

**TEN-POINT  
PEACE PLAN  
FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND**



**February 2003**

# Purpose

The National Committee on American Foreign Policy (NCAFP) was founded in 1974 by Professors Hans J. Morgenthau and George D. Schwab and others to serve as a nonprofit, independent foreign policy think tank to help shape U.S. foreign policy. Among members are experts from the worlds of diplomacy and academia and leaders from business and the professions.

*The purpose of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy is to identify and articulate American foreign policy interests from a nonpartisan perspective within the framework of political realism. American foreign policy interests include:*

*Preserving and strengthening national security*

*Supporting countries committed to the values and the practice of political, cultural, and religious pluralism*

*Improving U.S. relations with the developed and developing worlds*

*Advancing human rights*

*Encouraging realistic arms-control agreements*

*Curbing the proliferation of nuclear and other unconventional weapons*

*Promoting an open and global economy*

A distinguishing activity of the NCAFP is the publication of firm, reasoned positions designed to help formulate U.S. foreign policy. When, after study and discussion, the Committee or one of its study groups reaches a consensus on an aspect of foreign policy that affects American national interests, the NCAFP makes that judgment known to the administration, Congress, the media, and the general public.



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# Foreword

The National Committee on American Foreign Policy (NCAFP) first became interested in the problem of Northern Ireland because of its potential impact on a strategic ally of the United States, Great Britain. The Committee's interest became more focused as a result of the 1993 publication of a document called the Downing Street Declaration, which was jointly released by British Prime Minister John Major and Irish Prime Minister (An Taoiseach) Albert Reynolds. For the first time, in the opinion of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, the essential principles on which a peaceful settlement could be based were laid out in a clear and concise manner.

The National Committee understood that a successful solution must recognize the differing aspirations of both sides in the conflict and that the people of Northern Ireland would have to learn to live with their deepest differences. If peace were to be achieved, the people of Northern Ireland would need to recognize that they have much more in common than they have in difference. The National Committee drew hope from the realization that on any one block of people living in peaceful coexistence in New York City there is more diversity than can be found in all of Ireland.

As this report is being written in 2003, it must be acknowledged that the people of Northern Ireland have come a long way on their journey toward peace. When the National Committee began its work to facilitate the work of those interested in achieving peace, it was recognized that the path to peace is never a simple one and that the steps to find a common ground would be measured in pain, bloodshed, and grief. The National Committee witnessed other similar attempts at peace around the world that had been problematic, evoking clashes of personalities and of diverse political values that resulted in human failure and misunderstanding. As we continue our efforts to support and promote the important dream of peace in Northern Ireland, we recognize that the long

and difficult journey is not over. Now is not the time to quit. Now is not the time to throw up our hands in despair. The dream of peace envisaged in the Downing Street Declaration can and must be realized.

The NCAFP began its direct involvement in the peace process by inviting all of the leaders of the major political parties in the North of Ireland to attend a special meeting of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. Those political leaders were invited to give their views on the principles set forth in the Downing Street Declaration. One of those leaders, Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein, was refused a visa to enter the United States. President William Jefferson Clinton got personally involved for the first time and, against the advice of the U.S. State Department, agreed to give Gerry Adams a special 48-hour visa to allow him to attend the meeting and present his views. Other political leaders from Northern Ireland who responded to our call were John Hume of the Social Democratic and Labor party (SDLP) and John Alderdice of the Alliance party. James Molyneaux of the Ulster Unionist party (UUP) and Dr. Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist party (DUP) refused to attend the original meeting but did subsequently request to meet with us and were given the opportunity to present their points of view. The meetings were significant, paralleling the work being done by the British and Irish prime ministers, and were recognized as playing a key role in the developing peace process.

