

**REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE
NORTHERN IRELAND TRADE AND INVESTMENT CONFERENCE
MAY 24, 1995**

Secretary Brown, thank you. Your work promoting American trade and investment in Northern Ireland and across the globe really is making a difference. We are grateful to you.

Thank you as well to the Very Reverend John Dunlop and His Eminence Cahal Cardinal Daly for your thoughtful invocations. Your voices resonate with the calm of faith and hope, and your good works in bringing the communities of your land together have been inspirations to so many of your fellow citizens; from the Ulster Community Conference — a powerful new force promoting cross-community harmony at a grass-roots level, to the University of Ulster's Peaceline Campus at Springvale — an exciting project which will pioneer innovative approaches to economic and social development for all the peoples of Northern Ireland.

I also would like to say a word of appreciation to Senator George Mitchell.

It is testament to the importance he attaches to the future of Northern Ireland that George Mitchell — a Lebanese-Irish-American son of Maine — accepted the President's request to dedicate himself to your cause.

So, Senator Mitchell, we thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is indeed an historic occasion.

The Administration takes this conference very seriously. In fact, the President, the Secretaries of State and Commerce, Senator Mitchell and I have tried our best to coordinate our remarks so we would each have something fresh and original to say. We also wanted to make sure we each didn't quote the same lines from Yeats about the beast slouching towards Bethlehem, or the center that would not hold.

It is fitting tonight that we recall the courage of Taoiseach (TEE-SHOCK) Reynolds and Bruton and Prime Minister John Major, who have blazed a path of peace for all of us to follow.

But most of all, we salute the quiet and unsung voices of reason — especially those of the many women of Northern Ireland; the brave mothers, the wives, and daughters, who have suffered this past quarter century with dignity and grace.

To them we say our task will not be done until all political violence — the punishment beatings and intimidation — that still wreak fear in the housing blocks and city streets of Northern Ireland — is brought to an end, once and for all. All our peoples understand well that a just society can give no quarter to thugs. It is only through democratic means that we can resolve our differences.

That is why we pledge tonight that the United States will do all it can to play a strong supportive role to help build upon the cease-fire, and to encourage all those who would lay down their arms and walk the paths of peace.

Let me say a word, if I may, about the special role of President Clinton in helping to lay the foundations of real peace in Northern Ireland.

I am particularly proud tonight of the President. To all the brave men and women who take risks for peace, be they in Northern Ireland, in Haiti, the Middle East or beyond, President Clinton has said that America will stand with you.

The Administration will continue to do its part to build opportunity for the people of Northern Ireland and Americans alike. We have embarked upon a broad and innovative program of financial and technical assistance to promote economic development and American investment and trade in Northern Ireland. As part of this effort, we will continue to fully support the International Fund for Ireland.

Now we turn to you — the best and the brightest of business, trade, and finance — to build on these foundations and help sustain a new century of progress throughout Northern Ireland.

The recent cease-fires usher in unparalleled opportunities for business development. This, in turn, fortifies peace. History has shown us repeatedly that economic opportunity has benefits far beyond material well-being. Jobs and growth provide both enfranchisement and hope for a better future. And as societies prosper, they give everyone a stake in continued peaceful, social, evolution.

But what is at stake here is more than social progress in Northern Ireland. It is the prospect of jobs and growth for Americans as well, and for the many companies represented here tonight.

We fully recognize that while our best hopes are for a future of peace in Northern Ireland, many of you are accountable not just to your dreams, but to stockholders as well.

Your success at this conference will be measured not only in the moral coin of the families in Northern Ireland you will hold together, and in the focus you will give to the many lives shattered by years of despair. It also will be measured in profit.

That is why we gather tonight. This conference is being held now because of the many new opportunities for profitable business in Northern Ireland and the border counties. Understandably, for many years these areas have been bypassed by investors as backwaters of violence. For a quarter century the "Troubles" marked a time of high unemployment, and the disappearance of large scale industrial sectors which hampered economic growth. Many young people emigrated precisely because of the absence of hope that pervaded Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods alike. But no longer.

As over forty American businesses operating there already have learned, Northern Ireland is blessed with a highly-skilled population offering tremendous resources of talent and potential. It is a direct port of entry into the European common market — the world's second largest after NAFTA. We share a common tongue, and increasingly are linked through an improving telecommunications infrastructure. In these and in many other respects, Northern Ireland is already well ahead of the game.

Let's not forget that a century ago, Northern Ireland was an engine of the industrial revolution. Its shipyards, its looms and of course its peoples helped fuel prosperity throughout the United Kingdom and beyond. And even before, in grimmer times, when many Irish emigrated to America searching for a better life, they grasped opportunity in

an explosion of creativity and dynamism. The indomitable spirit of the Irish people has been etched forever on our national psyche — from politics to art, music and education, commerce and trade. That spirit of progress and industry is alive and well today in Northern Ireland. Hope has returned. And out of this hope it is clear that the economic future of every man, woman, and child in Northern Ireland stands or falls with the chances for peace.

So as you in business and finance search for bold new ways over these next days to build prosperity throughout Northern Ireland, we in government shall also rededicate ourselves to building peace. One simply cannot exist without the other, for out of peace springs prosperity, and out of prosperity, peace.

That is why peace in Northern Ireland will owe much of its fortune to the work you do in the coming days and weeks.

Tonight, the eyes of Northern Ireland are upon us. Let us summon the best in our spirits and in our hearts to the important task before us. By your trade and investment, by your building and nurturing, let us consecrate the bonds that unite Americans and Irish alike in the service of peace and reconstruction.

Last month, in celebration of the cease-fire, a Belfast writer named John McClelland presented a play called the "Mermaids Circus" at Belfast's Old Museum Arts Center that drew audiences from Catholic and Protestant communities alike.

His words resonate across Ireland, and for all of us here tonight:

"I say we can stop running. I say we can open people's hearts, we can free their minds, we can unlock their souls."

With confidence in your vision, and with faith in your mission, I know you shall do no less.

Thank you.