

**POLITICS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:  
A STUDY OF THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "POLITICS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT" submitted by me for award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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## CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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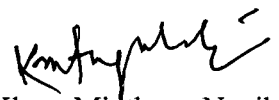
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Dated:  
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Kham Minthang Ngaihte

**TO**  
**MY FAMILY**

**List of**  
**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AIA	Anglo-Irish Agreement
ANIA	Americans for New Irish Agenda
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
GFA	Good Friday Agreement
IR	International Relations
IRA	Irish Republican Army
MNC	Multi-National Corporations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NIA	New Irish Agenda
NWO	New World Order
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
SDLP	Social Democratic Labour Party
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNO	United Nations Organisation
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

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**CHAPTER ONE:  
INTRODUCTION**

This dissertation aims to analyse conflict management by focussing on the Northern Ireland peace process. The study specifically dwells on the Good Friday Agreement (GFA). With comparison to other peace agreements around the world, the experience in Northern Ireland with the signing of the GFA attracted the attention of the international community; this peace agreement is exceptional in terms of design and outcome.

‘The Northern Irish problem’ is a term widely used when we refer to Northern Ireland as if there was an agreed and universal understanding of what it means. It is more accurate and more productive, to consider the issue, not as a problem with the implication that a solution lies around the corner for anyone resourceful enough to find it, but as a tangle of interrelated problems. There are central constitutional problems pertaining to the political context for the people of Northern Ireland, the question of ‘integration with Britain’, a quest for united Ireland, etc. (Darby 1995: 3)

The conflict in Northern Ireland and the peace process therein had the distinction of being one of the longest-running processes both in the time required to reach an agreement and the time required for implementation of the agreement. The peace process in Northern Ireland that led to the signing of the agreement culminated in multi-party negotiations on 10 April 1998. A series of bargaining, negotiations and discussions led to the ‘Good Friday Agreement’ of 1998. These include the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) of 1985, the Downing Street Declaration of 1993, the Framework Documents of 1995, and the Propositions of Heads of Agreements in early 1998.

The AIA gave the government of the Republic of Ireland, the right to be consulted over the affairs of Northern Ireland. It set up an intergovernmental conference and affirmed that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would depend on the consent of a majority there. From its part, the British government made it clear that it was not committed to indefinite sovereignty when Peter Brooke, the then Northern Ireland Secretary, declared in 1990 that Britain had no ‘selfish, strategic or economic interest’ for being in Ireland (Miall *et al*, 1999:178).

The Downing Street Declaration was a turning point of the peace process, since it laid down principles drawn from both sides which offered a reasonably



comprehensive framework for a resolution. It reiterated the principle of consent but also accepted the right of self-determination of the people of Northern Ireland 'by agreement between the two parts (North and South) respectively' including their right to bring about a united Ireland if that was their wish. Later it was followed up by the Framework Documents of 1995, in which the two governments set out detailed proposals for a settlement, based on the three strand framework that had emerged from the Brooke talks of 1989-90: First, a North-North strand, with provision for a devolved assembly, proportional representation and power-sharing in the North. Second, a North-South strand, which would, envisages an emergence of a new body to take on functions to be decided later. Third, an East-West strand, with the UK-Irish intergovernmental council to underwrite the settlements and the interests of both the communities. The proposals emphasised the importance of parity of esteem, in keeping with the recognition of cultural traditions that emerged from community relation work. It received a cautious welcome from the public and was close to nationalist proposals. The Unionists eventually rejected this developments, especially the North-South body which they feared would be a slippery slope to unification. However, they were ready and prepared to accept internal power-sharing with the Nationalists in Northern Ireland (Miall *et al* 1999: 179).

It is claimed that the crisis in Northern Ireland is a matter of domestic affairs by Britain. This is said to be done in order to avoid embarrassment – owing to the deteriorating law and order situation and human rights violations - from the international community. However, the intervention of the United States in the arena with the end of the Cold War brings about another chapter in the history of the peace process in Northern Ireland. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement stands as one of Clinton administration's major foreign policy successes. As seen by many Irish-American observers, the intervention of the United States, with its enormous political and financial power, fundamentally altered the equation and provided the catalyst for a historic agreement. Domestic political factors account for stimulating Clinton's interest and initial support for US intervention. However, they played less of a determining role once the administration became actively engaged in the peace process. It is important to note that the United States intervened after the end of the Cold War. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War

resulted in realignment of global power relations and a redefinition of US security interests that changed the nature of America's 'special relationship' with Britain.

