

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO
RONALD MCNAIR

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 1986

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I was invited to participate in a January 31, 1986, program at North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro, NC. This program was a memorial tribute to Dr. Ronald McNair—"a great Aggie." Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues my comments on that day:

Last Wednesday morning when I awoke I found this message at my door:

"DEAR CONGRESSMAN: Please accept my grief for the members of the shuttle, one of whom was a North Carolinian."

This message was written by one of my neighbors. I thanked her for her concern, and I assured her that two of those aboard the shuttle Challenger had North Carolina connections. I explained that Ron McNair was an alumnus at A&T State University. She was not familiar with A&T, and I doubt that she knows my surname, but she wanted me to know that the explosion that occurred the previous day was a personal tragedy.

Oftentimes we become stronger by having been victims of misfortune, sorrow, and loss. Misfortune, sorrow, and loss bring us together as one this morning to honor the memories of Dr. Ronald McNair and his colleagues who perished last Tuesday.

I walked a mile with Pleasure
She chatted all the way,
But I was none the wiser
For all She had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow
Not one word uttered She,
But, oh how much I learned from Her
When Sorrow walked with me.

We have walked hand in hand with sorrow since Tuesday. But as we honor Dr. Ron McNair today, my wish is that the memory of his life will illuminate around, and inspire within, those who become involved in the arts of teaching and learning on this great campus.

Ron McNair was a gallant patriot and great American as the Governor observed. He valiantly gave his life for his country, and I am pleased to join you in honoring him today.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN HUME

HON. JAMES J. HOWARD

OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 1986

Mr. HOWARD. Mr. Speaker, on January 15 the Catholic University of America awarded an honorary degree to one of the greatest statesmen in Ireland's long and far too often tragic history, the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party in Northern Ireland, John Hume.

It is almost 17 years since the breakout of the current troubles in Northern Ireland and in

those years John Hume has worked endlessly in trying to find a peaceful solution to the troubles. His commitment to nonviolence has shown that it can be the only path from which change can come about.

In his address at Catholic University he reaffirmed his strong commitment to peace, justice and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and of the inspiration he has drawn from the civil rights movement in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the Catholic University for the honor and tribute that they have paid to John Hume for his leadership and cause. His address, portions of which are excerpted below, is of interest to all Americans who share his commitment to peace and a final settlement of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

STATEMENT OF JOHN HUME

It is a great honor for me to accept this Honorary Degree from an educational institution of such high standing and prestige as the Catholic University of America. It is also a great pleasure for me to receive this award and to speak to you in an institution which has such a distinguished record of service in a whole range of fields corresponding to my own background and to the causes which I have sought to serve in my political life.

Coming from Ireland, which over 40 million Americans are proud to claim as the land of their birth or ancestry, let me salute the work and achievement of Catholic University in documenting, in studying, in celebrating the heritage of those Americans. Irish studies were initiated here in 1896. The first Department of Irish Studies in any university in the U.S.—only seven years after this institution opened its doors and over the intervening period, right up to the present day, the scholars who have graced these halls have made a contribution to the study of the rich linguistic, cultural and literary heritage bequeathed to us by the different major strands and traditions that have gone to make up the Irish nation.

We are gathered here today at the beginning of the International Year of Peace and on the birthday of a great American, Martin Luther King, a man of world stature, whose principle of non-violence in the struggle for justice has been an inspiration and guiding light to me personally in my approach to the resolution of conflict, whether in Ireland or the international sphere.

You are, in this country heirs to beneficiaries of great traditions and principles of constitutional government which stand out as of particular value and indeed, as a standard of emulation and application in our own affairs in Ireland today.

In America, there has always been respect for this idea of unity in diversity and whatever the controversies may be about the value and application today of the old melting-pot concept, there is, I understand, increasing acceptance of the idea of cultural pluralism. Again not without difficulty yesterday or devoid of controversy today, you have achieved religious toleration and established the separation of Church and State. Written on your smallest coin in this country is your message of greatest value, the cement of your society—E Pluribus Unum—from many, one. The essence of unity is the

acceptance of diversity. The tragedy of divided people everywhere, as in Ireland, is that they have pushed difference to the point of division and have not yet learned the lesson that is the essence of unity in every democratic society in the world is to accept and respect diversity.

The story of Northern Ireland is the story of a conflict between the aspirations of ordinary men and women—600,000 Nationalists, 900,000 Unionists—who have been trapped by a tragic error of history which saw their hopes and fears as mutually exclusive and irreconcilable within an Irish state but which obliged them nonetheless to live and compete side-by-side in one corner of Ireland. These two communities in Northern Ireland, Catholic and Protestant, Nationalist and Unionist, both behave like threatened minorities and only by regarding them and only by removing the fears which they both feel can a just and durable solution be found.

