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Not for the faint-hearted: Reflections on the Good Friday Agreement- 8 years on.

These are the reflections of a practising politician. In many ways, I crossed the bridge from private to public life flying blind. Concerned by the dearth of women in positions of leadership in public life, I had been active in the Women's Political Association for some years, and worked on the presidential campaign of Mary Robinson, my former law lecturer in Trinity. But I had no prior engagement with any political party of any hue. From being a reluctant lawyer, I fell into politics as a result of a chance meeting with Mary Harney in 1991, 4 weeks ahead of local elections.

I had no agenda, apart from being persuaded that I could make a contribution to public life in a party in which there was space for me personally and intellectually. The Progressive Democrats, formed in 1985 by Des O'Malley and Mary Harney, promised to 'break the mould in Irish politics'. The party's credo was one of radical tax reform and prudent management of public finances. It also had a moderate approach to the Northern Ireland issue. Mary Harney had been expelled from Fianna Fáil for voting for the Anglo-Irish Agreement negotiated by Garret FitzGerald in November 1985, an event that provided the catalyst for the formation of the new party.

Desmond O'Malley was more concerned with 'true republican values than with nationalistic myths'. Dismissed by many as an anti-Haughey rump, based more on personalities than principle, the party articulated a new and attractive electoral choice. In his first address as leader, Des O'Malley said: 'I believe there is a great consensus in Ireland which favours a peaceful approach to the problem in Northern Ireland; which favours fundamental tax reform; which favours a clear distinction between Church and State. Irish politics must be transformed. Experience tells me that no such transformation will come from within the existing parties. It must come from outside. There must be a new beginning.'

When I came on board in 1991, the party was in a coalition government with Fianna Fáil, led by Albert Reynolds, a union that came to an abrupt end with the Beef Tribunal¹, following a clash of evidence between the two party leaders. I was one of 10 Teachta Dála (TD's; Dáil Deputies) elected in the 1992 General Election, and served in opposition as whip and justice spokesperson for the party. By 1997 I had just 5 years' high-octane front-bench experience as an opposition TD. With such an inauspicious political pedigree, little did I think that it would fall to me to be one of those charged with negotiating the multi-party talks that led to the Good Friday Agreement.

John Steinbeck's credo, that 'a boy becomes a man when there arises a need' (*Flight*, in *The Long Valley*, 1938), was certainly applicable in my case. In June 1997, after taking a hammering in the General Election, my party had been reduced from 10 to four seats. But by a curious cocktail of luck and numbers, a government was formed in which the Progressive Democrats were to play a decisive role. I found myself being appointed as Minister for State at the Department of Foreign Affairs with a key role in Anglo-Irish relations. The next 9 months of my life were to be dominated by Northern Ireland, as the talks intensified across the strands of negotiations.

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At that stage there was no peace process to speak of, despite the careful stewardship of the outgoing Rainbow Government headed by John Bruton. The IRA bomb at Canary Wharf and the end of the first ceasefire had seen to that. The new government inherited a moribund situation and depression on all sides.

All that changed when the IRA reinstated its ceasefire on 20 July 1997. The peace process was back on the rails. After a short decontamination period, talks were to kick off in Belfast in September. I spent the summer beefing up on documents related to the peace process and ingesting what was to become its 'glossary of terms'. The Draft Framework Document and Heads of Agreement, and the position papers already put forward, needed to be understood and absorbed. It soon became clear that learning the language of the peace process was a vital ingredient for participation therein. In a political context so devoid of trust and so full of paranoia, loose words could cost lives. I was adamant I was not going to be the one to drop the ball.

The Irish peace process was a government-driven political project, blessed with all-party support in the Dáil. It aimed to find a comprehensive settlement to the Northern Irish question, one that would identify and deal with the causes of the conflict on the island. It was not, therefore, a normal political process but very much a micro-managed exercise in conflict resolution - very little happened by chance. Yet we had to sustain a line that would not be blown off course by every latest atrocity on the ground, of which there were many. Thanks to desperate efforts over the years to keep the show on the road in the face of constant obstacles to progress, the term 'creative ambiguity' has become synonymous with the peace process in Ireland.

The project was always high-risk for both British and Irish governments. Fundamental democratic principles were at stake. For the sake of peace and an ultimate settlement, should sovereign governments negotiate with terrorists? The state of mind of the republican movement was crucial. Looking back, many of us from the constitutional parties on the island had frequently to suspend our critical faculties about republican *bona fides* and keep our minds on the ultimate prize of lasting peace.