The history of Northern Ireland and the structure of the conflict within rest in the asymmetrical relationship between the Protestant and Unionist majority, backed by Great Britain, and the Catholic and Nationalist minority. Three factors helped changed this asymmetry. First, the British government became increasingly impatient with the Unionists' handling of the situation which led to the suspension of Stormont and the imposition of direct rule that saw the Unionist in the same position of exclusion as the Nationalist. Second, the agreement of the United Kingdom (UK) and the Republic of Ireland governments to work together through the Anglo-Irish Agreement transformed the structure of the conflict, which could no longer be seen as the UK and Northern Ireland Unionists against the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland Nationalists. Third, the pan-Nationalist coalition and the support of Irish-Americans for the Nationalists helped to level the playing field (Miall *et al* 1999: 177-178).

The ending of the Cold War contributed to a change of milieu that facilitated the peace process. It gave the perception that political settlement is a more preferable option than prolonging the struggle in the new international era brought about by the end of the Cold War. Moreover, with the end of the Cold War, a number of changes occurred in the structure of the international system. It not only challenged traditional republican thinking about the reason for the British presence in Ireland but also presented its leaders with a unique opportunity which they felt could be exploited to their advantage. The post-Cold War era, allowed the possibilities of playing the 'American card' to accelerate the peace process for which the British had serious reservations (Cox 1997: 677). On the other hand, it paved a way for any aspiring hegemon to initiate its influence upon a weaker state. Upon the intervention of the United States (US) with a clear platform and opportunity that it enjoyed, the British had no option but to agree to accept a third party to the Northern Irish conflict.

It is noteworthy that the change in the domestic factor also enhanced the peace process for the signing of the GFA. It took new leadership among the most prominent players in London, Dublin and Washington to spur the negotiations toward a

successful conclusion. In 1990, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative colleagues forced her into retirement and replaced her with John Major. Unlike his predecessor, Major was more flexible and a better negotiator than the 'iron lady', who followed a strong policy denying any concession to the Nationalists and Republicans in Northern Ireland. But the election of Tony Blair and his Labour Party gave the peace process a new momentum. Meanwhile, Albert Reynolds became the *Taoiseach* in the Republic of Ireland two years later. He moved his formerly pro-unification Fianna Fail Party toward acceptance of a permanent partition of the island. He also began a series of meetings with the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) and Sinn Féin leaders, who were also meeting secretly with British civil servants (Haus 2001: 115).

On the other hand, the change of administration in Washington also added to the hastening of peace process in Northern Ireland. The election of the Democratic candidate Bill Clinton to power brought about a change in US policy towards the Northern Irish problem. Although the dynamics of the peace process had begun before the Clinton's presidency, a combination of the end of the Cold War and Clinton's domestic concerns had terminated the tradition of cautious approaches towards British sentiments. The Clinton's administration was clearly less sensitive than its predecessors to London's sensibilities and more willing to recognise Sinn Féin as a legitimate political force (Drumbell 1995: 124).

States fight to resolve their difference of opinions. The act of waging war reveals information about the relative strengths of each side (Clausewitz 1954: 12). Few wars are fought to completely disarm one side or the other. Rather than continuing the fight until one side is eliminated, the parties tend to reach a settlement through bargain or negotiating an agreement. The nature in which political processes of states unfold triggers that war and conflict is inevitable in many cases. However, every conflict has its own dimension on how it could be resolved or managed so as to prevent further escalation.

Black (1990: 43) defines conflict management as 'the handling of grievances'. Therefore in such management of conflicts, there have to be adoption of the collaboration of self-help, avoidance, negotiation, settlement and toleration by the conflicting parties. However, the study here focuses upon the strategy enacted by the

ruling elite, so to say, from the 'top-down analyses'. In every international conflict the ruling elites enact strategies of how well they can get out of the conflict on relative terms. They execute their ideas and strategies towards the other side after consulting and selling those strategies to its domestic constituencies. It is well known that conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change. It is an expression of the heterogeneity of interests, values and beliefs that arise as new formations generated by social change come up against inherited constraints. Nonetheless, the way we deal with conflict is a matter of habit and choice. It is possible to change habitual response and exercise intelligent choices.

Whenever there is a conflict of interests between states, war is of the one possible modes of policy to resolve the conflict. War remains as the only procedure while other procedure involves negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, etc. These are the more preferable modes to the international community and the concern parties to settle the disputes. Theories of conflict management suggest that the traditional method of negotiation is the most effective strategy in resolving conflict around the world. These theories explain that negotiation includes direct communication between the parties with a view to reach an agreement concerning mutual claims between the parties. If each party tries to accommodate, in part if not wholly, the claim of the other party, then the parties might be able to arrive at a mutually satisfactory settlement of their respective claims. If either party or both stand firm on their demands then the process of negotiation cannot proceed. A bonafide negotiation requires that each party tries to understand the other party's concerns and accommodate the demands of the 'other' to the extent possible. However, the outcome of the negotiation may be a settlement of the dispute or no-settlement at all (Kegley Jr. and Wiltkopf 2004: 234).

