



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2016/52/57
<b>Creation Dates:</b>	5 March 1986
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	3 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Embargoed for release upon delivery.  
March 5, 1986 - 9:30 a.m.

Remarks of Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.  
Before the House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East  
March 5, 1986

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY TODAY BEFORE THIS DISTINGUISHED SUBCOMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF PROVIDING U.S. ASSISTANCE TO THE PROCESS OF BRINGING PEACE TO NORTHERN IRELAND.

LAST FALL, THE GOVERNMENTS OF IRELAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM TOOK A DRAMATIC STEP FORWARD TOWARDS BUILDING A FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE ANGLO-IRISH ACCORD IS A RECOGNITION BY THE GOVERNMENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND THAT THE VIOLENCE OF THE LAST SEVENTEEN YEARS COULD ONLY BE STOPPED BY BRINGING AN END TO THE POLITICAL STALEMATE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND PROVIDING INSTEAD A NEW POLITICAL PROCESS. THIS PROCESS PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR DEVELOPING TIES OF COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO TRADITIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

BEGINNING IN 1977, SENATORS KENNEDY AND MOYNIHAN, GOVERNOR CAREY AND I ISSUED A SERIES OF ST. PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENTS CONDEMNING THE VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND URGING IRISH-AMERICANS TO WITHHOLD THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE I.R.A. TERRORISTS WHO WERE BRINGING DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO THE LAND OF THEIR FOREBEARS.

I BELIEVE THAT TERRORISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND CONSTITUTES A DIRECT THREAT TO DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND. THE ASSASSINATIONS AND ATTEMPTED MURDERS OF ELECTED OFFICIALS STRIKES AT THE HEART OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. FURTHERMORE, THE SENSELESS MURDERS OF MORE THAN TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED IRISHMEN AND ENGLISHMEN, CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS, OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES HAS BROUGHT TERRIBLE GRIEF AND SUFFERING TO ONE OF EUROPE'S OLDEST AND MOST RESPECTED CULTURES. THE TIME HAS CERTAINLY COME TO REPLACE TERROR AND RELIGIOUS HATRED IN NORTHERN IRELAND WITH A COMMITMENT TO POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.

THE ANGLO-IRISH ACCORD IS THE LAW OF THE LAND IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND. IT IS A HISTORIC COMMITMENT BY TWO WESTERN DEMOCRACIES TO PROMOTE AN END TO CIVIL STRIFE IN A FAIR, JUST AND CREATIVE WAY.

BEGINNING IN 1977 PRESIDENT CARTER AND LATER PRESIDENT REAGAN PLEDGED THE ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE EVENT THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND REACHED AN AGREEMENT THAT PROVIDED A FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

ON NOVEMBER 15, 1985 THE DAY THE ANGLO-IRISH ACCORD WAS SIGNED IN HILLSBOROUGH, PRESIDENT REAGAN AND I JOINED TOGETHER IN THE OVAL OFFICE TO ENDORSE THE AGREEMENT. ON THAT OCCASION THE PRESIDENT STATED THAT "THE UNITED STATES STRONGLY SUPPORTS THIS INITIATIVE" AND THAT HE "...WILL BE WORKING CLOSELY WITH CONGRESS IN A BIPARTISAN EFFORT TO FIND TANGIBLE WAYS FOR THE UNITED STATES TO LEND PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO THIS IMPORTANT AGREEMENT."

AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT AND I HAVE HAD OUR DIFFERENCES ON MANY ISSUES OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS. WE HAVE NO DIFFERENCES ON THE NEED TO END THE VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND BRING ABOUT POLITICAL PROGRESS THERE IN A PEACEFUL AND CONSTITUTIONAL FASHION. WE ARE UNIFIED IN OUR COMMITMENT TO HELP OUR FRIENDS IN THE PARLIAMENTS OF LONDON AND DUBLIN TO MOVE FORWARD IN BRINGING JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION TO NORTHERN IRELAND.

THE EVENTS OF THIS WEEK IN NORTHERN IRELAND DEMONSTRATE THE GREAT OBSTACLES THAT THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE FACES IN NORTHERN IRELAND. CENTURIES OF CIVIL CONFLICT AND STRIFE ARE NOT EASILY OVERCOME. BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE COMMITMENT OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF IRELAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM TO IMPLEMENT THE ANGLO-IRISH ACCORD IS UNSHAKABLE.

THE PROSPECTS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THAT ACCORD DEPEND, IN NO SMALL WAY, ON HAVING THE RESOURCES TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL STABILITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE UNITED STATES HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL PROGRESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY CONTRIBUTING TO THE SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION PROVIDED FOR BY SECTION TEN OF THE ACCORD.

BASED ON MY RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN AND SECRETARY SHULTZ, I UNDERSTAND THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WILL RECOMMEND THAT CONGRESS APPROPRIATE FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR FOR FIVE YEARS TO THIS FUND. I BELIEVE THAT CONSIDERING CURRENT BUDGET RESTRAINTS THAT THIS IS A REASONABLE SUM. I DO, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT THE ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY IN THE NATURE OF ECONOMIC SUPPORT FUNDS AND NOT LOAN GUARANTEES. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT CONGRESS SHOULD MAKE THE AID SUBJECT TO STANDARD CONDITIONS FOR ASSISTANCE AND NOT MAKE IT CONTINGENT ON A LONG LIST OF POLITICAL CONDITIONS. WE NEED TO EXPRESS OUR UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT FOR THE ACCORD NOT OUR DOUBTS ABOUT IT.

I WANT TO THANK THIS COMMITTEE FOR BRINGING THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE BEFORE THE CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

PROBLEMS IN IRELAND HAVE ALWAYS HAD AN AMERICAN DIMENSION. OVER FORTY MILLION AMERICANS ARE OF IRISH ANCESTRY. MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE TWO TRADITIONS IN IRELAND, PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC, WERE EARLY SETTLERS OF AMERICA AND IN LATER YEARS MADE ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BUILDING OF THIS NATION INTO THE STRONGEST NATION ON EARTH.

OVER THE CENTURIES, IRELAND'S GREATEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD HAS BEEN ITS PEOPLE. TODAY, A CORNER OF THAT ISLAND HAS SERIOUS PROBLEMS. ITS PEOPLE NEED HELP IN OVERCOMING THE DIVISIONS OF ITS HISTORY. I HAVE VISITED NORTHERN IRELAND, I HAVE MET WITH ITS PEOPLE AND ITS LEADERS, UNIONIST AND NATIONALIST. I HAVE SEEN THE DISTRUCTION AND THE SUFFERING. I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE CHALLENGE THAT THE CAUSE OF PEACE AND JUSTICE FACES THERE.

BUT I BELIEVE THAT THIS ACCORD PROVIDES THE BEST CHANCE IN THE NEARLY TWO DECADES OF "TROUBLES" IN NORTHERN IRELAND TO BUILD A BRIDGE OF HOPE AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND. WE KNOW FROM OUR EXPERIENCE IN THE UNITED STATES THAT DIVERSITY CAN BE A SOURCE OF STRENGTH AND NOT A SOURCE OF WEAKNESS. AND WE KNOW IN THE UNITED STATES THAT JUSTICE AND OPPORTUNITY ARE THE FRUITS ~~OF~~ OF DEMOCRACY AND NOT THE REWARDS OF VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM.

AND THAT IS WHY I HAVE COME BEFORE YOU TODAY BECAUSE I BELIEVE WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO HELP PROMOTE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN A PRACTICAL AND MEASURABLE WAY. THE GOVERNMENTS OF IRELAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM HAVE DONE THEIR PART. THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO DO ITS PART.