The American civil rights movement in the 60's gave birth to ours. The philosophy of non-violence which sustained your struggle was also part of ours. Our own history and our own circumstances gave a special power to the counsel of Reverend Martin Luther King that violence as a way of achieving justice is both impractical and immoral.

The world in the 60's responded with sympathy to our non-violent movement for civil rights as it did to yours. But whereas here in the United States the structures of your democracy were resilient enough to encompass the challenge of civil rights, in the unstable political environment of Northern Ireland, our struggle was perceived as a threat to the very survival of the society itself and as such was resisted by the institutions of the State.

In the ensuing clash, the Unionist majority, through the imposition of direct rule from London, lost their local parliament which they had come to regard as the symbol of their independence and as the guarantor of their heritage. Though many would still wish to regard Northern Ireland as their exclusive homeland, they lack the power and indeed the freedom to shape their destiny as they once hoped. Though they dominate the security institutions of the State still, they have not found security as a people. This insecurity has led them to oppose change, even when that change is constructive.

Nevertheless through pressure on the British Government including the presence of sympathetic opinion in America and the world at large, we were able to make, through non-violent methods, major progress on a number of fronts, especially on the original demands of our Civil Rights Movement. These included one-man, one-vote, fair allocation of publicly provided housing and an end to job discrimination.

While we made these very worthwhile advances, affecting the lives of ordinary men and women, we encountered, as I have said, a blockage from the unionist parties, to our legitimate calls and efforts to secure for the nationalist people we represent effective political, symbolic and administrative expression of their identity, including a fair share in the exercise of political power in the executive, as well as the legislative branch of

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.
Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

government. Moreover, the reforms we secured were not, regrettably, generously and openly offered by the majority party but had to be imposed on them by the British Government and Parliament.

Against the background of the resulting clashes and in impatience at the results achieved by peaceful, political methods, the philosophy of non-violence was rejected by a minority in my own community who followed the old law of an eye for an eye, who in the end were inevitably brutalised by the process in which they engaged, who in their savage anger and barbarous deeds have come to reflect themselves all of the hatred and sectarianism they had sought to overthrow and who, in their pursuit of violence, demeaned the cause we hold dear and lost us many good allies around the world. Sustained by their violence this terrorist group is beset by the illusion that they can, one day, impose their will on Ireland as a whole.

This violence, together with the unionist intransigence which gave it birth and the too long continued inadequacies of British policies in tackling the underlying political problem, has left us a bitter harvest. The human losses and economic costs have been enormous. The most tragic loss is that of the deaths of over 2,400 men, women and children. These deaths, in an area with a population of 1½ million, are equivalent in proportionate terms to the killing of approximately 350,000 in the United States. In addition, almost 25,000 people have been injured or maimed. Thousands are suffering from psychological stress because of the fear and tension generated by murder, bombing, intimidation and the impact of security countermeasures. In Northern Ireland, we now have the highest number of prisoners per head of population in Western Europe—in an area where twenty years ago, serious crime was practically unknown. The lives of tens of thousands have been deeply affected. The effect on society has been shattering. There is hardly a family that has not been touched to some degree by death, injury or intimidation.

When a society produces alienation in the individual, when it cannot provide for the equality and the differences of its citizens, "when the social system does not build security but induces peril," that society must be reshaped and transformed through new institutions which accommodate diversity and promote the best basis for reconciliation. This is the only way forward in Northern Ireland.

Like Martin Luther King, we the Social Democratic and Labour Party had a dream, like Theobald Wolfe Tone, the father of Irish republicanism, our vision has been "to substitute for the denomination of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter the common name of Irishman." Our chosen strategy encompassed Reform, Reconciliation, and Reunification along a path of steady progress, continually narrowing the gap between the reality and the dream, using the political means of dialogue, persuasion, negotiation, accommodation, compromise. Violence can never heal the deep wounds that divide a people. Only a healing process can in time end the division in Ireland.

Our analysis is that the first necessary step in that healing process is the creation of total equality of treatment of all the citizens of Northern Ireland, nationalists and unionists alike, from basic civil rights to full expression of their identity.

On the basis of that equality on that, because reconciliation can only be based on equality, comes the process of reconciliation, the second element, in my party's long-term programme, the breaking down of barriers between the different sections of our people. No one can underestimate the diffi-

culty of that task. It will take time, but it is a task that involves everyone and that will lead, coming to the third major element, to the only Irish unity that really matters, the only unity that all preparation leaders spoke of, a unity that respects diversity and legitimises differences. That is a process and objective that no one need fear because everyone must be part of the building process. Those who claim that their role and objective in politics is to preserve, protect and develop the Protestant tradition in Ireland have surely much more interest in a process such as this than standing forever apart, paranoid about the future precisely because they have refused to grasp the nettle of settling their relationships with the people with whom they share the island of Ireland.

