



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Extract from address by the Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T. D., at Dinner hosted by the Honourable R. J. L. Hawke, Prime Minister of Australia, in Canberra on Tuesday, 12th July, 1988

Monitoring the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

Within our own island, we are determined to spare no effort in the search for peace and reconciliation. We seek the understanding and support of our friends abroad for this most urgent of all our problems. More than a century ago the Young Ireland movement, like the United Irishmen a generation earlier, sought to foster a common patriotism in Ireland, which would help to reconcile the different traditions. This still remains our task. We seek through the Anglo-Irish Agreement in co-operation with the British Government to remove injustice and discrimination as one of the principal sources of conflict. We are acutely aware that violence offers no solution but serves only to prolong the pain and tragedy of a divided society and we are determined to defeat those who prolong this tragic fertility. We particularly welcome the concern which you expressed in your eloquent address to Dail Eireann last October in wishing to see an end to the strife which has brought such great suffering and hardship to the Irish community in Northern Ireland. I am confident that we can continue to look to the Australian Government and people for their goodwill and support in our efforts to bring lasting peace to Northern Ireland and bring forth a new dawn of hope for all who live there.

Mr. Prime Minister, this magnificent parliament house stands as a triumphant symbol of the extraordinary progress and achievement of this nation over 200 years. In a brief span of time, this society has undergone a unique and profound transition in emerging from its hesitant and insecure beginnings as a penal colony to become a prosperous and powerful democratic Commonwealth of Nations, enriched by the contribution of the many different peoples who have made a home here. It is an achievement of which all Australians can justifiably be proud. It is an achievement which I am honoured to salute on the occasion of this bicentennial

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countries like Australia. We at present have an army contingent serving in the Lebanon, as well as observers monitoring the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

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Extract from address by the Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T. D. to the National Press Club in Canberra on Wednesday, 13th July, 1988

In addressing the recent United Nations Special session on Disarmament in New York, I restated Ireland's belief that the only acceptable level of nuclear weapons is zero. The urgent need for a comprehensive test ban treaty is an objective which Ireland has consistently advocated over the years. We are pleased to join annually with Australia and New Zealand in their sponsorship of a UN Resolution calling for such a ban. This would be the clearest proof that the nuclear powers could offer of their willingness to discharge the obligations they have accepted and of their determination to bring the arms race under control.

While understanding fully the reasons for the cold war era, I believe that the era of fear and distrust which led to the division of the world into hostile camps is now being superseded by history. If that should indeed prove to be the case, I have no doubt that your country as well as mine will rejoice in the new vistas which will open up for humanity.

We would like to think that the Irish Government, when they speak on the great international issues of the day, such as human rights, nuclear disarmament, and apartheid reflects the values of the extended Irish family round the world. The support and encouragement we receive, the knowledge that Irish people abroad do take an interest in and want to identify with Ireland's stance on the great issues of the day, is an important dimension of Ireland's role in the wider world.

But there is one major problem in our own situation which also has its roots in the historical past and which, in spite of the forward-looking emphasis of contemporary Ireland, is proving as intractable as problems rooted in history often prove. I refer of course to the legacy of Northern Ireland.

It has often been misleadingly depicted as a sectarian problem. But even though it has appalling sectarian

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weapons for the first time. The ultimate goal of negotiations on nuclear weapons, however, must go beyond reductions and lead to the eventual elimination of all such weapons. In addressing the recent United Nations Special session on Disarmament in New York, I restated Ireland's belief that the only acceptable level of nuclear weapons is zero. The urgent need for a comprehensive test ban treaty is an objective which Ireland has consistently advocated over the years. We are pleased to join annually with Australia and New Zealand in their sponsorship of a UN Resolution calling for such a ban. This would be the clearest proof that the nuclear powers could offer of their willingness to discharge the obligations they have accepted and of their determination to bring the arms race under control.

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manifestations, it is in essence a problem of historical political-economic origin. It is a problem greatly exacerbated and extended by violence used for political ends and it is important that Ireland's friends everywhere should clearly and unequivocally join us in rejecting the men of violence and their actions.

Now it may seem strange to an audience which is accustomed to recurring news of violence in Northern Ireland to say that I believe we have been moving very gradually, tentatively and indeed sometimes painfully towards a resolution.

There have been three developments of major significance in regard to Northern Ireland in the context of Anglo-Irish relations in this decade.

The first was the development of a new dialogue and process of consultation between the two sovereign Governments, British and Irish, which had its origins at a conference between myself and the British Prime Minister in Dublin Castle in December 1980. The principle was enunciated there that a solution to the problem of Northern Ireland would best be found in the context of the totality of relationships between the two countries.

Later all the democratic parties on the Nationalist side, north and south, came together in the New Ireland Forum to draw up a statement of the nationalist position. The Report of that Forum concluded that the arrangements of 1920 had failed to bring peace and stability to the island; that each of the two major traditions in Ireland had a right to self-expression, the protection of their ethos and their way of life and that it was only on the basis that this right was secured by irrevocable constitutional guarantees that a permanent and lasting solution to Ireland's problem would come.

Most recently, under my predecessor Dr. Garret FitzGerald and the British Prime Minister Mrs. Thatcher, an Anglo-Irish

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Agreement dealing with the affairs of Northern Ireland was signed in November 1985. That Agreement established an Anglo-Irish Conference which provides a forum in which peace and stability in Northern Ireland can be actively pursued, steps towards this end discussed and difficulties resolved.

On coming into office my Government declared their intention to use this Agreement to the full, to promote reform, bring about an improvement of the situation for the people of Northern Ireland and promote peace and stability.

We have since been availing of the process of the Agreement to improve the circumstances of the people of Northern Ireland and particularly the Nationalist community, in areas such as fair employment and the improvement of relations between the security forces and the community in the North and to attempt to build confidence in the administration of justice there. There have been major setbacks, disappointments and disagreements. Nevertheless, the very availability of a framework for that purpose imposes upon us a duty to do our utmost to resolve our differences and make progress whenever this is possible.

For those of us who belong to the majority tradition on the island of Ireland one great source of hope for the future would be to achieve a preliminary understanding with the representatives of the other tradition, the Unionist tradition, as to how both traditions might share the small island on which we both live.

I have, therefore, recently publicly indicated my desire to meet with representatives of the Unionists to hear from them at first hand their anxieties about and their hope for the future.

There have been some indications that such a dialogue may yet take place. I am certain that it would have the blessing and the best wishes of the general public in all parts of Ireland and here in Australia.

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