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Eight years on from Good Friday –10 April 1998 – my memories of that final weekend remain remarkably vivid. For those of us who were deeply involved, that day marked the end of a tedious process of meetings, drafting's and drama over many, many months. From the outside, it was easy to spot the tension and sense of stand-off. Hopes were high after many false dawns. People were glued to the TV as though they were witnessing a hostage-taking.

Inside dreary Stormont Buildings, fatigue had replaced elation as the hours and days slipped by and merged into one another. Depressed groups huddled together and hung around, grey-faced and apprehensive. We were charged with a life-altering responsibility; few felt up to it. Toggled out for our respective parties and government, we were all also there as individuals. We knew that we had to dig deep, to transcend our own tribes in order to find a historic accommodation.

That morning, walking up to Castle Buildings from the boarding-school-type accommodation provided for the Irish delegation's overnight stays, David Andrews and I joked that Tony Blair's 'hand of history on his back' could just as easily turn out to be a boot of history 'up the rear end'. David was anxious and, by his nature, impatient at the prospect of yet more long meetings. Someone with black Ulster humour had coined the phrase 'punishment meetings'. The Taoiseach, pained with the task of finalising these talks on the same weekend as burying his dear mother, was pinched and white-faced. George Mitchell, whose saint-like patience had sustained us through hundreds of fractious bilaterals and plenaries, knew he was going to have to wear the trousers and 'call it' at some point. The tension was suffocating.

Early in the morning it had seemed clear that all the elements of a deal were in place, following days and weeks of intense negotiation. But then the short time necessary for tidying up the texts and preparing final versions started to drag on. We learned of divided counsels in the Ulster Unionist Party; rumours swept the corridors of walkouts, of recriminations, of delay, maybe of rejection. Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern came back in to talk to leaders one last time; Bill Clinton was on the phone. Seven o'clock in the morning became 10, then noon, then four in the afternoon. Early euphoria gave way to exhaustion and then the onset of head-hanging despair; Mo roamed the corridors barefoot and bleary-eyed. I fretted that we might lose control of final texts in the frenzy of last-minute amendments to documents. We nearly lost Trimble on the North / South Bodies² list, which was filleted at the last minute.

But finally the word came that George Mitchell, the Chairman of the Talks, was convening a final plenary session. David Trimble had convinced most of his party to come with him, and had agreed to go ahead. Tony Blair had sent him a side letter holding out the promise of decisive action by the British Government if there were not early progress on weapons decommissioning.

I remember the crowds who piled into the humdrum meeting room to witness what we all knew was history in the making – the politicians and officials who had been around throughout being joined by many others, including the cooks from the hard-pressed Stormont kitchens, still in their white uniforms.

George Mitchell was eloquent as ever, but otherwise rhetoric was in short supply. We were talked out. David Trimble, asked if he agreed to the final text of the agreement, simply said, 'Yes'. Everyone else was more positive, save for Gerry Adams, who had to reserve his position ahead of internal party consultations. People forget that the only people who actually signed any document on Good Friday were Bertie Ahern and Tony Blair, with David Andrews and Mo Mowlam, who put their names to the official British–Irish Agreement.

Then it was over. There were tears of exhaustion and hugs of relief. We all spilled out to brief the media amidst the mud and porta-cabins and freezing wind. The skies opened and drenched John Hume – more than anyone, the intellectual architect of the Agreement – as he gave his press conference.

We flew back to Dublin. Despite it being Good Friday, some celebratory drink was found. The atmosphere was one of unalloyed delight. As one official said, it was as if we were on a team bus having won an All-Ireland or FA Cup final. Arriving home to an empty house (my family had expected me to join them in Donegal for the weekend), I put on the kettle, only to find that there was no milk. The house was cold. I sat in my coat and turned on the television. It was like an out-of-body experience. RTE was still covering Stormont Buildings with endless analysis. The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) had staged an angry protest, with poisonous exchanges between the loyalist Progressive Unionist Party and Paisley. I didn't share the euphoria. I knew it was only the beginning, and that the scale of change set out in the Agreement was going to be very difficult to deliver.

