

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



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alterations

DRAFT SPEECH OF SIGNING OF ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

of para 3
2nd par.

Throughout these negotiations, the Irish Government approach has been to find solutions which would end the alienation of nationalists in Northern Ireland and recognise and respect the rights of unionists about whose anxieties we have been at all times deeply concerned.

Irish UK

A majority of our people share the aspiration to Irish unity to be achieved peacefully and by agreement. That is the nationalist position. It is obvious that the British Prime Minister and I have come to these negotiations with different historical perspectives and, as it were, with different title deeds. But we have been able to agree about what would and what would not happen in the future.

The Agreement affirms clearly that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. The Agreement recognises that the present wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland is for no change. The Agreement goes on to say that if in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the fulfilment of the nationalist aspiration, the two Governments will act to implement that wish.

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The Agreement thus makes provision for the fulfilment of the nationalist aspiration to unity in the only conditions in which constitutional nationalists seek, or would accept, its fulfilment - without violence and with the consent of a majority in Northern Ireland.

The corollary of this is that the Northern Unionist community has for the first time a commitment in the form of international agreement that a change in the status of Northern Ireland, such as would be involved in a move to Irish political unity, would not take place without the consent of a majority in Northern Ireland.

On the Irish side these negotiations were preceded by a process of consultation involving a review of traditional attitudes by the constitutional nationalist parties of the island, through the New Ireland Forum.

The Forum's Report provided the basis for the Irish Government's approach to this negotiation. The Agreement as it has now emerged is ^{fully} consistent ~~in all respects with the proposals for a Framework for a New Ireland within which to tackle this problem that are set out in Chapter 5 Paragraph 2 of that Report.~~

Out out out country!

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with the principles proposed

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renew 3. ← RA

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identify

Our purpose is to create after 65 years conditions in Northern Ireland that will secure equal recognition and respect for the Irish nationalist identity there.

Nationalists can now raise their heads knowing their position is, and is seen to be, on an equal footing with that of members of the majority Community.

As a result we will be creating conditions in which the nationalist community in the North, can more readily identify with the structures of Northern Ireland in a way that will help peace and stability to emerge.

For the unionist community, who have suffered the most tragic and repulsive onslaught on their right to life and to well-being, this Agreement offers a way forward towards the restoration of normal civilised life.

- lawful occurrence without the fear or threat of violence.
- without violence or fear.

This Agreement thus involves no abandonment of nationalist aspirations, nor any threat to unionist rights; but it does offer a prospect of progress towards peace and justice for Northern nationalists, and of peace and stability for Northern unionists.

There are no victors: nor any losers. But if what has been agreed is implemented in full good faith, as I believe it will be, all of the people of Northern Ireland will gain. So indeed will the peoples of the rest of Ireland and of Great Britain,

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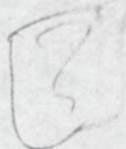
who for many years have had to carry together a heavy burden of security costs, and in the case of my State have also suffered severe economic losses.

As a person with close family bonds on the unionist side and ~~by~~ X close personal friendships on the nationalist side I want to address myself directly to the people of Northern Ireland .

To unionists and nationalists alike I appeal:

Look at and evaluate this Agreement for what it is - not for what some people in both communities committed to maintaining divisions and hatreds, will attempt to portray it to be.

and who have also paid a severe economic price,



X