Subsequent to the original meetings the National Committee on American Foreign Policy has made it possible for a broad range of individuals to present their views about what has been accomplished and what still is needed if the dream of a lasting peace is to be realized. Among those who have presented their observations at public and private meetings of the National Committee are Irish Prime Ministers Albert Reynolds, John Bruton, and Bertie Ahern; Irish Foreign Ministers David Andrews and Brian Cowen; Ambassadors of Ireland to the United States Sean O'Huiginn and Dermot Gallagher; Irish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for

Foreign Affairs Dick Spring; Irish Deputy Prime Minister Mary Harney; British Secretaries of State Sir Patrick Mayhew, Dr. Marjorie Mowlam, Peter Mandelson, John Reid, and Paul Murphy; General John de Chastelain, head of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning; Sinn Fein representatives Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness; SDLP leaders John Hume, Seamus Mallon, and Mark Durkan; UUP representatives David Trimble, Sir Reg Empey, The Rt. Hon. The Lord Kilclooney of Armagh (John Taylor) and Lord Maginnis of Drumglass (Ken Maginnis); PUP representatives Gusty Spence, David Ervine, and Billy Hutchinson; former UDP representatives Gary McMichael, David Adams, and Joseph English; Women's Coalition representatives Monica McWilliams and Jane Morrice; RUC Chief Constable Sir Ronnie Flanagan, and PSNI Chief Constable Hugh Orde; Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, New Scotland Yard, Sir John Stevens; U.S. Ambassadors Jean Kennedy Smith and Michael Sullivan; U.S. Special Envoys Senator George Mitchell and Ambassador Richard Haass.

The National Committee was pleased to have its chairman invited to witness the announcements of the 1994 cease-fires by the IRA and later by the Combined Loyalist Military Command. It recognized as significant the decision by the Combined Loyalist Military Command to include in their announcement of a cease-fire an apology to all of those affected by their actions. The National Committee welcomed the signing of the Belfast Agreement and recognized this important document as building on the principles outlined in the original Downing Street Declaration. The Belfast Agreement was accepted by a majority of unionists and nationalists as well as a majority of the voters in the Republic of Ireland. The agreement was significant, as it required concessions from both sides and offered an opportunity for a more constructive and stable environment that allows for the advancement of ideals through exclusively political means without prejudice.

Since the signing of the Belfast Agreement a number of difficulties have arisen from the continuing atmosphere of

distrust. The elected Assembly and Executive were suspended by the British government on four separate occasions. As is always the case in an environment of distrust, each side blamed the suspensions on its political opponent.

In October 2002 British Prime Minister Tony Blair made an eloquent appeal for a resolution of the problems in the North of Ireland. He stated unequivocally that progress by inches could no longer be tolerated—that the time for a final peace settlement had come. Gerry Adams responded in kind. The people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland braced for a final settlement.

Thus was the stage set for the National Committee on American Foreign Policy to present its Ten-Point Plan, which had been drafted in February 2003 by an NCAFP task force consisting of Chairman William J. Flynn, President George D. Schwab, Thomas J. Moran, Executive Committee member, and Edwina McMahon, senior fellow. In late February a four-member NCAFP delegation traveled to Belfast, Northern Ireland, to present the plan. Besides its chairman and its president, the delegation included William M. Rudolf, NCAFP executive vice president, Thomas J. Moran, Executive Committee member, and Edward J. T. Kenney, NCAFP member. Accompanying the delegation were Dr. Gerald W. Lynch, president of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and Mr. William G. Barry, chairman of Barry Security, Inc.

The NCAFP's Ten-Point Peace Plan for Northern Ireland was presented at a press conference held at 2:00 p.m. on February 27, 2003, at the Europa Hotel in Belfast. The conference was well attended by press, television, and radio newscasters from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and Britain. The National Committee's plan received wide distribution throughout the British Isles and limited but significant coverage in the United States.

William J. Flynn  
Chairman

## **National Committee on American Foreign Policy**

**Belfast, February 27, 2003:** The National Committee on American Foreign Policy announced today the results of its year-end review of the Northern Ireland peace process. The National Committee has concluded that it would be helpful to submit its policy recommendations to the people of Northern Ireland, to their political leaders, as well as those of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. We hope to reinvigorate the peace process in the North, to reiterate our unequivocal support during this time of political crisis for the immediate restoration of the power-sharing institutions, to propose a modality for ensuring the complete and immediate implementation of the Belfast Agreement, and to offer recommendations and suggestions that we believe will promote permanent peace in Northern Ireland.

The Committee is convinced that the continuation of the political impasse, which has negatively affected the morale of the people of Northern Ireland, dulled their aptitude for compromise, undermined the agreement, and eroded its base of support, will inevitably imperil the peace settlement.