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Eight years on, I still regard that day as a highlight of my contribution to national politics. I do not believe I will ever experience a more awesome period of my career in terms of sheer responsibility. Moreover, I strongly believe that the Good Friday Agreement and the peace process generally, have been in most ways a great success, bringing about many positive transformations.

Even though the very worst moment of the Troubles, the Omagh bombing, came just 4 months after the Agreement – and I had the grim task of representing the Government at the memorial service for its victims – political violence has effectively now come to an end. It may be a cliché, but like most clichés it is true: hundreds of people are alive today who would not have been, had violence continued even on the scale of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The IRA – belatedly – has decommissioned its weapons and effectively declared that

its war is over. I continue to hope that loyalists will follow suit – and bring to an end the murderous conflicts that harm their own communities more than anyone else.

The democratisation that has replaced the conflict and what passed for politics for so long in Northern Ireland, is still fledgling. Thirty years of tribal conflict has left a legacy of political dysfunction. Politicians are expert in some ways, but one-dimensional. They have no experience of running their own affairs. They remain polarised, and capable only of representing their own tribe.

While Northern Ireland remains economically less vibrant than the South, and excessively dependent on the state sector, unemployment is far lower than historically. Discrimination has been effectively outlawed and the two communities are much more equal than ever before. Belfast and other cities are much livelier and more prosperous. Nationalists, so long driven by a sense of grievance, have a new-found confidence and optimism. If anything, it is Protestants on low incomes or facing unemployment who feel hard done by, their previous ascendancy – as they see it – negotiated away.

A new police service has been created, which is held up as a world leader in terms of accountability and responsiveness to the community. The courts system has been reformed and substantial demilitarisation has now taken place. And while the enduring pain of the victims of violence remains, all eligible paramilitary prisoners have been released.

Economic and social links between North and South are stronger and more mutually beneficial than ever before. One of the great achievements of the Agreement has been to make North–South cooperation to our joint advantage, politically unthreatening to unionists. I recall the total resistance of the unionist parties to discussing cross-border institutions. They saw them as anathema: a Trojan horse in the belly of which lay a united Ireland. One recalls David Andrews's unfortunate description of the purported North South Council as 'not unlike a government', prompting yet another Unionist walkout. Many Unionist figures from the business and other worlds now play an active part in the running of North–South bodies and in the development of connections generally. Unionists now generally accept that the Irish Government is balanced and fair-minded. No more striking sign of this exists than Dr Paisley's willingness to meet the Taoiseach in Dublin. But it is still early days in that particular courtship.

The relationship between the British and Irish governments, at all levels, is closer, friendlier and more equal than ever before. Great credit goes to Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, and indeed to their predecessors, notably Garret FitzGerald, John Major and Albert Reynolds. I think that the habit of consultation and partnership is now deeply rooted across the political and administrative systems, and will continue after the Blair/Ahern era – whenever that may be. There are signs, too, that the two governments are willing to press on and insist on a form of power-sharing short of the full Executive.

These are all remarkable and enduring achievements. The Agreement rightly deserves great credit for its central role in bringing them about. It unquestionably marked a profound and positive change in the history of Ireland and of British–Irish relations. That the Agreement was democratically endorsed - North and South, on the same day gives it a status and credibility way beyond a normal political agreement.

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Nevertheless, it is clear that some fundamental issues remain unresolved. In particular, the relationship between the two communities in Northern Ireland often seems to be no better now than in the darkest days of the Troubles. Indeed, there are those who believe that it may be worse. Sectarianism seems to thrive. There is a limit to what politics can achieve in human relations. Time may well be a more potent force in that regard. One cannot legislate for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Sadly, cross-community, power-sharing institutions – the so-called ‘Strand One arrangements’ – have functioned only fitfully in the period since the Agreement. They have now been suspended for three and a half years. Despite the best efforts of the two governments to find a basis for their restoration, it is hard to see how this will be achieved. Even if the Assembly and Executive are restored, it remains an open question whether they will, in fact, function as envisaged by the framers of the Agreement – as an example of, and motor for, reconciliation and partnership for mutual understanding. It does not seem as if there is much public interest in, or enthusiasm for, the institutions – hardly surprising given their chequered and unsatisfactory history, but this is depressing nonetheless.

