Turkey: Comparative Study Visit to the Republic of Ireland

Conflict Resolution

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Democratic Progress Institute

27th November – 1st December 2011

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Foreword

DPI's programme on Turkey aims to create an atmosphere whereby different parties share knowledge, ideas, concerns, and suggestions facing the development of a democratic solution to the Kurdish Question in Turkey. The work focuses on a combination of research and practical approaches to broaden bases for wider public involvement by providing platforms for discussion in the form of roundtable meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences. This is being carried out in order to support and contribute to existing work in Turkey but also extending to the wider region where necessary.

DPI's work will incorporate research and discussions on a wide range of strategic and relevant topics including constitutional reform; preparing for constitutional changes in conflicting societies; post conflict societies; freedom of expression and association; cultural and language rights, political participation and representation; women's role in resolving the conflict; access to justice and transitional justice including truth and reconciliation commissions.

DPI aims to facilitate the creation of an atmosphere whereby the different parties are able to meet with experts from Turkey and abroad, to draw on comparative studies, as well as analyse and compare various mechanisms used to achieve positive results in similar cases. The work supports the development of a pluralistic political arena capable of generating consensus and ownership over

work on key issues surrounding a democratic solution at both the political and the local level.

This record details the activities and roundtable discussions experienced during our Comparative Study visit to Dublin, Ireland, from 27th November to 1st December 2011. The study focused on the subject of Conflict Resolution and the Peace Process in Ireland, and is the second in a series of round tables that began with visits to London, Belfast and Edinburgh in July 2011. Comparative Studies will be conducted on similar topics in locations such as South Africa, Wales and elsewhere. We hope that this series of Comparative Studies will be valuable for participants, and that it will contribute to ongoing discussion in Turkey.

With special thanks to Jo Weir and the staff from DPI for their assistance with this report. DPI gives special thanks to the Department for Foreign Affairs in Ireland for hosting this visit, and the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, Ireland, for their facilitation of the visit.

Cengiz Çandar, Yılmaz Ensaroğlu, Prof. Dr. Mithat Sancar, Prof. Dr. Sevtap Yokuş, Kerim Yildiz
DPI Council of Experts
December 2011

Participants:

Participants from Turkey:

- Ali Bayramoğlu: Journalist, writer, political commentator; columnist with Yeni Şafak Daily Newspaper.
- Ayhan Bilgen: Journalist, columnist and Editor in Chief, Günlük Daily Newspaper.
- Ayla Akat: Member of Parliament, Batman, Peace and Democracy Party (BDP).
- Bejan Matur: Writer, poet; columnist with Zaman Daily Newspaper.
- Cengiz Çandar: Journalist, writer; columnist for Radikal newspaper.
- Hasan Cemal: Journalist, reporter and correspondent with Milliyet Daily Newspaper.
- Hilal Kaplan: Journalist, television presenter and columnist with Yeni Şafak Daily Newspaper.
- Levent Gök: Member of Parliament, Ankara, Republican People's Party (CHP).
- Levent Tüzel: Member of Parliament, Istanbul, Independent.
- Lütfi Elvan: Member of Parliament, Karaman, Chairman of the Planning and Budget Commission, Justice and Development Party (AKP).
- Prof. Dr. Mehmet Tekelioğlu: Member of Parliament, Izmir, Justice and Development Party (AKP). Chairman of the EU Harmonisation Commission of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

- Prof. Dr. Mithat Sancar: Professor of Public Law, Ankara University; columnist at Taraf Daily Newspaper.
- Nazmi Gür: Member of Parliament, Van, Member of EU Harmonisation Commission of the Turkish Grand National Assembly; Member of the Commission for Foreign Affairs; Member of The Turkey-EU Mixed Parliament Commission; Vice-President of Peace and Democracy Party (BDP).
- Nursuna Memecan: Member of Parliament, Sivas, Chairperson of the Turkish Group of the Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Member of the Turkey-EU Mixed Parliament Commission, Justice and Development Party (AKP).
- Prof. Dr. Sevtap Yokuş: Professor of Constitutional Law and Head of Department of Public Law, Kocaeli University.
- Sezgin Tanrıkulu: Member of Parliament, Istanbul, Republican People's Party (CHP). Vice President of CHP, Member of Central Executive Board of CHP; Vice President of the Human Rights Research Commission of the Parliament.
- Yilmaz Ensaroğlu: Director of Law and Human Rights at SETA (Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research), Member of the Executive Board of the Joint Platform for Human Rights and İHGD, Chief Editor of the Journal of the Human Rights Dialogue.

UK and Ireland Contributors:

- Altay Cengizer: Turkish Ambassador to Ireland
- Bernard Durkan TD: Fine Gael, Vice Chairman of The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Travel
- Brian Glynn: Director, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs
- Catriona Vine: DPI
- Colette Nkunda: Glencree Centre, Dublin
- Cyril Brennan: Anglo Irish Division (Security), Department of Foreign Affairs
- David Cooney: Secretary-General, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland (Host of dinner at Iveagh House)
- David Donoghue: Political Director, Department of Foreign Affairs
- Derek Mooney: Former Special Adviser to the Minister at Department of Defence
- Eleanor Johnson: DPI
- Eoin Ó Murchú: former Chair of the Political Correspondent Unions and Political Editor for Radio na Gaeltachta
- Eric Byrne TD: Labour
- Father Tim Bartlett: Lecturer, Maynooth University and Advisor to the Catholic Bishops, Belfast
- Gerard McCoy: Joint Director General, International Fund for Ireland
- Gerry Adams TD: President, Sinn Féin
- Gerry Kelly: Anglo Irish Division (Reconciliation), Department of Foreign Affairs

- Ian White: Political and International Director, Glencree Centre, Dublin
- Jo Weir: DPI
- Julian Clare: Russia/Europe/Western Balkans/Council of Europe Section
- Kerim Yildiz: DPI
- Sir Kieran Prendergast: British Diplomat and former Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs at the United Nations, London, United Kingdom
- Maureen O'Sullivan TD: Independent Member of Parliament
- Maurice Manning: President, Irish Human Rights Commission
- Michael Culbert: Coiste, Belfast
- Michael Forbes: Director, Russia/Europe/Western Balkans/ Council of Europe Section
- Niall Burgess: Director General, Anglo Irish Division, Department of Foreign Affairs
- Richard Moore: Journalist and former Government Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs
- Ryan Feeney: Head of Community Development, Strategy and Public Affairs, Ulster Council, Belfast
- Paddy Buckenham: Department of Foreign Affairs
- Pádraig Mac Lochlainn: Sinn Féin Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs
- Professor Vincent Comerford: Historian
- Senator David Norris: Independent Member of Parliament
- Senator Jim Walsh Fianna Fáil

Aims of the Comparative Study Visit 27th – 1st December, 2011

The aim of the visit to Dublin was to bring together the participants from the previous Comparative Studies visit (to the United Kingdom), to follow up their study of the Ireland – Northern Ireland conflict and peace process. The visit brought together representatives from each major political party (including members from the opposition and government parties) and key policy makers/influencers, journalists and academics from Turkey, with a cross section of Ireland/UK-based professionals and experts in specific subjects relevant to peace, conflict and democracy building.

Topics examined in the study are relevant to the situation in Turkey and include the roles of government, media and civil society in the peace process; vocabulary of peace; and rights and identity as part of the peace process. Issues addressed during the visit to Dublin are detailed in this report.

The visit created an atmosphere where the participants were able to draw on comparative situations, and analyse and compare various conflict resolution mechanisms used to achieve positive results in the Irish context. Participants were given a unique opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of conflict transformation and peace building tools. Furthermore, the roundtables and structured discourse provided an opportunity for all participants to share knowledge, ideas, concerns and challenges.

DPI fosters an environment for participants to engage in an open dialogue in order to broaden bases for peace and democratic advancement.

ROUNDTABLES/SEMINARS/MEETINGS

Sunday 27 November, 2011 – Arrival at Carton House, Maynooth, County Kildare

Participants were welcomed by DPI staff to Carton House Hotel. The estate of Carton House first came into the ownership of the FitzGerald family shortly after Maurice FitzGerald played an active role in the capture of Dublin by the Normans in 1170, and was rewarded by being appointed Lord of Maynooth, an area covering townlands which include Carton House.

Carton House dates back to the 17th Century, and stands in a rural setting. It offered a tranquil location for the comparative study; providing numerous opportunities for discussion in its libraries, dining rooms and expansive grounds.

Sunday 27 November, 2011 – Battle of the Boyne Visitors Centre, Private Tour

As part of the Dublin programme, participants were invited to attend a private tour of the Battle of the Boyne site and Visitors Centre.

The Battle of the Boyne is an iconic event in Irish history. It is seen as a defining encounter in the war that was primarily initiated by James II's attempt to regain the thrones of England and Scotland, following an invitation from Parliament to William III and James's daughter, Mary, to take the throne. The Battle marks a crucial moment in the struggle between Irish Protestant and Catholic interests. Though far from being a decisive battle, it became the focus of attention for the staunchest supporters of Protestant ascendancy: the Orange Order.

During a private tour of the Battle of the Boyne Visitors Centre, participants were briefed about the long-standing conflict between England and Ireland and Protestants and Catholics; and the significance the Visitors Centre marks as part of the peace process. The battle site has now been redeveloped in cooperation between the Government of the Republic and the Orange Order as part of the ongoing peace process. The Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre was jointly opened by First Minister Ian Paisley and Taoiseach Bertie Ahern. The opening ceremony was the first time the two figures shook hands publicly, a gesture which showed how far the country has come since the conflict.

The battle ground was recently visited by Queen Elizabeth II during her landmark visit to Ireland, the first by a UK monarch since the country gained independence in 1922.

DINNER DISCUSSION, Sunday 27 November, 2011 – Carton House

Pre-Dinner Speaker: Professor Vincent Comerford, Historian

Professor Vincent Comerford was a Professor of Irish history at the National University of Ireland (NUI), Maynooth, until February 2010. He graduated from the NUI Maynooth, followed by a PhD from Trinity College (Dublin) on Irish politics in the mid-nineteenth century. Professor Comerford has a long academic career, and was the head / acting head of the Modern History department of NUI Maynooth from 1988 to January 2010. At present, Professor Comerofrd is on the Consultative Committee of the Irish Historical Society and a Board member of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS).

Professor Comerford continued the introduction to Irish history in his pre-dinner speech, where he spoke about the British and Irish perspectives on Irish history.

Professor Comerford, Historian, addressing participants at Carton House.

Professor Comerford: A thousand years ago, four nationalities emerged: English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish, all of which were very stable. However, one of the nationalities was wealthier, stronger and more advanced in politics. That nationality was the English. For centuries, England imposed itself on the other nations, as has often been the case in the world's history. This included the promotion of 'good order' and the promotion of 'good religion' by the Imperial English.

By 1200 of the common era, England had control of about one half of Ireland and English settlers were arriving in Ireland in vast numbers. Amongst those settlers was the Fitzgerald family who owned Carton House, the place of this dinner, and where you are staying for the duration of this visit. James Fitzgerald was the Earl of Kildare and the first Duke of Leinster. When you visit the Irish

Parliament you will see Leinster House. This building was built by the Fitzgeralds as a holiday house and was occupied by them until 1815 when the third Duke decided to sell Leinster House to the Royal Dublin Society and make Carton his principal residence. With the money the Fitzgerald family received from selling Leinster House, they hired Richard Castle, a very famous architect, to renovate Carton House.

In the 1500s, there was a strong push towards the English State, starting with King Henry VIII of England, who wanted to exert greater control over England and Ireland. More specifically, the English were not satisfied with the noble men in Ireland and wanted greater control of the island. The Reformation of Ireland also occurred under the rule of King Henry VIII. This was a movement for the reform of religious life and institutions in Ireland. From the time of Queen Elizabeth I, Protestants became identified as being English rather than English people being Protestants. In addition, Protestants were seen as being loyal to the Crown.

The large Catholic population in Ireland did not accept the changes of the Reformation and, as a result, religion became a major point of conflict in Ireland for many centuries. This later evolved into a struggle between Protestants and Catholics for Control of Ireland.

There is a story that many of you may have heard before: in the 1920s many of the residents in this area were trapped in their houses and the houses were burnt down. When local Irish militia came

to burn down Carton House they were informed that a portrait of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, a great Irish patriot, was hanging in the house and if they burned the house they would be responsible for burning the painting of Lord Fitzgerald. The house was left standing. This event illustrates the complexity of Irish history.

In the 1800s, the British Government decided to create a union between Ireland and Britain. However, the majority of the population in Ireland did not accept the formation of a Union as a long-term solution. These people were the Nationalists. The divide between the Unionist and the Nationalists, and therefore the Catholics and Protestants, was very prominent by this stage. In 1940, the eve of World War I, Britain agreed to give Ireland 'Home Rule' which enabled them to self-govern from within the Empire. However, the Union, which comprised 20 per cent of the population, opposed this decision and threatened to resist it through the use of force. As a result, the changes were deferred to after the war.

The war dragged on much longer than was expected and, in 1968, a rebellion within Ireland emerged. The rebellion was initiated by people from the Northern Ireland Catholic minority who were against the British-backed Unionist model. Even though that rebellion was defeated, it gave supporters of the movement the momentum they needed to gain attention. Much of this support was harnessed by the political party Sin Féin.

Sir Kieran Prendergast addressing participants at Carton House.

Post-Dinner Speaker: Sir Kieran Prendergast

Sir Kieran Prendergast is a British diplomat and former Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs at the United Nations. In 1997, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan appointed Sir Prendergast Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs at the United Nations, a position he held until 2005. During this role he helped call attention to human rights violations and ethnic cleansing resulting from the War in Darfur, and was an instrumental part of the Cyprus reunification negotiations in 2004.

Prior to this role, Sir Prendergast worked as Assistant Private Secretary to Secretaries of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs; Member of the United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations; Head of Chancery and Consul-General in Israel; High Commissioner to Zimbabwe and Kenya, and British Ambassador to Turkey. He has also served as Ambassador to Turkey; and with the NATO Department at the British Foreign Office; the foreign service in Cyprus, and The Hague.

Sir Kieran Prendergast in discussion with Cengiz Çandar and Mithat Sancar.

Sir Kieran Prendergast:

The identity of people is what they feel it to be. It is a mistake to try to deny or engineer identity. You must allow it to be what it is and, when you do that, you may end up decreasing the sense of identity in people. This relates to the Law of Physics: every action has an equal negative reaction. Therefore, if you suppress someone's identity, you will increase the demand for that identity.

I have an uncle who was a revolutionary in his youth and the most neutral term he ever used for Ulster was 'the six Counties'. My uncle once said 'if you want to encourage the speaking of Irish then the Government should ban it'. The best thing to promote the speaking of Irish would be to ban it, because no-one spoke Irish anymore and it was difficult to learn but if you ban it, you immediately create a demand. This demand is something we need to be aware of. So, my first point is that the question of identity is

very important. However, taking measures to identify identity can counter this effect.

The second point that I would like to address is: how do you get started in your efforts to solve the issue in Turkey? I think the issue of building confidence is very important. What each party needs to do is to identify what is important to the other side. When I was working for the United Nations, we would often try to provide small steps for people to take. It is usually impossible to address very, very serious issues right from the start but we can look at small steps which will move us forward. Sometimes it is the things that you do not do that speak the loudest. For example, working out what terms are most offensive to the other side and deciding not to use them can be a confidence-building venture. More specifically, if you know that a term is offensive to the other side, do not use it. Then signal to them that you are purposefully not using it.

Turkey is going through a difficult time at the moment and the conflict must be resolved by people within Turkey. It cannot be resolved by outsiders. As part of this resolution it is vital for each party to try to understand the other side, to try to understand why they are doing what they are doing. This requires some feat of imagination but is worth doing.

When I was in Israel, for example, there was a feeling that terrorism was something that just sprang up from its own accord. In actual fact, things usually have a cause. They happen for a reason and you

need to work out what that reason is from the perspective of the other side. Furthermore, you need to make sure you are not doing things to make that situation worse.

Professor Comerford mentioned the Easter Uprising of 1916. My grandmother told me that the Easter Uprising was very unpopular at the time in Dublin and throughout Ireland. The reason was that people thought that it was done at the wrong time. It was the middle of the First World War and so people thought it was not the right time to start an armed rebellion. They wanted to wait. I do not think that it was the Easter Uprising that created the Insurgency. I think it was a response to the British Government and the next thing that happened was the creation of martyrs. One of Ireland's biggest poets, W.B. Yeats (who was a Protestant), wrote a poem Easter 1916 which spoke about this:

I write it out in a verse -
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

This sentiment has echoed down the decades. If the British Government had not executed those people, who knows what would have happened. We might have been speaking about history

in a very different way. So, within this, there is a lesson for you to learn.

Another point I want to make is that the real game changer is the issue of use of force. Now, how do we address that point? I think this is something that policy makers probably need to think about quite hard. When I was with the United Nations, we very often dealt with guerrillas. They would ask 'why should we give up our arms? It is our only weapon.' So, how do you move past that point? We used to say, and even got Mrs. Thatcher to say this to the President of South Africa, that you cannot require people to relinquish the armed struggle completely unless there is something very clear and firm to be given to them in response to that. You may be able to achieve a suspension of violence but it will not last unless there is a really strong and sustained response from the Government's side. Ceasefires create a political space and that political space has to be filled and it has to be used in order for it to last. When we look at Ireland, for example, one of the game changers was the IRA's agreement to stop using force. As an outsider, one of the things I think you are going to have to deal with in Turkey as politicians, as journalists, as academics and as policy makers is the question of how you get to that point, given the lack of trust.

When I was dealing with issues like this in the United Nations, we tended to try to look at it as packages. Often there was the view that 'nothing was agreed until everything was agreed.' Packages were created because everything had to be kept confidential. If you

release every element, one-by-one to the public, there will always be very severe criticisms of those concessions. People need to see the package and this is the approach I use to take when I was dealing with guerrillas and the relevant governments.

It has been said in Turkey that if violence is given up, many good things will happen. However, if we are going to build confidence, we need to be more specific. We need to ask what it would take for us to find that the armed struggle is no longer relevant and then see if that answer is a fit or a non-fit. This needs to be done in secrecy and in private so that the advantages of both sides can be seen in the overall package. My feeling as an outsider to Turkey is that more thought needs to go into this process. For example, the classic agreement was achieved in Cyprus when it was decided that there were not going to be anymore high-level agreements because they were always vague and compromised. Instead, they did it the classic way. A new constitution was created with a review of all laws, and amendments were made to all relevant laws. I am sure this is what you Members of Parliament are going to do in the coming sessions when you look at a new constitution.

Again, from my experience, this involves a very wide consultation process, which cannot be hurried. The broader the consultations, the better the results will be. It is also important to ensure that people have a sense of ownership over the process. The best constitutions in the world will be the ones where everyone has had their chance to have an input and share their views.

You are the ones who are living through this situation and you will have to find the solutions but I say to you: be positive and do not give up. Be optimistic. Do not be provoked. You can only be provoked if you allow yourself to be provoked. If you refuse to be provoked, no-one is going to be able to provoke you. You are going to have to find some type of balance as you move forward and perhaps this will include a review of your counter-terrorism laws. As someone living in Western Europe, it is difficult to see so many thousands of detained, arrested and charged people in Turkey. However, the way forward is for you to decide.

Cengiz Çandar introducing Sir Kieran Prendergast at Carton House.

SESSION 1: Monday 28 November, 2011 – Carton House

Topic:
Journalism and the media in a violently divided society

With:
Eoin Ó Murchú, former Chair of the Political Correspondent Unions and Political Editor for Radio na Gaeltachta, and
Richard Moore, journalist and former Government Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs

Moderated by: Kerim Yildiz

Participants and speakers during a roundtable discussion on media and journalism.

Kerim Yildiz: Eoin Ó Murchú is a journalist who has worked for over forty years in a variety of media sources, both English and Irish.

Ó Murchú has served for many years as the Chairperson of the Irish Parliamentary Press Gallery. He has been deeply involved in the Northern Ireland conflict for all of his adult life, both as an activist and as a journalist.

Eoin Ó Murchú:

Eoin Ó Murchú: The first point I would like to make is that journalists and the media are not a natural friend of the peace process. Sometimes an individual journalist may be at the forefront, looking for ways to end conflict but, more often, the media reflects the ownership of the media. This ownership tends to be very reluctant to face up to new challenges and new ideas. In the Irish context, the emphasis on the peace process did not come from the media. Instead, it came from political organisations and the follow-on from the agreement document itself.

In my opinion, the media's role was quite amiss in the Irish peace process. For example, one of the most important beginning points in the process was the talks between the Sinn Féin President, Gerry Adams, and the leader of the moderate Catholic-backed Social Democrat and Labour Party (SDLP), John Hume. The talks between Adams and Hume were widely condemned in the Irish media. In particular, the Sunday Independent, the largest selling weekend newspaper, went to great lengths to condemn that fact that such talks were even taking place. Therefore, I think that one of the lessons to be learned is that those who want to reach out for a peace process should not necessarily assume that the media

is automatically going to be on their side. A good example of this can be seen in the most recent Presidential election, where large sections of the media, both here and in the southern parts of Ireland, continued a very strong campaign against the Republican candidate.

The issue of trying to find a way forward is one where the media is important for all players because it is in the media that the debate actually takes place. Therefore, I think those who want a peace process to develop must recognise that they are the ones who have to force it into the media. They must also be prepared to accept that within the media there is opposition, perhaps even more rigorous opposition than they actually encounter from their political opponents, with whom they are trying to engage.

In the context of Ireland, one of the first things that everyone involved recognised was that we had to approach the public with a view of trying to understand what the other side were thinking, why they were thinking it, what their motivations were and what their real aspirations were. From there, it was vital to try to identify at what point a common ground existed or where one could exist, and then to listen to the criticisms that the other side would make. It was also important to try to understand what question we would need to answer in this process, even if we believed that the opposition had more things that they should be answering for. Being prepared to answer questions was one of the first steps. In this regard, the Irish media did not help as they concentrated entirely on one side of the conflict.

The hope of the media was that the issues would be resolved in the end by the essential marginalisation of one of the main participants in the actual conflict: the Republicans. That obviously did not happen and we now see them in the North of Ireland where the Nationalist-Republican movement is far stronger than any other group. This, in itself, has led to stronger media opposition here than in the South.

My points on this matter are threefold. First, to recognise that the owners of the media, particularly the newspapers, are not necessarily well disposed and that the struggle in the media is often a very delicate one where you try to push very delicate boundaries. Secondly, there is a need to be highly sensitive to the genuine aims and motivations of those we are engaging with. Finally, we need to recognise that the whole process is a very, very long and drawn-out one, which contains many contradictions. This is best summed-up by an Irish journalist in the famous phrase 'dodge, nudge, budge'. By this he meant: 'dodge' a degree of uncertainty around what is going on; 'nudge' to give a little encouragement to do something; and then 'budge' – and at the end of the day give a big push to move forward.

One of the central points which was lacking in the Irish peace process, which was a big weakness in the overall developments, was a genuine commitment by the media to involve itself in the process, rather than purely casting skepticism from the sideline. The way to resolve that is unique to each situation, however, the importance of this interaction was one of the most important lessons we have learned.

The next point I would like to make is that the relationship of the sate broadcaster was not, in any significant way, different from that of the privately owned media. The State broadcaster was very reluctant to engage with the elements that were recognised as hostile to the Sate and, therefore, that slowed down the whole process. The key is that peace processes work in the end, not because Governments or political parties come to an agreement, but because the community which they represent becomes willing to accept the idea of compromise and a potentially slower process than they desired. That is the essence of what the Irish media should have been debating – how they could assist the process in a realistic way.

The last point that I want to make is that in very occasional cases in the radical media, there were efforts to get the other side to write in their newspapers. This was not only to express their views, but also to make sure that the newspaper's committed supporters were actually hearing what the other side said. At times this was very difficult as, for example, people would object to a policeman writing in a Republican newspaper. Nonetheless, that type of exchange was very important to prepare the community, who backed the political platforms, and get them ready to accept a strategy which recognised that, despite what the armed struggle may have achieved, it could not achieve any more. Furthermore, the way forward would be one which depended on a different strategy that took into account all of the sensitivities of each party.

To summarise, the media is not a natural arena which will carry out

the peace process. Therefore, it is important that people struggle within the media to try to counteract the decisions of the main elements, which tend to be more official than the opposition. It is vital to encourage elements within the media to expand against that resistance and to participate in a democratic reappraisal of what the conflict is actually about.

Participants and speakers during a roundtable discussion on media at Carton House.

Kerim Yildiz then opened the floor for questions.

Q: Where did the attitude of the media towards the peace process originate from? Why did it take this stance?

Eoin Ó Murchú: The was a degree of fear towards the peace process. In the south of Ireland,

Q: In Turkey, the media is very powerful and informs public's opinion and discourse. What extent is the media responsible for the publicity of the peace process?

Eoin Ó Murchú: There is a conflict between what people say in private and what voters hear. There are common instances, especially in the past, of the media reporting about the peace process in a negative light- almost as if they were trying to bring back the war. Furthermore, the media took a very unsympathetic stance on the marginalised minority which impacted their attitudes towards the peace process.

Q: What side did the media take in the peace process? What influence did the media have on each side of the process?

Eoin Ó Murchú: As Todd Andrews, a Fianna Fáil Republican, said: 'freedom of the press is the freedom to write fearlessly what the owners of the press want written'. Media has traditionally been owned as a tabloid which caters to the needs of its supporters. For example, the Irish Times in the south was directed at landlords and similar people. Therefore, even if the media was not against the peace process, they did not behave in a way that supported the process.

During the conflict in Northern Ireland, Section 31 of the Broadcasting Authority Act was used to censor and prevent Sinn Féin and IRA members from accessing the media. This rule was brought in by Fianna Fáil.

Q: What has been the role of internet media and media?

Eoin Ó Murchú: These sources of media have broken through the

barriers of closed media. Internet and social media are now more widely used and make it easier to share facts, stories and opinions which are not limited by the agenda of an owner of media. As these sources are relatively new, they did not play as large a part in the Irish peace process as they would today.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for developing a language of peace?

Eoin Ó Murchú: Without justice there cannot be peace. In addition, it is important to understand what justice means to other people and why they adhere to those beliefs. Through this understanding, we can also develop a better understanding of each other's use of language and use this to develop a non-threatening dialogue.

Q: To what extent did the media demonstrate self-censorship during the conflict and peace process?

Eoin Ó Murchú: There is a general rule in the media that you have to be very careful about the 'facts' that you report. Therefore, we say 'if in doubt, take it out' even if this results in less being written. Journalists have a responsibility to report accurate facts but, at the end of the day, their editor will also have a role in the censorship of reports. Furthermore, the censorship was influenced by both Section 31 and pressure from political parties in Ireland.