The people of Northern Ireland have come a long way on their journey to peace. It has been measured in pain and grief and bloodshed. Victims can be found in every community. Now is not the time to quit. Now is not the time to despair. It was always recognized that the journey toward peace with dignity would be long and difficult. Those who remain committed to peace and reconciliation must now renew their pledge to achieve a just and lasting peace.

The people of Northern Ireland have much more in common than they have in difference, but they, as we, must learn to live with their deepest differences.

Prime Minister Tony Blair as well as virtually all political leaders in the North of Ireland are in agreement that progress



by inches toward a peaceful settlement can no longer be tolerated. The people of Northern Ireland can wait no longer. The world can wait no longer.

The National Committee, after ten long years of effort in support of the peace process, has come to the firm conclusion that it is time for a final, peaceful settlement. We are of the strong conviction that a peaceful settlement can be achieved.

**What is required is**

- 1. The full implementation of the Belfast Agreement;**
- 2. A straightforward statement from all paramilitary groups that the war is over, along with agreement on the full decommissioning of their weaponry and a pledge that there will be a real, total, and permanent cessation of all paramilitary activity;**
- 3. The normalization of British military forces, armaments, and installations to agreed peacetime levels;**
- 4. The full implementation of the Patten Commission's recommendations;**
- 5. Unconditional support for the Police Service of Northern Ireland;**
- 6. The full restoration of the Northern Ireland government and all other institutions provided for in the Belfast Agreement;**
- 7. The amendment of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) to eliminate or severely restrict the power to suspend the Northern Ireland governmental institutions called for and established under the Belfast Agreement;**
- 8. The participation of all political parties in the development and implementation of a Bill of Rights;**

**9. Holding elections as scheduled;**

**10. The establishment of a Northern Ireland Peace Commission to monitor those issues agreed on but not capable of instant implementation and to report periodically to the public and to the British and Irish governments for their response and action.**

The National Committee on American Foreign Policy believes that the political crisis in Northern Ireland will be resolved by the people of Northern Ireland who have the courage to compromise, the sensitivity to acknowledge the suffering of victims, and the strength to ask for and grant forgiveness.

*For further information:*

Mr. William J. Flynn

Chairman

National Committee on American Foreign Policy

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# Appendix

## Notes and Observations

### 1. Background

The National Committee on American Foreign Policy was founded in 1974 by Professors Hans J. Morgenthau and George D. Schwab and others to serve as a nonprofit, independent foreign policy think tank to help shape U.S. foreign policy. Among its members are experts from the world of diplomacy and academia and leaders from business and the professions. The chairman of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, William J. Flynn, enjoys the respect of the various political parties in Northern Ireland and was invited in 1998 to witness the announcement of both the IRA cease-fire and the cease-fire of the Combined Loyalist Military Command.

A distinguishing activity of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy is the publication of firm, reasoned positions designed to help formulate U.S. foreign policy. When, after study and discussion, the National Committee or one of its study groups reaches a consensus on an aspect of foreign policy that affects American national interests, the National Committee makes that judgment known to the administration, Congress, the media, and the general public. In addition to the Northern Ireland Peace Initiative, recent projects of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy include the Cyprus Peace Initiative; the Middle East: Islamic Law and Peace; Reinventing the Transatlantic Partnership; U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations; and U.S. National Security and Land Mines.

The National Committee on American Foreign Policy became involved with the Northern Ireland peace process following the release in 1993 of the Downing Street Declaration. The National Committee, immediately recognizing its significance, endorsed the Downing Street Declaration and subsequently hosted a meeting at the

Waldorf-Astoria in New York City to which the leaders of major political parties from Northern Ireland were invited in order to respond to the Downing Street Declaration. Invited were Lord Alderdice; Lord Molyneux of Killead; Mr. John Hume, MP, MEP; Rev. Dr. Ian Paisley, MP, MEP; and Mr. Gerry Adams, MP. It was for his attendance at this meeting that Gerry Adams was given his first visa to the United States. The reports generated by the National Committee on American Foreign Policy from this conference resulted in the involvement of the United States government and President Clinton in the Northern Ireland peace process.