Moreover, despite calls to implement the Agreement notwithstanding the possible absence of the Assembly and Executive, and while there has been much important progress in other areas, these institutions are at the very heart of the Agreement. Without them, there will be no arena within which the leaders of the two communities can work together and

determine their own affairs. And while functional North–South cooperation can and should continue to be developed for its own sake, the absence of a Northern equivalent means there is no truly authentic partner for the Irish Government in North–South institutions, even if British Ministers can fill the gap in a practical sense.

At the heart of this dysfunction is an absence of trust among the players. Trust is only starting to build in the context of relationships between the DUP and the rest. The fact is that the deal was done with a different Unionist Leader, David Trimble, whose party was a major victim of post-Agreement politics.

Politically, the main feature of the 8 years since the Agreement, has been the weakening and - to an extent - the marginalisation of the political parties that were key to its negotiation and its early functioning – the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) – the so-called ‘middle ground’. I also deeply regret the continued erosion of the Alliance Party and, in particular, the effective disappearance from the scene of the brave voices of the Women’s Coalition, the Progressive Unionist Party and the United Democratic Party. It appears that only those parties which build up their strength from the extremes inward – the DUP and Sinn Féin – have the political security and authority in their own communities to reach a lasting compromise.

Reaching that compromise would, of course, be immensely important. But at present one has the sense that both parties are quite happy to stay in their own respective comfort zones, rather than challenge themselves or their supporters to reach out and take the further steps needed – whether on devolution or on commitment to policing.

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A question I repeatedly ask myself is whether there were aspects of the Agreement itself, or of how it was negotiated, that encouraged or led to the current difficulties. Could these have been changed? And are there lessons for others here?

My overall view is that indeed there were significant flaws in the Agreement and its negotiation. But at the same time, especially in the circumstances at the time, I am not sure these could have been corrected without effectively making negotiations impossible.

From the very start there was an overlap between two rather different processes, with different sets of participants and different issues of concern. First there was the talks process, which in its structure (the three strands of Northern Ireland, North–South and

East–West), and in its objective (the negotiation of a new political agreement to transcend the Anglo–Irish Agreement), essentially went back to the Brooke/Mayhew Talks of 1991/92 in which Sinn Féin had not participated, and indeed further back to earlier initiatives.

At the same time there was a peace process, which essentially involved the two governments and Sinn Féin effectively acting on behalf of the republican movement as a whole. This was initially concerned with the ending of violence, and then with dealing with the consequences and legacies of violence, including prisoners, weapons, and the extent of the British military presence in Northern Ireland.

These two processes effectively came together in the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement. The Agreement itself contains sections on all relevant issues. But there was one consistent difficulty that has continued to bedevil its implementation. This stemmed from the fact that progress on political institutions – a matter of interest to all parties – inevitably became tied up with issues, above all decommissioning, over which most parties had little or no influence. In addition, because Sinn Féin had a wider agenda than the other parties – acting as it was, in some cases, as an agent of the IRA – the understandable sense grew among others that the party had a privileged relationship with both governments and was getting special treatment denied to others. This was only exacerbated by the inevitable secrecy in which the peace process had to begin.

A second feature of the process, which was both a strength and a weakness, was the central role played by the two governments. This, again, was inevitable as government policy bore directly on many key issues, not least constitutional change, and the structures and scope of Strand Two and Strand Three cooperation. Moreover the parties, not unreasonably, looked to the governments to act fairly and honourably as cosponsors of the process. But in addition, it fell to the two governments by proxy to drive discussions forward; we urged the parties to engage in discussion with us and with each other, framed the terms of reference for the negotiations, came up with discussion papers, and in the end drafted the great bulk of the Agreement itself. There were some valuable exchanges in the plenary and other sessions of the Talks. The UUP and the SDLP also met bilaterally and, together, thrashed out the details of Strand One. But there was absolutely no engagement between Sinn Féin and the Unionists, and frankly little enough between others.

This meant that the parties had less sense of one another, as individuals and as politicians, than might have been expected, particularly in so small a society. They had not talked through the issues as human beings. They did not understand, much less trust, each other.

This was to have major implications for the period ahead, which continue to this day. But, at the same time, without the role of the British and Irish governments – and indeed of the USA – in pushing things forward, it is unlikely that the parties on their own would have taken the lead. The parties became dependent on the governments and seemed incapable of taking the initiative themselves.