In any negotiation, each party feels that it is dealing with the other party on a footing of equality. Indeed the political reality is that often the negotiating parties are unequal. There are in the world community a classification of great powers, middle powers and weak states. When a big power negotiates with a small power, there is a scope for the great power to impose its terms using its superior position to coerce the weak state to accept a particular solution. In such case, if the weak state feels the impact of such coercion, it can terminate the negotiation. Christine (2006) points out

that under international law, there is no obligation for a party to negotiate to settle a dispute unless such an obligation was undertaken under a treaty or agreement. However, an obligation to negotiate under such treaty does not imply a duty to reach an agreement.

Negotiations can be on a bilateral basis and also on a multi-lateral basis. These can be conducted directly between Heads of State or Ambassadors or special representatives of the parties involved. When a large number of states are interested in a particular issue, they may meet at a conference and conduct negotiations to resolve the issue. The case of Northern Ireland is in conformity with this theory where a number of players came forth to negotiate. The reason for this is simple: the conflict had a spiralling effect on the governance and image of the concerned states. Looking within Northern Ireland, the conflicting parties, Unionists and Nationalists had to negotiate multi-laterally and accommodate each other's interests and also ready to sacrifice certain interests for arriving at a final settlement.

Theories of conflict management claim that during the process of negotiation the conflicting parties restrain from a violent method of acquiring their demands. This happens as it is the obligation of the parties within to show their commitment to the negotiation for an outcome. Putnam (1993) explains the 'cost of defection' in international negotiations and this system abides to every aspiring negotiating party to live up to the confidence of their rival parties. Hence in the process of negotiations there is a tendency that the parties will relent to positive approach and this generally helps in controlling the conflict in terms of conflict management.

The process of negotiation also conveyed a perception that the outcome would fall into the category of 'positive peace' a term coined by Johan Galtung. The concept of positive peace is based on the broad understanding of social conditions, means of removal of structural violence and not merely the absence of direct violence. According to Johan Galtung (1995) positive peace would not be obtained without the development of just and equitable conditions associated with the elimination of inegalitarian social structures. Equality is the essential element of peace because its absence perpetuates tensions of all types. All groups of people ought to have equitable

access to the economic benefits of society as well as enjoying social, cultural and political development.

Besides, there are several theories that happen to be closely related to the conflict management strategies. Edward Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) paid great attention to the root of causes, effects and international implications of the ethnic and other forms of communal conflict. The theory claims that conflicts around the world are formulated at the behest of state elites that have gained considerably from the ongoing state of conflict. This theory emphasised that the source of conflict lay predominantly within rather than between states, with four clusters of variables identified as preconditions for their transformation to high level of intensity (Miall *et al* 1999: 71-75). Let us examine the PSC theory.

First, there was the 'communal content', the fact that the 'most useful unit of analysis is the identity groups – racial, religious, ethnic or cultural, etc. Azar links the disjunction between state and society in many parts of the world to a colonial legacy on a principle of 'divide and rule' policy. Similarly, Northern Ireland had the past experience under the British subjugation that went as far as to classify the people into different identity groups *viz* Catholics and Protestants. The Catholics identified themselves as close to Irish while the Protestant had asserted their identity thereby identifying themselves more towards British rather than Irish.

Second, Azar identified deprivation of human needs as the underlying sources of PSC. This deprivation could be identified with the treatment of Catholics in Northern Ireland in the field of employment and other related economics activities. Grievances resulting from need deprivation are usually expressed collectively which manifests as the civil rights movement in the late 1960s under the behest of Catholic intellectual leadership. The failure to address these grievances by the authority cultivates a niche for a 'protracted social conflict'.

Third, in a world in which a state had been 'endowed with authority to govern and use force where necessary to regulate society, to protect citizens, and to provide collective goods', Azar cited "governance and the state's role" as the critical factor in the satisfaction or frustration of individual and identity groups needs: state like Northern Ireland which have experienced protracted social conflict are being

characterised by incompetent, parochial and authoritarian like government from Westminster that fail to satisfy basic human needs.

Lastly, there is a role of what Azar called “international linkages”, in particular political-economic relations of economic dependency within the international economic system. In a globalised world this linkages do not exempt Northern Ireland and the main players involved in the conflict. It had been a case of interdependence that govern the behaviour of state and in between the society bears the brunt of such harmful cooperation solely monopolised by the dominant identity groups.

However, these are theories of conflict that if premeditated to its utter sense can provide insights to the innovating strategies in terms of conflict management. The political elites of states had to address the plight of the social element in order to achieve a long-lasting positive peace in their dealing in the negotiation table. The main aim of negotiation is to achieve a reliable settlement to the conflict. If the political representative achieves this task, the chance of winning the trust and support of its domestic constituencies is likely in the future.