Q: What are the lessons that we can learn from the role that the media had in preparing society for the post-peace processes developments?

Eoin Ó Murchú: If you want to avoid the continuation of conflict, there needs to be an outlet for relevant discussions. This is not an easy thing for the media to engage in due to the ownership of the media. However, it is important that journalists work hard to provide a dialogue on the peace process, to explain the ideas at the heart of the process, to gage people's reactions to different parts of the process, and to explain the opinions of the political parties. In doing so, the media will bridge a gap between the public and the policy makers.

Participants Ali Bayramoğlu, Columnist, political commentator at Yeni Şafak daily newspaper; Ayhan Bilgen, Columnist and Editor in Chief of Gunluk daily newspaper; Nazmi Gür: Member of Parliament and former Vice-President of Peace and Democracy Party (BDP); Levent Tüzel: Member of Parliament, Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) during a roundtable discussion at Carton House.

Richard Moore:

Richard Moore has worked as a journalist in regional and national media across Ireland. He was News Editor of the 'Irish Press' before transferring to work for the Irish Government in the mid-1990s. He has held positions as both a Press and Policy Advisor with the Rainbow Government from 1994 to 1997 (Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left) and continued this role for both the Fianna Fáil /PD and the Fianna Fáil /Green Party governments until 2011.

Richard Moore has served in key advisory roles in Government, most notably as the Press Adviser and Spokesman for the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, where he dealt with Northern Ireland matters, including the St. Andrew's Agreement on devolution of power to Northern Ireland in October 2006.

Richard Moore: This is a splendid building and it reflects an element of our past. We currently have maybe a small element of dissident Republicans. But generally speaking, the peace process is very well embedded. If you look back to the 1960s – I was struck by this when I watched television last night, on our TV there is a programme called 'Reeling in the Years', which is a documentary, a snap shot of one year, and spends half an hour going through visual images of what transpired back then. Last night it was focused on 1964, and one of the items was a current affairs programme, which centred on the discrimination in Derry city. This would have been broadcast on our televisions in 1964, and it effectively depicted the

Catholics in the city being discriminated against by the Unionists. While there was a majority of Catholics in the city, they had no control over their own future. And this was back in 1964, when Ireland was a completely different country and there was probably a real sense of partition between North and South.

Where I was born and come from, is Galway on the West Coast – there, there would have been very little interaction between people from there and the North. So, I think when the Troubles flared up in 1968 to 69, there was extensive outrage among the people in the South, in the manner in which they are co-religionists, and were actually being treated by the government of Northern Ireland. When the serious problems began in 1970, 1971 and 1972 there was a sense of major crisis at the heart of government at the time, and there was possibly fear at one stage that the island may be engulfed in all-out civil war. So, there was massive pressure on the government of the time to manage a conflict in the North, that could spill over into the South and to essentially ensure that there were cool heads. But there was also a deep sense of ignorance at the time as well, with regards to what exactly had been happening in the North, apart from some journalists, I think there was very little focus with regards to the overall situation in the North and the manner in which society was divided and government was operating. But, as the atrocities mounted, and the killings continued (and you have to be quite blunt about this, there were some absolutely terrible atrocities only 40 years ago, indiscriminate shootings, bombings, maimings), and it polarised society quite dramatically. But it

significantly put dramatic pressures on the democratic institutions of the state here in the South. As I already mentioned there was a fear that it would overspill into the South. Because we are talking about the media here and its input in relation to government, and it was actually a Labour minister, Connor Cruise O'Brien, who introduced Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act, which effectively banned certain paramilitary groups from gaining access to the airwaves. So it is against that backdrop and the terrible killings and murders that were being perpetrated, that successive governments down here and to an extent in Britain, put in a major effort to get a peace process up and running, which began to take shape in the eighties. Trying to make any overtures to the other side and get the parties of the conflict around a table like this involved a lot of delicate footwork. That delicate footwork meant that whoever was involved had to operate very much under cover and in the background. And in many instances they had to deny, in a sense, the people who had been instructing them to take part. The reason for this, in my opinion, is that the tensions in the community and people involved in the killings and the bombings, if they were seen to be brought into a process and to have engaged with any form of political person, that would seen to have been very serious for the party concerned. There was a sense of such anger and revulsion in a lot of people at the murders and killings that were taking place, so, the politicians and members of both communities trying to put together a peace process and had to tread very carefully.

Eoin mentioned John Hume, who was the leader of the SDLP, the

Nationalist Catholic majority party at the time. When he made overtures with Gerry Adams of Sinn Féin and when word filtered out that this was the situation, one publication viciously attacked Hume over a protracted period of time and essentially stirred up a lot of antagonism. That of course had a knock-on effect among other politicians. Of course, when you see someone trying to do something being pilloried in a newspaper, it has a natural effect on the other parties involved and that is the impact the media can have on a situation like that.

It is fairly well documented, the way in which the process has been developed in the eighties, and obviously the Good Friday Agreement in 1994, but there were a lot of people on both sides that took risks in engaging with the other side, or in trying to bring the paramilitary groups into the process where they would depart with their weapons. The difficulty in trying to achieve a ceasefire is that the people who are involved in murder and mayhem, if you like, their currency on what gets them to that situation is the very fact that they hold goals. I know over the past ten or twelve years that people in the SDLP would argue and some in the Ulster Unionist party would argue that they did all the heavy lifting at the time when they reached out, but that they were essentially parked once the process got to a certain stage by each government. The strongest currency of those around the table was that of those holding the guns. That was the one that was the 'game changer', because if you could get the guns taken away, they were the people who would have the most effect in terms of the most dramatic

change on society and on the community. I think it is the nature of government and politicians that where you have a society where there is a lot of violence, the fundamental point I think that officials in government and politicians try to do, is to get those guns silenced. So the people with the guns have the greater currency.

In relation to the process itself, when the Good Friday Agreement came into force, there was a significant amount of engagement at official level, again, probably behind the scenes, with members of some of the paramilitary groups, and Sinn Féin and other paramilitaries in the North. My roles as the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Justice, were both intrinsically involved in the peace process in the North. A lot of my media involvement would have been very, very choreographed, and I could not, or would not underestimate the amount of background engagement we had with the North, but more importantly with the British government. Because the government and the British Prime Minister had staged a lot of political capital on securing peace in relation to the whole conflict, that political capital meant that for every involvement you had with the media you had to be very, very careful. Any statements, for instance, that were issued had to be very, very carefully choreographed. There was a phenomenal amount of behind the scenes involvement at official level and at ministerial level. Whatever step forward was taken was always against a backdrop in which you were dealing with a very delicate situation. A stray word could be very, very serious and damaging and could set the process back because you had on

both sides people within the organisation who were part of the process of seeking peace, but both sides had elements there that did not want the process to continue, and certainly not at the pace in which it was. So you had the leadership of some of the paramilitary groups, Martin McGuiness Gerry Adams, who were trying to bring their supporters with them, but they could only do that against a backdrop where the language used by 'official Britain' and 'official Ireland' had to be consistent with the message they were delivering to their own people. So I cannot stress how important the way in which language was used by the governments involved, because there were one or two incidents where a wrong word used could set the process back, could spook or frighten some of the supporters that the leadership of the paramilitary groups or Sinn Féin had been trying to get to come with them. People like myself and others in the British government and the Irish government would regularly get phone calls from the various media outlets as to what was the significance of a development; they would ask 'why was this important, someone was saying this, what would you say to that?'. So there was an interpretive war between people like myself, which again had to be very carefully managed, because I know some journalists did have a strong view on this, and those who spin the language can often over spin it or spin it incorrectly, or be too descriptive. But, the actual briefings that went on behind the scenes were extremely important in ensuring that there was a flow of information going to the population and the public at large, so they had an idea or a concept of where it was going. As I said, that was fraught with great dangers.

The other aspect that was unique, that I suppose is the same in any conflict situation when the guns fall silent (this is going to sound crass, I don't want it to) – was that there was a significant volume of journalists from Belfast because of the violence, because of the killings, and these journalists, when the guns fell silent, had then to engage in a process of a next step – when the peace process comes in, how do we get into a situation where both sides get power? That was a very protracted and very long, run out saga, and in fact even when I was not in foreign affairs, when I was in other positions of government, I found it extraordinary, the amount of one step forward, one step back, proximity talks that took place. One group was in a room here, and the other over there, and someone was going between the two sides. But you had, in a sense, a sort of separate media industry operating out of Belfast, which did not have the straightforward story of murder and mayhem to report on, and which now had to learn new languages – how do you report on this nebulous process that was trying steer various parties that have been in conflict, get them to sit together around one table and get them to work out a shared future? So people in my job, the difficulty you always have, is that nature abhors a vacuum, and when you work in a vacuum it will always be filled by someone.

On a regular basis we would brief or release an innocuous type of a statement, which would always be carried quite high in the news even if it did not amount to anything, but at least it meant that the space would be filled, in the sense that it was not an empty space for someone else to fill. I spent three or four days in St. Andrews

in Scotland and we were isolated in a hotel overlooking the sea, by a golf course not unlike here. But there was a massive media group of journalists to meet us there. There were talks going on behind the scenes with all parties to the resolution, hoping it was going to be theirs, and it kept going down to the wire. My job and that of the people from the Northern Ireland office of the British government was to feed the media beast, which was there which every two hours, and had to be given a story of some description even if the story was 'there has been some progress'; 'reconciliation'; words that don't mean a lot but fill a certain news agenda.

Politicians, by nature, will always find it difficult to operate under intense scrutiny. But when you are operating in a situation where you have two diverse communities that have been at each others' throats for a number of decades and you are trying to get them to sit down together and work out a shared future, and the spotlight has been on them for several years (and it had been distinctly on them at St. Andrews), you have a situation where they can be easily scared, back like a herd to where they came from. So from the point of view of the media, the aim is to try and give enough information out in order to keep the media happy, but also to ensure that the parties involved were not frightened away into their communities.

In relation to the responsibility of the media, Eoin sums it up very well – 'the media is not going to be a friend of government'. The media will see itself as reporting in normal time what is going on, it reports this on a day-by-day basis, not from the perspective of

the future. Having said that, the amount of briefing and assistance by people like me, and by officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland and in the Department of Justice had a significant bearing in ensuring that what the story was, would be there in the background, even if it was not going to be there as an official statement.

The other thing that surprised me was that in the process of dealing with the media, a number of journalists had become players in the process. Because of the nature in which they were talking to the government, the paramilitaries, some of them became involved as a kind of back-channel, transferring information, which I found a bit surprising. I saw no role for them in that. Journalists were almost becoming players, in fairness to themselves, they saw themselves as honest brokers, I cannot see what role they could have in relation to that.

When you mix politics and the media together while trying to resolve an age-old conflict, it is extremely difficult to manage, and it took a long time for the skill base among the officials in the South and in Britain to come up to scratch, so that they could manage a process where you could bring partiers together, around a table, and at the same time manage a media story that would be managed in such a way that the politicians engaging in the process would not be frightened away by certain coverage. That is the biggest problem; politicians by their nature can be frightened away or can go back to the herds from where they came.

Richard Moore and Eoin Ó Murchú addressing participants at Carton House.

Kerim Yildiz then opened the floor for questions.

Q: Elaborate on the 'game changer' from your perspective.

Richard Moore: I think the biggest game changer was obviously the success in getting a ceasefire. The process was put in place by John Hume and other politicians behind the scenes, who had spent a lot of time essentially scoping out and asking 'what is your long term plan?', 'how much longer are you going to continue the conflict?', 'what do you want to do, what do you want to achieve?'. So, some of the game changers were played by the roles of the religious people on both sides, who brought people together behind the scenes. When people are involved in major conflict it is very hard, if your day to day existence is questioning whether or not you are going to get blown up by a car bomb, it is very hard to focus on

'where we are going to be in two years time?', 'where can we map ourselves out?', so I think the big game changers were played by John Hume and certainly the religious leaders on both sides who came to be involved to tried and bring the more moderate element together. And also, in a sense, the Republican movement always saw an end game, as a united Ireland. At least they knew what they were trying to achieve. I think the difficulty from the point of view of the Loyalist paramilitaries is that they did not have the same level of political engagement and they were probably let down by their political leaders, with the exception of one or two. The game changer was, once the guns fall silent, anything is possible. Until the guns fall silent people will stay in their corners. It was the ceasefire that allowed other things to happen.

Q: Is there a way of struggling against media which is using the language of conflict?

Richard Moore: The media will always operate on its own agenda, someone else's; or many others. If a journalist or the media is led by someone like me, or a politician, their first reaction is to resist. I used to be a journalist, and I have seen it from both sides. The first thing would be to resist any attempt, the freedom of the press states that 'I don't represent anyone but I represent everyone and I represent the common good'. I think that in any organisation, the same is in the media, there will be a number of key players, whether it is in broadcasting or print, that have to be in a sense, looked after.

Like any organisation with five hundred people, there will always be four or five who have a significant role as players, whether in terms of an editorial policy or what they write. So, all you can do in a situation like that is to ensure that there is flow of information. I have worked in various jobs in the media, and the access of information is the one thing that will stop you in your tracks in terms of trying to achieve anything. I have spent fifteen to sixteen years working in media and government in different departments, in communications and transport, but the one thing I have always learned is that journalists by their nature are very chatty people and you always find it is a two-way process. If I pick up the phone to a journalist and say 'I have got something to tell you about', on or off the record, I would get as much information back if not more from the person I was talking to. So the general thrust of it is, you have to get the key influencers, and in this instance if it is a newspaper, it could be an editor, a columnist. It could be because that what you have is debated internally within newspapers for example 'why do we have such and such an approach?', 'why are we always antagonistic to this?'. I think there can be an internal debate within newspapers. I think coming in with a big mallet and saying 'I am government, you change your tune' is not helpful. This will not have any affect here.

In terms of approaching proprietors – proprietors probably played an increasingly important role in media and in terms of what they say, even in Ireland. The national radio station effectively dismissed one of its broadcasters because of antagonism towards the

proprietor. But I think in general, journalists in media operations, in print and broadcast, are very strong people and I think that the important thing is to get the key influencers to have an internal debate among themselves as to why we are approaching a story in a certain way. I think that that is a very manageable thing that people in government can do.

Regardless of what attempts are made at peace, certain journalists will always oppose it; there will always be antagonism regardless what you do. With freedom of the press you will have a lot of views. And maybe media will interpret things differently; I think that the public of Ireland do not like change, humans by their nature like certainty. Obviously, a peace process involves significant change, because you are moving into an area where people are fearful that what is going to transpire will weaken their position or will be seen to be giving strength to people who operate out of the norms of society. So, that is a significant change for a lot of people, to take on board that you are actually going to talk to people and bring them into a process that involves people who have committed terrible atrocities.

Back in the eighties when these talks began, they happened behind the scenes. And the reason they happened behind the scenes is because people involved realised it was going to be a major risk talking to people who were then engaged in violence. That was a major, major problem, because there was a vast group of people on this island who said 'do not speak, if someone kills or maims or

murders someone they should be ostracised', so there was a leap, to try and get acceptance among the public, that this is ultimately the right thing to do. You have to take a series of steps, which is why we have had, in relation to the peace process here, a situation of talks going on behind the scenes. For instance Sinn Féin and the IRA would make statements or make a speech somewhere, and certain language would be used which would then be interpreted as significant, so you had a little series of building blocks going ahead all the time and the process was like baby steps. And the people who gave speeches made noises or made references in their speeches which were interpreted rightly, by the other side, as being progressive or more importantly as the media realising that what they are saying here is changed language form what was said in the past. Through language, you eventually condition the public, over a period of time into the fact that there is progress being made, that 'maybe so-and-so is not such an evil person after all', and so forth, because people are not black and white. Even if you are the leader of a paramilitary organisation, there is a possibility that you have a good side to you as well. And I think that that process allowed people to see, on both sides, people as progressive or not as bad as they thought they were. These baby steps that you take through these speeches and choreography eventually builds on the process, but you have to get the engagement of the media into that. You have to be conditioned that this is significant, which is why a lot of background briefings that were done around this process were very important – because they allowed the media to see outside a certain prism and to see that there was certain progress being made.

When you build this by taking baby steps, you actually may get somewhere.

Q: Is it possible to change the perspective of the media? What steps can be taken to do this?

Richard Moore: There were quite a few columnists, there is a famous columnist in this country called Eamon Dunphy, who was a former soccer player for Millwall, and then the Irish soccer team, he was a pretty poor footballer but he went into the media. He was very much opposed to the talks with Gerry Adams, he railed against a lot of what was being done behind the scenes. He said it was wrong to be talking to terrorists, that this was totally wrong. But now he has moved to a position where he supports a Sinn Féin candidate, Martin McGuinness, who ran in the recent Presidential election. There have been a number of people who have changed their view. And that would not be being seen as disgraceful, or not the right thing to do, because the public at large changed *their* view over a period of time. In fact the public, generally speaking, have often been ahead of the media in terms of their views. Because they began to see that people are not as bad as they thought they might be, and 'maybe what they are saying is important' and we have to sit down together, ultimately, and sort out our future.

The media are crucial, some of you are politicians and you live and die on whether you are going to be elected and whether the people think you have some value or don't have any value, or whether

you're delivering on some kind of policy agenda. So politicians have to take brave steps, and there are a number of politicians on this island who took very, very brave steps and who were standing outside the media consensus in relation to the process. Because you have this scenario where they were talking behind the scenes, to put into place, I suppose a kind of template to deliver lasting peace against the backdrop where there were still killings going on, and murders going on, which simply outraged people. The public at large will only engage with certain issues at a peripheral level, they will not have forensic detail and extensive knowledge of a story, so whatever happens, it will be interpreted through the media. Therefore, there will always come a time when people decide to lead from the front, so the politicians will have to, in a sense, move out of their comfort zone and engage with those who are diametrically opposed to them. There is a process there, I think, possibly laid out by Ireland – there is a process that I think other countries can learn from, these stages of baby steps, where you have to bring the media with you, but it has to be done in a very controlled way. If anyone loses their nerve along the way – and there were a number of moments where people lost there nerve – the process will, and did fall back quite a period of time.

Ultimately, the media play a vital role. In Ireland, one or two papers were antagonistic towards any attempt to seek or engage with terrorists, it was as simple as that. Their language was 'these people are killing people, you should not talk to them, they have to stop killing first, before you talk to them'. But it did not look like

that was going to happen, so there had to be engagement behind the scenes underneath the radar, and that is where people need to hold their nerve. In fairness, they did hold their nerve and then, as I was saying earlier on, we went into using language as a sense of progress, and a sense that, well, there is an end game here, it is possible for us to get places because people are moving their feet a little bit every time. Ultimately, most journalists are reasonable enough people, if you keep giving a flow of information to them – if you give information to them, even a lot of information, which they cannot use (because you tell them you cannot use this because this is not to be used), it can be used to inform you because you are writing something but, people may specify 'please do not quote me'. Therefore, a lot of trust has to be built up in the media and people have to be shown what we are trying to achieve and the process of getting there.

Eoin Ó Murchú: I think on the issue of Sinn Féin /IRA (the Loyalists and the media in the North dubbed these 'Sinn Féin-IRA', which I think annoyed Sinn Féin), it was felt there was not much point talking to Sinn Féin, who had people ordering various atrocities, in relation to the peace process, unless you actually engage with people who were ordering certain actions of a paramilitary nature, that's the first point. I think there was genuine feeling in the South, with the IRA killings, there were Loyalist killings as well, that the Republic at large down here, were furious and annoyed that these things were being done in the name of the Republic down in the south. And so there was a big anger about that. That was the

difficulty that the engagement with Sinn Féin and the IRA had, there was a deep revulsion and a large number of people down here who felt that you should not speak to terrorists, you should not speak to murderers, and that they should stop killing first before you engage with them. That was a difficult position to be in.

Q: To what extent is the media responsible for the perspectives of the people?

Eoin Ó Murchú: There is in the South itself, a strong desire to have the reunification of our country, and all of the political parties, including those of the government, agree theoretically with that objective. So, there is a groundswell of support. But there was a disagreement with tactics, which produced the killings of civilians and people. I will not use the same terminology as Richard, but people did not like that, and therefore that was one of the problems, the killing of civilians; people could not see how that was advancing our cause of democratic freedom. But once the armed struggle was over, there was tremendous receptiveness amongst the population at large to the principle of 'let us find a peaceful role to accomplish this aim of a free, independent, united and democratic Republic'. So that is very strong and we are in a process of working it out.

In my view at least, every conflict has a beginning middle and an end. It has to be driven by a desire of some part of an organisation. They must want to achieve something, and the only way that they can achieve it is through force, because they have been denied access

through democratic methods of achieving their aims in terms of developing a language of peace. I think you have to go back through the Irish newspapers and the media in the last twenty years, where you go through the language that was used, when you look over a period of time, language is used by both sides, which allowed them to come closer together and be in a position where they could be in one building at one time. A situation where officials could work between the two, with big long briefing documents, saying, for example, 'We have used this word here, are you happy with that word, if we put this in and take this out?'.

To be honest with you, there were half a dozen or more of these big gatherings, so many of them involving both extreme sides of the conflict – people who would end up sharing power. There were so many of them that, some will tell you tomorrow, I think at times those involved at the official level and the political level were ready to throw their hat in and say 'what is the point – these people have made no kind of concession to the other side and will not move one little bit'. A lot of very, very hard work went in over a protracted amount of time, and ultimately, the suspicions and the nature of where they came from was ameliorated, but also, while the very fact that they were in one building and had to meet each other at lunch or over a cup of tea, where they weren't actually dealing with the documentation, the very fact that they were thrown together every now and again, with officials, I think had a very positive effect in how the process eventually came to be what it is today. Again, there was a language that was acceptable to both sides

and language is incredibly important to this process – it has been analysed, you have your thesaurus out over every sentence. The language was there to build little baby steps, and it was a long, long process. I don't think this is a little booklet or dictionary that can be transferred, because language differs from country to country but I think that the template was probably there.

Q: What side did media take in the peace process?

Richard Moore: There were a lot of simple words like 'murder' and 'atrocity', or 'so and so has been murdered', 'you have caused an atrocity'; stark language which the other side would never accept. Deaths were called 'killings' and even to this day the language of Sinn Féin is still very, very precise language. I was involved for a period in the recent Presidential election, and I was taken by the fact, as I hadn't been dealing with people from Sinn Féin for some time. At one stage, reference was made to David Kelly, who in my opinion was murdered by the IRA – he died in a gun fight. When Martin McGuiness was confronted, his use of language, and I'm paraphrasing, was, 'yes I understand your grief, I understand your horror'. He used the same language when he was asked about the murder of Jean McConville, who went missing in Belfast in the seventies; they were talking about her murder and Martin McGuiness used very precise wording to respond. The precision of language to this day, is still being used, and it does annoy the public a lot but that's the way it is. An organisation will say 'I did not murder somebody, I was involved in a conflict, and they were

killed as a by-product of the oppression of me' and so forth. The use of language is extremely important.

Q: What was the relationship between the media and politics?

Richard Moore: Back in 2004, Dermot Ahern, the minister I was working for, became the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Ironically enough, it is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this country that deals with the North – some would say that that should be the Home Office). On Dermot Ahern's first visit to the North, I was not with him, he did his very first press conference and there were 25 journalists. At this time the peace process was well embedded (in 2004) – it still had a way to go but was in process. He faced 25 journalists (a dangerous group of people to come across!), and he was asked whether he could ever see a situation where Sinn Féin would be in government in the South. He answered the question quite honestly; he said that he could. That got him into a lot of trouble and he was seen in the media, in the North, as this kind of IRA/ Sinn Féin politician, when they did not really know the man at all. The dramatic ripples had a lasting effect and it took him a while to rebuild the trust of the Loyalists.

SESSION 2: Monday 28 November, 2011 – Carton House

Topic:
The role of civil society in peacebuilding

With:
Ryan Feeney, Head of Community Development, Strategy and Public Affairs, Ulster Council, Father Tim Bartlett, Lecturer – Maynooth University and Advisor to the Catholic Bishops, and Michael Culbert, Coiste

Moderated by: Kerim Yildiz

Michael Culbert, Father Tim Bartlett and Ryan Feeney addressing participants at Carton House, during a roundtable on the role of civil society in peacebuilding.

Ryan Feeney is the Head of Community Development, Strategy and Public Affairs for the Ulster Council Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), where he has worked as an official since 2006. He is also a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

Ryan Feeney addressed the participants on the issue of 'peace building in the cultural arena: structural change'.

Father Tim Bartlett is an adviser to Cardinal Seán Brady, the leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland. A native of Belfast, Father Bartlett grew up during the Troubles. He has been a member of the Inter-denominational group on Faith and Politics, and was the spokesperson for the Catholic Church on the reform of policing. Father Bartlett was also a member of the Bill of Rights Forum, established by then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to make recommendations on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

He is the Secretary of the Catholic Church all-island Council for Justice and Peace and a member of the Inter-Church Meeting Committee on Social Issues. Previously, Father Bartlett taught theology at St. Mary's University College in Belfast.

Father Bartlett spoke about resourcing reconciliation initiatives.

Michael Culbert is the Director of Coiste na n-Iarchimí, a network for Republican ex-prisoners and an ex-prisoner himself. Culbert was a social worker until 1978 when he was sentenced to 16 years in

Long Kess. After his release, Culbert completed his Masters degree and started working with Coiste, initially as a full-time counselor and then as their Regional Development worker.

He was appointed to the position of Director in 2008, and is working for the social, economic and emotional well-being of current and former Republican prisoners and their families.

Michael Culbert discussed the issue of prisoner's participation and peace building.

Ryan Feeney:

Ryan Feeney: The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is the largest sport and cultural organisation on this island. It has one million members, a fifth of the population of Ireland. It's a strong cultural body responsible for six sports: Gaelic football, hurling, rounders, handball, kamugi and ladies Gaelic football. We're a family based amateur community and voluntary organisation. The GAA is a large social and economic driver that reinvests 85% of its income back to clubs and communities at a community level. It operates a trust basis, where it owns about 2.5 billion Euros worth of assets across this island, which are held in trust for local communities. 42% of volunteering on this island comes from the GAA. It is the largest supplier of social capital, it has a massive impact on health, on justice, on community building and capacity building, and we see ourselves as the glue that binds Irish society together.