Since that time, the National Committee on American Foreign Policy has hosted numerous meetings in New York City, hearing from British and Irish government officials as well as the leaders of the various political parties. The National Committee has also sent its foreign policy experts to Dublin, London, and Belfast to explore the status of the peace process. Since becoming involved, the National Committee has issued reports and has offered its recommendations both publicly and privately in support of the principles of the Downing Street Declaration, the Framework Document, and the Belfast Agreement. Many of the recommendations of the National Committee have been incorporated and are now an accepted part of the peace process.

## **2. Conflict Resolution**

The National Committee on American Foreign Policy notes that around the world there are several examples of failed attempts at conflict resolution. Each of these failures has served to destabilize a particular region and negatively affect economic conditions. Northern Ireland has the potential to be a model for success. Yet there are some serious challenges. On October 14, 2002, the power-sharing government of Northern Ireland was suspended for the fourth time in five years. The cause and the result of each suspension reflect a failure of trust.

A majority of the people on the island of Ireland, both North

and South, approved the Belfast Agreement in two referendums held in 1998. For unionists the agreement led to the end of the Republic of Ireland's constitutional claim to Northern Ireland. It also promised that any change would require the consent of the majority of the people in Northern Ireland. In return for this, nationalists were assured that their aspirations would be given parity of esteem and that they would have a right to contest elections and exercise government power based on election results. All parties agreed to use exclusively peaceful means to achieve their aims.

It has been noted by the British prime minister and others that certain economic benefits have already resulted from the Belfast Agreement. These include the doubling of exports in the last ten years and the reduction of long-term unemployment by 65 percent. On October 17, 2002, Prime Minister Tony Blair also noted that 470 were killed in 1972 and as of that date in 2002, the number of people killed was reduced to 10. Despite this progress, there exists a crisis of confidence in Northern Ireland—a failure of trust—which, if not addressed immediately, could bring back the dark days of the 1970s.

### **3. The Implementation of the Agreement**

The National Committee on American Foreign Policy joins those who have called for the full and immediate implementation of the Belfast Agreement. It is the considered opinion of the National Committee that all political parties and paramilitary groups recognize that anything less than the full implementation of the 1998 agreement will result in failure and lost opportunity of historic proportion. The political institutions must be immediately restored, and all groups must commit their unconditional support to those institutions that represent the best hope for a peaceful and prosperous future for all of the people of Northern Ireland.

### **4. Constitutional Imperatives**

The repeal of Articles 2 and 3 of the constitution of the

Republic of Ireland and the subsequent ratification, in a referendum conducted in 1998, of the Irish state's official withdrawal of its historic claim of sovereignty over the six counties of the North have eliminated the legal basis underlying the republican quest to achieve the reunification of Ireland without the consent of a majority of the people of the North. This was designed to be the companion piece to the British guarantee that as long as a majority of the people of Northern Ireland wished to maintain the province's link with Great Britain, Northern Ireland would remain a part of the United Kingdom. This Irish constitutional change, along with the guarantee of the British government, represents a major effort to reassure the unionist community that their status within the United Kingdom is secure.

Most people agree that the Belfast Agreement and the laws that came into effect as a result of its implementation should govern political life in Northern Ireland. Few realized that the Northern Ireland Constitution Act (1998) passed by Parliament incorporated the letter and the spirit of the language used by Prime Minister Tony Blair in the "comfort letter" on decommissioning that he gave to David Trimble in 1998. That act provides the legal basis for the government of Great Britain to suspend the power-sharing institutions of Northern Ireland.

## **5. Political Institutions**

More has been done than left undone, although the repeated suspension of the power-sharing institutions makes that judgment problematic and prospectively invalid. A review of what has been accomplished under the Belfast Agreement reveals that in every category some provisions have been implemented and others have not. For example, the Assembly and the Executive as well as the North-South Ministerial Council and the British-Irish Council were constituted, but the all-Ireland Civic Forum and the all-Ireland Interparliamentary Forum were not. One would have thought that if one power-sharing institution was to be rejected, it would be the North-South Ministerial Council, for the conditions prescribed for its

creation and operation appeared to be almost impossible to meet. The unionists insisted that this institution derive its authority from the Northern Ireland Assembly. In acquiescing, the Republic of Ireland, a sovereign state, transferred its sovereign authority in that cross-border body to a nonsovereign province of the United Kingdom in order to establish an institution designed to develop a common approach to common interests and concerns such as tourism and inland waterways. Dublin compromised further by agreeing to limit the purview of the Council to the subjects prescribed by the unionists in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