The process of reform and reconciliation could best be tackled through a framework corresponding to the framework of the problem and thus, through the British-Irish framework, through an approach that dealt and deals with the three major dimensions of the problem—relations between the two communities in Northern Ireland, relations between both parties, the nationalist and unionist traditions in Ireland as a whole and relations between Ireland and Britain. A promising start along these lines was made following discussions between the Irish and British Governments in 1980 but these efforts suffered a major setback in 1981 and 1982, as a result of the trauma arising from the campaign and deaths of the hunger-strikers imprisoned in Northern Ireland. As a consequence in that atmosphere three years ago, we faced a bleak situation and prospect, with alienation greatly accentuated and more widespread among all sections of the nationalist community and with the political situation apparently in a state of deadlock and paralysis.

My Party took a fresh initiative at that stage, designed to break the logjam and to carry our analysis into the realm of practical politics. We put forward the proposal which came to fruition as the New Ireland Forum, a deliberative body of elected representatives from the four major constitutional nationalist parties in Ireland, both North and South, representing over 90% of the nationalist population of Ireland. The purpose was to set out a modern up-to-date and formal statement or blueprint, setting out the principles and structures on the basis of which the constitutional nationalist dream of a new Ireland could be achieved.

The Report of the New Ireland Forum was adopted as policy by the Irish Government and taken as the basis for a process of negotiation with the British Government which after 18 months and not without some setbacks along the way, led to the signature of a formal international agreement between the two countries about Northern Ireland, on 15 November last, at Hillsborough in Northern Ireland, by the Irish Taoiseach, Dr. Garret FitzGerald and the British Prime Minister, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher.

The Agreement is a major achievement of democratic, non-violent politics. It is a significant step forward on the road to lasting peace and stability. No one amongst us feels it is the final solution.

Northern Ireland continues to be governed, as unionists still wish, by the British Government. The Agreement rather adds a dimension which by giving institutional recognition to the Irish identity of those of the nationalist tradition, without detriment to the identity, of unionists, will enable nationalists to participate fully in the affairs of Northern Ireland without prejudice to their aspiration to Irish unity.

The Agreement has secured the support of substantial majorities of the population

in Britain and in the Republic of Ireland. It has been greeted with satisfaction by a majority of nationalists in Northern Ireland although there is, among many, a consciousness that much depends on its practical implementation, with firmness and fairness, by both Governments. Internationally, there has been unprecedented support including again from President Reagan and from both Houses of Congress.

But, surprise, surprise, there has been a strong negative and hostile reaction among unionists in Northern Ireland. The unionist political parties have embarked on a determined effort to set the Agreement alight, if necessary, as their spokesmen express, by making Northern Ireland ungovernable. One may regard this opposition from a community used to ascendancy, to having all power in their own hands, as understandable, even as inevitable: it is certainly not justifiable or justified. The Agreement takes nothing away from the legitimate rights or concrete interests from unionists, nor does it diminish in any way their political, cultural or spiritual heritage.

Particular opposition has been expressed to the Irish Government having a role in regard to the affairs and administration of Northern Ireland. But this attitude ignores the identity and aspirations of the people I represent, who constitute about 40% of the area's population. If there is an apprehension that the role of the Dublin Government represents the thin end of a wedge pushing towards a united Ireland against the wishes of a majority, the answer is in the second major feature of the Agreement itself. This recognises, in a binding international instrument, that which is a matter of fact, that Irish unity would only come about with the agreement of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland; and that the present wish of a majority there is for no change in that status. In this Article the two Governments also declare that, if in the future, a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a united Ireland, they will introduce and support in the respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to that wish. Thus the Article of the Agreement devoted to the status of Northern Ireland recognises the identity and aspirations of both traditions there. It also makes it clear that Britain has no interest of her own, strategic or otherwise, in remaining in Ireland and that Irish unity is a matter for those Irish people who want it to persuade those Irish people who don't, thus removing any justification whatsoever for the use of violence. You cannot unite people at the point of a gun.

When they are ready to do so, I and my party stand ready to meet them and engage in discussions on how we share our future together. We must begin the process of breaking down the barriers between us, barriers of prejudice and distrust which are at the heart of the conflict that has disfigured Ireland for centuries. We have a choice. We can live together or live apart. We have lived apart for too long and we have seen the bitter consequences. Or we can live together with all the painful readjustments that this will require. It is the only road to peace and stability. For whatever happens we will be sharing the same piece of earth for a long, long time.

We are, whether in Ireland or globally, with Martin Luther King:

"We still have a choice today: non-violent co-existence or violent co-annihilation."