In Northern Ireland in particular, there are those that would view the GAA with suspicion because the organisation is seen very much as an Irish cultural and sporting organisation, which, if you like has strong links with one section of the community, and it would be broadly representational on the Republican Nationalist community, in fact there would be very few members of that community in the North that wouldn't have a connection with the GAA. The association has had a controversial history when it comes to the history of this island. It was founded in 1884 to try and reintroduce Irish pastimes and cultural pastimes into Irish society again. Over the years it has been very much connected in different forms with Republicanism and has on several occasion been dragged into, unwillingly, the conflict. During 1981 to 1993, there was massive civil unrest in the North and the GAA was stripped right down the middle in that conflict. The hunger strikes were the centre of it, because there were those in the GAA that were in support of it, and those who were not. At the time, a man called Peter Harte, whose brother Micky Harte is one of the leaders of the GAA, was the President of Ulster Council, and he worked hard to ensure that the association became non-politically aligned.

As a result of that, a new rule was brought in to ensure that no political activity could take place in the name of the GAA or on GAA property. For example, we own the largest stadium in Ireland, which is the fourth largest in Europe. We spent 400 million Euros of our own money developing that stadium, we got a 41 million investment from the Irish government at the time. When you take

the economic contribution that was played out, we think we were actually owed money, but it is there.

At the time politicians wanted to hold their party conferences there but we had to turn them down because of the strict rule about party political activity. In terms of the GAA, they had a difficult relationship with the police in Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster constabulary (RUC). Up until 2001 you could not be in the GAA and be an active member of the RUC. We were the first body with the broad brush of nationalism in the North, to make a decision to drop what we call 'Rule 21', which barred any member of the GAA from being a member of the police or the British army.

Last Friday, the Police Service (PS) and Irish Games Association (IGA) team and the Garda Síochána (Irish police force), played a football match against each other in Croke Park, the GAA headquarters. This was very significant because twelve years ago it would not have happened, it was against GAA rules.

The organisation has named its clubs and many of its cups after Irish patriots, such as Patrick Pearce and Thomas Clarke. There is a lot of suspicion about this in the Unionist community – about the GAA and the role they play. We see ourselves as a very confident community driver, something that plays an active and positive role in communities. The Unionist community often views this with suspicion, and over the last five years the GAA has engaged in a very focused, but also very respectful outreach programme, where

we have extended the hand of friendship to Loyalist paramilitaries and the leading Unionist politicians. And we have found that in that time, particularly in Belfast we've got a situation where Loyalist communities are being left behind by society. Most of the deprivation and lack of education is concentrated in working class, Loyalist areas. They have sat down with us and asked if we can help build capacity in their areas. They are not interested in the Irish cultural dimension of the GA, what they are interested in is the community based sporting and volunteering organisation.

As I said, there are over one million members of the GAA on this island, and a further 300,000 across the world. I'm a paid full time official of the GAA, I have my own volunteer club in County Derry. There are very few people like me, where completely amateur members of their community play for their county and do not get paid, and for that reason the money we receive is reinvested at a community level. We see ourselves a big society model, an organisation that has a positive contribution to community life on the island. The Unionist community are very interested in that model because they would like to have a model like us in their own community. We have gladly provided that model and assisted in many cases in building up capacity in the community in which they live.

We have had situations in the last number of years in particular, involving policing where we built a very positive relationship with policing, and I am the very first senior GAA member to sit on the

Policing Board. Prior to 2001, I would not be able to take that role in the GAA, so it was about the GAA taking an active and positive role in establishing a cohesive but also a stable community in the North.

At the moment, we have a situation in the North where we have those who are against the peace process, but they are in a very small minority and in April this year, a Catholic police office called Ronan Kerr was murdered by dissident Republicans who have no mandate and play a very small but growing part in the community in the North. Ronan Kerr was also an active member of the GAA, and for the first time in my memory, the GAA and Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) stood shoulder to shoulder and jointly carried his coffin together, but also participated in the funeral arrangements, which sent a very strong message across the island to those who were against peace, that the days of conflict are now over. This entire island voted in 1988, for the structure we now have under the Good Friday Agreement. At 19 years of age, that was the first vote that I took in my entire life. I voted 'yes' for that agreement. I never voted before that because our voting age here is 18. I was a young student at St. Mary's College. At the time there was a bit of unrest, we did not have the stable government we have in place now, but we are a very confident organisation, and as such we engage with the entire community. So we have met leading Unionist politicians and leading Loyalist politicians.

The place I am from is called Greysteel in County Derry. In 1993,

a Loyalist gunman walked into a bar on Halloween and murdered eight members of my community. Five of them were members of my GAA club, one of them was my cousin, the other two were my next door neighbours. I met with a leading Loyalist figure call John 'Jacky' McDonald three years ago and engaged in dialogue with him. It was a very difficult thing to do, but it was the right thing to do. The first question he asked me was 'How can you help us build stable and sustainable communities in Loyalist working class areas throughout Belfast?' The response we gave was very simple – 'Any way you want us to. We're happy to help' and since then we've engaged in a comprehensive dialogue with members of the Loyalist and Unionist communities to try and build there capacity and community level.

We have over 250 children in the centre, playing Gaelic games through our Cúchulainn Cup programme which is a cross communities school program. We have a further 500 children at primary school level engaging in Gaelic games, from the Protestant Unionist community. Though that might not be massive in terms of numbers and may not mean very much to those sitting around the table, it must be said that six to eight years ago, it would have been impossible for those children to have engaged with the GAA and to have played our games, and have had a level of trust to engage with us, because, I will emphasise again, there are those in the Unionist community that still see the Association as something they should be negative towards.

As an organisation, we believe whole heartedly in the Good Friday Agreement, we support it and endorse it holistically, we believe in the devolution we have in place now with the peace process, but we also believe in a right for people to be proud of their identity. I'm from Ireland and I'm proud of that, I would probably describe my own politics as Liberal Republicanism, but I'm very proud of where I am and where I come from. There are those in this country, one million of them, that see themselves as British, and I can only respect their Britishness, I would first be the first to be respectful to them, but also they should be respectful of my Irishness. So we accept the Good Friday Agreement's premise, the people on this island can be Irish, British or both. We are also very strong on the fact that you cannot celebrate your Irishness without respecting other people's right to be British, and we would fight strongly against anyone that would try and take away the rights of anyone on this island to be British or express their Britishness. They should be very proud of that. However we understand that there are those in our community that find Britishness offensive and our job as a sporting and cultural organisation in the community is to instil confidence in them about Britishness and British symbols, which we find ourselves having to deal with on a daily basis in the North.

I will conclude by saying that there has been substantial progress made over the last twelve years in our society and on this island. I consider myself reasonably young, and the transformation I have seen since I was at university in Belfast, starting in 1988 until now has been immense. I have lived in Belfast, I work in Belfast, that

city is now a leading European city, the transformation that has happened in the last years cannot be measured, we tangibly see it every day. We see clear examples of people reaching hands of friendship out to each other right across this island, people like our former President, Martin McGuiness and John Hume; there is now a real sense of community leadership happening on the ground.

We have not got it all right, we still have a lot to do, but I am convinced now more than ever that there is a willingness to reach out the hand of friendship and share the resources and capacity we have built. Today I was asked to talk about structures, I very arrogantly say, our organisation has one of the best voluntary and capacity building models in the world. It sustains and builds community, it give people a sense of place and a sense of identity. We as Irish citizens are very happy to share that very unique capacity building model with our Unionist brothers and sisters, and we will be engaging continuously with them over the next couple of years as we enter a very important phase as a dedicative commemoration, or as we see it a dedicative reconciliation takes place, where we can celebrate what is different but also draw together on what unites us.

Father Tim Bartlett:

Father Tim Bartlett: Most conflicts in the world are a mixture of different conflicts, involving cultural, political and religious histories and identities, and that is the story of the conflict on the island of Ireland. I would like to share briefly with you the role

of the religious dimension and particularly the role of religious leaders. Let me begin by saying I have a personal conviction that the role of religious leaders across the world of resolving conflict is very under appreciated, undervalued and under used. I cannot speak specifically on your situation, but no matter where I go I come to that conclusion. So let me talk a little bit about the role of religious leaders in our conflict resolution process here in Ireland.

First of all, a very brief history lesson. The history of the main conflict on this island has its origins way back in a dent in Christianity called the Reformation, and where the Christian communities throughout the world fractured into a lot of different roots. Up to that point we only really had one group; the Catholic church and with them the Orthodox churches, but around the 1500s we had a split in many different groups, all of which grew around a lot of political and religious roots from around Europe in the 1500s and 1600s.

Here in Ireland it was particularly significant because when King Henry VIII broke off from the Catholic church, he set up the Church of England as an independent church, of which he was head. Part of the consequence of that was the parallel invasion of Ireland and the effort of the Christian tradition – the Anglican church if you like, to try and suppress the Catholic church of Ireland, and Ireland was completely Catholic at the time. That was very firmly resisted by the people of this island, and for example, for many years there were laws which obliged people to report a

Catholic priest for saying Mass, and the priest would be hunted by the British forces occupying Ireland with many killed and so on for their faith - many Catholic people were killed. The Church of England was the official church of the state for many years across the island, even though it only represented about three or four per cent of the population.

Then another very significant thing happened, the reformation in England took different forms and in Scotland, and the Northern part of the island you had a particular Christian denomination; the Presbyterian church. The Presbyterian church was very different from the Anglican church, which was made up of poor farmers, and the English leaders decided that they would lift these poor farmers from Scotland and bring them over to the Northern part of Ireland, expel the Catholic people from the farms and give the farms to the Presbyterians. This was the famous historical event of the plantation of Ulster.

Why is it important to know that? Well because it helps you to understand that the religious issue became very significant in terms of the political issue here. In 1921, when Ireland was given independence from Britain, as you know, they divided the island into 26 counties across three quarters of the island, but they kept the Northern part of the island, which is now Northern Ireland, separate and to themselves, still as part of the UK. They did that because this historical Protestant community was a majority in that part of the island, and in 1921 when they created Northern

Ireland as a new state, part of the UK, it was approximately 75 per cent Protestant and 25 per cent Catholic. Over the 80 or so years, since then, that has changed very significantly and the latest census would suggest it is now 48 per cent Protestant and 45 per cent Catholic and 5 per cent coming from other religions, or who claim no faith whatsoever. So that is a very substantial change in the dynamic.

When they created Northern Ireland with a substantial Catholic minority, the Protestant political leaders who had an affinity with Britain as the centre of power, created a society in Northern Ireland, which without any question treated Catholics as an oppressed minority in terms of voting rights, housing rights, employment opportunities and so on. Catholics were treated as unequal and subjected to a lot of social, economical and religious discrimination. In 1969, the civil rights movement led by John Hume in Northern Ireland was a fight for civil rights for everyone, but particularly for ethnically identified religious Catholics who were being treated in this way. That was fiercely resisted by the Protestant Unionist leaders, who had discussed creating Northern Ireland with a Protestant government for the Protestants, without any reference to the Catholic population. The history of our violent conflict has it genesis and beginning with that 1969 civil rights movement effort, and then the violence and so on that ensued.

Now to be positive for a moment, during that period, political leaders subject to democratic votes from their own communities, generally

were afraid to be seen to be reaching out to the other community. Religious leaders however, were inspired by their Christian vocabulary and idealism of peace, justice, love of neighbour, love of enemy, with a vision of forgiveness, reconciliation as fundamental values. Some of those religious leaders began to step beyond the boundaries of their own community and to reach out to the other religious leaders, and they did two things in particular, which are invaluable in a conflict resolution situation.

One, they created safe spaces where people could come together from different sides of the community without feeling threatened by their own community or by the other. So, the religious leaders were able to create these spaces of encounter and dialogue very often in very quiet, hidden ways. That happened at local community level, but also by bringing together political leaders, who could not be seen speaking to each other in the public domain. The churches created these safe spaces for engagement, which became the fertile ground for the dialogue that eventually became public and formal in the political process.

I would also say that the language created by the religious leaders, not all but some, remained entrenched in their own communities, and the language of defensiveness and aggression. However, a lot of religious leaders decided to create a new vocabulary about a shared future, by acknowledging for example, that if we continued in conflict with one another no one would alternately succeed and we would all be diminished.

We also had members of religious churches who issued heroic words of forgiveness after they had been subjected to the most terrible ordeals of violence. I mention two in particular, one, Gordon Wilson, a Protestant. After a bomb at Enniskillen, a little town, during a remembrance service, where I think eleven people were killed, under the rubble of this bomb, he held his daughter's hand, he could not see her, but could hear her speak as she died beside him. That man spoke of how he forgave those men who committed this atrocity; absolutely mind blowing, but it also prevented politicians and those who committed the violence from retaliating, because how could you do that in the face of such dignity, such generosity, such humanity and from a religious point of view, with such clear Christian principals.

Another man was Michael McGoldrick, whose son was a taxi driver, who was shot in his taxi by Protestant Loyalist paramilitaries. He too said he did not want any other father or mother to experience this pain, and called for no retaliation, and only forgiveness. He was a profoundly Christian, Catholic person.

So that in a sense is what I want to say about the role of religious leaders. They created safe spaces where places where the politicians could go. They did so courageously; that, I believe should be their role across the world. They spoke to the best of their of their religious traditions and their shared ideal for peace. Not things that divided, but the shared ideals for peace, without giving up. I am no less a Catholic priest, but my ideas implement friendship

and cooperation with my Protestant friends and neighbours, even though I am still a very much committed Catholic obviously. Religious leaders also created a new vocabulary, which because of the framework for the vocabulary of the Good Friday Agreement, could be implemented. We need to share this space together in mutual respect, with tolerance, forgiveness and more than that, working together for a better future. That continues to be the role of religious leaders across our society today.

Michael Culbert:

Michael Culbert: My name is Michael. I just want to tell you a little bit about me and my past and my experience around the IRA. I'm a married man and a social worker, but at the same time I engaged in armed activity against the British forces. I don't refer to the war in Ireland as being a sectarian war, but more a colonial struggle against by the locals against colonial forces – Ireland was the first and hopefully the last of Britain's colonies. I was raised to be an intelligent young man, a very active, sociable young man, but there was something wrong with the state of things in my country that made me and many other thousands of people feel that political change would probably not be achieved through the theoretical, democratic process of dialogue and political representation of the parliament. We considered in the early 1970s that the British government were not going to concede enough to us, if they had given enough reform then that probably would have blunted that push for revolutionary change. I use the word revolutionary in a

mild term, but we wanted more than basic reforms, which were eventually offered by the British government.

We were sensible, intelligent, articulate people, but we knew we were being conveyed to the world as a bit mad or as gangsters – we were never portrayed by the media as a positive organisation fighting for the freedom of the country. That's roughly what I was involved with when I was a young man, and I was captured by the British troops and sentenced to life imprisonment for killing members of the British forces. I don't really know why, but after 16 years, they released me from prison, which I was very glad of. Within prison we were quite politically active and organised and we were very politically aware, constant observers of national and international political movements. Towards the end of the 1980s, IRA prisoners across Ireland, approximately 25,000 of us were captured and imprisoned. If you take any standing army of guerilla organisation, approximately 2,000 of the army will be engaged in active service. But in the late 1980s, early 1990s, we had our own dialogue in prison, because it was a safe place to do it. A lot of us were long-term prisoners, there were a lot of young men and women coming into the jails and we had to re-think our situation. This was also being reflected on the outside in our communities and the concern was how long would the war continue for. So we would have been quite proactive in pushing our leadership on making a call on how things were going to go in another ten to twenty years.

We probably pushed very hard for our broad movement to engage in political dialogue with possible objectives. By coincidence, three months after I was released from prison, the IRA called for a ceasefire, which I was very glad of, then, political activity was ongoing. As for the mechanics of bringing this situation about – we regularly use the term 'peace process', - there were factors that had to be put into place. In recent years I have engaged with Haitans, Sri Lankans, Afghanis, the Thai government, and we were surprised that there were no real structures in those communities to allow for safe conversations. There were no organisations like Glen Cree here in Ireland, or other organisations. The Catholic church and other organisations provided us with the mechanics of that dialogue.

Kerim Yildiz then opened the floor for questions to the three speakers:

Q: What effect has political power sharing had in Northern Ireland?

Ryan Feeney: I'll respond by answering the first question. The three speakers here today broadly represent the Nationalist Republican community. You have a former Republican prisoner, a Catholic priest, and someone who speaks on behalf of a cultural and sporting organisation that is very Irish. The Catholic, Republican nationalist community is very cohesive in that respect, we have one church, we have the GAA, we have two political parties, where the largest party Sinn Féin, has eclipsed the SDLP. That is how our side

of the community is structured. Within the Protestant or Unionist community, you have three Unionist parties: one large Unionist party, a smaller one and a very small one which is against the peace process. You have a range of churches, and you have the Orange Order, which is a cultural group of 30,000 members, that is very small for an organisation.

As Father Tim said, religious and political leaders were chastised for reaching out the hand of friendship, so a lot of work was done under the radar. In many cases, that remains the case. There are leading members of our community at grass-roots level that are criticised for communicating with members of the other community at grass-roots level, so the majority of this work is done under the radar. We have larger, symbolic gestures going on, on an ongoing basis. For example, I attended university at 18 years of age. When I went to university, there were members in my year that had never met a Protestant, who had never engaged with someone from the Protestant community. I attended a Catholic primary school, secondary school and university, so as a result of my religion and education I never met anyone from the Protestant community. My neighbours at home were Protestants, who my mum and dad were friendly with, so I had experience of them. My community was a mixed one so I saw the Protestant religion and culture through the Orange Order, but we have to remember that while Belfast remains segregated in many respects, from where we have come, there is a lot more interaction and more engagement than there ever before. The churches – Loyalist and Republican, shared government, and

that trickle down effect hasn't happened as fast as we would have liked it to on a community level, where we have now a strong centre and hierarchy in terms of government. We are trying now to get that to filter down to community level. It hasn't happened in all areas, but although it may not be seen or tangible, it is happening a lot more than it has before. I can walk up the Shanklin Road (largely Protestant area in Belfast) now with clear British symbols around me, but feel safe being there, because I know and work with the people there. When I was a young man ten or twelve years ago, I wouldn't have has that opportunity because it wouldn't have been a place where a person like me would have gone.

Q: You spoke about the role of religious leaders in Ireland. The most well-known of those is Dr. Ian Paisley, can you describe his role?

Father Tim Bartlett: In Ireland, North and South, there are four main churches: Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist and Catholic. In the early 1970s, the leaders of those four churches came together for the first time in a very public way and ever since then they meet regularly about six times a year. Just yesterday I was at their most recent meeting and they go together to places where there has been violence, to visit police officers who were injured for example. The power and the importance of showing joint leadership, such as religious leaders provide, is important, and that has remained solid since 1971, through all the challenges. However, you are absolutely right to say, that just like within the political and

religious communities, there are those who want people to go in that direction, who after Ian Paisley, remained aggressive and violently opposed to the two religious leaders coming together, and who accused the Protestant leaders of selling out.

I think there is a big question here internationally as well as locally about the relationship between religious leaders and politics. Dr. Paisley was a politician, a leader of a political party as well as a religious and political leader. As a Catholic priest, I am not permitted under church law to hold a public or political office, I must primarily remain a religious leader. But there is an overlap and there is a challenge to the work of religious leaders. Before Dr. Paisley could become First Minister of Northern Ireland, we insisted to the British and Irish governments as a Catholic church, that this could not happen if he did not first set aside his historic opposition to the Catholic church and give reassurance to Catholic people on faith terms, that he was willing to treat us with dignity and equality, as citizens of our country and to respect our religious rights. The day before he made the agreement with Sinn Féin, as he left from the airport to go to St. Andrews to make this agreement, he met myself and the leader of the Catholic church in his offices. This was widely publicised at the time and it was hugely historical. This was the man who shouted at Pope John Paul II in the European parliament and was taken out of the Parliament as a result. He had to sit across the table from the Cardinal and treat him with dignity and equality, and the meeting went very well.

Something I have learnt is that politicians will say one thing in terms of playing into their community in the public domain, whereas privately they will be very different and say different things. The religious dimension of this has gradually calmed, and it is seen more as a political, cultural country. Religious leaders had to take a step back and allow the political leaders to do their job for our society. As we would expect to happen, some of those politicians are now blaming religion and religious leaders for having created the conflict.

Q: Are all of those 25,000 prisoners out of prison now, and were they all convicted prisoners?

Michael Culbert: The British government have said at all times, they do not have the statistics on everyone who has been in prison.

Q: Do they not have records on the people that have been in jail?

Michael Culbert: They say they don't have it, and I believe them when they say that. We have engaged two lecturers from Queens University, and during the past year, one of them did some research with the undergraduates, and she came up with the figure 25,000. The 25,000 refers to the IRA. Within that statement, there were people, maybe a couple of hundred, who would have been in prison twice. There were also just under 4,000 who were interned, which means imprisoned without any trial, and some of them were in prison for up to five years under that situation. So, for prisoners

who were convicted and taken through legal processes, you are probably talking about 20,000. If you take out people who were in prison twice and sometimes three times, and if you take those who were never sentenced, that is the figure that we are talking about.

Q: And where are they now?

Michael Culbert: They're all over Ireland, back with their families or living their lives.

Q: Were there special arrangements made for them?

Michael Culbert: Part of the arrangements for them came as part of the Good Friday Agreement, and that includes the organisation which I represent. In that organisation we have 13 offices over Ireland, and I am the head of them. I work specifically on their behalf and our organisation is funded by the EU in Brussels. They filtered a limited amount of money to Ireland, specifically directed to certain areas with the most conflict. One theme is actual victims, another and another theme is the ex-prisoners community, another would be women and women's issues, because these would have been particularly hidden and Troublesome at the beginning of the conflict. When there was no law and very little recognition of the state forces, and no respect for women, a lot of crimes in our areas went unreported and undealt with, and unfortunately a lot of these would have been abusive crimes with many of the victims of these abusive crimes women. They could not really, in the environment,

report abuse of rape and other crimes. So there are particular areas which are funded by the EU.

Q: What was the legal process for the imprisonments?

Michael Culbert: I did not want to go too deeply into the legal structures that existed here, but what I should have said was that people in prison, related to IRA activities, a lot of them were imprisoned falsely. There were processed reports with no juries, just a judge, processed by a police force and what we had, particularly during the 1970s, were anxieties by the broad legal professions about the conduct of the police in interrogations. So quite a lot of the people sentenced, hadn't actually carried out the activities for which they were charged. There was an amazing percentage that were convicted on corroborate evidence, based on what they would call verbal statements, where there was only admission and no evidential backup. Amnesty International and the British Government's own report of 1978 found that it was inhuman and degrading treatment of the prisoners to carry out such interrogations. The British Government, nearly ten years ago set up a review commission in Britain, which was finished with, but which people felt should be reopened. It was called the Criminal Case Review Commission. It also applied here but they did not set one up here initially, and when they set one up here there were 25 IRA related cases that have been sent for sentencing and have been maintained and been successful.

Q: Was there torture in the prison system?

Michael Culbert: Regarding torture in the prison system – to be frank with you the torture was more in the interrogation centres than the prisons – that is as frank as I can be about that. There certainly was torture in the British government but they weren't quite found guilty of it. They were found guilty of inhuman and degrading activity, but there is an amazingly narrow line between that and torture. The circumstances of our imprisonment were such that there was one particular sector of the community, which tended to be the guards, and they weren't from our particular part of the community. The political allegiances and attitudes of the guards were directly opposite to those who were in prison, so there was a lot of ill treatment, but I could not put hand on heart and say torture.

Next, regarding trust issues: a couple of major factors were vital. It is a 'chicken and egg' situation. Republicans made it clear to the British that they were prepared to examine conflict and the possible termination of it, as long as the British indicated that they were wanting to bring an end to it. Other people were very important, in particularly the Americans. The British Prime Minister, who was John Major at the time, he was genuine in wanting the conflict to come to an end, without too much glory going to the British government. What he wanted was it to be ended. The local politicians were sort of OK about that, but what I'm trying to give you here is a context for the trust, that cannot come about in one

meeting. I have to get to know you and believe you and you could still be lying to me anyway, but there's a guarantee that if another person I trust meets you and his assessment is that you're OK, that you're genuine, there is more likelihood of trust. That is where the roles of other non-governmental agencies were very important. Even down to neutral environments; for example taking people away to different countries to have a dialogue – these were all important things in the creation of trust.

There were a lot of prerequisites. One thing the British government was interested in knowing was what was the situation with those still in prison. So people who were former prisoners were allowed into the jail to talk to the prisoners and to find out their feelings, to see if in due course literally up to 1,000 or maybe 600 to 700 prisoners could be given release. The British government had to be clear that they were also supportive of the peace process and that they believed it. So people were allowed into the prisons to talk and also people were allowed out to talk outside. They were not only actions to build trust, but they were also indicators of what each side was prepared to do to achieve peace.

In terms of the question of whether we got tired after 20 years of the peace process. Yes, this is very boring work. It is a good place to be, it is what we do. Politics is funny, I class myself as a political activist, I am not a politician.

Q: Has the Good Friday Agreement been fully implemented?

Michael Culbert: It is the right way and has proven to be the right way but the vast majority of issues that were treated by the Good Friday Agreement have still to be implemented. There were a couple of things that came out of the Good Friday Agreement which were satisfying an early resolve, and from my point of view were to do with political prisoners, but they are never big enough issues to say the whole thing should crumble. When you are prepared to save some ground then everything is negotiable. But policing, for example, was a major issue and out of the Good Friday Agreement came a proposal to change the policing here, which was most important as this was the most heavily armed facet of the state and they were always perceived by my community as being very bad, so big changes had to be made with them. They are not all in place, they haven't really worked through them, but it seems to be guaranteed that within the next three years they'll be put in place. So it is what they call 50/50 recruitment. Given the history of the policing it is very heavily populated by one section of the community, and that procedure was brought in to bring 50/50 recruitment, that was kept in place for a few years then stopped, but there is still the vast bulk of recruitment from one section, but there are promises that it will be brought back in again. But for democracy, the democratic process we are involved in is working. So when I was talking earlier about the vindication of activities, for me it is getting stronger and stronger, although others may interpret it slightly differently.

Father Time Bartlett: If I could give a perspective on some of those questions, which might be slightly different from Michael's. He mentioned the tiredness of peace and peace making. Let me tell you something, after 35 years of violence, destruction and misery, we were all much more tired of that stage than we are after 20 years of peace and that was part of what created the environment, as Michael acknowledged earlier, when the IRA went out to the community, they sensed the community wanted peace. They were tired of war, so let us remember that as well. And, there is a dispute between Michael and myself and the parts of our community that we are representing, on the question of 'was the war necessary? Did it go on too long?'.

