



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2019/31/56
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

ON BEHALF OF

Department of Foreign Affairs,
80 St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2. Tel. (01) 780822.

THAR CEANN

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha,
80 Faiche Stiabhna,
Baile Átha Cliath 2. Tel. (01) 780822.

*D. Please
disuss
of*

SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
MR. GERARD COLLINS T.D., TO THE DUBLIN DIPLOMATIC CORPS
AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 19 OCTOBER 1989

*Mr. Collins
Rd*

*Mr G C Collins
h.m.
18.11.89*

*Mr. Collins,
In case you don't
already have a copy
it might be useful re
EC Council on 30 Nov last.
US 24/11/89.*

EXCELLENCIES,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

I AM DELIGHTED TO WELCOME YOU ALL TO IVEAGH HOUSE ON THIS PLEASANT OCCASION.

I FULLY APPRECIATE THE RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH YOU AS DIPLOMATS HAVE IN SERVING THE INTERESTS OF YOUR COUNTRY IN IRELAND AND PROVIDING A CLEAR AND DIRECT CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOUR GOVERNMENTS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND. FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE EVERY INTEREST IN ENSURING THAT OUR POLICIES AND POSITIONS ARE FULLY UNDERSTOOD WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO HELP YOU FEEL AT HOME AND MOST WELCOME IN OUR COUNTRY.

I BELIEVE THEREFORE THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE, GIVEN RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS AND THE SERIES OF THREE MEETINGS OF THE ANGLO-IRISH CONFERENCE WHICH LASTED ALMOST THIRTY HOURS AND HAVE JUST CONCLUDED, THAT I SPEAK TO YOU BRIEFLY TONIGHT ON THE SUBJECT OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS.

AT THE OUTSET, I WOULD WISH TO WELCOME IN THE MOST POSITIVE TERMS THE DECISION OF THE APPEAL COURT TODAY TO QUASH THE CONVICTIONS OF THE GUILDFORD FOUR. I WOULD ALSO WISH TO WELCOME THE DECISION OF THE HOME SECRETARY AND THE BRITISH ATTORNEY GENERAL TO ESTABLISH A JUDICIAL ENQUIRY INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE TRIAL OF THE GUILDFORD FOUR AND THE MAGUIRE FAMILY.

OVER THE YEARS, THE GUILDFORD AND CERTAIN OTHER CASES - THOSE OF THE MAGUIRE FAMILY AND THE BIRMINGHAM SIX HAVE GIVEN RISE TO SERIOUS CONCERN, BOTH HERE AND IN BRITAIN ITSELF, ABOUT A POSSIBLE MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE; AND THIS IN TURN HAS AFFECTED

THE CLIMATE OF ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS. I AND MY PREDECESSORS HAVE CONVEYED THE CONCERN FELT HERE ABOUT THESE CASES TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON MANY OCCASIONS OVER RECENT YEARS. I AM GLAD NOW TO SAY THAT I BELIEVE THAT TODAY'S DECISION, AS WELL AS RIGHTING A GRAVE INJUSTICE, WILL ALSO HAVE A VERY POSITIVE AFFECT ON THE ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONSHIP AS A WHOLE.

THAT RELATIONSHIP IS CLOSE AND FRIENDLY - I AM GLAD TO SAY. BUT, AS YOU KNOW WELL AS DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS HERE, THERE CAN ALSO AT TIMES BE DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN US OVER ISSUES RELATING TO NORTHERN IRELAND. HAVING SAID THIS, I WOULD DRAW YOUR PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO AN IMPORTANT PARAGRAPH IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE WHICH WE ISSUED AFTER YESTERDAY'S LENGTHY MEETING IN BELFAST. IN IT WE SAY CLEARLY THAT

IN DISCUSSING SPECIFIC DIFFICULTIES IN THIS FIELD BOTH SIDES START FROM THE COMMON GROUND OF THEIR JOINT COMMITMENT TO THE AGREEMENT IN ALL ITS ASPECTS AND THEIR DETERMINATION TO MAKE THE FULLEST POSSIBLE USE OF THE PROCESS OF DIALOGUE IT AFFORDS THEM.