## **6. Implementation**

Implementing the remaining provisions of the Belfast Agreement concerning policing, justice, human rights, equality, demilitarization, and normalization is fraught with peril because it will expose the passions of communitarian hostility that fueled the thirty-year conflict. How could it be otherwise when, to use Prime Minister Blair's term, "acts of completion" regarding policing, for example, center on resolving the status of the suspect Special Branch in the Police Service of Northern Ireland, convincing Sinn Fein to participate in the Policing Board, and determining whether to admit ex-prisoners who served terms for committing paramilitary acts of violence to District Policing Partnerships that exercise oversight over the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

## **7. Northern Ireland Peace Commission**

The task of the Commission would be to oversee the implementation of the outstanding elements of the Belfast Agreement according to agreed upon schedules. The Commission should include respected individuals already familiar with the issues, possibly members from earlier commissions, such as the Mitchell Commission, the Patten Commission, the International Independent Commission on Decommissioning, and perhaps the Inspection Commission that validated explicit acts of decommissioning on the part of the Irish Republican Army. The appointment of members of

the Commission would be based on the impeccable records they have compiled in facilitating the peace process in Northern Ireland, in monitoring specific provisions of the Belfast Agreement with fidelity, and in acquiring a working knowledge of the two traditions of the North. The Peace Commission, the National Committee believes, would be well served also by employing another, time-honored means of selection: the appointment of distinguished statesmen or stateswomen from neutral countries such as Finland and Sweden. The sheer weight of their civic accomplishments, reinforced by the skills that they have honed in international diplomacy, suggests that they would be trusted, effective, and resourceful advocates of implementing the Belfast Agreement.

## **8. Direct Rule**

After four suspensions of the political institutions in Northern Ireland, the time has come, the National Committee on American Foreign Policy believes, to eliminate from the Northern Ireland Constitution Act (1998) the provision that authorizes Great Britain to reimpose direct rule in Northern Ireland. The comment that the leader of the Ulster Unionist party, David Trimble, made some time ago that direct rule is misrule has even more salience today, after the people of Northern Ireland have experienced episodic doses of devolved government and democracy and then been deprived of their benefits four times during the past five years. The National Committee recommends further that immediately after the elimination of the suspension mechanism, the political institutions of Northern Ireland be restored. Eliminating the suspension device and allowing the Assembly and the Executive to engage in the process of democratic politics will restore esteem to the still fledgling political institutions of the North and will provide time in which to compile a record of effective governance that will convince the electorate that their new political institutions are worthy of support.

## **9. Elections**

Hold the Assembly elections scheduled for May 1, 2003. The



National Committee on American Foreign Policy believes that postponing the scheduled election would erode both democracy and the peace process in Northern Ireland and reinforce the current of cynicism that is rife throughout the province. Just when the government of Great Britain is engaged in trying to engender trust among the political parties of the North at the roundtables designed to end the political crisis that action would send a resoundingly harmful message that not even the passage of time may be able to dissipate.

### **10. Letters of Comfort**

In talks designed to promote the implementation of the Belfast Agreement, the National Committee on American Foreign Policy urges British Prime Minister Blair to abandon the practice of issuing “letters of comfort” that have come to be interpreted in ways different from the meaning of specific provisions of the agreement.

### **11. Human Rights**

The National Committee appeals to the British and Irish prime ministers to instruct their representatives, in discussions leading to the formulation of a new constitution for the European Union this year, to strengthen the European Convention on Human Rights by incorporating provisions that address the specific concerns of the people of Northern Ireland (and those of other areas on the Continent where conflict has been a part of everyday life) and make the revised convention an integral part of the new constitution.

### **12. Punishment Beatings**

The National Committee on American Foreign Policy calls on all political parties to use their influence to convince the paramilitary forces to stop the odious practices of punishment beatings, banishments, and other ruthless forms of rogue justice that no civilized society based on the rule of law tolerates and instead to support community policing provided by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

### **13. Trust**

Learning to function democratically in arenas filled with political or communal opponents requires trust that comes from listening and learning to respect the ideas of others, compromising, and forging solutions that promote common interests. In brief, the National Committee believes that building trust is the cornerstone of permanent peace in Northern Ireland.



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