There might be different answers to those questions, some might say, like me, who believe in a just revolution, just war traditionally, who are not completely pacifist, that after bloody Sunday and so on, and the absence of rights, that violence may have been justified, but whether it should have gone on as long as it did is a huge unresolved problem. A large section of our community said no, it should not have gone that way, we should have continued on the political route from the beginning, others say no, the violence brought people to a position on solution. That's a debate that goes on.

The other thing mentioned was about trust and confidence. I think there are no words that capture more the fundamental life-blood, of any peace process more than the building of trust and confidence. In any conflict, our own included, we have what I call the conflict entrepreneurs, those who have a vested interest in

keeping a conflict going, whether it be political leaders, religious leaders, people in paramilitary groups who get some status, that they otherwise would not get. There can be reasons why conflict can be romantic and attractive and people have a vested interest in keeping it going. What we tend to do in conflict and what we did here, is dehumanise the other, demonise them, in the most ethnic, political and religious terms, and the task of building peace as Michael mentioned, was making safe spaces where human beings could encounter other human beings, *as* human beings. But I would like to say something that Michael hasn't said, that as somebody who grew up on the interface in Belfast, whose family had their windows smashed, who grew up not able to play Gaelic games in the street because I lived on the interface, whose father was kidnapped by Loyalist paramilitaries and left for dead, but thankfully survived – I did not choose violence in response to that. That was my decision. My choice is conscience and creating a place of encounter to re-humanise the other, part of it was the tears that people shed.

One of the thing that priests and Protestant ministers said at a funeral of people that were killed, and said by those parents who had lost loved ones, was that, be it Protestant tears, Catholic tears, Irish tears, British tears, broken hearts, it is the same human pain. In a strange way, that reality became an important factor in re-humanising, out of the tiredness and pain of conflict, re-humanising each other and creating a desire to meet each other in a new way and in a constructive way. That was an important part of this situation as well.

Ryan Feeney: I will just offer a quick perspective. I was 14 in 1994 when the ceasefire started coming to affect, so I never had the option of choosing violence, or not. Thankfully, that decision was made for me. I come from a middle class background, I was born in rural Derry, so many of the issues that Father Tim and Michael experienced in their youth, I' have never seen. There is now a whole generation of young people who have no experience or understanding of the conflict, and you can see it in our education system, you can see it right throughout society at the moment. But it is very clear that one of the major issues that we have to address is the past. There are those that would say, in the Unionist community, that Michael is a criminal, that what he did was wrong, and they would very staunchly hold that view, whereas within our community he would be seen as a freedom fighter, somebody that had to take up arms during the conflict to defend our community. So there is a disagreement on what the past was, whether we had a war, a civil insurrection, a situation where everything, in some peoples view, was OK post 1968 until the IRA started violence, and clearly it was not. My grandparents did not have a vote, my parents did, but it was only through change that came through civil rights and the conflict that enacted that.

Here is a quick anecdote about humanity and Christianity. In January this year, a very close friend of mine and a former student of Father Bartlett was murdered on her honeymoon. She was the daughter of a very famous and well-known leader in the GAA, a man called Micky Harte, who has managed Gaelic football teams to various successes. It was a very tragic story that went throughout

our entire community. The day she was murdered, I got the news during a meeting I was having with the leader of the Presbyterian church of Ireland, a man called Dr Norman Hamilton. I am a very close friend of the Harte family, and of Michaela, who was murdered.

A colleague of mine had walked into the room to tell me she was dead, and at that stage we didn't know what had happened. Norman Hamilton turned around to me in the meeting and asked if I wanted to pray. I am a practising Catholic, and this man turned and said to me 'do you want to pray?' and we prayed. So we were sitting in the headquarters of the GAA in Ulster, an inherently Irish, cultural place, a place that is proud of where it comes from, that represents members who were involved in the conflict, who probably caused a lot of pain to the leader of the Presbyterian church, and we were praying over the death of a young woman who was the embodiment of everything Irish. After that, the first minister, Peter Robinson, the leader of Unionism, visited the Harte household, he stood up in the assembly as a father and spoke from the heart about what we as a community, and what the Harte family were going through, recognising the fact that this was a very strong Irish cultural family, recognising the background they were from. I never felt the need to be convinced of the need for outreach and reconciliation because I am very confident in my identity and who I am. I would pay tribute to my former lecturer and others who instilled that sense of confidence in people like me. But I knew then, that the need for continued reconciliation and outreach was something that we should continue to do over the next ten to fifteen years, because we

have done a lot of work, but there is still a lot to do. This anecdote was an example of where we've come to and where I see us going over the next few years.

Q: Is there any possibility that the conflict will recommence?

Michael Culbert: I will answer as well as I can. The 30 years in which we experienced the conflict here required quite a heavy duty input from the population in order for it to be carried out, or else the guerilla organisation would have been totally wiped out. With that as a basis for an example of what's happening at the moment and not to minimise it in any way, only four deaths have occurred of the British force personnel since the IRA ceasefires. Now, there are three organisations which consider themselves to be carrying out a continuation of the IRA campaign. The IRA no longer exists, but we as Republicans condemn these people and their activities. But if you take the length of time that those three organisations have been in existence for, it totals up to about 40 years, one is in existence since 1987, one since 1997 and one has only been in existence for six or seven years. In 40 years of alleged campaigning against the British forces, they have killed four members of the British forces. Now I'm not minimising the deaths, but that gives a little indication of how strong the intent of these people is. The violence will probably continue to a very low level and of course there needs to be caution about people who are part of the British forces, but in the main, the war is over because the people do not support the war, and more importantly, the people who fought the war with intent are against these people and the communities.

But to follow on from that, an armed conflict of the type which we saw here can only be carried on with any degree of intensity with quite a heavy support from the local community. That does not exist any more and the conditions that would be needed for people to support a guerilla organisation no longer exist. There is no longer heavy, obvious injustice, there are heavy mechanism for recourse against the governmental authorities. The state is no longer represented by one organisation, one sector of society. My own organisation is very heavily involved in running the state now, so Republicans are very heavily there. The conditions no longer exist to carry out guerilla warfare, if there were, the IRA would still be there and we would be fighting the war.

One of the legitimators the IRA used for carrying out their armed activity and killing was that it is legitimate, as long as the British military was in Ireland and had arms there. The difference between a degree of legitimacy to fight against a foreign army, having that legitimacy, and the right to use it obviously would depend on the conditions which exist on the ground. If there is an army of occupation carrying out activities against the local population on behalf of the government that is intent of exploiting the population, as colonial power used to do, in the end it is OK to used armed force, that's no longer the circumstance. Unfortunately people today belong to these micro groups – the legitimacy concept is a correct one, but the legitimacy is not the reprobation, because morally it is the correct thing to do. It may sound hypocritical from people that are in the IRA, it is no longer there.

Ryan Feeney: One addition to that quickly, very significantly the vote across the island for the Belfast Agreement as the solution, the democratic way forward, was an overwhelming majority, 94 per cent in the Republic of Ireland, 70 per cent in the North, a vast majority coming from the Republican Nationalist tradition voted for a peaceful, democratic way forward. They do not have democratic legitimacy, and as Michael says, the support is not there among the community, but we must be careful about a generation of young people who have no memory of the horror, the misery of the conflict, but could be romanticised into some simplistic idea of the violence.

Michael Culbert: Can I just say, my own organisation throughout our 13 offices, we are tied in with the Department of Education, we have drawn up a booklet and we have given it out in schools to young people. The reason that we do that is to convince young people from the ages of approximately 14 to 18 that the use of armed struggle is no longer legitimate, and we have had dialogue in classes where teachers deliver to the young people. In the violence programme, we discuss why we took up arms and the reasons why we no longer find it necessary. We do that in schools and in youth groups.

Dinner Discussion, Monday 28 November, 2011: Bang Restaurant, 11 Merrion Row, Dublin

Hosted by:

Sir Kieran Prendergast, former Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs at the United Nations

Topic:

Main lessons from the Irish Peace Process

With: Ian White, Political and International Director, Glencree Centre for Reconciliation and Michael Culbert, Coiste

Sir Kieran Prendergast with Nursuna Memecan, Ayla Akat and Hilal Kaplan.

Sir Kieran Prendergast opened the evening with a warm welcome to participants. He then reinforced the main points from the discussions earlier in the day, encouraging participants to work constructively with the media during this process and focusing on the importance of developing a common language of peace. Within his address, Sir Kieran highlighted that, when forming a language of peace, the words you choose to omit can be just as powerful as the words you use.

Following Sir Kieran's address, DPI Council of Experts member, Professor Dr. Mithat Sancar introduced the pre-dinner speaker Ian White from the Glencree Centre.

Ian White addressing participants at Bang Restaurant, Dublin. With Sezgin Tanrıkulu, Lütfi Elvan, Mehmet Tekelioğlu and Yılmaz Ensaroğlu.

Ian White: The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation was established in 1974 as a response to the violent conflict occurring in Northern Ireland at the time; in particular, the horrific wave of bombings that took place in Belfast in 1972. Since its establishment it has been dedicated to working towards peace, not only in Ireland but also in conflict areas around the world through promoting inclusive dialogue and reconciliation.

The Centre has been the scene of many important events and projects; most notably it was the site where the IRA negotiated Irish independence. The programmes run by the Centre have been wide-ranging in scope, involving the fields of education; recreation; fund-raising; work camps and the hosting of talks and discussions. Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, the Glencree Centre has been instrumental in promoting the ongoing peace process in Ireland. It has hosted countless talks, workshops and discussions aimed at promoting enduring positive relationships between those affected by the conflict in Ireland, including: former combatants; victims and survivors of the conflict; youth; churches and religious groups and wider society.

Glencree has experience in many different areas but I would like to talk to you about our experience in the Irish peace process. First of all, I think that the biggest lesson that we, as a civil society actor, learnt id that there is no sustainable security solution to a security problem. Despite all of the efforts from both sides of the conflict in Ireland, we found that in the end violence did not create

a sustainable solution for us to move forward. Whether it was non-State armed groups committing the violence or whether that violence came from the State, it did not get us anywhere. In fact, it led us to a stalemate where we had to look for other new ways to move forward. Therefore, the first lesson that I want to share with you is that there is no sustainable solution to a security problem.

The second lesson is that you do not need to trust each other to engage in a peace process. In many ways we were slow learners in Ireland. We said that we could not possibly build peace with each other. Why would we possibly trust each other? For years we have been killing each other. At the same time, the people who held power had held it for many, many years and the people who did not have the power fought against them. We killed each other's children, we killed each other's neighbours and we killed people in each other's communities- so why would we trust each other? It would be ridiculous to even think about trusting each other. So, the second big lesson that I want to leave you with is that you do not need to trust each other to build peace. You need to be able to trust a process.

Our process has been ongoing for many years. People say that it began at the same time as the ceasefire but, the fact is, it goes way beyond that. There was a time that we did not trust each other and today, the reality is that we still do not trust each other. However, we are in a position where we have learnt to manage our conflict. We have not resolved our conflict in Ireland and I would

expect a resolution is 30 to 40 years away. However, if you cannot resolve your conflict, at least we can learn how to manage it. The management of conflict is about the reduction of violence and it is about creating an opportunity for everyone to think that they are winning. That is what the process of Glencree has been doing.

Q. From the outset, was Glencree a Republican institution or was it impartial?

Ian White: Glencree was neither Republican or Loyalist. It was neither Protestant or Catholic. It was neither British or Irish. However, it was perceived to be all of those things. You see, whenever you are trying to put yourself in a position which is objective and which encourages people to share, quite often you are perceived to have an agenda: pro-British, pro-Irish, pro-Catholic, pro-Protestant. I have no doubt that there have been times that we may have said and done things that would have allowed people to think that we were either Republican or Loyalist but most often we just offended everybody equally.

Let me share a story with you of another non-government organisation. This organisation went to lay a wreath at a place where a large number of Protestants had been killed. Sadly, two weeks later they had to go and lay a wreath at a place where a large number of Catholics had been killed. The Nationalist and Republican communities only remember the organisation laying the wreath where the Protestants were killed. They could not

remember them laying the wreath where the Catholics were killed. The same is true when they lay the wreath where the Catholics were killed. The Protestants only saw that action, they did not remember the organisation laying the wreath were the Protestants died.

So, your question is a very good one because it is actually very difficult to be neutral. Therefore, I do not pretend to be. We all have an agenda and we all have ideas. I have never been a fighter but I can say that the words and actions that I was involved in as a young child had an agenda.

Q: Can you please explain a little bit more about the history of Glencree and the work it does?

Ian White: I joined Glencree in 1994 to work on the Irish peace process. There were many organisations operating within the same area. In fact, someone estimated at one point that there were 400 organisations working on the peace process in Ireland. Some of these organisations only had five to six people in them, some of them might have had 500 people in them. There were organisations that had paid staff and others that worked with volunteers. Some of them had money and some did not but almost all of them were involved in politics.

We all have a tendency when we are involved in a conflict to scapegoat the other person and to blame them for the conflict.

The other organisations in Ireland generally called up politicians and told them that they were doing a bad job and blamed them for the conflict. These people seemed to have forgotten that they were the ones that elected the politicians in the first place. So, if the politicians were not doing their jobs, perhaps those people needed to look at themselves and not blame the politicians.

I think one of the things that Glencree did which was different in 1994 was to say to every political party in Ireland, both the North and South, that we would like to be their partners. We told them that we would not advocate something that they were against, we were advocating peace. As part of this process we went to every political group in Ireland and said that we would like to engage with them. These organisations had things that we did not have but Glencree also had things to offer them, things that maybe they did not understand yet. So, it was never us lecturing the politicians.

In fact, on two occasions, Glencree took out a full-page article in all of the British and Irish newspapers. In this article we did not beat up the politicians. Instead, the article read 'A message to all politicians in Britain and Ireland: We, the undersigned, would like to say thank you for your leadership towards peace and Ireland. Your dedication and your devotion has been inspirational to the whole island.' Then we got 300 of the wealthiest people in Ireland and a collection of companies in Ireland to sign that statement. Maybe this is a little bit like the journalism we were talking about earlier today. It would be very easy for me to criticise any politician

in Ireland but that does not get you anywhere. What we need to do is to reinforce positive leadership.

Glencree's work was about building relationships, honest relationships that we could sustain and relationships that we felt were critical to the process. That reminds me of a third point: nobody really wants to be violent. My first encounter with Coiste was when we had victims at a Glencree programme, who asked if they could meet some former combatants. The people I approached from Coiste were keen to meet with these victims and had no hesitations about this interaction. Again, nobody wants to be violent but when you feel that there are no other options open to you and that violence is the only way – I would not justify that violence but I do understand it.

Last week I was lucky enough to meet with a group from Haiti, the poorest country in the Southern Hemisphere, who are also tortured at the moment by violence. At the Glencree Centre we try to do peace 'with' people not 'to' people so I asked these people why they used violence. They said that is was because they did not have enough money to feed their children but, with a gun, they could kidnap someone and maybe get a ransom for them which could be used to buy food for their family. This is not a justification for violence but it is important to understand what motivates people, because people do not naturally want to be violent.

Tuesday Morning, Dublin Castle Private Tour

Dublin Castle was built in 1204 following the orders of King John of England. Until 1922, the Castle served as the fortified seat of the English and, later, British rule in Ireland. When the Irish Free State was established in 1922, the Castle was handed over to the newly formed Provisional Government and, to date, it remains a prominent Irish Government facility. For example, the Castle is now used for state affairs, and a variety of conference and dining venues are available. The participants received a private tour of the Castle, wherein they learnt about its historic British occupancy and modern day uses.

Participants and DPI staff at Dublin Castle following a private tour.

SESSION 3:
Tuesday 29 November, 2011 –
Iveagh House, Headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin

Topic:

The Irish Government and the Peace Process

With:

David Donoghue, *Political Director, Department of Foreign Affairs*
Brian Glynn, *Director, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs*
Niall Burgess, *Director General, Anglo Irish Division, Department of Foreign Affairs*
Gerard McCoy, *Joint Director General, International Fund for Ireland*
Gerry Kelly, *Anglo Irish Division (Reconciliation), Department of Foreign Affairs*
Cyril Brennan, *Anglo Irish Division (Security), Department of Foreign Affairs*

Participants and speakers during a roundtable discussion at Iveagh House, Headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin.

Participants:

Niall Burgess is the Irish Council General and has led a long and diverse diplomatic career, with his beginnings in the Chicago Consulate in 1987, where he worked for four years before moving to serve at the New York Consulate in 1991. Between 1993 and 2000, Burgess served as Private Secretary to Foreign Minister Dick Spring and as part of the Irish Mission to the UN in Geneva. Subsequently, Burgess worked in the European Union and is now the director of the Anglo Irish Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) advises the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Ministers of State and the Government on all aspects of foreign policy and coordinates Ireland's response to international developments. It also acts as a consultancy think-tank that provides advice and support on all issues relevant to the pursuit of peace, partnership and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, and between the North and South of the island.

The Political Division of DFA is responsible for the programme and policy of international political issues and it manages Ireland's participation in the European Union's Common and Foreign and Security Policy.

The Anglo Irish Division of the DFA works on the consolidation of peace in Northern Ireland, which is a policy priority for the

Irish government. As part of that, sustained contact with the British Government and international partners are vital to this policy priority. From the early 1980s onwards, the British and Irish governments deepened their cooperative efforts to achieve a durable political solution to the Northern Ireland conflict. The Anglo-Irish Agreement in November 1985 and the Joint Declaration of December1993 set their own precedents for intensifying plans for a joint solution to the conflict.

The International Fund for Ireland (IFA) was established by the British and Irish Governments in 1986. The total resources of the fund total at over £600m and this helps fund over 5,800 projects across Ireland. The fund focuses its attention and efforts on Northern Ireland. The Board of the Fund is appointed by the British and Irish Governments with the United States, the European Union, Canada, Australia and New Zealand represented by their international observers at meetings of the Board.

Brian Glynn: I introduce my colleagues from the division who are with us, this morning: Gerry McCoy, Treasurer for the Special Fund for Ireland, has been working for twenty five years or more on cross-community and cross-border projects with support from the United States and the European Union. Gerry Kelly runs this department's reconciliation fund, which is a small grants fund that works mostly with organisations that have relatively limited capacity; small organisations on the ground. It has a budget of three million Euros a year. Gerry will tell you something about

how that budget operates and how it has been operating in support of reconciliation for several years now. Brian Cahill is the Head of our Political section, Conor O'Riordan is the Director for Northern Ireland in the division and Cyril Brennan is the head of our Security department. Between all of us I hope we'll be able to give you a relatively comprehensive overview of our work, the work of the department and the role of the government in the Northern Ireland peace process.

Before I start would like to acknowledge Ian White; we have been working, in the Department of Foreign Affairs, with the Glencree Centre for many years, and they have played an extraordinarily important and to some extent unrecorded role in the peace process. This year, in a way, Northern Ireland and Ireland were in the news very prominently again, in the international headlines for very good reasons: the visit by the Queen in May this year was the first such visit by a monarch for ninety years. In a sense, the images from the Queen's visit say an awful lot about the prospect for reconciliation on this island, not just in Northern Ireland, but on the entire island. The most vivid images were the images of Queen Elizabeth laying a wreath as a memorial to all of those who died for Irish independence, and the Queen and President Mary McAleese laying a wreath the following day to all of those who had died in service with the British army during the first World War. That was a very profound public acknowledgment of our history, and of the complex history on these islands; the process which has taken us, British and Irish governments, to that visit in May was a very long one.

I think when people think of the conflict in Northern Ireland, they generally think of 1969, when the Troubles erupted in a particularly violent phase, but it has to be said that already, by 1969, the British and Irish governments had been locked in profound disagreement over Northern Ireland for over forty years, that was reflected in the Irish Constitution, which formally claimed that the counties of Northern Ireland were part of the national territory. The eruption and escalation of violence in Northern Ireland in 1969 pitched the two governments, the British and Irish governments into probably the greatest political crisis and the most profound disagreement that they had seen this century, and yet within three or four years of that crisis, both governments were working together to try to find a negotiated solution to the violence in Northern Ireland. That first attempt was the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973, and although that agreement was never successfully implemented, the basic design elements had been set out, and the absolute necessity for the British and Irish governments to work together in trying to find a solution had already been recognised long ago.

I want to say a few words about some of the main landmarks in the journey that has taken us from 1969 to today, but I will not dwell too long on that because what I would really like to do is simply map out a few themes, which I think are important in our own experience of peacebuilding. My colleagues can develop these themes. After the failure of the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973, we experienced a decade of conflict, and to some extent a decade of hopelessness on this island, there was no political peace

process. The failure of the Sunningdale Agreement had in effect given the impression that a negotiated arrangement with a power sharing government in Northern Ireland was not possible. In the early 1980s, the Irish government took the initiative of organising a very extensive consultation with civil society, and with all of the political parties on this island, around what a new Ireland should look like – one that could create a way to peace and ensure peace in the long-term. All of the political parties were invited to that consultation, Unionist and Nationalist, churches and civil society participated.

That process produced an agreed document, which set out a number of options for the way ahead. On the basis of that document, discussions were opened with the British government. The British government at the time, under Margaret Thatcher, discounted all of the options which had been put on the table, creating another crisis between the two governments. Out of that crisis in 1984 came what we would consider to be the 'game changer': the agreement which in a sense laid the path that we have led until today. That was known as the Anglo Irish Agreement. The Anglo Irish Agreement acknowledged that in the absence of power sharing, the Irish government would be given a consultative role in major decisions taken within Northern Ireland. That process of consultation extended for the next ten years and created partnership between the British and Irish governments, which I think became one of the closest political partnerships in Europe. I worked in Brussels for several years around that time and I always remember that when

the Irish Taoiseach or Prime Minister came to a Council meeting in Brussels, the first person he would search out would be the British Prime Minister, and the two would become locked in conversation about the peace process. In a sense, the peace process, with all its ups and downs, all its progresses and setbacks, became the project that kept both governments awake at night, but that forged a very close bond that still exists to this day. That process over time lead to the opening of negotiations between all the parties in Northern Ireland and the two governments facilitated by the United States which led to the Good Friday agreement in 1998.

The essence of the Good Friday Agreement was that it acknowledged three distinct relationships, which had to be both acknowledged and developed if we were to have secure peace in Northern Ireland. The first set of relationships was the political relationships within Northern Ireland, across the entire community, between Unionists on the one hand, those who wanted to retain the links with the United Kingdom and Nationalists and Republicans on the other hand, those who wanted a united Ireland. The Good Friday Agreement established a *modus operandi* or *modus vivendi* between all political representatives in government in Northern Ireland. The second strand of the relationship was the North – South dimension; it was the complete, settled political relationship set up on the island of Ireland between Unionists and Nationalists in Northern Ireland, and the governments in the South. The third set of relationships was the relationship between Ireland and Britain, that relationship was particularly significant for Nationalists, and was given a visible

institutional expression. That relationship with London and the UK was particularly important for Unionists, and was given visible expression as well. That is the design that we implement today. It took almost ten years to establish a durable power sharing government in Northern Ireland. That only happened, finally, in 2007. Now we have a power sharing government in Northern Ireland, which has run a full term; four years. We have an election conducted in Northern Ireland without political rancour and signs now of a devolved administration, that is beginning to tackle some of the really difficult issues facing society. That is the basic outline of the peace process.

Firstly when I talk about the role of the British and Irish governments, I am talking about only one strand of this peace process. A very significant strand is that played by political representatives in Northern Ireland itself, I know you are going to speak to Gerry Adams this afternoon, but there were several political leaders without whom the process in Northern Ireland would not have been possible. There is another dimension as well, which is very important. That is the dimension played by civil society and by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). I mentioned at the beginning that there were many others who played a critical role in the peace process, and helped to build the building blocks from the ground up, that ultimately provided support for that process.

This process has taken a long, long time, it has been 13 years since the Good Friday Agreement, 26 years since the Anglo Irish

Agreement, 38 years since the first attempt to establish a power sharing executive and we are still, after all that time in the relatively early stages of establishing a fully functioning, normal, democratic apparatus. This process has experienced its setbacks. I remember very vividly in 1996, two years before the Good Friday Agreement the IRA had begun ceasefire for a year and a half and that ceasefire was suddenly broken with a bomb in London, in Canary Warf. I remember at the time we felt that the process had fallen apart. I remember at the time we were looking enviously at the Middle East where the workings of the Oslo Accord were still being worked through at about the same time their were negotiations at sharm el sheikh. It seemed that everything was going right with the Middle East and everything was going wrong in the peace process here. There was a similar sense in 2001 when the first attempt at a power sharing government in Northern Ireland began to fall apart, and when it did fall apart, and when the British government re-established direct rule of Northern Ireland we seriously wondered whether this could be done, was this retrievable so that sense of two steps forward one step back has been a constant in the peace process.

Another theme that has been important has been the role of the European Union (EU) throughout the peace process. The UK and Ireland joined the EU about the same time as the first attempt to negotiate a peace settlement at Sunningdale, 1973, and over that period, over those 38 years, issues around identity and government have changed, they have changed as the EU itself has developed.

I suppose as increasingly important decisions have been devolved to Brussels, the sense of whether you are governed by London or Dublin has become less important, what is actually important for most people in Northern Ireland is that they are governed by their own representatives in Belfast. So that sense of fixed sovereignty and the fixed role of states as it has developed over the last 30 or 40 years has been a significant backdrop to what has been achieved in Northern Ireland.

Another theme is the role of the United States, which has been critically important for the last 20 or 30 years. It was around the time of the Anglo Irish
Agreement in the early 1980s, that we, through our embassy in Washington and our consulates in the United States, went on to develop a strong, helpful Irish lobby in Washington, that would become strong advocates of the peace process, both with the Irish in America and with the US government and over time, as their influence developed, the US government took an increasingly active role. The US issuing certain visas to visit at a critical stage in the developments in the IRA, was a very important step taken, for example. Equally important was the sense that those who were involved in trying to negotiate a deal, political leaders of Northern Ireland, always had encouragement from the US. Doors were open to them in Washington, the US had appointed a special envoy for Northern Ireland who regularly visited, there was practical support coming from the US for community work in Northern Ireland border counties through the international fund. Those

communities in Northern Ireland were supporting programmes that took young children, Catholic and Protestant, out of Northern Ireland to get work experience, to meet each other in the US. That process had been underway since the mid eighties, the darkest days of the Troubles and in a sense, that generation came of age in the last decade, when critical developments were made in the peace process.

Another theme is the importance of human rights and equality. At the heart of the violence in the late 1960s, was a sense of inequity, it was a sense of civil rights abuses, unfairness; it was a crisis of governess. The structures of governance were not acknowledged by a large part of the community, which thought that the government was not serving them. Patient work to establish equal employment legislation, equality legislation across a full range of areas and the explicit commitment to human
rights norms were very important, as well in creating the groundwork that was followed through the Good Friday Agreement.