IT IS PRECISELY THE FULL USE OF THIS "PROCESS OF DIALOGUE" WHICH HAS MADE OUR RECENT MEETINGS RATHER LENGTHY. IN THE FACE OF RECENT DIFFICULTIES, WHERE DO WE NOW STAND?

WE HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS AND IN CERTAIN AREAS WE SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING MATTERS FORWARD TO SOME DEGREE. THERE WILL, FOR EXAMPLE, BE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCREENING MEMBERS OF THE UDR AND NEW SAFEGUARDS FOR THE HANDLING OF SENSITIVE SECURITY MATERIAL SUCH AS PHOTO-MONTAGES. THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE POLICE FOR LAW AND ORDER HAS BEEN CLEARLY RESTATED; AND THERE IS TO BE A NEW WORKING GROUP AT OFFICIAL LEVEL TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY OF ACCOMPANIMENT OF UDR PATROLS BY A POLICE PRESENCE.

I WELCOME THIS PROGRESS; AND I HOPE TO BUILD ON IT AT FUTURE CONFERENCES. I DO STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE PROBLEMS WHICH WE HAVE RAISED AND PRESSED AT THE CONFERENCE MUST BE MATTERS OF CONCERN TO BOTH GOVERNMENTS IN VIEW OF OUR COMMON COMMITMENT TO THE IMPORTANT AIM OF CONFIDENCE BY THE COMMUNITY IN THE SECURITY FORCES.

IN HONESTY, I HAVE OF COURSE TO SAY THAT THERE ARE STILL IMPORTANT POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES. WE STILL CONSIDER IT UNACCEPTABLE TO ISSUE PLASTIC BATTON ROUNDS, WHICH ARE ESSENTIALLY CROWD CONTROL WEAPONS, TO THE UDR - THOUGH WE WELCOME THE ASSURANCES THAT THERE WILL BE VERY TIGHTLY CONTROLLED REGULATIONS ON THEIR USE. BECAUSE OF THE VERY WIDE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ISSUES WHICH WE HAVE RAISED, WE HAVE ALSO ARGUED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ENQUIRY INTO ALL ISSUES AFFECTING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SECURITY FORCES, IN PARTICULAR THE UDR, AND THE COMMUNITY. WE WILL CONTINUE TO RAISE THESE POINTS. BUT WHAT I WANT TO EMPHASISE HERE IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FRAMEWORK, TO WHICH BOTH GOVERNMENTS ARE FULLY COMMITTED, FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN US AS WE TRY TO COPE WITH THE DIFFICULT PROBLEM WHICH HISTORY HAS LEFT TO BE RESOLVED IN PART OF THIS ISLAND.

IN OUR RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD THERE IS NO SURER WAY OF MISUNDERSTANDING TO BE AVOIDED THAN THROUGH THE PROCESS OF DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY. AS A FOREIGN MINISTRY, WE GREATLY VALUE AND ENCOURAGE THE CONTINUING CONTACT THAT YOU MAINTAIN WITH US ACROSS THE RANGE OF ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN.

AS DIPLOMATS IN THIS COUNTRY YOU HAVE NO DOUBT FOUND OUT THAT WE ARE A PEOPLE WITH A VERY KEEN AWARENESS OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD. OUR PEOPLE ARE BY NATURE OUTWARD-LOOKING AND CONCERNED THAT IRELAND SHOULD MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

