FROM CONFLICT TO CONSENSUS: THE LEGACY OF THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

REPORT ON CONFERENCE HELD ON 3 APRIL 2008
FROM CONFLICT TO CONSENSUS:
THE LEGACY OF THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

CONFERENCE HELD AT
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
3 APRIL 2008

REPORT

Institute for British-Irish Studies
University College Dublin
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The support of the Department of the Taoiseach for funding of this conference is gratefully acknowledged
FROM CONFLICT TO CONSENSUS:  
THE LEGACY OF THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

CONFERENCE OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BRITISH-IRISH STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN, 3 APRIL 2008  
REPORT

Background  
The conference was the first in a new series of activities launched with the support of the Department of the Taoiseach, and drew a record attendance of 230 participants. A similar conference will take place in 2009 and in subsequent years.

Theme  
The Good Friday agreement of 1998 has been widely hailed as a remarkable political settlement at the end of one of Europe’s longest-running civil conflicts. It has attracted attention from academics interested in understanding the dynamics of the agreement and from policy makers keen to identify the lessons it may have for conflicts elsewhere. This conference offered an opportunity to explore precisely these lessons, and to set the Good Friday agreement in its broader comparative context.

The conference began with an overview of the factors that came into play in bringing the agreement into existence in the first place. The first session looked at the cornerstones of the agreement: relations between the parties in Northern Ireland and the formation of the power-sharing executive, relations between the governments, and the backdrop of devolution in the United Kingdom and European integration. The early morning discussion concluded with a major address by an Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, TD, on the significance of the Good Friday agreement.

After the break, the conference turned to the vital topic of the interaction between the agreement and the groups which have been parties to the conflict: the changing character of unionism, transformation in the nationalist tradition, and the more general issue of shifting identity patterns. The conference was brought to a conclusion by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Shawn Woodward, MP, whose remarks focused on the future of the British-Irish relationship.

Practical information  
The following documents are attached to this: a copy of the conference programme (annex 1) and a list of preregistered participants (annex 2).
ANNEX 1: CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Session 1, 09h30-11h00: Making the agreement
Chair: Dr Maurice Manning (President, Irish Human Rights Commission, and School of Politics and International Relations, UCD)

The role of the parties
—Professor Lord Bew (School of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy, Queen’s University Belfast)

The role of the governments
—Dr Martin Mansergh, TD (Dáil Éireann)

The British-Irish and European contexts
—Professor Elizabeth Meehan (School of Politics and International Relations, UCD, and School of Law, Queen’s University Belfast)

Session 2, 11h00-11h30: Good Friday and the future
Chair: Dr Hugh Brady (President, University College Dublin)

—An Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, TD

Session 3, 12h00-13h30: New styles of politics
Chair: Professor Brigid Laffan (Principal, College of Human Sciences, UCD)

Unionists and the agreement
—Professor Henry Patterson (School of Economics and Politics, University of Ulster)

Nationalists and the agreement
—Professor Paul Arthur (School of History and International Affairs, University of Ulster)

Changing patterns of identity
—Professor Jennifer Todd (School of Politics and International Relations, UCD)

Session 4, 13h30-14h00: The future of British-Irish relations
Chair: Sir George Quigley (Chair, Institute for British-Irish Studies)

—Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Shawn Woodward, MP
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>AHERN</td>
<td>Mr Bertie TD, An Taoiseach</td>
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<td>ANDERSON</td>
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<td>Mrs Fatemeh Embassy of Iran</td>
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MCCANN  Ms Saoirse  University College Dublin
MCCARTHY  Dr Sean  South Tipperary County Council
MCCORMICK  Ms Moira  Greenville, SC
MCDERMOTT  Ms Susan  University College Dublin
MCDONALD  Ms Dearbhail  PSAI
MCGARRY  Mr Paul  Department of the Taoiseach
MCGILL  Ms Marianne  Co-operation Ireland
MCGRATH  Ms Sarah  Department of Foreign Affairs
MCKINNEY  Mr Brian  Labour Party of Northern Ireland
MCKINNEY  Mr Eunan  University College Dublin
MCLoughlin  Dr Peter  Institute for British-Irish Studies, SPIRE, UCD
MCNULTY  Mr Terry  Irish Association
MEEHAN  Professor Elizabeth  SPIRe, UCD
MELIA  Ms Vernonica  Glenomena
MIKSA  HE Mr Franc  Embassy of Republic of Slovenia
MILNE  Mr Kenneth  Dublin
MOLLOY  Mr Shane  Trinity College Dublin
MOORE  Mr Stephen  University of Ulster
MORRIS  Ms Caroline  Mason, TX
MULLIN  Mr Jim  North South Exchange Consortium
MURPHY  Dr Pauline  Irish Association
MURPHY  Mr Jonathan  University College Cork
MURPHY  Ms Karen  SPIRe, UCD
MURPHY  Ms Mary Pat  University College Dublin
MURTAGH  Ms Elaine  CDVEC
MURTAGH  Mr John  University College Dublin
MYLTHEN  Mr Fergal  Department of Foreign Affairs
NEESON  Mr Bernard  Dublin
NEESON  Ms Frances  Institute for British-Irish Studies, SPIRE, UCD
NUNAN  Ms Frances  UCD Research
O CAOINDEALBHAIN  Mr Brian  Co operation Ireland
O CONNELL  Ms Josephine  Irish Association
O CUINN  Mr Ciarán  Department of Foreign Affairs
O GRADEY  Ms Rosaleen  Dublin
O HAIRT  Mr Aonghus  SPIRe, UCD
O REILLY  Ms Sheila  Irish Association
O SULLIVAN  Mr Mortimer  Dublin
O BRIEN  Mr Barry  Department of Foreign Affairs
O BROIN  Mr Michael  Trinity College Dublin
O DOHERTY  Mr Vincent  Vice-Chair, British-Irish Association
O DONNELL  Ms Catherine  Co-operation Ireland
O DONOGHUE  Ms Aingeal  Department of Foreign Affairs
O DWYER  Mrs Carol  Department of the Taoiseach
O FLAHERTY  Ms Aine  SPIRe, UCD
O HANLON  Dr Rory  TD, Dáil Éireann
PAKENHAM  Mr Thomas  British-Irish Association
PANKE  Dr Diana  SPIRe, UCD
PATTERSON  Professor Henry  University of Ulster
PETROVICH  Mr Sergev  Embassy of the Russian Federation
PIERCE  Ms Ted  Embassy of the United States of America
PLUNKETT  HE Ms Anne  Embassy of Australia
PORTER  Mr Gareth  Dublin
PUNG  Mr Andrew  Embassy of Estonia
QUIGLEY  Sir George  Chair, IBIS
QUIGLEY  Lady Moyra  Belfast
QUINLAN  Mr Stephen  University College Dublin
RAHIMPOUR  HE Mr Ebrahim  Embassy of Iran
RANKIN  Dr Kieran  SPIRe, UCD
REDDAWAY  HE Mr David  British Ambassador
REGAN       Mr Maurice Dublin
ROBB        Mr John New Ireland Group
RUSSELL     Mr Martin Clinton Institute for American studies
RYAN        Mr Christopher InterTrade Ireland
RYAN        Mr Mattie North Tipperary County Council
SAKURAI     Mr Tomoko Irish School of Ecumenics
SCHOEN      Ms Ricki International Decommissioning Body
SCHUTTE     Mr H Netherlands Embassy
SIMMS       Mr Laurence Department of Foreign Affairs
SKAHAN      Ms Mary Cumberland, MA
SMYTH       Mr Alan Dublin
SOTOS       HE Mr Liassides Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus
STERLING    Ms Summer Lexington
STEWART SHORT Ms Caitriona Geary Institute, UCD
TALPAI      Mr Tamas Embassy of Hungary
TANNAM      Dr Etaine Trinity College Dublin
TODD        Professor Jennifer SPIRe, UCD
URABE       HE Mr Toshinao Embassy of Japan
WALSH       Mr Patrick Paul SPIRe, UCD
WARING      Mr John Dublin
WEISS       Ms Allison Conneticut College
WHELAN      Mr Noel Dublin
WHITE       Senator Mary M Seanad Eireann
WHYTE       Dr Jean Trinity College Dublin
WHYTE       Ms Therese SPIRe, UCD
WISE        Ms Jessica Knox College
WOODWARD    Rt Hon Shaun Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
XIUSHENG    Mr Wang Chinese Embassy
YALNAZOV    HE Mr Emil Embassy of Bulgaria

*Note. This list does not include members of the press, guests of An Taoiseach, or other participants who registered on the day.