When you look at Queen Elizabeth's visit to Ireland – that is a measurement of progress to some extent. There are still very significant challenges ahead I said that the process has taken along time, it will take a long time yet, but this is not merely a work of negotiated agreements or of diplomacy, it is the work of generations in terms of changing mindsets. We face major challenges on all fronts. There are political challenges in Northern Ireland. The Good Friday Agreement, which sets a working arrangement for

government in Northern Ireland was not made to last, it is a step in an evolution towards normal democracy, normal democratic elections and that will have to develop further over time and will require trust, confidence and more negotiations before we get there. The government structures in Northern Ireland were designed for stability; we now need to look at how they can deliver good democratic policy decisions along European norms, the executive in Northern Ireland has no opposition. There are social challenges, communities who by many yardsticks have become more divided over the last ten or fifteen years. There are more physical peace walls dividing communities in Northern Ireland now than there were ten years ago, so there are quite profound challenges around social cohesions and reconciliation; there are security challenges. We still have a number of organisations which are committed to the use of violence to achieve political ends. We have a number of paramilitary organisations which still command support from some sections of the community and are capable and vicious enough to destabilise the peace process. There are also economic challenges.

Northern Ireland still has an unemployment rate of four or five per cent, but that's achieved because of very high public sector employment, and it is achieved on the back of a very large grant from the exchequer from London. That block grant
has been steadily reduced as the British economy has come under pressure, but of course the Irish economy is under pressure, and of course the levers for both Northern Ireland investment, exports so on are under pressure from the global situation. So that will

create its own challenges for the peace process in Northern Ireland. There are challenges for our own economy as well for developing real North – South economic cooperation needed for both the government here and the executive to generate growth so there are still very significant challenges ahead.

The Irish government has been committing very significant resources, both political resources and human resources, here in the department, and financial resources to the peace process for a long time, and in a sense one of the most difficult challenges when you come out of the hot phase of the conflict, is how you address the perception that it's all done, that problem is solved now. How, against that perception that the resources that are needed to sustain and develop the peace process remain and are challenged by the peace process, not just for the years immediately following the most difficult phase but possible for decades too.

Brian Glynn: I think that was an extremely comprehensive overview of the peace process. It answered in particular the one question every group that comes here under Ian's stewardship asks us, which is how long does a peace process take? Some groups come here and say, we wish to implement a peace process like the Northern Ireland peace process, but we have only one year to do it. As he showed in his presentation, you can trace our peace process back 38 years, 40 years at this stage and you could be facetious as well say that next week the 6th of December is the 90th anniversary of the signing of the treaty between Britain and Ireland, that established

the independence of this part of the island. Which at the time was a type of conflict resolution again thought to be a temporary arrangement – we are living with the consequences of it still.

Q: Could you explain the role of civil servants like yourself?

Niall Burgess: Within the Irish government, there has been a very close partnership between the Taoiseach's Department, the Prime Minister's Department, the Justice Department and the Foreign Ministry Department, the Department of Foreign Affairs. We work very closely together all the time, because there have been different dimensions to the peace process. I suppose if I were to talk about the role that this department and its officials have played, there are two themes that I would take out, without going into too much detail. One is, there is institutional knowledge. The importance of institutional knowledge and of retaining institutional knowledge within your public service, who are devoted to the peace process over time, is great. Due to the fact that we move on, it is in the essence of life in a foreign ministry; every three or four years you move to another role. In many cases here, those who have been involved in the peace process, when we have served abroad it has often been in places like London or consulates in the UK or Washington, or our consulates in Canada. In other words, in areas where there were communities and governments, who were very close partners in the peace process itself. The issue of retaining institutional knowledge was seen at a very early stage as being very important to this department.

The other theme I think that has been important has been local knowledge. We took a policy decision in this department 25 years ago, to get out onto the ground, and to understand what was happening in local communities. We had teams of people who travelled, who spoke not just to local politicians but to local businesses, local trade unionists, the churches, so on, we developed over time very good feel, not just for the diplomatic and governmental process but also for what was happening within communities and the sentiment on the ground and we have been very careful to retain that over the years as well those are the things. If I was asked what are the critical skills we need to retain for the future it would be the retention of institutional memory and the retention of good local knowledge I don't know whether than answers your question.

Q: Can you talk about some of the mistakes that were made?

There were lots, but they all come with hindsight to some extent. I think a mistake was made in the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement. Real security issues around decommissioning of arms were left unresolved. I think parties went into power sharing and from the word go there was distrust around decommissioning and that power sharing government. The executive fell apart after a couple of years, the major part of work the government had to do was work around security; addressing confidence issues around security, policing, justice, decommissioning was
one.

We still have not addressed the legacy of the past. There have been several attempts but it has not been done. There are an awful lot of people in Northern Ireland who were bereaved, or who know people who were bereaved during the conflict. There are a lot of victims. There is still a sense of in many cases of the truth not being known about what happened, and then there's a sense of justice not having been done for those who were involved. These are extremely complex and difficult issues and we still haven't been able to tackle them successfully. I can think of missed opportunities, I can think in hindsight, of opportunities that should have been followed through at the time, that cost time in this 38 year progress towards peace. I would be concerned now that the resources and funding for reconciliation projects for the social dimensions of the peace process are being pulled back. We are conscious all the time of weaknesses developing and issues that might need to be addressed but that issue around unresolved security guarantees probably cost six years.

Q: The first agreement you signed was in 1973 and the second one was the Good Friday Agreement. Was there any other agreement in between?

Yes, the agreement in 1973 and the agreement in 1998 were agreements between all the political parties in Northern Ireland and the governments supported them. They were very similar; the Good Friday Agreement was called 'Sunningdale for slow learners' by some observers at the time. In between there was one particularly

important agreement and that was the Anglo Irish Agreement, to work together between the British and Irish governments, that was in 1984 and that was essentially an attempt by the two governments to fill the political vacuum that had
developed in Northern Ireland.

Q: Can you talk about a real peace if you can't take down the walls?

If you took down the walls you would have chaos. I think the walls, unfortunately are there because of local tensions between communities. I think the first step is to address the social and human issues that underline the walls and then to take them down. I think that's the biggest challenge facing the power sharing government in Northern Ireland. I said the government was designed for stability, and it has shown itself to be a stable political institution, but one of the most difficult challenges it faces is how it begins to address the mindsets among its own core of supporters and how it begins to initiate social change that underpins reconciliation. Some of the walls have been taken down; some of them can't be taken down. But taking the walls down does not solve the problem. The problem has to be solved in the mindsets of the communities around those walls. I think there has been a trend towards fewer mixed communities, towards a concentration of Catholics and Protestants in majority communities. Of course that is not a positive trend for the long-term, so if there was one challenge facing the executive in the long term, it would be this issue, of how you move from peace

to reconciliation, and I think we all acknowledge that's going to take some time.

The agreement between the British and Irish governments, out of which the partnership between Britain and Ireland developed was a game changer that transformed the political landscape. The Good Friday Agreement, in one go tried to address all of the issues. Issues around the political relations in Northern Ireland, North – South relationship, the British – Irish relationship, human rights issues, equality issues, issues around identity, and issues around culture were all addressed in the Good Friday Agreement; it was called the comprehensive agreement. It was a very long process because just about everybody was around the table and involved in the negotiations. I think it could be misleading to look at the big diplomatic and negotiating moments as the breakthrough moments. With hindsight, the breakthrough took place quietly and unnoticed before those actions, for example when Sinn Féin and DUP agreed on a power sharing government, they were under enormous pressure from their own supporters to go into government, to agree a deal, and the last small crisis that we had which was last year around whether you could devolve responsibility for justice and policing, that led to a week of all-night negotiations in Belfast. In reality the parties were under enormous pressure from their supporters, just to get on with it; sometimes it is hard to distinguish between cause and effect.

Brian Glynn: Thanks for that, for taking the time to give us a comprehensive overview. We've been joined in the interim by David Donahue, who is the political director of the Department of Foreign Affairs and who also has a lot of experience in this area as the Former Joint Secretary, responsible for monitoring the Anglo Irish Agreement, and the last Joint Secretary of the old agreement and the first joint secretary of the new agreement; so he straddled both sides of this part of the history of the peace process.

Gerry McCoy: Good morning everyone. I would like to add my own words of welcome to Ireland and indeed to the Department of Foreign Affairs. I will talk about the role of the International Fund for Ireland in promoting peace and reconciliation in Ireland, especially in the social and economic sphere, and I also want to underline the role of the international community in promoting the process of peace and reconciliation.

First of all, I want to underline that the fund is an international, independent organisation, which is independent of the Irish and British states. So even though in reality I work here in the Department of Foreign Affairs and am an Irish civil servant, I do not work for the Department of Foreign Affairs or for the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I work for the Minister for Ireland, and the International Fund for Ireland has
its own independent Board, appointed by the two governments, which directs the work of the organisation. So it is an international organisation, established by the Irish and UK governments and the

other elements, which we will look at. It is critical that support comes from the international community. In other words it is not funded by the Irish or British states it is funded by the international community, particularly by countries where Irish people have settled, above all the US, as well as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and also the EU.

As I mentioned, I am the Joint Director General of the fund, now what does that mean? One of the features of the fund is that everything alternates between North and South, so we have an office here in Dublin, which looks after the South, and then we have an office in Belfast, which looks after the North. But of course we sit down together to make sure we have a common and joint approach, in terms of our programmes and in terms of promoting the process of peace and reconciliation across the whole island of Ireland. Our focus tends to be on Northern Ireland, and the border counties of the South with Northern Ireland, but we do operate across the whole island of Ireland. So as Mr Burgess mentioned earlier in his talk one of the critical agreements along the process of peace and reconciliation was the Anglo Irish Agreement in the mid 1980s. Immediately following this agreement the two governments, the British and Irish, sat down and decided to establish an international organisation to draw on international goodwill, to promote peace and reconciliation in Ireland through social and economic renewal. This international fund for Ireland drew particularly on US goodwill towards Ireland, and in particular, depended on very prominent Irish Americans, who were interested

in assisting the process of peace and reconciliation in Ireland. In addition to US funding, the governments of New Zealand and Canada and Australia also contributed to the fund and of course the European Union, of which both Ireland and the UK are members, since 1973.

The international feature of the fund was critically important because it allowed the fund to go to groups in Northern Ireland and across Ireland to say this is not Irish government money, this is not British government money, this is international money and the objective is to bring people together and to promote reconciliation and social and economic renewal. So the funding is neutral and the International Fund is independent of both states, and therefore its decisions are neutral. That gave the fund access in quite divided communities and it allowed the fund to work with groups who might have had difficulties working with either of the two governments. The international fund was established in 1986 and it celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary in December. Over that period the fund has received hundreds of millions of Dollars or Euros in support from both the US or the European Union principally and from the other three donors, the founding agreement stipulates very clearly that the objectives of the fund are to promote economic and social advancement and to encourage contact dialogue and reconciliation between Nationalists and Unionists throughout Ireland.

The reason for which the fund was established to focus on economic and social dialogue was that the conflict in Northern Ireland had

broken normal social and economic relations within communities and of course across the island of Ireland. Due to the break down of links, this caused many of the border crossings, the roads and other crossings to be either closed or subject to restrictions. As a result, many of the normal, natural intercourses, whether they be social or economic, across the border and between communities, had been disrupted because of the conflict, and communities had withdrawn within each others. For example, many people from Northern Ireland, from Belfast may never have come South and many Southerners were reluctant to go North. Even for people who lived on the border, whether it was on the Northern or Southern side, it became very difficult in certain areas or there was reluctance or indeed a fear to cross the border. So many of the normal, natural, cultural, economic social exchanges, these normal routes had broken down.

The area of focus of the fund is Northern Ireland and the six border counties of the South, but the fund does operate programs across the whole island of Ireland. Back in 1986 the island of Ireland, North and South faced a serious economic crisis. Unemployment in Northern Ireland was 17 per cent and, in the Southern border counties was 18 per cent. So there was a desire on the part of the two governments to promote economic developments, to break down divisions between the two communities and the two parts of the island and above all to give people a sense of hope that the international community was concerned and was willing to promote economic and social reconciliation. In its early days,

the International Fund for Ireland placed a very heavy focus on economic regeneration, supporting entrepreneurship, developing small work spaces, so that local businesses might have somewhere to be based, developing tourism infrastructure and in particular establishing cross-border partnerships.

The Shannon Erne waterway, which is one of the earliest initiatives of the fund, is a waterway which had been closed. The canal system, which connected lakes in Northern Ireland to the river Shannon, the longest river on the island of Ireland, this canal system had been closed, it had fallen into disrepair, it no longer had economic immunity. The fund was the first organisation to say we will support the reopening of this waterway, this was quite a radical thing to do at a time when many crossings along the border were closed and communities did not wish to mix or were reluctant or afraid to mix. It was also a very symbolic thing to do, to open crossings and to allow free movement between North and South and to bring economic regeneration to a part of Ireland which had suffered economic exclusions. It is these small types of projects that the fund has focused on and which are designed to link communities and break down divisions, and to explain to people that greater economic prosperity is in everyone's interest, that there are certain things which we can do on the island of Ireland, which we can do together to bring a better return for all of us; things which threaten noones identity; no ones aspirations. Those are the type of projects which the fund gave priority to.

We have promoted small, local economic centres in both Northern Ireland and along the Southern counties; these include small local industries, small IT setups, and also focusing on social services such as childcare facilities or centres for senior citizens to come together. This is a very important element of the fund's work, because by bringing people from both traditions together you give them an opportunity to share their stories and to listen to other people's stories and their version, their understanding of themselves. It is not to change people's identity, but to allow people to appreciate their identity and history and value others, so that everyone wins. Over the last twenty five years the fund has offered support to over six thousand projects, has assisted over thirty five thousand young people in training and has created about fifty five thousand jobs in this part of Ireland, which I must underline, traditionally, has suffered economic disadvantage and economic isolation.

There is still some work to do, although a lot of progress has been made. In parts of Belfast you can see some Loyalist and Republican murals, historically these have been used to identify areas with different traditions, whether Nationalist or Unionist. In response to these murals, the fund has a special programme called 're-imaging communities'. This allows local communities, if they wish, to reimage themselves, to remove what might be considered hostile or offensive images in their community and replace them with more welcoming or inclusive images. Also to encourage communities to remove flags, symbols and emblems which some communities might feel are threatening or intimidating. So this is an example

of the social work with communities. We have to stress that it is for local communities to decide the pace of change, and whether they wish to participate in our programmes. Much of our work has depended on the goodwill of civil society and we have assisted organisations across Ireland, including the Glenncree Centre here in the South, in County Wicklow. The fund began in 1986, and we are now approaching our twenty fifth year anniversary. I should also point out that we are coming to the end of the fund, or certainly the fund in its current form. We have four programmes, and these programs will close in two years time, so by the end of 2013, all current programmes will close and we expect our current funding to end. We expect, we hope that the government will take a greater ownership in part for the work that we are doing, because there remains an awful lot of work to do.

The opening of the island of Ireland Peace Park commemorates Irish soldiers from across Ireland, North and South, and from both traditions in Ireland; Nationalist and Unionist, who fought in the British army in World War I. The meeting of Queen Elizabeth, obviously the British Monarch, with our former President Mary McCaleese and the King of the Belgians Albert II was very significant. The Peace Park was an initiative of the International Fund for Ireland to underline that we on the island of Ireland have a common history, which we haven't always been very good at addressing or indeed admitting to. We have a common history, thousands of Irish men from Northern Ireland and the South fought in the British army, it is only right and proper that we should

remember the sacrifice that they made and when the Queen and the President went to Belgium, it was a very powerful statement that the process of peace and reconciliation, while it may be a bit slow at times, the process of peace and reconciliation is working and is bringing people together without threatening their identity or those aspirations which they hold dear.

So in conclusion, what I would like you to take from this is that the work of the International Fund for Ireland has been successful, I think because it is independent, it is neutral and it has worked with local communities at their pace and to their agenda. It is the local communities that set the pace and set the agenda for the types of programmes that they want.

Brian Glynn: Thanks very much Gerry for reminding us that one of the key elements of the success of the fund is international involvement. International involvement in conflict areas is almost always difficult, but this is an example of our shared understanding of how international support and international money could support and follow a peace process, and provide a neutral space, essentially for two communities to make some steps towards each other, that they might not been able to make had this fund not been in existence.

I mentioned next week is the ninetieth anniversary of the signing of the treaty. We are heading into a decade of commemorations of events, both North and South and in the past the commemorations

would have been something that were noted only in the communities that were involved, so it's very much the hope of the government here, that this decade of commemorations can be an opportunity for us to look at our shared history in a way that allows us to look at how the other side views things, rather than simply one community or another community commemorating their event.

Q: Do you bring the different communities together in Northern Ireland?

Gerry McCoy: The reconciliation is central to the work of the IFI but we accept that you have to take communities at their own pace. So for example we have one project, the community leadership project, which deals with what we would call single identity communities, in other words largely Nationalist or exclusively Catholic communities or largely Unionist or exclusively Protestant communities, we might work with them in establishing a group or addressing a particular issue such as renovation of a local park or restoration of a particular building of historic interest. Then we would say to them, you now need to go the next step. You need to link up with a group from a different tradition, possibly from your area, preferably in your area but possibly a bit further away, and then we would bring two or three groups together from different traditions to work on a larger project. This can take a long time, it can take ten years, but you have to allow communities to move at their own pace. We are clear with groups we start to work with at the very beginning, that the intention, even if we are working

with a group just from one tradition, the logical next step would be to work with other groups in your area or in other areas but from different traditions or from mixed traditions which is the overriding objective. We do have currently a four step program which takes groups from the beginning when there single identity, all the way through to mixed groups. People from different traditions, different backgrounds sit down, meet, work together on a common project and get to know each other, which is the critical thing.

Q: Did you play any role in disarmament?

Gerry McCoy: The fund had no role in disarmament. In terms of changing a roadmap you raise a very important point. When the fund began in 1986, it was asked to focus especially on economic issues, which it did. As you will probably know, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Irish economy boomed and the fund therefore reassessed their priorities and it put far more emphasis on peace and reconciliation projects, compared to economic projects, and this was obviously in response to the economic circumstances at the time. So the fund has changed its working or its 'road map' over the last twenty five years. I suspect we will probably be doing a lot more economic work in the last two years of the fund's existence, which reflects the current economic difficulties.

Brian Glynn: Many thanks. Now Gerry Kelly would like to say a few words about the reconciliation process within the department.

Gerry Kelly: Thank you and welcome to Ireland, my name is Gerry Kelly and I manage the reconciliation and anti-sectarian funds, which are part of the department of foreign affairs. Probably the first point to make about the reconciliation fund is that it actually predates the peace process. This department established a fund, which aimed to a assist organisations which were involved in reconciliation work, and to facilitate better relations, both within Northern Ireland and between the North and South. The fund was established in 1982, at the height of the Troubles, and the aim then was to try and create space on the ground for civil society to come together in a positive manner, and hopefully create some of the conditions that were necessary for a resolution of the problems in Northern Ireland. This has taken some time, the funds available at the time were quite small and it was only with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 that we were able to increase this reconciliation fund quite significantly. The Good Friday Agreement was a comprehensive agreement, it covered every area of interaction within Northern Ireland and between North and South and between Britain and Ireland. One of the conditions placed on the parties was that they would examine the conditions for enhanced reconciliation on our part, that led the Irish government to increase the funds available to the reconciliation fund, equal to two and a half million Euros; two million pounds at the time.

In recent years we have established an anti-sectarian fund on the same line that works in tandem with the reconciliation fund. The two are administered together and effectively work together as one

fund. At the moment, we spend approximately three million Euros a year on over one hundred projects in the average year, in the areas of reconciliation and anti-sectarianism. What do we fund? The fund essentially is, compared to the International Fund for Ireland, which we've just heard about, a fund operating as a micro fund, in some ways. The majority of our grants are between twenty and fifty thousand Euros, we do not fund infrastructural costs for organisations such as buildings, staff costs, salaries that sort of thing, what we really do is programme project based funding for small organisations, a lot of whom for example would not have the capacity for the development, where they could access larger funds from the International Fund for Ireland. The criteria is administered from this department, funding comes solely from this department, so it is Irish government money, there is no involvement from outside funders such as the British government or EU or anything like that. This gives us a much greater deal of flexibility in how we operate and the organisations we fund. Organisations apply directly to this department. We run three funding rounds a year, so essentially every four months we release a lot of funding so there is a great deal of flexibility in regard to timing. If an organisation misses one deadline there is going to be another one coming up very soon.

Q: Can you describe the criteria?

The criteria are reasonably broad, which gives us a good degree of flexibility on how we can work with organisations. The applications

are considered under the following criteria. Funding is available to assist reconciliation through education, dialogue, culture, to develop and maintain meaningful cross-boarder links to promote improved Anglo Irish relations. To promote cross community and inter denominational activities, to promote tolerance and acceptance of cultural diversity. To promote academic research aimed at promoting reconciliation and to support contribution to political reconciliation. A lot, in practise a lot of groups we operate, we find would be engaged in cross community contact work. Even more than a decade after the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland is still a very divided society. Northern Ireland would suffer from a lot of the same social problems of many industrialised societies, but when you add that to that the history of conflict and the prism of conflict, it exacerbates a lot of the issues. For example public housing and education are still very divided in Northern Ireland; this leads to a great deal of mistrust between communities so we work a lot with organisations, NGOs, community and voluntary organisations, who would work to break down these barriers and try and move beyond the mistrusts between communities. A lot of the organisations we work with engage with young people to try and bring them together through education, sports, culture, to mix young people from one community with young people from another community, to build on shared experience. Often young people in Northern Ireland will not meet through normal social networks because education is divided, because housing is divided. There are not as many natural opportunities, so it needs that extra input from community and

voluntary organisations, to bring people together. We also work a lot with groups, that are only developing their ability to seek and attract funding because of their of their past. For example, we have worked with ex-prisoner organisations, where they are engaged in cross community work. These are organisations comprised of people who have been in prison for terrorism related offences during the Troubles, and we would fund programmes with them, where they would come together with people of similar experiences from the other community, where they would try and build relationships and move beyond their past. Because we operate on an annual basis, we do not provide multi-annual funding, organisations apply to us via a year to year basis, so what we are able to finance really are programme costs, not salaries. This gives us, because of the nature of the fund, an opportunity to engage closely with applicant organisations. We often work with applicant organisations on building their programme, to refine their application to target better outcomes, to better meet our goals.

Throughout its life, since the early 1980s, the reconciliation fund has been a tool for this department to engage with community groups in Northern Ireland. Having even small financial resources opens doors in communities means we are able to encourage organisations down a certain path with the promise of financial assistance. That is broadly what we do. The main characteristics of the fund, the money is not huge but because we target smaller grants in hard-to-reach areas, I think we have greater outcomes and the flexibility we have in the fund, the fact that it is fully Irish

government money, means we can engage with groups who maybe do not have the capacity to seek funds from other larger sources.

Brian Glynn: Thanks very much for that Gerry. Next I turn to Cyril Brennan, for a discussion on security, and then we can continue our discussion over lunch.

Cyril Brennan: Thank you very much. I deal with justice and security issues here in the Anglo Irish division of the department. My name is Cyril Brennan. What I propose to do is to focus on some of the security issues that Niall mentioned earlier, on which were formed important elements of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. In particular, the policing and justice elements of the Good Friday Agreement, what was in those, and how they have been progressed, and then touching on other elements of the Good Friday Agreement related elements, which were security normalisation and decommissioning. Our political director will also have words to say about that. Niall Burgess mentioned earlier on that the security issues were in fact some of the issues that caused, perhaps most difficulty, and this was even after the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, when we ran into difficulties in the establishing of the institutions. Some of the issues were the stumbling blocks that caused delays in the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement in the early 2000s.

I'll start on policing. The Good Friday Agreement recognised policing as a central issue, it set the broad objectives of a change

process and it agreed to establish an independent commission. By way of background, in recognising policing as a central issue there was a long history in Northern Ireland, of a perception of unequal treatment by the police force, which at the time was the RUC, the Royal Ulster Constabulary. It was perceived that one of the stumbling blocks that needed significant reform, was the policing service, change was needed in order to gain the confidence needed as part of the peace process. The Good Friday agreement said that 'the participants recognise that policing is a central issue in any society. They equally recognise that Northern Ireland's history of deep divisions has made it highly emotive, with great hurt suffered, and sacrifices made by many individuals and their families, including those in the RUC and other public servants'. As I mentioned the RUC was the name of the police force that was institute in the North. 'They believe that the agreement provides the opportunity for a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland was a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole'; that's a key element, from the community *as a whole*. 'They also believe that this agreement offers a unique opportunity to bring about a political dispensation, which will recognise the full, equal legitimacy of the identities, scenes of identity and allegiance of all sections of the community in Northern Ireland.' I think that was more important because it gives you a very good sense of what this reform process was about. An independent commission, and *independent* was the key word here, on policing was chaired by Chris Patten whom I'm sure your familiar with, he had a number of roles in the past, he was the last British governor of Hong Kong,

but he also served as an EU External Relations Commissioner and you will probably recognise him from that role. He was a very well respected figure I think on all sides and he did some very good work, he was assisted by eight members and I include international figures. He embarked on a widespread consultation process, with all of the political parties, with other police forces, civil society and engaged in public meetings. The other police forces would have included the Irish police force later, because one of the key elements that we currently have is a very good level of cooperation between the new police force in Northern Ireland and the police force in Ireland, but they also consulted police forces as well as in Britain and the US, in Spain and South Africa, learning from the experience of policing in those countries. The recommendation were quite numerous, there were one hundred and seventy five recommendations, but essentially the key principles were effective and efficient policing, fair and impartial policing, accountability to the law and the community and a police for that representative of the community it serves. They were the principles that guided the Patten report, the implementation took place in the course of June 2000. A key addition is a new policing service in Northern Ireland, which is known as the PSNI, that's the acronym for the Police Service of Northern Ireland, which has an independent Chief Constable and a decentralised command structure throughout the North. There's a system of monitoring and that is through what's known as the Policing Board, which, without going into too much detail essentially monitors and sets guidelines targets for what the police force in Northern Ireland should be aiming to do on

the basis of the Good Friday Agreement principles. For example, there is a monthly meeting of the Policing Board with the Chief Constable, which is held in both public and private to monitor the progress of policing, of the PSNI. Equally then there's a Police Ombudsman; an ombudsman which provides oversight and deals with any complaints, regarding issues of policing within Northern Ireland.