IRELAND'S FOREIGN POLICY HAS LONG REFLECTED THIS GENUINE CONCERN ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT, HOW IT IS AND HOW IT OUGHT TO BE AND A WILLINGNESS TO SAY AND TO TRY AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS OF THE STATE, IRELAND HAS RECOGNISED THAT ALL NATIONS HAVE THE POSSIBILITY, INDEED THE RESPONSIBILITY, TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN A CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE WAY IN INTERNATIONAL MATTERS. IN A WORLD OF INTERDEPENDENCE, WHERE THE QUALITY OF THAT INTERDEPENDENCE IS NOW CRUCIAL, WE HAVE LONG HELD THE VIEW THAT THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ISOLATIONISM, SOME 60 YEARS AGO WHEN IRELAND TOOK ITS TURN AS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS THE THEN TAOISEACH, MR. DE VALERA, HIMSELF TOOK THAT OFFICE WHICH WAS A CLEAR SIGNAL OF THE IMPORTANCE THAT IRELAND ATTACHED FROM AN EARLY STAGE TO MULTILATERALISM AND THOSE FIRST EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A SYSTEM OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY.

FOREIGN POLICY IS NO OBSCURE OR ABSTRACT BUSINESS. IT IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE VALUES OF OUR STATE, IN OUR CULTURE AND OUR HERITAGE. WHILE EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS MAY BE BEYOND THE CONTROL OF MANY STATES, IRELAND HAS NEVER BELIEVED THAT THIS FREES IT FROM THE OBLIGATION TO PLAY ITS PART IN SEEKING TO PROMOTE THE VALUES THAT WE HOLD AS A PEOPLE - OUR BELIEF IN FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND AN ESSENTIAL DECENCY IN THE CONDUCT OF AFFAIRS. WE ALSO HAVE A FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN THAT THE RULE OF LAW AND NOT THE LAW OF FORCE SHOULD PREVAIL IN THE WORLD.

WHILE WE MAY SEEK TO BE IDEALISTIC, WE ALSO KNOW THAT REALISM IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THE CONDUCT OF OUR AFFAIRS, THE PATH TO CONSENSUS AND SUCCESS IN AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF SO MANY PEOPLES, CULTURES AND CREEDS INEVITABLY INVOLVES WORKING TOGETHER TO SPAN THE DEEP DIFFERENCES THAT SOMETIMES DIVIDE THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMUNITY. AS A COUNTRY WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY WORKED TO ENCOURAGE AGREEMENT AND PROMOTE CONSENSUS.

THE VALUES THAT WE HOLD AS A STATE WILL ALWAYS BE CENTRAL TO THE WAY IRELAND PURSUES ITS FOREIGN POLICY. BUT THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR WORLD HAS EVOLVED OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS ALONE IS AMPLE PROOF THAT FOREIGN POLICY CAN NEVER BE STATIC AND THAT WE MUST NEVER BECOME THE VICTIMS OF AN EXCESSIVE RIGIDITY. NEW CONCERNS AND ISSUES CONSTANTLY ARISE AND MUST BE ADDRESSED.

WHO COULD HAVE IMAGINED THAT THE FIRST STIRRINGS OF DEMOCRACY IN EASTERN EUROPE SHOULD HAVE DEVELOPED IN THE WAY THAT THEY HAVE?

WHO COULD HAVE IMAGINED THAT THE NATIONS OF EUROPE WITH THE US AND CANADA SHOULD BE DEEP IN NEGOTIATIONS ON REDUCING ARMAMENTS IN EUROPE AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE SUCH GOOD PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS?

WHO COULD HAVE IMAGINED THAT SO MANY REGIONAL CONFLICTS WOULD BEGIN TO YIELD TO NEGOTIATION AND COMPROMISE?

AND WHO COULD BUT APPLAUD THE FACT THAT THE UN AFTER SO MANY YEARS SIDELINED AND IGNORED HAS NOW EMERGED TO PLAY SUCH A KEY ROLE AND BECOME SUCH A VITAL COMPONENT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE OF THE SPEED WITH WHICH CHANGE CAN BE BROUGHT ABOUT IF THE POLITICAL WILL EXISTS. WE HAVE THUS ALSO SEEN WELCOME AND FUNDAMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS. IRELAND HAS CONSISTENTLY ENCOURAGED SUCH AN IMPROVEMENT BELIEVING AS WE DO THAT STABLE AND PREDICTABLE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS ARE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE ENTIRE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

WITH WHAT WE HOPE WILL BE FURTHER AND FAR REACHING IMPROVEMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS THE CHALLENGE THAT WE ALL - BIG AND

SMALL AMONG US, THE STRONG AS WELL AS THE WEAK - SHARE IS TO WORK TOGETHER AND BRING TO FRUITION THE DIALOGUE UNDERWAY ACROSS SO MANY ISSUES WHICH HAVE BEEN AT THE CORE OF FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS FOR DECADES.

