) Jail is the greatest politicisation centre. We now know how poorly we were represented by the main Unionist parties.

Q. What about future relations with the Irish Republic ?

A. (McMichael) I was born in 1969 - the start of the troubles. All I know is conflict. I have no historical baggage. The reality is that the Irish Republic exists as a separate state. It evolved separately, its people are different. I don't want to see a role for the Republic in the internal affairs of my country. I accept the principle of democracy. If the people of N.I. i.e. a majority in both communities want to have a relationship with the Republic I will accept that. In reality such a situation is unlikely. My main point is that N.I. and the Republic are neighbours in the EU and I will support cooperation in areas of mutual concern. N.I. is in severe economic competition with the Republic. I don't foresee being happy with any role for the Republic, but at the end of the day, it's up to the people of N.I. to decide. (Ervine) The civil servants are working on a framework document - an agenda for future discussions involving the three relationships. Major has stated that the round table conference will put any agreement to the people of N.I. in referenda. The will of the people will decide the extent of the North/South relationship. Two democratic societies should be able to propose anything. Negotiators representing say Canada and the U.S. might agree on something but they must obtain the approval of their parliaments before it is ratified. Similarly the Dail and Stormont should have power to reject or ratify interstate agreements.

Q. Are you ready to talk to SF?

A. (Ervine) We are willing to talk about common issues with our fellow protagonists. That must wait until after our bilateral discussions with the British Government. (McMichael) I will find it difficult to talk to SF but I am prepared to do it to find peace. This process is in its infancy. We must beware of moving too slow or too fast. (Spence) We need time and space. Be patient.

Q. How do you see the role of Irish America?

A. (English) I thought you were all IRA fundraisers. I now know Irish America is determined to be evenhanded. (McMichael) We failed to present our views to Irish America in the past. Our ideas about Irish America have changed. (Ervine) Irish America is determined to be seen to be evenhanded. (Hutchinson) We are glad we came.

Q. Do you see yourselves as Irish?

A. (Ervine) I am British. Its my ethos, my culture, my tradition. I am not as British as Finchley but I am not as Irish as Dublin.