Turning to the second element of that, which is criminal justice, I think it would be fair to say, the criminal justice aspects which are mentioned in the Good Friday Agreement which is well, do not have the same status as, and is not as much in the media as policing reform, which was seen as a key element. Nevertheless, it was included in the agreement and it must be said, compared to other conflict situations, there was a very well-developed criminal justice system within the North, a functioning court system, with prosecutions and so forth, so the amount of work that needed to be done on the criminal justice system was not the same as that which was required on the policing side, but nevertheless, work was undertaken, similar, to the Patten Commission, but involving more of the British government, with an independent element. They made a number of proposals that were implemented after the year 2000, notably having structured cooperation between the criminal justice agency across the island, between the North of Ireland and the South.

Security normalisation processes is another element, the key thing

there is that there was a very heavy military presence in the North of Ireland when the Troubles broke out in 1969, British troop levels in 1972 reached 27,000 in Northern Ireland. This was a very high level and indeed, in certain parts of Northern Ireland effectively it was a militarised zone to some extent. So again part of the Good Friday Agreement was to seek to normalise that security situation, to reduce the visible level of troops, to reduce the number of troops and the visible presence of troops on the streets. That was a key element for the Nationalist side in the course of negotiations, and it was also important in reducing some dissident elements, Niall mentioned we still have dissident elements, this is still a challenge but to reduce their cause for continued paramilitarism, we needed to reduce the visible signs of militarisation on the streets of Northern Ireland. The end of British military operations in Northern Ireland was chaired in July 2007. From a high of 27,000 troops back in 1972, there are now about 5,000 troops, which is relatively normal, and there has been the closure of all but fourteen army bases in the North.

Finally, I'll turn to decommissioning. The main body that was set up to deal with decommissioning, known as the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, was responsible essentially for overseeing the decommissioning by the paramilitary bodies. It included international figures, a Canadian, an American, and they did tremendous work in observing and monitoring and confirming decommissioning. In September 2005 the International Commission on Decommissioning was able to confirm the full

decommissioning of IRA weapons, which was the stumbling block over the previous years, and as I mentioned, decommissioning was one of the key factors that delayed progress in the full implementation of the Good Friday agreement, so it was a key moment when the international commission was able to confirm full decommissioning of the IRA weapons.

In conclusion, in terms of the challenges on the security side, unfortunately there still is a dissident element, that is out there, and they have been responsible for the tragic death of a PSNI constable, Ronan Kerr, who was killed in a booby trap explosion when he was leaving his house. A booby trap bomb had been placed under his car and he died as a result of his injuries and that unfortunately has been all too recent and was a very stark reminder of the dissident threat that those that still do not adhere or do not believe in the peace process, continue. That is something that both sides are very conscience of and as I mentioned there's an excellent level of cooperation between the new police service in Northern Ireland and the police force down here, the Garda Síochána, in countering this dissident threat and starving it of the oxygen that it needs to survive and that's a challenge that continues to be there.

David Donohue: Ladies and gentlemen, if I may I'll just say something in addition to what Cyril said, something about the political context for the issue of weapons, the decommissioning of weapons, it might be of some interest to you. First of all, the word itself – 'decommissioning' of weapons, what does that mean?

In our peace process in Northern Ireland, we had to find some means of putting the weapons beyond use, the weapons that the paramilitary groups, the terrorist groups, the weapons which these groups had laid down as part of a ceasefire. Some solution had to be found to the fact that there were large numbers of weapons and explosives in Northern Ireland, even in parts of the Republic and the basic political dilemma was that the Unionist community in Northern Ireland, those who had perhaps suffered at the hands of IRA violence over the years, the Unionist demanded proof that the IRA meant it when they said that they were declaring a ceasefire. They didn't just want to take the IRA's word for it, they wanted physical proof, they wanted to see the weapons being disposed of. On the other hand, the IRA, and one can understand it from their perspective, they maintained that they had conducted a thirty year campaign against the security forces in Northern Ireland and they had neither been victorious nor had they been defeated there had been a standoff at the end, so the IRA was not defeated. So this was a matter of pride to them and it was part of their rationale in declaring a ceasefire, in declaring a ceasefire they were opting for a political route to achieving their objectives, so they maintained the very fact that they declared a ceasefire and observed a ceasefire should itself be enough for the British and Irish governments and the Unionist community.

It would have been enough for the British and Irish governments, because what counted was that there was no further violence, there was of course some residue violence by breakaway groups as

Cyril just mentioned, but the IRA proper declared a ceasefire in 1997, and that has been maintained ever since. It was a matter of, almost of military or quasi-military discipline for them, they saw themselves as a military organisation. They had military titles so they said to the two governments we will insist that this ceasefire be implemented, it's not necessary to hand over the weapons, it is enough that the weapons are not being used. The Unionist community asked 'why would they hesitate to hand over the weapons? There must be some plan to use them again some day'. So we were caught in this dilemma, where each side felt that the other side was being unreasonable. It took years before the problem was solved and as Cyril implicated one means of solving it was to set up an international body, which would liaise with representatives of these organisations. The international body could not force the IRA or other paramilitary groups to hand over the weapons, but they could at least try to set up procedures. Eventually, the thing in practical terms was of course, sometimes nonsensical. The IRA could say, right, here are all of our weapons, this morning and then they could keep some back, or they could go off and buy some more in the afternoon, or they could make some more, they could manufacture bombs. So in practical terms the IRA said, well this is actual nonsense. But there was a political point to be addressed, mainly that the Unionists needed this reassurance, even the symbolic reassurance before they would continue with the implementation with the rest of the agreement.

It did take many years and much patience before finally it was solved

in 2005, it was solved on the basis of the weapons being destroyed in the presence of the international commission, that meant they were destroyed, they were not handed over. That was the crucial difference, some of the weapons were concreted over, they were put in dumps and concreted over. So the weapons were taken out of commission, they were taken out of use, decommissioned, that's what the word means. So it was a tricky process for the Northern Ireland peace process. Eventually it was solved and that opened the way for the conclusion of the implementation of the agreement.

Lunch, Tuesday 29 November, 2011 – Iveagh House, Headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin

Hosted by:
David Cooney, *Secretary-General, Department of Foreign Affairs*

Special Guests:
David Cooney, *Secretary-General, Department of Foreign Affairs*
David Donoghue, *Political Director*
Brian Glynn, *Director, Conflict Resolution Unit*
Michael Forbes, *Director, Russia/Europe/Western Balkans/Council of Europe Section*
Julian Clare, *Russia/Europe/Western Balkans/Council of Europe Section*

Secretary General of the Department of Foreign Affairs with Kerim Yildiz, Cengiz Çandar, Mehmet Tekelioğlu, Levent Tüzel, Ayhan Bilgen, Hasan Cemal, Ali Bayramoğlu and Mithat Sancar, over lunch at Iveagh House, Headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin.

The lunch, hosted by the Secretary General of the DFA, at Iveagh House, Headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs, was an opportunity for participants to talk with Irish Government officials to discuss their experiences pre and post conflict. Informal lunch-time discussions included topics such as Turkey's relationship to other countries in the region; the Irish Government and international relations; international human rights bodies; and the Irish and Turkish Governments' interactions.

David Cooney, Secretary General of the Department of Foreign Affairs, addressing participants, DPI staff and other government officials during lunch at Iveagh House, Headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin.

Participants at Iveagh House, following lunch, hosted by the Secretary General of Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs.

SESSION 4:
Tuesday, 2011 – Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament)

With:
Gerry Adams TD, *Leader of Sinn Féin*
Pádraig MacLochlainn TD, *Sinn Féin Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs*

Moderated by:
Kerim Yildiz

Gerry Adams TD is an Irish republican politician and Teachta Dála (TD) for the constituency of Louth. He is president of Sinn Féin, and in 2011 succeeded Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin as Sinn Féin parliamentary leader in Dáil Éireann.

Previously, Adams was the political mouthpiece of the Provisional IRA and, as such, secret talks were held with Adams in 1988, which led to unofficial contact with the British Northern Ireland Office. This interaction lay the groundwork for 'The Belfast Agreement" and the discussions with Adams led to the IRA ceasefire of 1994, a prelude to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

Pádraig MacLochlainn TD is the Sinn Féin Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs. He was elected as a Teachta Dála in the 2011 general election and was elected to the Dáil on 25 February, 2011. MacLochlainn is a member of two Joint Oireachtas Committees:

Foreign Affairs and Trade, and European Affairs, and he is a member of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA).

Gerry Adams TD and Pádraig MacLochlainn TD taking questions from the delegation at the Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament).

Gerry Adams greeted the group and welcomed them to Ireland. He then proceeded to accept questions.

Q: Can you describe the secret talks that took place?

Gerry Adams: Thank you for your question. There were talks between Sinn Féin and elements of the British government, going back to Margaret Thatcher's time. They were conducted through what could be described as a back-channel between representatives of the British government and Sinn Féin's leaders, and occurred when Tony Blair was elected as British Prime Minister, as well as during John Major's term as British Prime Minister. The association with John Major's government broke down because they refused to engage properly. When Mr. Blair came into talks with representatives through the back-channels, the IRA's association with the British

government was restored, and the question of arms was dealt with, some thirteen or fourteen years ago. We refused to accept any preconditions. I also think that it is important to note that there are still elements of the Good Friday Agreement which have yet to be recognised. So the process of making peace and sustaining peace is a very proactive/protractive process. The short answer to your question and to that of Mr. Blair, has been reported inaccurately and what his said is incorrect.

Q: I would like to ask you about the role of the armed struggle or the role of violence in bringing about the peace in Ireland.

Gerry Adams: Well, essentially, if I give you the longer answer, initially there were two guardian conservative states established, and particularly in the North, there was structured discrimination, and a police state. The two states were born out of armed struggle. And in my own view, historically there were not any politics involved, so the British were able to abort a very potential revolution, to suck the strength out of Ireland and to lead the conventions for more armed actions, more arms procurement. As you may know from your own situation, it operates in a cycle, with the violence of the state and with the violence of the oppressed alternating.

In my own view, even though I wish there had not been any armed struggle, the rights that are enjoyed by the people at the moment would not have been achieved any other way. I think what Sinn Féin succeeded in doing, with the assistance of others, was to bring

a permanent end to the armed struggle, which was over 30 years long, and to establish peace in a democratic way. To bring about Irish unity if that's what the citizens want, or to continue with the union if that's what the citizens want, but either way, only on the basis that everyone is treated with equality.

The British were able to abort a potential revolution, because of the lack of politics in Ireland. Famously, in armed interactions in Ireland, the military attendance has always dominated, and in my view, to a degree, this lies in the hands of the colonisation and in this case the British. It is easier for governments to wage wars and it is easier for them to look for prisoners and to hand them over to their generals. It is more difficult for them to obtain democratic rights. So, while armed actions may or may not be legitimate in certain situations, they always have to be underpinned by politics. I think that whatever one thinks about the IRA, it was legal enough when the alternative was presented, to take that alternative; essentially it saw a noble way to bring about justice and freedom and equality.

I also think it is important to note, that those who were running the war, those who held the leadership of British were the more comfortable of them all. As I said earlier, it is easer to depict people as terrorist and criminals, it is easier to marginalise them, so there was big resistance within the British system and within the Unionist leadership. At the time prior to the IRA ceasefire of 1994, the leader of the Unionist party said that there was going to be a development, which would be the most destabilising development in the history of the state.

It is not up to me to lecture, and as has often been said, you cannot replicate one situation with another. But those who want the biggest changes, those who genuinely want to bring about the maximum advancement in people's lives, have to take the biggest chances and the biggest risks and our peace process has succeeded not least because of this.

Gerry Adams TD and Pádraig MacLochlainn TD with the delegation at the Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament) during a roundtable discussion.

Q: What made you a reasonable choice of person to run the IRA?

Gerry Adams: I don't know – it could have been someone else. Sinn Féin has a qualitative leadership. We saw negotiation as a means of struggle; we learned that from South Africa, and the African National Congress. We wanted politics to be a part of the people. So this wasn't quite all down to me – any of our comrades were going off on our own, to trying to do whatever we needed to do, but we tried to involve the public in our activists as well as the wider population, particularly in the North, so that people would understand what the process was about. They may not know every detail but they have some sense of empowerment and of being part of something.

Q: I have two simple questions, the first one is practical. We have seen you in pictures in San Sebastian, the Basque Country, with other international humanitarians. It seems that you took some part in bringing the Basque settlement about; you were involved in the scene. We are really in interested in knowing if are asked to play a role in the resolution in Turkey with Kurds. This is the practical question, the second question is more philosophical: how would you compare yourself with Michael Collins?

Gerry Adams: The biggest different between me and Michael Collins, is that Michael Collins is dead! We said at the beginning that there could not be eternal settlement, in other words, there could not be a partisan settlement. So we still need to get a settlement, we are still on the journey. But the politicians are working on the basis of an all-Ireland infrastructure, and I think that is the big chance to persuade Unionists that their rights, their quality of life, their culture, their religion, their liberties are based in a new Ireland. We want Ireland to become a republic, a real republic. So, we have a lot of challenges. We wish you well, and if can help we will help, we helped with other processes like the Basque Country one, but we do this with great humanity we do not think we have any special prescription.

And we would caution, that you cannot give up, you cannot put off. Changes are freighting and fearful for people. The elites do not like change. We wish you well and we would strongly urge you – the most important thing any one can do, is to be engaged in talks,

dialogue, it is key to making peace. Dialogue includes listening. So, if you want to make peace with people who are your enemies, you have to be listen. As I said earlier, you can dehumanise people, depict people as terrorists, gangsters or evil, then you would not want to with be them, you would not want to talk to them, you do not think that any rights are good. But once you can see that they do have rights, progress can be made. Sinn Féin thanks you, and we keep watching and hoping, and don't be giving up.

Participants and DPI staff with Gerry Adams TD at the Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament).

SESSION 5:
Tuesday 29 November, 2011 – Dáil Éireann

With:

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs:
Bernard Durkan *TD, Fine Gael, Vice Chairman*
Eric Byrne TD, *Labour*
Joe McHugh TD, *Fine Gael, Co-Chair*
Maureen O'Sullivan TD, *Independent,*
Pádraig Mac Lochlainn TD, *Sinn Féin*
Senator Jim Walsh, *Fianna Fáil*
Senator David Norris, *Independent*

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs is a cross-party delegation which oversees foreign policy issues of primary interest and concern to the State and to the Irish public. The Committee holds debates, releases press releases and publishes reports which all contribute to guiding Irish foreign policy.

Recent press releases include a condemnation of the treatment of minority communities in Iran and endorsement of John Ging, former Director of United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA), as head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Throughout the session, each member welcomed the delegation from Turkey. Following this exchange, the participants were able

to ask the committee questions about working in a cross-party environment and their opinions on the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Dinner Discussion: Tuesday 29 November – Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament)

Special Guests:
Altay Cengizer, *Turkish Ambassador to Ireland*
Derek Mooney, *Former Special Adviser to the Minister at Department of Defence*
Joe McHugh TD, *Fine Gael, Co-Chair*
Maureen O'Sullivan TD, *Independent*

The dinner at the Dáil Éireann began with an address by the Turkish Ambassador to Ireland, Altay Cengizer, who gave a warm welcome to all of the participants. Ambassador Cengizer noted the significance of the visit in bringing together eminent MPs, journalists and academics and offered his support for the activities. Ambassador Cengizer continued by outlining the positive relationship between the Turkish and Irish Governments, for example in the area of trade. However, he encouraged governments as emerging pillars in their regions to do more.

Following on from Ambassador Cengizer's address, Joe McHugh TD and Maureen O'Sullivan TD spoke to the participants and

responded to Ambassador Cengizer's comments. Mr. McHugh thanked the Ambassador for his 'honest, open and frank' comments and offered his commitment to follow-up on the challenge to increase interactions between Ireland and Turkey. In addressing the topic of peace and conflict, Mr. McHugh recognised the importance of reconciliation as part of the peace processes; a process which he believed needs to be ongoing and will never end. He encouraged the participants to continue learning from the Irish peace process and wished them luck in their progression towards a democratic solution.

During the dinner, participants representing each political party, journalists and academics stood to reflect on their experience of the trip so far. Each speaker expressed gratitude towards DPI for facilitating the visits and to Glencree for their support. A common thread of all of the speeches was that the DPI visits have provided a valuable platform to learn from the Irish peace process. Furthermore, each participant commented on the significance of gathering the participants together to engage in an open dialogue. However, the participants also challenged each other to continue the discussions and democratic activities when they returned to Turkey.

Kerim Yildiz of DPI addressing participants over dinner at the Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament).

SESSION 6:
Wednesday 30 November, 2011 – Carton House

Topic:
Rights and identity as part of a Peace Process

With:
Dr. Maurice Manning, President, Irish Human Rights Commission
Moderated by Kerim Yildiz

Dr Maurice Manning is the President of the Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC). The IHRC has its origins in the Good Friday Agreement and was established in law in 2000 to promote and protect the human rights of everyone in Ireland.

Dr Manning is an academic who has lectured in politics in University College, Dublin, and has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Paris and the University of West Florida. He was a member of the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) for twenty-one years, serving in both the Dáil and the Seanad. Dr Manning was also a member of the New Ireland Forum and the British Inter Parliamentary Body, and served as both Government Leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Seanad (Irish Senate).

Dr. Maurice Manning, President, Irish Human Rights Commission, addressing participants during a roundtable discussion on Rights and Identity, at Carton House.

Maurice Manning: I am an academic, a historian and am currently Chancellor of the National University of Ireland, and President of the Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC). But for twenty years I was a Member of Parliament, so I have a broad background in politics.

One of the key issues in the whole peace process and in the conflict in Northern Ireland, was the question of civil rights and human rights. As you know, the current Troubles began out of the civil rights movement. And the question of what we now call human rights, was going to be a major part of the ultimate settlement. When the peace process was going, there were certain proposals as to how human rights could be secured in the new arrangements. At the very beginning, there was of course a total reform of the legal system, to ensure that it was fair and that it was pluralistic. There was also a proposal that there be a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, there was a proposal that there be a Charter of Rights for the entire island of Ireland. Central, was the establishment of a Human Rights Commission, first of all in Northern Ireland but then it was agreed that there would be a Human Rights Commission in each part of Ireland, there would be two. But there would also be a joint committee of the two commissions, which is made of the Commission of the North and the South, which, again was one of the joint bodies set up under the Good Friday Agreement.

The Irish Commission came into existence in 2001, and I have been with it since 2002. It was intended that a commission was not going to, on its own, guarantee human rights, but it was seen as a way of ensuring that they were high on the agenda, they could be developed and they could hopefully be enforced. The Irish Commission was established in 2001. First of all, its guiding principles were the Paris Principles of 1993. The Paris Principles laid down that a human rights commission must be pluralistic, it

must be independent of government and independent of all other bodies, but it must be *truly* independent, it must be transparent in the way it does its business, and its main purpose is to promote and protect human rights. And of course the Paris Principles are essential if a human rights commission is to be recognised by the United Nations and indeed by bodies such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE. But unless a commission fulfils, dictates the Paris Principles, it will not get international recognition. International recognition by the UN is hugely important, both for the standing of the commission in its own country and for its capacity to interact with other human rights commissions.

We all know 'human rights' is a phrase that is very much abused by many people, people who deny human rights to others claim human right for themselves, and sometimes the phrase is used so vaguely that it could mean almost anything. But for us, the legislation which established the human rights commission told us precisely what is meant by human rights. Human rights for us, are all of the rights laid down in the Irish Constitution and of course all of the rights in all of the international agreements to which Ireland is a party. In other words, rights laid down in all of the United Nations covenants and charters, the European Convention on Human Rights and other international agreements. And this is probably the most fundamental point to recognise: because human rights are the rights laid down in international law, and when we interpret human rights, we have a very broad canvas to work from, but it is important that from the outside, there is clarity as to what

is meant by human rights. I should also say that one of the founding principles of the commission was that we worked closely with the Commission of Northern Ireland, which we do. The commission is made of a President, that is me, full-time, and that the status of the President in the legalisation is that of a High Court Judge and that is the status of the President in the legalisation.

Secondly there are 14 members, there is an absolute rule that it is totally gender balanced, seven men and seven women, and that is an absolute. Otherwise, the members are expected to have experience or expertise in human rights and they are meant to be broadly representative of society. That does not really happen, but 'broadly representative' is what the legalisation says. And a number of them are very distinguished legal scholars as well as people who have come from other backgrounds.

Before opening for discussion, I should look at a human rights commission actually does. Its function is to ensure that human rights are both protected and promoted in the state, but how does it go about having defined human rights? Among the key things it does, is keep legalisation under review. So, every piece of legalisation which is proposed for Parliament, which has human rights implications, is refereed to the commission before it goes to Parliament and so the commission will then examine the legalisation in order to see whether it respects Ireland's human rights obligations either in the Constitution or in international law? We do a very detailed legal examination of the proposal, we

report to government and we also report to Parliament. If requested by the Parliament, we appear before a committee to explain why the legalisation does not conform to human rights standards. We review all proposed legalisation from a human rights perspective. Secondly, we have the right to look at the law in practice so, if we believe that some practices of state are contrary to human rights principles, we examine and we report. This usually happens when people approach us, such as groups or individuals who say that their human rights are being breached, and we would then examine this. This come often results in us doing a major report and coming back to Parliament. The interaction of the Human Rights Commission with the Parliament, to my mind, is essential. One of the changes I have managed, during my ten years as President, has been to persuade the government to make the Human Rights Commission accountable, directly to Parliament, a direct link to parliament and accountable to Parliament, because we believe that this is not specific to any one subject, but covers all of the major issues.

The Human Rights Commission believes that education is extremely important. We do not see ourselves as just being there to lecture the government and lecture the politicians; we also try to explain to the public service, especially, what is meant by human rights and how their compliance with human rights can help their work. For example, the Irish Army decided that their code of discipline was based on old English military law, and so with the army, we rewrote their military law regulations to make sure they

conformed to the European Convention rights. We worked very closely with the police force and we commissioned a major study as to what exactly was meant by human rights in day-to-day police work, and we participate in the training of police on human rights matters. We have a major project with the public, the entire civil service, where we try to explain in simple language to the public service, what their human rights obligations are. So this education, trying to create a culture of human right,s is very much a part of our mandate. We have also carried out enquiries into things like the breaches of rights of young people with intellectual handicaps in institutional settings, as well as the plight of women who were held for many years in laundries run by the Catholic Church and who were abused. We have done a number of inquiries. We also examine individual cases, where people come to us and say that their human rights have been abused. Now, we have to be very careful, because there are a whole range of bodies, such as family courts, so we do not get involved there, but where we feel that somebody's human rights have been breached and there is no other recourse, we get involved and we go to court, we provide legal assistance. Increasingly we are asked by the courts to appear as what is called *amicus curiae,* which is a friend of the court, where we are not on either side; we simply come and say that in our view, these are the human rights implications here, to help the court. So, there are some of things the Human Rights Commission does to promote and protect human rights. We also work internationally, for five years, I was the Chair of the European group of national human rights institutions so we worked with the UN, OSCE, with the

Council of Europe in trying to develop human rights commissions in countries where they are hoping to establish themselves. So we have been in a number of countries in Africa and also in one or two countries in Eastern Europe, we help out there, we work there.

Finally, to go back to the peace process, the Northern Ireland Commission, one of its first tasks, was to devise a Bill of rights for Northern Ireland, which effectively laid out what are the rights open to our people. The Northern Ireland Commission has completed that task and published the Bill of Rights last year. Virtually all parties have been hostile to it, I don't know why; it is curious. But at least in the Good Friday Agreement a Bill of Rights was one of the requirements, and the task was given to the Northern Commission and they have done it. Finally, I mentioned at the beginning that the Good Friday Agreement also hoped to establish a Charter of Rights for the entire island of Ireland. We worked for the last eight years with the Northern Commission to draw up such a charter; it has been a very difficult of task, there has be no engagement from politicians, but we published that last year and I suspect that it is one of the things that will surface again in the coming years.

A human rights commission, to be effective, needs a number of central qualities, the first is expertise; it must be able to speak with authority, and when it speaks it knows that what it has said will be greeted with hostility by many people, and will be examined very carefully in the court. So whatever it says must be capable of standing

up to rigorous legal scrutiny, it must have authority. Secondly, a human rights commission, to be effective, must be independent; it must be independent of government. That is why I fought so hard to have the commission be accountable to Parliament, because at least in Parliament there would be an openness. I will give you a specific example. Our commission very strongly criticised the Irish government a few years ago on a specific matter, which was the use the possible use of Irish ports and airports in the process of extraordinary renditions. We were critical of the government, the government was not pleased to offend the US, and the result was that very shortly afterwards, our budget was cut by 32 per cent. It was a small budget but it was cut by 32 per cent. We proved we were independent, we paid a high price for it, but independence is absolutely essential.

Kerim Yildiz: Many thanks. It is extremely important to hear what is happening after the Good Friday Agreement. And also important to reiterate that if you do not recognise the conflict first, you cannot talk about the conflict. One has to accept that the conflict exists, both politically and practically, to make progress. So, I think in that sense, the Irish experience also suggests that we are in a better shape to think about human rights now, while society is talking about conflict resolution.

Let's now open the floor for questions:

Q: The main aim of the Commission sounds similar to that of an Ombudsman. What are its organic connections with government and other agencies?

Dr. Manning: The roots of the Irish Human Rights Commission can be found in a review of the Constitution in the 1990s, which proposed that there be a human rights commission, so the idea was there, the immediate cause was, as I said the Good Friday Agreement, that laid down that there be a human rights commission. This was voted upon by the people in the referendum, it was part of a major package, voted on in the referendum. So, there was popular backing for the concept.

The two governments set about creating the human rights commission and were guided by the Paris Principles, obviously by the advice of the United Nations, which does have a national human rights section, so they were able to give advice on what could be done. The proposal was drawn up by the Ministry of Justice, but then it was debated in Parliament, in both Houses of Parliament, so it is established by statute, it is established by law. For example, my position is protected; it would need an act of Parliament to remove me, that is to say, government or both of the Parliaments. So, there are protections for the commission in the legalisation. And, the Irish legalisation is regarded by the UN as a model of good practice. It has been used to influence a number of other institutions which have appeared since then. But each country does it its own way, within its own framework, and I would recommend

to you maybe the Scottish human rights commission, which brings Parliament very much into the picture. Its members are appointed by a committee of Parliament, after a very open process of interviews and evaluations, but parliament is at its centre, that's were we are moving to. There is at this point, a great deal of academic literature on human rights commissions, comparative literature on how they have been established. There is a lot of expertise of people who have served in human rights commissions, who are willing to advise, and I suppose each country would bring its own particular history and special needs to bear, because there could always be improvement. Compared to ten years ago, there has been significant development in our understanding and in our practices.