EACH OF US HAS AN OBLIGATION TO PLAY OUR PART IN ENSURING THAT THE ROAD TO PROGRESS HEADS, IRREVERSIBLY, IN ONE DIRECTION - TOWARDS PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY. IRELAND TAKES THIS OBLIGATION VERY SERIOUSLY INDEED.

OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE UN, IN PARTICULAR, HAS GIVEN RISE TO SUBSTANTIAL COMMITMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS, NOTABLY IN THE AREA OF UN PEACEKEEPING. IRISH TROOPS ARE NOW SERVING THE CAUSE OF PEACE IN NO LESS THAN SEVEN OF THE NINE CURRENT PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD.

IN THE CSCE ALSO, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PLAY OUR PART IN PROMOTING SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DISARMAMENT IN EUROPE.

YET IF THERE IS ONE SINGLE EVENT THAT MEASURES OUR DEEP COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IT IS OUR ACCESSION TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE EC. THIS EVENT ALSO STANDS OUT AS PROBABLY THE MOST FAR-REACHING AND IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN OUR FOREIGN POLICY SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE STATE.

AS CO-EQUAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WE HAVE PARTICIPATED FULLY IN THE EMERGENCE OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE TWELVE OVER THE LAST SIXTEEN YEARS. THE TWELVE HAVE BECOME A DYNAMIC AND POSITIVE FORCE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

OUR FORTHCOMING PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE EC WILL BE AN IMPORTANT TIME FOR IRELAND. THIS IS THE FIRST OCCASION FOR US TO COORDINATE AND STEER THE COMMUNITY SINCE IT BECAME TWELVE. IT IS ALSO AT A TIME WHEN THE COMMUNITY IS

EMERGING AS SUCH A KEY PLAYER IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

IN FACING THIS TASK WE RECOGNISE THE CLEAR RESPONSIBILITIES THAT WE WILL BE ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY TO OURSELVES, TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS WHOLE ON WHOM THE AFFAIRS AND POLICIES OF THE TWELVE NOW HAVE SUCH A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT.

BUT WE ARE ALSO FACING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR PRESIDENCY WITH CONFIDENCE. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO MAKING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE EVOLUTION TO THE TWELVE AND LEADING THE COMMUNITY FORWARD ON THE MANY COMPLEX AND VITAL ISSUES THAT FACE US IN THE COMING MONTHS.

BEFORE CONCLUDING, I WOULD LIKE TO REVERT TO AN IMPORTANT PURPOSE OF THIS EVENING WHICH IS TO WELCOME THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES OF SO MANY COUNTRIES WITH WHOM IRELAND MAINTAINS CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS. AN AMERICAN WRITER ONCE SAID THAT THE FIRST DIPLOMAT WAS THE PERSON WHO CENTURIES AGO VISITED HIS NEIGHBOUR TO SOLVE A DISPUTE AND CAME HOME ALIVE. IT IS PERHAPS NOT AN ELEGANT IMAGE, BUT IT REMINDS US OF THE VIRTUES OF COURAGE AND CONCILIATION WHICH STILL TODAY ARE THE HALLMARK OF THOSE WHO MEDIATE THE CHALLENGING AND COMPLEX RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES. TO ALL OF YOU, ON BEHALF OF MY WIFE AND MYSELF, OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OF THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND, MAY I SAY "YOU ARE HEARTILY WELCOME IN OUR LAND".

EXCELLENCIES,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

I ASK YOU TO RISE AND I PROPOSE A TOAST TO "THE HEADS OF STATE OF THE COUNTRIES HERE REPRESENTED".