Related to this was a lack of public engagement with, or ownership of, the talk's process. Mo Mowlam always bemoaned the fact that it was not a 'people's project'. It was almost exclusively a top-down process, much of which took place in private. The Agreement was negotiated and drafted in sections. Its final shape emerged only very late in the process. Just a month before Good Friday 1998, I remember an opinion poll in the *Belfast Telegraph* which indicated that only 13% of the public expected a deal to be reached. That it did come was an immense surprise. The SDLP's supporters certainly understood, and were primed for the basic elements of, that deal. But it is fair to say that many republicans had not anticipated an outcome that essentially copper-fastened the principle of consent and established a new Assembly at Stormont. Still less had Unionists expected to see a power-sharing Executive in which Sinn Féin would be entitled to sit on the basis of its electoral mandate.

This lack of preparedness had two negative consequences. First of all, it meant that republicans adopted a very cautious approach to the central plank of confidence-building, as evinced by their difficulties in providing a clear commitment to decommissioning. Secondly, and linked to this, many unionists were quite unprepared to make the emotional and psychological adjustments required of them. They seized on the decommissioning issue as a litmus test of republican good faith, undervaluing or discounting the substantial gains registered elsewhere. Soon, republicans adopted the same zero-sum mentality from the diametrically opposite point of view. They eventually moved; but much too late in terms of capturing broad unionist goodwill.

Nor did many unionists internalise the logic underpinning the basic bargain in the Agreement: A recognition on all sides of the legitimacy of Northern Ireland's place in the Union on the basis of the principle of consent, in exchange for action to promote the equality, in a broad sense, of the two communities. Despite the positive constitutional outcome for unionists, they still felt they were negotiating down and losing. Trimble's failure to sell the deal convincingly to his own electorate was disastrous.

Another major flaw was the self-imposed exclusion of the DUP from the deal. This left the UUP fatally exposed, politically and electorally, to DUP rejectionism.

The decommissioning issue also throws into relief the function of language and creative ambiguity in any agreement of this kind. The reality is that the decommissioning section of the Agreement, however clear its objective, was unclear as to where responsibility lay, and even less clear when it came to the consequences of a failure to decommission. Sinn Féin would almost certainly have refused to sign a more clear-cut document. But, with the support of the British Government, the UUP had to act as if the text were more straightforward. It has been suggested by one biographer that David Trimble was aware of the contradictions, but decided to take the risk that progress in implementing the Agreement generally would induce the IRA to move. It turned out that he was right in the long run, but too late for him personally, and for his party.

The Good Friday Agreement has been famously described by Séamus Mallon as ‘Sunningdale for slow learners’ – meaning the UUP and Sinn Féin. But looking back, it is at least arguable that the Agreement was actually reached too quickly for the parties, and even more so for the people they represent. Possibly a slower and less dramatic process would have given the Agreement deeper roots. The rocky and difficult implementation phase has already lasted more than twice as long as the period between the first IRA ceasefire (August 1994) and the Agreement itself (April 1998). But, against that argument, one has to ask if the passage of time would necessarily have made the issues any easier. In particular, would the republican side have stayed sufficiently committed over a longer course? What if Omagh had happened before, instead of after, the Agreement?

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We will never know. But I hope the issues I have raised here will at least prompt reflection on the part of those who seek to manage similar processes. Some of the same kinds of argument – the merits of a top-down versus a bottom-up approach; the desirability of a short timetable; the need for an external actor to spell out the options, even if in harsh terms – are now being rehearsed in the Kosovo final status talks. Similar issues may well arise following the ETA (‘Basque Fatherland and Liberty’) ceasefire in Spain.

Moreover, much of the discussion of how the international community should respond to Hamas’s election victory in the Palestinian Territories has referred to the possible lessons of our peace process and the republican movement’s transition from violence to politics. It is

essential that certain basic principles be laid down clearly. The international community has done so. The key issues – of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and respect for the commitments the Palestinian Authority has already made – have been set out in straightforward terms. Certainly, the threat or use of violence is incompatible with normal politics. Nor should there be any doubt over the right of Israel to exist in peace and security.

But, at the same time, we need to show the Palestinian people that we respect the democratic mandate they have given to Hamas – this has wider implications for Europe's role and credibility in the Middle East as a whole. And we need to see how a very complex situation evolves over the coming period. Hamas finds itself in an unexpected situation, one that perhaps it did not want to reach so soon. We also have to see how the relationship between Hamas and President Abbas develops.