Q: What is the method of appointment to the Commission? How is your relationship with civil society and non-governmental organisations?

Dr. Manning: On relations with civil society – it's difficult, because we have to say to civil society that we are independent of you, just as we are independent of government. And you probably know from your own experiences that sometimes civil society thinks it owns the commission, but we have to be independent. We have a vey good relationship with most parts of civil society, we hold regular consultations, and I try to meet as many as possible, but there will always be conflict, because we are not an advocacy body, we are not a campaign body, so frequently civil society thinks that we haven't gone maybe as far or as enthusiastically as they would

like. It can be a tense relationship, but we try to keep it open and there are people on the commission who have been very active in civil society too.

Regarding Parliament, I think it is about how people are being appointed. This is always a difficult issue, because the process is that the positions are advertised publically. People apply to become members. The government establish an expert committee, headed by a former judge of the Supreme Court and by three or four people who would be regarded as people of great standing and stature in the community. They then say to the government, these people have applied and of those these are the people we think are qualified and this, we now have come to the problem, the government then decides, obviously there must be seven men and seven women, the government then decides that these are the people it wants, because in the government's view they are the best people to fill the criteria. Parliament will then vote on that. It is a problem, because civil society thinks that it should have the final say in appointing the commission, but the government says no, we are answerable to Parliament, and Parliament have the final decision.
As a former politician, I tend to support that view but it is a contested view. As to the appointed of the President of the Commission, that is entirely in the hands of the government, which is also contentious. I was appointed, I am not a lawyer, but the government felt that they needed for a new body, somebody who had a high profile and who was regarded as fair by all sides.

Q: Do you have the right to open state archives when making a decision? Do you have access to police information?

Dr. Manning: For the most part, we tend to work with existing agencies. For example, we have a very close relationship with the inspector of prisons who is completely independent and values his relationship with us. If we have a problem on prisons, we go directly to him and he has access to them. I have accompanied him on his visits to prisons – I can have access to the prisons, but my view is that the inspector is the expert, and I have to say I trust him. If I didn't trust him it would be different. With the police, there is a Police Ombudsman. Again where we have difficulties there we go to the Ombudsman.

We do have the right to send for papers, we do have the right to oblige somebody to report to us, to speak to us. But it is a very difficult area because as a country we had a range of major enquiries and the legal position about people being compelled to talk is still a very difficult one. There was a referendum here which was defeated, which dealt in part with Parliament's ability to compel people to appear on reporting committees; it was rejected. The whole question about compellability is the one that is legally unclear. And for a body like us, with a small budget it would be an expensive route to go.

Q: How effective are your reports, and what is the process of making a decision?

Dr. Manning: Regarding how effective are the reports are; they are always covered in the media. Sometimes the government says yes, we will make the changes you suggested. Sometime the government are very hostile to what we say and there is public disagreement. Parliament increasingly invites us to appear before committees, and there is good reason; Members of Parliament like to have an alternative point of view to that of the government and they accept that what we are saying is independent and based on authority. They may disagree, but at least there is a different point of view. Maybe, those of you what have been in the Parliament know how busy it can be and often how badly researched or badly staffed it can be. Members of Parliament may not always agree but they welcome us. And I think it will be more important with the new arrangements.

On the question of making decisions about individual cases and whether we go to court, this is taken, we have legal experts working for us, they would bring the case to a committee and it would then go to preliminary meetings of the Commission, so the Commissioner will decide to accept the decision of the staff, or maybe not but it is a decision of the preliminary.

The question of independence I think is a fascinating one, because, yes, when we were unfriendly to the government, when out budget was cut, that is a risk you have to take. Independence to my mind is first and most important of all here. If people don't feel we have a commitment to be independent, then they will find ways of

agreeing with the government on not doing things and you are very dependent on the calibre, the character, the integrity of the people who are members of the Commission. I have been very lucky, the people on the Commission that I have chaired have all been honest and most of them were intelligent. So it helped, but it could go wrong. Independence is a funny thing, sometimes you meet people who have their first loyalty to the organisation they represent rather than to wider public interest, so there is always a danger and independence is a fragile thing.

Kerim Yildiz: Thank you very much; I think it is very important to consider the question of independence of commissions. And as you said earlier, the most important of all, is to establish a culture of human rights.

Dr Manning: I have been following with interest the process in Turkey, to establish a Paris principled Human Rights Commission, and I wish it every success. If in anyway the experience we have been through can be of any help, I would be more than happy to give that help.

One more final thing is about language, human rights people and special lawyers can sometimes treat human rights as if it belongs to lawyers or to the experts, rather than talking directly to people. I will give one piece of advice: try to ensure that the language of human rights is expressed as much as possible in a way that is comprehensive to the general public. It is not easy and if I was to say where we have failed, that is one of the areas where we have not

been that straightforward, direct and engaged. We are improving but it is a difficult one.

Q: Would you explain in a little more detail; Ireland is party to a number of international conventions and treaties, why do you think it is necessary, both in the North and the South here, to have for example a Charter, a Bill of Rights, while Ireland has a constitution as well? Why is it seen as necessary to have a separate Bills of Rights and Charter of Rights, in addition to international obligation and constitutional obligations?

Dr. Manning: that is a very good question and most politicians have decided by their lack of action that they agree with the general thrust of what you are saying – that the Charter of Rights and the Bill of Rights may have been necessary in the middle of the Troubles and after the Troubles, but now there is a sort of normality. We are about to have a major constitutional convention, which will look at all aspects of the Irish Constitution. In part, it is because the Irish Constitution was written in 1937. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights dates back to 1948. There have been huge developments in the international understanding of human rights and in international law over the past number of years and it is important to make sure that this thinking, as far as possible, has become part of the living Constitution. So, there is a sense to it. I describe the Bill of Rights and the Charter of Rights as deeds of foresight; maybe in ten or 15 years they will find there way into the ordinary Constitution. The Bill of Rights is there because of the

strong belief that rights in Northern Ireland were not universal and that there were huge gaps in human rights. So, a brand new Bill of Rights would see a way forward, to give confidence to everybody in the community. Time brings change, there are now economic priorities. But the work is done, the work is there, people have a map; a guide.

SESSION 7:
Wednesday 30 November, 2011 – Carton House

Topic:
Internal Session – review/evaluation of the trip by participants.

This session was set aside for participants to discuss their experience from the Ireland Comparative Study as well as the preceding trip to London, Edinburgh and Belfast. Participants reflected on the unique opportunity to learn from the Irish peace process and the significance of having all participants come together for the visits.

SESSION 8:
Wednesday 30 November, 2011

With:
Former Irish Prime Minister (Taoiseach), Bertie Ahern

Mr. Bertie Ahern served as the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland from 26 June 1997 to 7 May 2008. Ahern was a Member of Parliament from 1997 to 2011 and in 1994 was elected as the sixth leader of Fianna Fáil. During his political career, Ahern also held the positions of Minister of Finance and Minister for Labor. During his time as Taoiseach, Ahern played a significant role in the negotiations of the Good Friday Agreement and the subsequent peace process in Ireland. As part of this agreement the British and Irish Governments established an 'exclusively peaceful and democratic' framework for power-sharing in Northern Ireland.

Ahern received the Thomas J. Dodd Prize in International Justice and Human Rights in 2003 and was awarded Honorary Doctorates by Queen's University Belfast (2008) for the work he did on the Good Friday Agreement and for his promotion of peace in Britain and Northern Ireland.

Bertie Ahern: Well thank you very much and thank you very much for coming to meet me here at my constituency base Drumcondra.

Just to say a few brief words about myself. I finished in Parliament at the last election. I was 34 years in Parliament so I understand all the working pressures of Parliamentarians. I was 11 years Prime Minister. I had 20 years in cabinet. Minister for Finance three times, Minister for Labour, and Minister for Employment on two occasions.

So I'll maybe just say a few brief words about the Northern Ireland conflict before taking your questions.

I come from a Republican background. My father was a Republican. My father was, back in the early years, a militant Republican. So I was an unlikely person to be involved in the peace process, trying to bring the various sides together. But also during all my years growing up, from 1968 onwards, (I was in secondary in 1969) the conflict was ongoing.

Former Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Mr. Bertie Ahern, with participants at his offices in Drumcondra.

Q: When did you become involved in the peace process?

Bertie Ahern: I started off in 1971. 1971 was my first year to be elected as an officer. I was elected for Parliament in 1977 so I had six years of involvement. I was elected for Parliament when I was 25 years old. I had always been involved, as had the various committees of my party. And when I was Minister of Finance the leader of my party, at that stage, was Robert Reynolds started the peace process. I was very much involved. I played one of the key ministerial roles. Our role was to try and see if we could bring an end to violence. There were a number of reasons for that. We wanted to bring an end to the violence, the killing, the mayhem, the huge suffering that was being caused to the country and people on all sides. Also the huge economic problems it was causing the country. The island of Ireland is small. There was so much conflict in the North of Ireland it was spilling over into the South. Not every day but there were terrible atrocities in the South. When I went to Europe, I would be talking about the good things in Ireland, trying to build up the Irish economy. The only questions I ever got were 'what is happening in Northern Ireland?'. Many times, you would feel they did not know anything about Ireland. They would ask about Northern Ireland. And even when there wasn't much happening in Northern Ireland, when it was relatively quiet you would go to countries and they would say 'Oh, it's terrible, the conflict and everything that is happening in your country'. So Northern Ireland was hanging over us in a huge way.

In the mid 1990s, we endeavoured to try to start dealing with all sides, with all of the parties. It was difficult because, as democratic parties, we could not talk to people who were engaged in violence. So we had to try, fairly secretly, dealing with people. I know you met Gerry Adams yesterday. Sinn Féin was still involved in violence. The organisation they were associated with was still involved in killing, in bombing. And generally their members were persecuted in the south of Ireland. They were on the run. Those associated with them were killing policemen here, robbing banks, and generally creating mayhem, so it was very difficult to talk to people who were engaged in that.

Q: Can you talk about confidence building?

Bertie Ahern: I was the one who invented the saying 'opposite side of the (one) kind'
When they, Sinn Féin, used to have meetings with the IRA, they stood in front of a mirror. We had to try and build up confidence. Many people helped. There were very good clergy people. Clergy people on different sides, Catholics and Protestants. There were very good community leaders. People who wanted to help end the violence. We worked through those. In the early years, our meetings were with the community leaders and with the churches.

From 1994 onwards, we did not really make much progress. In 1994, we had the Downing Street Declaration at Christmas. That allowed us to try to deal with all the parties. For any successful

peace process to work, any process of reconciliation, following a long conflict, it is crucial to remember that peace has to be built step by step. It is gradual, it is a very slow process, and noone should believe that peace and reconciliation can happen instantaneously, following a wave of a magic wand. It takes time, it takes courage, but it is a price worth paying, it is worth persevering very hard. I believe that this is why I fought really hard to get into the talks. I believe elected politicians should do all they can to bring peace and an end to conflict. So from when I was elected as Prime Minister in 1997, we started with Tony Blair. In my opinion, he was terrific.

Q: What was your relationship with Tony Blair?

Bertie Ahern: Tony Blair was elected one month before me. When he was leader of the opposition, I was the leader of the opposition here, so we had worked together very closely and had tried to plan what we would do if we were elected. We said we would give it a year or two's effort to try to get things working, and I suppose to move on fast, we started the talks in September of 1997. It was a process. We included everybody that wanted to be included. The talks continued with lots of difficulties, because there were killings in between and we tried to keep everybody in, but we would have to expel people sometimes, to show afterwards that we had democratic values on all of this. From September 1997 to Easter 1998, we negotiated the Good Friday Agreement. George Mitchell, who was an American Senator, chaired the talks, we had other international figures involved aswell. We got a lot of help when we needed it.

Not all of the time but when we needed it. Mainly it was Tony Blair and myself, dealing with the parties directly. We met the parties ourselves, mainly the two of us meeting delegations separately. We rarely met them together because they did not talk to each other.

Q: Describe the process leading to the Good Friday Agreement, and Ian Paisley's role.

Bertie Ahern: He basically wouldn't shake hands. It took 90 years to get Paisley to shake hands but we ended up friends. So we negotiated an agreement on Good Friday, that's where it got its name from, Good Friday 1998. We went to the people and got them to pass it the on the 22nd May 1998. It took us until 2007 to implement this. Just short of 90 years in the implementation of it.

Q: What do you mean by implementation?

Bertie Ahern: Making the agreement work.

Q: How difficult was it to set up the power sharing agreement?

Bertie Ahern: When we set it up first, it continued to collapse, because there were issues of ongoing violence. Those associated with Sinn Féin were still involved with violence. Those involved with the Loyalists were still involved in violence. There was definite proof that people were being killed by people associated with the parties involved. Which created problems for us, because people would say that we were dealing with terrorists.

The decommissioning of arms is important. Taking arms out of the equation and getting parties to do away with their arms took us a long time. Setting up a new criminal justice system, setting up a new police force, or reforming the old police force. So before we could get through all these issues, the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement started off four times and collapsed four times for different reasons. So it was not until May 2007 that we could implement them.

Q: What were the outstanding unresolved issues?

Bertie Ahern: There were ongoing issues. There were criminal and justice issues; community relations; trying to get Paisley on side. Paisley's party, which was the biggest Loyalist party, did not accept the agreement or sign into the agreement until we had a review, which concluded on the13th October 2006, so we did not have the biggest party signed up until October 2006. And everything was meant to happen six months after that, which was March 2007.

Q: Paisley did not shake hands with you, why not?

Bertie Ahern: I'm practically a part of the Republican Party. So we had a good talking relationship. We started talking to them in 1988. But to be honest there wasn't much talking until about 1992. The dialogue was with true religious leaders from 1988 to 1992. We started dealing with them from 1992 onwards. Then from about 1993 they got fairly substantial. From 1993 and 1994 onwards, I used to practically meet with them every week.

Q: What were the real differences between the parties?

Bertie Ahern: I think the real difficulties came down to three issues. It was, internally the parties in Northern Ireland working together, in an inclusive process. The second one was the government, my government, with Northern Ireland. The relationship we had with the Northern parties. And the third was the relationship between the Irish government and the British Government. This was Tony Blair and me. So there were three different strands, When I was dealing with the issues within Northern Ireland, some of the parties would not deal with everything on that, because they would say, 'That's none of your business. We are British and we are answerable to Britain, we are answerable to the House of Commons, Westminster, under the Queen, mind your own business, Ahern'. Remember at the start of this the Loyalists were deeply suspicious of us, of my party. They believed that we wanted a united Ireland. They believed that we wanted to take control. They believed we were anti the Queen, that we wanted to kick them out. As we got talking they ended up with more distrust of the British than they had of us but that was five or ten years on. I still talk to them a lot; they come down here a lot. In those days they would never come down.

Participants with Former Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Mr. Bertie Ahern, at his offices in Drumcondra.

Q: How difficult was it to engage with all sides?

Bertie Ahern: Well, at different times it went from being easy, depending on what happened. Sometimes you could explain yourself, for the greater good, it was better to try to engage with these people, on all sides. The important thing was to be even handed. When I was dealing with Republicans, to be fair to Republicans and treat them the same way. Or when I was dealing with Loyalists, to deal with Loyalists and try to be even handed. Though I was Republican, to try and be even and deal with them with the law.

I think people saw, as time went by, that I was fair. Sometimes it was very difficult for a Republican. Sometimes the issues were so big. I was in opposition when I was dealing with Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuiness. The week they broke the ceasefire and the IRA blew up Canary Wharf in London, I had been with them that

week. Of course the only shots on TV were of me being with them. So I had to break off talks. It was difficult. Then I had to leave it for a while and then come back again. I said I would break off the talks and I could not meet them again until they stopped this. I had to do that a fair few times, it wasn't once. Sometimes there were some dirty tricks. Sometimes the British system was saying 'these guys are bad'. MI5, MI6, were creating something that wasn't actually as bad as it was. Sometimes it was difficult but each time we made a bit more progress and each time we would come back into to the talks and we would get a little bit further. We would take a few more steps. The IRA would issue another statement that would be a bit better and a bit stronger. You mentioned earlier on that the IRA made their final statement in August 2005, but they made their first one in 1998, so between Easter, April 1998 and summer 2005 they made 90 statements. In fairness, each time was a bit better. Each time I would say, please do the following five things; they'd say no, we will do two. Then I'd say please do the following four, they'd say one. So it was incremental.

Most of the time with maybe a few exceptions, I don't think the violence was directed from the top. I think it was units of the organisation. Now, Canary Wharf was different. That was from the top.

Q: What were your most difficult decisions?

Bertie Ahern: I think the big issue is, if I took the view, and Tony

Blair took the view in 1997 that we weren't going to talk to, and I don't want to just say the Republicans but the Loyalists as well, if we say 'No we're not going to talk to the Republicans and no, we're not going to talk to the Loyalists, until every single thing to do with violence is finished', we never would have done anything. There would still be killing in the North. I'm a Democrat and I have to get elected by the people, you have to try and explain: we're trying this, when you don't make progress you stop and when they do something wrong you start again, and say: I won't do it unless I get some guarantees. It was painfully slow, was it difficult, was it frustrating. Did you feel let down sometimes? Did you lose faith? Did you lose trust? Yes, several times. But the alternative was to give up. And the alternative was to go on along the way it had gone in 1968. It had gone on for 800 years. So there was no point in that. I had to go on. I'll give you one of my most difficult decisions. One of my most difficult decisions was when we agreed to leave over Christmas and I had to go over to the Parliament and stand up and say: people who were killed, policemen, unarmed policemen, who were just out doing their job, they weren't anti-terrorism policemen, they were just traffic men or a policeman standing near a bank, who were shot by the IRA and they got 40 years to life sentence, that I was going to let them out, after maybe five years or ten years. That was hard but I had to do it.

Q: What year was that?

Bertie Ahern: In 1998.

Q: How many prisoners did you release?

Bertie Ahern: Well, between Tony Blair and myself we let out about 2,500. He let out the most. So that was difficult.

Q: What was the general public perception of the release of prisoners?

Bertie Ahern: That these guys should rot in prison, that they had killed innocent people. And that they shouldn't be let out. The trouble was as always with the public, sometimes they would say: we understand you letting out all of these guys but we don't think you should let out this one because this one did something we all remember. That was a problem. There were a few really bad murders. The IRA went in one morning around this time down into the South of Ireland, the furthest away from the North, beautiful sunny morning, money was being delivered to a bank, IRA guys pulled up, these two policemen were half asleep in the car. And these two guys got their guns and shot them, one of them dead. Public opinion was really mad at this. The IRA said 'We've nothing to do with this'. It transpires that the guys who did it were very close to Martin McGuinness. This was really bad. At the end of the day, with public opinion so bad, I had to renege on what I said and I couldn't let them out.

Kerim Yildiz of DPI and Nazmi Gür, Member of Parliament and Vice-President of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) with Former Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Mr. Bertie Ahern, at his offices in Drumcondra.

Q: What was it like working with Blair?

I remember one day in a meeting, a meeting like this, I came into the meeting and Tony Blair asked me: would you go to the meeting and talk to those guys? I'm tired of talking to them. Would you go in and talk to them? There were Loyalists, Ulster Freedom Fighters, the Ulster Defence Regiment, the Red Hand Commandos, the Spirit of Ulster, the Provisional IRA, they're all around the table. So I came in and I sat down like this. I sat down and I said, 'Good afternoon gentlemen'. And before I could say anything else, one of them said, 'Do you know why you're the odd man out in this room?' And I asked, 'Why?'. 'Well for starters', they answered, 'we

know that you're the only man in this room who hasn't murdered anybody.' I then said, now I know why Tony Blair sent me in here.

At the time it was stressful, it was difficult. Was it worth it? Of course it was. There were risks, but the one good thing was that Tony Blair was a good friend. I stuck with him, he stuck with me. And this was not tradition. You know the history of Ireland. British Prime Ministers and Irish Taoiseachs don't get on. But we trusted each other. We worked together. They didn't let us down. The British, through Tony Blair, he was faithful. When he said he would do something, he did it. When he said he would try, he tried. This made my life easier, and this made his life easier too, but I just think of my perspective.

We were friends. He never put me 'in the stew'. Through all the agreements we were together. Because of that, we met Sinn Féin, we met Gerry Adams and Martin McGuiness in Chequers, and we had the pleasure of nearly going to all of Her Majesty's fine houses in Britain for various talks. And he genuinely did his best to help Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. I mean Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were good guys, they tried hard to convince people. They weren't always able to do it but they tried hard. And so did a lot of these guys. A lot of these guys were a bit different, because of the way they were disciplined. And some of them were in criminality. But the guys who were sincere, those who were sincere on the Loyalist side were good.

Blair had a feeling for Ireland. His mother was born in the North so he had some Irish blood and when he was a teenager, until the Troubles got bad, he used to spend some time in the North. So he had an understanding, he had an affinity and he was a very good listener and he was prepared to try and he didn't take the advice of the establishment. If he had trusted people, like our friend Jonathan Powell, very trusted friend, he was here many times with me, Jonathan Powell wasn't really a civil servant, he was a personal friend. And Alistair Campbell. They were to be trusted.

Q: What was Britain's view of the IRA at the time?

MI5's view of the IRA was: 'They're good for nothing, we can't do anything for them'. In the end, in 2006, MI5 were saying, 'Yes, we think it's a good idea to take down the tower blocks, the security blocks, the army barracks. They totally changed their position. Because they saw this was a difficulty. And you know, you'd be talking to a lot of people, Northern Ireland is a small place, but at one time there were 40,000 British soldiers and there were almost 30,000 police, there were about 30,000 recruits. They had MI5, they had MI6, they had all the intelligence you could find and they couldn't win. In the end, they had to get rid of all of that.

I never understand 'securocrats'. I'll tell you why. They never had a problem spending hundreds of millions, they spent hundreds of millions on security. The army, the police, the prisons, everything. But now, because I'm still involved in these peace initiatives, I'm

on the Boards of some of the organisations trying to build peace. You go and ask, 'Can I have one million Euros? To make sure that peace lasts forever?' And they say 'No. We have no money'. But if it were for bombs and shooting, you can have hundreds of millions.

Q: Are you still involved in politics?

It's very frustrating for me now because I'm no longer in politics, but I'm involved on the Boards in the North. And we're trying to help the young children of the next generation, children, and those in their teens and early twenties, from difficult areas. We are trying to help them, train them and educate them, make them live together and understand that a Catholic is ok and a Protestant is ok. But these security people say no. These are the same people who said you can have all the money you want to fight the war.

Q: Was there hope for a political solution?

The departments, the justice department, the security department, the department of defence, their position was that because we had been fighting the IRA and the Loyalists, for 30 years, and then, they had come to the conclusion that the fighting would go on indefinitely, that no politician could bring this to a conclusion.

They did not believe that there was a political solution, they didn't believe that we could convince McGuiness to work with us and the Loyalists leaders as well.

Q: Did you always have your political meetings here?

Of course. I used to do all my meetings here. Of course they said, 'Oh, you should do all your meetings in government buildings'. I knew if I did that, they would never go there. We would never make progress. And when I started meeting the Loyalists, I used to go to the North and meet them, but then I'd convince them to come down here, and we'd meet in Protestant churches so that people wouldn't know where we were. I don't think to this day that people know where some of these meetings were.

Q: Describe President Clinton's contribution to the solution.

President Clinton gave us George Mitchell. George Mitchell was really the key guy. I think he was from a Jewish background. He liked Ireland. The first day he came, got involved in the talks, he came in and I was there, and Tony Blair was there, and we introduced George Mitchell, and we said, President Clinton gave us this man, this great Senator, leader of the majority in the Senate. And he wants to chair the talks. But all the parties in the North were round the table and they said: 'We don't know him, you may know George Mitchell as a good guy, but we need to discuss if he's a good guy or not.' Six weeks later we were still waiting for them to come to a conclusion. Then when he was in the meeting, they wouldn't look at him, they'd look at the roof. He was very patient, he was considerate, he was understanding, very even handed, and, you know, could take terms

of abuse. Personal insults. He was a good guy.
Clinton only really got involved in the week of the Good Friday Agreement. And then when the Real IRA came on the scene and they caused a bomb, Clinton came over and that was really good because everyone was really down and demoralised. Bill and Hilary Clinton have come many times, Hilary Clinton was very good with the women in Northern Ireland. Because there had been many cases of women who had been suffering, their families were dying. She was very, very helpful.

Q: What was the public perception of your time as Prime Minister?

I think in the public eye's gaze, my 'up and down' in public opinion wasn't really to do with the North. My height was to do with the North. So I think Northern Ireland was a positive. Risks were taken. Sometimes you got into trouble over another party. I think at the end of the day, Northern Ireland is seen as a positive. I get into trouble over the economy. They still blame me for problems in Italy, France, Spain, and Greece.

Q: How did risks relating to public support affect you?

They ask me about the Irish economy, 'oh we were so high and then we went back down again'. The boom time was the only high time. Well, I was gone a few months and they said, you saw it all coming. It wasn't true because I would have put all my money in the stock market by then.

Q: While talking to press, how did you present your argument? What language did you use?

Most of the time I just try to give as comprehensive and full an account of what was happening as I can. And trying to give to both sides, the Loyalists and the Republicans, and to balance it as best I could. Sometimes, it got difficult. I mean, in 2004, 2005, maybe 2004, the 8th of December I think, Paisley was almost ready to sign up and I had spent all year, a full calendar year, and Paisley was getting to trust me. And to this day, he hadn't shook hands with me, but he was beginning to trust me. He was ringing me, I was ringing him. And we were getting places. And we were feeling that we were, you know, getting somewhere. So on the 8th December we didn't get as far as we could have in the negotiations, and they collapsed. And Tony Blair and I decided, let's put it down, we'll have Christmas, as you know Christmas in Ireland is a big thing. So we said let's have our holiday at Christmas and we'll come back in January. Paisley said to me, 'I was nearly going to sign, but I think you're right, we won't do anything'. On the 21st of December, the IRA robbed 30 million in a bank in the North. They took off with the pension money and of course Paisley, if he had signed, if I didn't tell him, I was lucky, because I didn't say, listen, let's wait for that from Tony Blair. Was it that the IRA thought we were going to sign and found a robbery and thought, we're going to do it anyway? They didn't care about us. I went into the Parliament and called Sinn Féin all the names I could think of. Gerry Adams at that time

was in the North.

Q: Starting negotiations like this was a big risk. What made you take that risk?

