



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Extract from Taoiseach's Address to U.S.
Congress.

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The all-party talks, for which we have worked so hard, have been delivered. We must have everyone there at those talks, genuinely willing, and able, to negotiate. That can only happen, when everyone has been convinced that violence will never again be used to intimidate opponents, or to control supporters. Never again.

That means a cessation of violence by the IRA that will hold in all circumstances. I know I have the full support of the United States Congress for that vital objective.

In trying to work out a system of Government for Northern Ireland that all can share, in equality and parity of esteem, we are not asking Unionists to cease to be loyally British, or Nationalists to cease to be loyally Irish - any more than the original framers of the United States Constitution ceased to be loyal Virginians, or loyal members of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are asking nationalists and unionists to agree a political framework which will allow them, together, to take on responsibility for solving the day-to-day problems that affect the lives of the million and a half people who live in Northern Ireland, and to do so in harmony and co-operation with the people of Britain and with the rest of Ireland.

Let the parties build on what they already agree about. All parties in Northern Ireland already agree that the form of Government should be democratic, all agree that there should be a Bill of Rights, all agree that there should be links with the rest of the island, each tradition agrees that the other should be respected, and each agrees that the other cannot be coerced.

The Irish Government has no interest in propelling anybody into an arrangement that they do not wish to be part of. We are not motivated by any interest of our own other than that of obtaining an agreement which is reasonable and fair to the aspirations of both communities in Northern Ireland.

Europe has many psychological boundaries that go back to the Thirty Years War and earlier, boundaries of religion, boundaries between one world view and another. One of those psychological boundaries does indeed run through the ancient province of Ulster. Yet similar boundaries in Europe have not prevented the development of agreed political structures, which allow regions and countries, majorities and minorities, to work together in partnership, to the mutual benefit of all their people.