Clearly, the most immediate issue is the continuation of financial support for the Palestinian Authority. The EU is the Authority's largest single donor. Most of Ireland's own national aid of €4m annually goes to non-governmental organisations or to the United Nations. But there are some issues for us too. The level and organisation of future funding will undoubtedly be linked to political developments. There is an onus on the Palestinian Authority to put its own house in order and to behave constructively in relation to the peace process. At the same time, I do not think it would be right or wise to act precipitately to cause more hardship for the Palestinian people, or to create disruption and instability.

It is also important that we do not lose sight of the big picture. Whatever the difficulties in implementing the road map, its core insights and principles remain valid. Essentially, only a negotiated and mutually satisfactory two-state solution can bring about lasting peace, stability and justice in the region. There are obligations on all parties, including both the Palestinians and the Israelis. I am glad that the clear unacceptability of settlement expansion, and of the route of the separation barrier, has been made clear by the international community.

As regards comparisons between our own peace process and the situation in the Middle East, one has to be careful to avoid simplistic analogies. There are many obvious differences: not least that Sinn Féin started to make significant electoral progress only once it had embarked on the peace process. But I do think there may be some useful general parallels in handling the transition from conflict.

·In our own experience, the most important condition of all is the absence of violence on the ground. Continuing violence makes it very difficult to build trust or maintain dialogue.

·There must be indications that those involved in violence wish to change and want help to move forward. The British and Irish governments both received a clear indication that republicans wanted to embark on a transition process.

·A secure channel for confidential dialogue is a prerequisite. In our process, this role was adopted by a small number of trusted intermediaries.

·While there needs to be clarity about the major objectives of the process under all headings – violence, weapons, and constitutional issues – it may be asking too much to expect progress on all these to be made at the same time, or at the same pace. In Ireland, both decommissioning and acceptance of the consent principle were to be achieved in a longer time frame. The notion that ‘nothing is agreed until everything is agreed’ is a recipe for endless procrastination.

·While it is right to expect clear signals of commitment, it can be counterproductive to demand the use of specific words, or to expect a group to move quickly ahead of its grassroots support base.

·Work needs to be set in a wider political context. The group being asked to change needs to have a sense that movement on its part will be reciprocated. Participants in a peace process must be treated with respect, regardless of their past crimes.

·A permanent secretariat, with a truly independent chairperson from outside, is indispensable. The awesome chairmanship of George Mitchell was a marvel to behold.

·Certainly a lesson we’ve learned the hard way – one has to have great patience and to be prepared for ups and downs. A peace process is not for the faint-hearted.

In closing

Looking ahead, I am optimistic about British–Irish relations. Building on the historical settling of our differences on Northern Ireland is an exciting prospect. Our new-found economic success has transformed Ireland in so many ways, not least in national self-confidence. And with peace comes an economic dividend.

Burying the hatchet on the vexed quarrel arising from our legacy of colonisation is long overdue. Now that the current and future constitutional position of Northern Ireland is firmly in the hands of the people of Northern Ireland themselves, Ireland and Britain can both move on.

We in the Republic are now free to honour, respect and enjoy aspects of our culture that are British: our built heritage, our literature, and of course our pre-independence history and war dead. While unionists in Northern Ireland are still in the majority, they are a minority on the island of Ireland, and their British allegiance must be respected by a majority that, in any event, is daily becoming more multicultural and diverse through inward migration.

The recent aborted 'Love Ulster' parade in Dublin shows we have some way to go in our tolerance of 'Britishness'. Ireland should be a warm place for unionists. The seemingly endless enquiries into unsolved killings on all sides during the Troubles make closure more difficult. Enquiries into Bloody Sunday, Finucane, Dublin–Monaghan bombings and many more are guaranteed to shed light on murky practices on the part of British governments over the years. This was a dirty war on all sides. We may never have a shared view of history. Certainly, it is far too early for the clear attribution of truth and justice.

Notes

1. A judicial enquiry, established following allegations in the media and the Dáil of serious irregularities in the Irish meat industry and the complicity of the regulatory authorities. In evidence, Des O'Malley was critical of Albert Reynolds's earlier decisions on export credit insurance. Reynolds, in turn, described O'Malley's evidence as 'dishonest', leading to the collapse of the coalition government.
2. A wider list of areas for North–South cooperation by way of executive bodies had been put forward by the Irish side; David Trimble insisted the list be reduced.