All the years I was growing up, the news every morning in Ireland was, what happened last night. Who was killed last night? Where was the bomb last night? Then you would come home from school in the evening, or come back from college, and there was a funeral on TV, a funeral of a policeman or an IRA man, or an innocent person. All our lives were just consumed by the violence. And we couldn't develop the country; we couldn't make politics happen until we stopped the conflict. And I honestly believe, and so did Tony Blair, and some of the politicians in the North would talk morning to night about the conflict, the Troubles. But they wouldn't talk about education. Later on this evening I'm talking to Martin McGuinness about development and young people, we are trying to get money to help young people next year with community activities.

In those days it was just about the Troubles. I remember going to America when I was Minister of Finance. I would go away with my officials and we would make a very good presentation about Ireland, and say Ireland is a great place, lovely place, on the periphery of Europe. We're very good at software, and we have good tourists and good food and then some CEO would say, 'Why can't you solve the Troubles?'.

My real motivation was my father, I was the youngest. My father spent a lot of time in prison in the 20s, my father was a Republican prisoner.

My father was in the old IRA, on the Republican side. My father was involved in ballistics, bombing. That was the 1920s. And here I was in the 1990s talking about the same thing. My father died in 1990 and I'm not too sure what he would have thought of me. My father hated the British. I'm not too sure what he would have thought of my shaking hands with Paisley either.

My mother was also a Republican. My mother would stay at home and she was very bitter, very anti-British. My last discussion with my mother was not about whether she was going to die in a few hours time, which she did, but it was about whether I was right about the Good Friday Agreement. And my answer to her was that the Good Friday Agreement can work over a period of time. But I also honestly believe that it's a quicker way of getting a united Ireland.

It is for this generation to work, to show the Loyalist people, and the Protestant people in Northern Ireland, that we are normal people, with no horns growing out of our heads. That we can work together. And that we have more in between us than between them and the British. That can only be done through peaceful means. It can only be done in peace.

Q: What were the highlights of your contribution to the Good Friday Agreement?

The thing that I was really happy with, and that solved my own conscience, was that I put in to the Good Friday Agreement that from time to time there can be votes taken on the island of Ireland, and votes in Northern Ireland, to decide whether the people of Northern Ireland want to stay with the British or want to come with us.

Q: What are the outstanding difficulties today?

I think the only difficulties now are the Real IRA. They have the ability to cause trouble, they have the ability to blow up policemen or shoot policemen. That's not to say it will never happen again. But I think that it will be now and again. I don't think there will be anything consistent. There is a bad element, maybe a hundred still there, and I've met some of these people, and they believe we should have kept fighting the British until they were driven out and we never should have had an agreement. But that was my father's anger too, it's now 90 years later. You have to move on.

We now have a process that can lead to unification. They are working at this. And I will be saying this to Martin McGuiness later on today. We must convince the Loyalist people and the Unionist people, that the past is the past, and working collectively together

as Irish men and women, we can work better together than the British holding it all together. The truth of it is the British don't care about the North. The British don't care.

Q: Is Northern Ireland still divided?

Northern Ireland is a strange place in a way. It's small. People look the same, Catholic and Protestants, the same colour, white, the same complexion. But when I walk down the street in Northern Ireland today and I say to you, what is your address? I probably know whether you're Catholic or Protestant. And if I ask what school did you go to, I'll definitely know whether you're Catholic or Protestant. And if I say to you, what sport do you play? Then I definitely know whether you're Catholic or Protestant. So though they all look the same there is real division. And that can only be got rid of by getting young Catholics and young Protestants to work together.

Dinner:
Wednesday 30 November, 2011 –
Jonny Fox's, Dublin Mountains

Special Guests:

On the last night of the visit, participants enjoyed a traditional Irish meal while being entertained by Irish singing and dancing. The group was accompanied by Altay Cengizer, Turkey Ambassador to Ireland and Ian White, Political and International Director,

Glencree Centre, Dublin.

Altay Cengizer, Turkey Ambassador to Ireland, with participants and Ian White at Johnny Fox's, Dublin Mountains.

Altay Cengizer, Turkey Ambassador to Ireland, with Sevtap Yokuş, Ayla Akat, Cengiz Çandar and Bejan Matur.

Hilal Kaplan, Mehmet Tekelioğlu, Lütfi Elvan, Yılmaz Ensaroğlu and

Ayhan Bilgen at Johnny Fox's, Dublin Mountains.

Media response

Journalists who participated in the visit played an important role in feeding back detailed reports of activities and discussions on a daily basis to Turkey. Throughout the visit, the accompanying journalists' work was published in all major publications in Turkey, as well as featuring heavily in other forms of media including television and internet. Participating journalist reports and other media commentary made top stories across Turkey and by the end of the trip, numerous newslinks had been published about the visit and associated activities and the vast majority of reports on DPI and the visit were positive. Media coverage of the visit continues in Turkey to date, and there have been follow up televised discussions on the issues covered during the study.

The wide media coverage of this visit provided a platform to raise public awareness and engage members of society in the progression of democracy and peace discussions.

Concluding observations

The Comparative Study visit to Dublin matched the success of the previous visits to Belfast, Edinburgh and London earlier in the year and completes the study of the Ireland - North Ireland conflict

and peace process. DPI brought together all of the participants from the previous visits including Members of Parliament from the three main political parties, renowned academics and respected journalists from Turkey. The support and participation of major political parties and media emphasises the significance of these visits as central tool for broadening the bases for democratic progression within Turkey.

London, December 2011

DPI

Appendix

A selection of media articles of the DPI Comparative Study, November / December, 2011

Bayramoğlu, Ali (29 Nov. 2011), Dublin'e Kürt sorunu çıkarması… Yeni Şafak

Bayramoğlu, Ali (30 Nov. 2011), Eşikte siyaset…, Yeni Şafak

Bayramoğlu, Ali (1 Dec. 2011), Kürt meselesi için dersler, Yeni Şafak

Bilgen, Ayhan (4 Dec. 2011), İrlanda'dan Türkiye'ye haklar haraketi ve anayasa, Özgür Gündem

Çandar, Cengiz (29 Nov. 2011), Irlanda Notları (1): Çözüm için asla vazgeçmeyin

Çandar, Cengiz (30 Nov. 2011), Irlanda Notları (2): Hangisi zor: Diyalog ya da savaş, Radikal

Çandar, Cengiz (1 Dec. 2011), Irlanda Notları (3): Gerry Adams ile: Hükümet, PKK ve BDP için, Radikal

Çandar, Cengiz (2 Dec. 2011), Irlanda Notları (4): Güvenlikçilerle sorun çözülmez,, Radikal

Çandar, Cengiz (28 Dec. 2011), Kürt Konusu: İyi Şeyler Olabilir mi, Radikal

Cemal, Hasan (30 Nov. 2011), Şiddeti anlamak için hukuk yetmiyor!, Millyet

Cemal, Hasan (2 Dec. 2011), Sorunun silahla bağını kopartırken, yüksek bürokrasiye kulak asmamak!, Millyet

Cemal, Hasan (3 Dec. 2011), Barış sürecinin 10 şifresi!, Milliyet

Cemal, Hasan (4 Dec. 2011) Çıngırakların sesini takip eden usaklar!, Milliyet

Cemal, Hasan, Siyasetin yolunu açın; siyaseti boğarsan silah, şiddet geliyor!, Milliyet

Kaplan, Hilal (4 Dec.2011), Irlanda barış sürecinde medya ve sivil toplum, Yeni Şafak

Kaplan, Hilal (3 Dec.2011), Irlanda meselesinden Kürt meselesine, Yeni Şafak

Kaplan, Hilal (5 Dec.2011), Irlanda barış sürecinde siyasiler, Yeni Şafak

Kaplan, Hilal (7 Dec. 2011), Büyük kararların adamı: Gerry Adams, Yeni Şafak

Matur, Bejan (30 Nov. 2011), Irlanda'dan dil dersleri, Zaman

Matur, Bejan (2 Dec. 2011), Dövüşmeye utanmıyor da, Zaman

Matur, Bejan (16 Dec. 2011), Barışi kim getirir?, Zaman

Sancar, Mithat (29 Nov. 2011), Barış için umut ve sabir, Taraf

Sancar, Mithat (30 Nov. 2011), Barış ve sonrası, Taraf

Sancar, Mithat (1 Dec. 2011), Barış sürecinin aktörleri, Taraf

Sancar, Mithat (7 Dec. 2011), Dublin'de ne arıyorduk, Taraf

Tekelioğlu, Mehmet (4 Dec. 2011), Irlanda notlari, Star Ege

Summary of media articles

Bayramoğlu, Ali
Yeni Şafak
29 November 2011

'Landing in Dublin for the Kurdish question'

Short background information is given about DPI, previous events and the visit to Ireland. He quotes the speech made by journalist Eoin O'Murchú during the Dublin meetings, underlying the importance of the press in conflict resolution processes and some important facts to be kept in mind by the policy makers. He further states that although the Kurdish question and conflict experienced in Ireland are not the same, the basis for resolving such problems are similar.

Ali Bayramoğlu
Yeni Safak Newspaper
30 November 2011

'Politics at the edge...'

'Sensitive borders must be pushed.' This is a sentence that has been formed by the Ireland experience. As a general rule, societies do not change without pushing sensitive limits. Political and social movements often follow a policy that pushes borders, and this is a kind of 'politics at the edge' or 'on the border'. Today we witness the elimination of politics at the edge, which means abandoning politics. All actors in contact with Kurdish politics are being taken captive, and this strangles politics at the edge. The whole arena of politics is being damaged by this.

Ali Bayramoğlu
Yeni Safak Newspaper
1 December 2011

'Lessons on the Kurdish issue…'

Some participants of the Dublin meeting of DPI are introduced in the article, and a brief history of the problem in Northern Ireland, with turning point dates, are mentioned. The foundation story of Glencree is summarised, and its stance against use of violence is underlined: 'At first, both sides stood aloof from Glencree because of its stance, but it later became one of the most respectable organisations. Today, it is one of the most influential in the Republic of Ireland when it comes to peace'. The representative of the organisation's Ian White, was perhaps the most influential on the committee, among those we listened to. I underlined three points in his speech which refer to our Kurdish issue: 1. Not a single security policy is sustainable against cultural and political rooted security issues. 2. Sides do not have to trust each other in conflict resolution situations. The important thing is the belief and trust in the peace process and in the necessity of a solution. 3. The goal is not the resolution of the conflict in all aspects, but managing it, and keeping within violence-free zone. These are some points that are worth thinking over.

Bilgen, Ayhan
Ozgur Gundem Newspaper
4 December 2011

'Rights movement and Constitutions: from Ireland to Turkey'

This article compares peace processes and Constitutions in Ireland and Turkey and discusses the role of social movement in conflict resolution. It considers what kind of social organisations and political language are needed to shape decision making processes, based on social expectations.

Ceyhun Bozkurt
Turkiye'de Yeniçağ
29 November 2011

'State officials in Ireland for a second time'

Summary of activities of the previous UK visit consisting of MPs, academics and journalists as well as participants in the recent visit in November in Ireland is given. An interview with Mr Levent Gök from CHP is also given.

Cengiz Çandar
Radikal Newspaper
29 November 2011

Ireland notes (1): 'For solution - never give up'

The author provides some short explanations about the historical and political background of the Ireland conflict and the process of resolving the conflict. He specifically notes that during their visit to Ireland and meetings with people who participated in peace talks, they were informed that while peace talks between the parties of the conflict were going on, media organisations from both sides were opposing these talks. He states that the corner stone for the media to change their approach was the ceasefire announced by IRA. Although parties were faced with many obstacles and difficulties during the process, they never gave up. Therefore, in terms of settling the Kurdish issue and the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish authorities, the parties should carry on the peace talks, regardless of the difficulties faced.

Cengiz Çandar
Radikal Newspaper
30 November 2011

Ireland notes (2): 'Which one is hardest; dialogue or war?'

The author points out his thoughts about their meeting with Michael Culbert during their visit to Dublin. He provides information about Culbert's life. He compares the situation which used to exist in Ireland regarding political prisoners and the current events occurring in Turkey with KCK operations. He notes that according to information given by Culbert the conflict in Ireland has yet to be resolved completely. He mentions the meeting took place with father Bartlett of the Catholic Church. Cengiz Çandar states that parties agreed that war was ended because people did not want it anymore. He underlines that parties of the ongoing conflict in Turkey should realise the fact that the people of Turkey do not want the war either. He supports Ian White's opinion, stating that a problem arising from security problems cannot be resolved by security measures; for the resolving of such conflicts there is no need for parties to trust each other, but to trust the peace process. Finally armed rebellion cannot be justified but if it exists, efforts should be made to understand the reasons of its inception.

Cengiz Çandar
Radikal Newspaper
1 December 2011

Ireland notes (3): 'With Gerry Adams: For the Turkish Government, PKK and DTP'

The author writes about their meeting with Gerry Adams, his life and political background. He refers to Adam's opinion on armed conflict, rebellion, peace and settlement. He agrees on the points underlined by Adams about the importance of availability of legal

grounds for opposing political movements and dialogue between the parties. He welcomes Adam's agreement to participate in a possible conflict settlement process in Turkey. He further notes the opinion stressed by Pádraig Mac Lochlainn of Sinn Féin, arguing that conflicts cannot be resolved by military measures. Political resolutions based on identity, honour and equality are the only means of conflict resolution. The author concludes that different experiences cannot be applied to other similar situations directly, but they should be considered carefully.

Cengiz Çandar
Radikal Newspaper
2 December 2011

Ireland notes (4): 'Problems cannot be resolved by the security forces'

The article is on the meeting with Bertie Ahern, former Prime Minister of Ireland, who was also among the signatory of the Good Friday Agreement. He quotes statements by Ahern, arguing that security forces and some official authorities can complicate the peace talks; participants of the talks should be aware of it; there can be ups and downs during the process; and conflict settlement takes time. The author finds these statements so important, since they could be applied to the Kurdish question in Turkey as well.

Cengiz Çandar
Radikal Newspaper
28 December 2011

The Kurdish Question: Can there be any positive developments?

The author refers to recent debates over the domestic criminal law in force in Turkey regarding political crimes and their damage to fundamental rights such as freedom of thought and expression.

He analyses the approach of the governmental authorities to those problems, and the steps to be taken for the democratic development of the country. He states that 'resolution' involves a reconciliation process, which means that parties to the conflict must be assured that no-one would be viewed as the defeated party of the conflict, in the same way that events occurred in the Irish example, learned about during DPI's previous studies in Ireland.

Hasan Cemal
Milliyet Newspaper
30 November 2011

'Law is not enough to understand violence 'Thinking PKK while listening to IRA in Ireland'

He quotes some points made by Michael Culbert and Ian White about the peace talk experiences in resolving the Ireland conflict, and the difficulties faced during the talks. He states that while listening to parties of that process, the participants of Dublin meetings must have thought of the PKK.

Hasan Cemal
Milliyet Newspaper
2 December 2011

'Not listening to high bureaucracy while separating arms from the conflict'

The author quotes Bertie Ahern's opinion on dispute resolution and peace talks between parties of a conflict. He provides information about Ahern's life and experiences.

Hasan Cemal
Milliyet Newspaper
3 December 2011

'Ten key remarks on peace processes'

The author writes about ten key outcomes he derived from the events taken place in London, Belfast, Edinburgh and Dublin; peace is made with the enemy, it is a process requiring the taking of risk, only politicians must take part in the process, not other state officials, facilitating of political grounds for opposition is vital; the arms must not be used during the process necessitating dialogue; the public must be prepared and resolution cannot be found by just applying the rule of law.

Hasan Cemal
Milliyet
4 December 2011

'Servants following the voice of the bells!'

A poetic description of the Irish culture. This article draws attention to melancholic songs and the Irish countryside. The author also recalls the history and the conflict of Ireland and England, describing the inequalities between different social, religious and ethnic groups, which, in his opinion was the cause of the conflict.

Hilal Kaplan
Yeni Şafak
3 December 2011

'From the Irish issue to the Kurdish issue'

A summary of the Dublin visit is given. Further information on the background of the Irish conflict, its inception, development and

resolving processes of the Irish conflict. She argues that regardless of the seriousness and deepness of the Irish problem, it was resolved successfully and it could be done in Turkey as well.

Hilal Kaplan
Yeni Şafak
4 December 2011

'Role of the press and civil society organisations in the peace process of Ireland'

Describes the meetings with journalist Eoin O'Murchú and the activist Ian White, and their opinion on the media's and civil society's role in peace processes. She state that press always comes second whereas politicians are at the forefront in conflict resolution processes. It is also argued that media groups in Turkey have not been acting impartially and self-censorship has been applied significantly. Thus, civil society organisations supporting settlement of disputes can be successful as it was seen in the case of the Glencree Centre in Ireland.

Hilal Kaplan
Yeni Şafak
5 December 2011

'Politicians in the peace process of Ireland'

Describes the most important steps taken during the Irish peace process and the meeting with Former Prime Minister Bertie Ahern. Hilal Kaplan points out some important facts stipulated by Mr. Ahern, particularly on the possible troubling effect of certain groups and authorities such as 'securocrats', and 'establishments' in the peace making processes.

Hilal Kaplan
Yeni Safak Newspaper
7 December 2011

'The man of big decisions: Gerry Adams…'

The author describes Mr. Gerry Adams, his personal, professional and political background; she quotes some assessments made by him during their meeting in Dublin, and explanations of resolution settlement of conflicts in the UK and Ireland.

Bejan Matur
Zaman Newspaper
30 November 2011

'Language lessons from Ireland'

The author refers to conflicts experienced in Ireland, Scotland and South Africa, the methods and history of their resolution which all had been focused on, during the meetings organised by DPI and took place in London, Belfast and Edinburgh. She underscores the importance of analysing other similar problems which have arisen in other countries to resolve Turkey's own conflicts. She mentions economic and politic development seen in Ireland after the resolution of the conflict. Bejan Matur argues that even if a language disappears or is assimilated, identity would still exist. With reference to the disputes arising in Turkey regarding use of mother-tongue, she states that oppression of an identity does not cause disappearance of the identity. In the case of Ireland it is seen that it strengthens the awareness of the identity.

Bejan Matur
Zaman Newspaper
2 December 2011

'Is not ashamed of fighting but…'

The author compares the Ireland conflict with the Kurdish question and states the similarities and disparities between the two of them. She argues that Turkey does not have time to waste on the conflicts and to resolve existing disputes, the authorities should be ready to talk with any party of the conflict, regardless of their identities.

Bejan Matur
Zaman Newspaper
16 December 2011

'Who brings peace?'

The author reiterates that it is time for Turkey to resolve its problems. Security based measures do not work. As it was seen in the case of Ireland, parties must feel tired of war in order to agree to conduct peace talks. The opinions and approaches of advisers and other experts who are around the decision makers are important during such processes. The Prime Minister of Turkey, Erdogan, must realise that risks should be taken for the resolution of conflicts.

Mithat Sancar
Taraf Newspaper
29 November 2011

'Hope and patience for peace'

The author refers to the aim of DPI, its works, meetings that are taken place and attendees. He states that the Ireland event was

important, since there were some similarities between situations in Turkey and Ireland. He argues that increasing tension between parties regarding the armed conflict in Turkey makes such peace efforts more important. He restates the information given by Prof. Vincent Comerford, Eoin Ó Murchú and Richard Moore and argues that all opinion shared shows that although there are many difficulties faced during a peace process, the parties must be patient to succeed.

Mithat Sancar
Taraf Newspaper
1 December 2011

'The actors of the peace process'

The author refers to the meeting with Ian White and Gerry Adams. Mithat Sancar states that peace processes must be conducted by the parties of the conflict. In addition there could be support from some third parties as well.

Mithat Sancar
Taraf Newspaper
7 December 2011

'What were we looking for in Dublin?'

The author explains the aim and the area of focus of DPI, the background of its establishment and participants in its works. Mithat Sancar criticises some arguments made against DPI, such as allegations made by Emre Uslu, and replies to those allegations. He states that the cost of criminalising every attempts made for peace is too heavy for Turkey and that people facilitating this would be responsible.

Mehmet Tekelioğlu
Star Ege
4 December 2011

'Ireland notes'

Refers to the DPI meetings, held in July and November, and discusses the purpose of the events and their impact on the participants. This article argues that the Kurdish issue was caused by the official Nationalist policy, adopted as the basis for the Republic. The solution to the Ireland problem as a positive example of conflict resolution, and points derived from the meetings in Ireland are discussed, and applied to the Kurdish question. The importance of elements such as trust and dialogue between the parties are underlined, the in the process of political resolution of the conflict in Turkey.

DPI Board and Council of Experts

Director:

Kerim Yildiz

Kerim Yildiz is Director of DPI. He is an expert in international human rights law and minority rights, and is the recipient of a number of awards, including from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights for his services to protect human rights and promote the rule of law in 1996, the Sigrid Rausing Trust's Human Rights award for Leadership in Indigenous and Minority Rights in 2005, and the Gruber Prize for Justice in 2011. Kerim has written extensively on human rights and international law, and his work has been published internationally.

DPI Board Members:

Nicholas Stewart QC (Chair)

Barrister and Deputy High Court Judge (Chancery and Queen's Bench Divisions), United Kingdom . Former Chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales and Former President of Union Internationale des Avocats.

Professor Penny Green (Secretary)

Head of Research and Director of the School of Law's Research Programme at King's College London and Director of the International State Crime Initiative (ICSI), United Kingdom (a collaborative enterprise with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and the University of Hull, led by King's College London).

Priscilla Hayner

Co-founder of the International Center for Transitional Justice, global expert and author on truth commissions and transitional justice initiatives, consultant to the Ford Foundation, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and numerous other organisations.

Arild Humlen

Lawyer and Director of the Norwegian Bar Association's Legal Committee. Widely published within a number of jurisdictions, with emphasis on international civil law and human rights. Has lectured at law faculties of several universities in Norway. Awarded the Honor Prize of the Bar Association for Oslo for his work as Chairman of the Bar Association's Litigation Group for Asylum and Immigration law.

Jacki Muirhead

Practice Director, Cleveland Law Firm. Previously Barristers' Clerk at Counsels' Chambers Limited and Marketing Manager at the Faculty of Advocates. Undertook an International Secondment at New South Wales Bar Association.

Professor David Petrasek

Professor of International Political Affairs at the University of Ottowa, Canada. Expert and author on human rights, humanitarian law and conflict resolution issues, former Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of Amnesty International, consultant to United Nations.

Antonia Potter Prentice

Expert in humanitarian, development, peacemaking and peacebuilding issues. Consultant on women, peace and security; and strategic issues to clients including the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, the Global Network of Women Peacemakers, Mediator, and Terre des Hommes.

DPI Council of Experts

Dr Mehmet Asutay

Reader in Middle Eastern and Islamic Political Economy and Finance at the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University. Researches, teaches and supervises research on Middle Eastern economic development, the political economy of Middle East including Turkish and Kurdish political economies, and Islamic political economy. Honorary Treasurer of the British Society for Middle East Studies and of the International Association for Islamic Economics. His research has been published in various journals, magazines and also in book format.

Christine Bell

Legal expert based in Northern Ireland; expert on transitional justice, peace negotiations, constitutional law and human rights law advice. Trainer for diplomats, mediators and lawyers.

Cengiz Çandar

Senior Journalist and columnist specializing in areas such as The Kurdish Question, former war correspondent. Served as special adviser to Turkish president Turgut Ozal.

Yilmaz Ensaroğlu

SETA Politics Economic and Social Research Foundation. Member of the Executive Board of the Joint Platform for Human Rights, the Human Rights Agenda Association (İHAD) and Human Rights Research Association (İHAD), Chief Editor of the Journal of the Human Rights Dialogue.

Salomón Lerner Febres

Former President of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Perù; Executive President of the Center for Democracy and Human Rights of the Pontifical Catholic University of Perù.

Professor Mervyn Frost

Head of the Department of War Studies, King's College London. Previously served as Chair of Politics and Head of Department at the University of Natal in Durban. Former President of the South African Political Studies Association; expert on human rights in international relations, humanitarian intervention, justice in world politics, democratising global governance, just war tradition in an Era of New Wars and ethics in a globalising world.

Martin Griffiths

Founding member and first Executive Director of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Served in the British Diplomatic Service, and in British NGOs, Ex -Chief Executive of Action Aid. Held posts as United Nations (UN) Director of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Geneva and Deputy to the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, New York. Served as UN Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes, UN Regional Coordinator in the Balkans and UN Assistant Secretary-General.

Dr. Edel Hughes

Senior Lecturer, University of East London. Expert on international human rights and humanitarian law, with special interest in civil liberties in Ireland, emergency/anti-terrorism law, international criminal law and human rights in Turkey and Turkey's accession to European Union. Previous lecturer with Amnesty International and a founding member of Human Rights for Change.

Professor Ram Manikkalingam

Visiting Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam, served as Senior Advisor on the Peace Process to President of Sri Lanka, expert and author on conflict, multiculturalism and democracy, founding board member of the Laksham Kadirgamar Institute for Strategic Studies and International Relations.

Bejan Matur

Renowned Turkey based Author and Poet. Columnist, focusing mainly on Kurdish politics, the Armenian issue, daily politics, minority problems, prison literature, and women's issues. Has won several literary prizes and her work has been translated into 17 languages. Former Director of the Diyarbakır Cultural Art Foundation (DKSV).

Jonathan Powell

British diplomat, Downing Street Chief of Staff under Prime Minister Tony Blair between 1997- 2007. Chief negotiator in Northern Ireland peace talks, leading to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Currently CEO of Inter Mediate, a United Kingdom -based non-state mediation organization.

Sir Kieran Prendergast

Served in the British Foreign Office, including in Cyprus, Turkey, Israel, the Netherlands, Kenya and New York; later head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office dealing with Apartheid and Namibia; former UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Convenor of the SG's Executive Committee on Peace and Security and engaged in peacemaking efforts in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cyprus, the DRC, East Timor, Guatemala, Iraq, the Middle East, Somalia and Sudan.

Rajesh Rai

Rajesh was called to the Bar in 1993. His areas of expertise include Human Rights Law, Immigration and Asylum Law, and Public Law. Rajesh has extensive hands-on experience in humanitarian and environmental issues in his work with NGOs, cooperatives and companies based in the UK and overseas. He also lectures on a wide variety of legal issues, both for the Bar Human Rights Committee and internationally.

Professor Naomi Roht Arriaza

Professor at University of Berkeley, United States, expert and author on transitional justice, human rights violations, international criminal law and global environmental issues.

Professor Dr. Mithat Sancar

Professor of Law at the University of Ankara, expert and author on Constitutional Citizenship and Transitional Justice, columnist for Taraf newspaper.

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