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from the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy
of Massachusetts

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MESSAGE FROM SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY
ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY
NOVEMBER 16-17, 1990

It is an honor for me to join in this well-deserved tribute to the Social Democratic and Labor Party on your 20th anniversary.

Throughout the past two decades of civil strife and turmoil in Northern Ireland, the SDLP has dedicated and rededicated itself to ending the violence and achieving a peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the conflict.

The success of your Party is a remarkable tribute to the enduring vision of John Hume, Seamus Mallon, Eddie McGrady and your other Party leaders, your dedicated Party members, and the long-suffering people of Northern Ireland who have consistently supported your path toward peace and voted against resort to violence.

Time and again over the past twenty years, the SDLP has demonstrated the wisdom and importance of progress through negotiations and institution-building. You have been at the forefront of every significant initiative to end the festering divisions between the two communities in Northern Ireland.

Throughout these turbulent years, the Party has never lost faith in the belief that a negotiated settlement is the only realistic hope for peace, and that old antagonisms cannot be settled by violence and terrorism. The SDLP's success is inspiring proof, in our own day and generation, of the value of the ancient proverb that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

At a time when the old order is ending and a new order is being born in so many other nations of Europe, it is my hope and prayer that peace and reconciliation will come to Northern Ireland and the Irish nation too, and that the great goals of the SDLP will finally be achieved.

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