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Meeting between the Taoiseach and  
Mr. Ron Brown, US Secretary of Commerce  
11 December 1994

SPEAKING POINTS

- I am delighted that you are visiting Ireland and that, in the short time available, you have had the opportunity to visit Derry and Dundalk and, of course, attend the Investment Conference in Belfast.
  
- As I am sure you have found everywhere during your visit, there is now a tangible sense of hope and expectation on both sides of the border that the achievement of peace is permanent and can lead to a lasting settlement.
  
- In the three months since the IRA ceasefire, we have made substantive progress in several key areas: the Loyalist paramilitaries have ended violence; the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation has been established here in Dublin; the British Government began first discussions last week with Sinn Féin.
  
- Both Governments are determined to seize the present unique opportunity to consolidate peace. Work on a Framework Document to guide future talks is now well advanced.
  
- It is important to start talks between the parties, including Sinn Féin, and the two Governments at the earliest possible stage.
  
- US role
  
- It is difficult to exaggerate the critical importance of the US role in encouraging the peace process. It has been indispensable.

- The President's personal involvement has been of particular and special importance.
- The economic initiatives announced by the President on 1 November to assist the consolidation of peace have received a very warm welcome on both sides of the border.
- After a quarter of a century of violence there is a strong demand on the ground in Northern Ireland, especially in areas of high deprivation that have suffered most, for evidence that peace will translate into jobs and a better life.
- The focus placed by the President to ensure that peace brings new opportunities for job growth and economic prosperity is, therefore, very welcome.
- We very much welcome the appointment earlier this month of Senator George Mitchell as Special Adviser to the President and the Secretary of State on Economic Initiatives in Ireland. We look forward to working closely with Senator Mitchell.
- As you know, there are at present almost 400 US companies here and they are finding Ireland to be an excellent location. We greatly appreciate their contribution to the Irish economy.
- We view the Philadelphia Conference as of enormous importance and will, of course, be represented at high political level. It will provide a unique forum to show the exceptional attractions of Ireland, North and South, as an investment location.
- The focus of the Conference on the island of Ireland is especially welcome. North-South economic cooperation is of enormous importance in helping us to deploy limited

resources to best mutual advantage.

- We will keep in close contact with the Administration over coming months concerning preparations for the Conference.
  
- I am delighted that you have been able to include Dundalk and Dublin on this visit. The cross-border and all-Ireland dimension are of central importance and must be a full and integral part of our work as we move the peace process forward.
  
- Finally, could I also say I am very glad that you were able to visit an International Fund project in Dundalk earlier today. The Fund is doing excellent work and we much appreciate the continued strong US support for this work.
  
- Again, we greatly appreciate that you have made this visit. I hope you have found it worthwhile and, not least, enjoyable.

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