International conflict management refers to international political, legal and institutional mechanisms that are available to and used by states and international institutions to manage conflicts (Brown 1987: 11). It dwells on the mechanism of resolution of conflicts. Conflict management sometimes involves the use of force, a sort of war and includes coercive diplomacy and methods like sanctions, etc. It attempts at reducing, manoeuvring and mitigating conflicts. It sometimes involves alliances, procedures of international law for dispute settlement, arms control and disarmament and the use of United Nations for peacekeeping in general. In short, it involves mechanism in search for security in an insecure world. We also learn from Clausewitz (1954) that conflict in international system is unavoidable. However, it is contended that even in the case of extremely hostile relations between states there is a perceptible element of cooperation that could reduce the intensity of the conflict; this obviously requires widening the area of cooperation and then narrowing the area of differences.

Kenneth Boulding (1978) focuses upon the larger strata of international relations relating to nuclear weapons. The work focuses on the minimal concept of peace which could be defined as the absence of large amount of collective violence. This means that peace does not require the absence of all conflicts. It is not necessary to eliminate conflict, particularly disagreement, in order to have peace but only to keep groups from trying to resolve their disagreement through the use of lethal violence. Therefore in order to have peace, it is necessary to have some sense of what causes war and specifically what issues are most apt to lead to conflict.

David P. Barach (2000) suggests that peace theorists must accept conflict as a normal part of human life and international relations. The goal of a peace analyst involves determining the ways and means of managing and resolving conflict in a manner that reduces the possibility or the level of violence without deteriorating other values such as justice and freedom. In a similar vein, Hugh Miall *et al* (1999) sets out to consider how resolution of conflict has become more challenging in the case of post-Cold War conflicts, both as a body of theory and as a developing practice. The authors examine the nature of contemporary conflicts and the formulation and reformulation of key theoretical ideas. Conflict resolution could be seen as a continuing process of dialogue and reflection between the contexts that could shape the conflict which we have to deal. Preventing and ending violent conflicts seem to be the concern of the authors. For instance, the challenge of preventing violent conflict could be seen in the case of the Balkans while ending violent conflicts manifest in South African, Israeli-Palestine and the Northern Ireland conflict. By reading this book, the reader could get an insight into the uniqueness of the conflicts prevailing in Northern Ireland. We are left with questioning basically how post-modern and highly industrialised states fall prey to conflict regardless of their primacy in international arena.

By comparison, the developing and underdeveloped countries of the third world are likely to be victims of strife and conflicts owing to economic deprivation coupled with identity politics. Yet Northern Ireland is unique since the conflicting parties are divided not on ethnic but on intra-religious factors within a Christian society itself. A book written by Keogh and Haltzel (1993) provides a clear picture



about the nature of conflicts beginning from the era of colonisation. It gives a clear overview of the conflict in terms of the parties involved and their aims and objectives.

Whyte (1990) interprets the Northern Ireland conflict in three different versions. First, the traditional nationalist interpretation suggests that it is a conflict between Britain and Ireland. According to this version, the Irish people form a single nation and the fault of keeping Ireland divided lies with Britain. Second, the traditional unionist interpretation is that there are two peoples in Ireland that have an equal right to self-determination *viz.* Protestant and Catholics. Therefore it is between Northern Ireland versus Southern Ireland. The fault for perpetuating the conflict lies with the refusal of the nationalists to recognise the reality. The third interpretation is internal conflict interpretation. The conflict is between Catholics and Protestants within Northern Ireland. The cause of the conflict could be attributed to incompatibility between the aspirations of the two divided communities in Northern Ireland.

However, these are all assumptions which may be short of reality or a stereotyped one. But the root cause of the problem in Northern Ireland was a product of colonial inheritance which builds up beyond management as it developed. Hancock (2008) acknowledges that the reality of conflict suggests several approaches in containing the trouble torn Northern Ireland. It seems that Britain and the Republic of Ireland were also a part of the protagonist and they both could rightly claim that it is their own internal matter. The nationalists and the unionists are tools in implementing those mutual interests. The author suggests that for the peace process to be successful, have to be taken into account Track-I and Track-II level. The people of the conflict torn Northern Ireland are ready to compromise and willing to sacrifice anything to achieve peace.

David Bloomfield (1995) highlights the convergence of the cultural initiatives, which are generated from the grass-root level and the structural initiatives, which operate through a political process including third-party mediation as a means of achieving an agreement or at least a settlement. However, there have been instances wherein such convergences have not developed as cultural-structural initiatives are diverse; the social aspects are not totally in conformity with the approaches of the politicians who are often on the forefront to negotiate peace. Thus the

complementarity, which the author emphasises upon, differs with regard to the whole notion of settlement and hence the model for peace settlements is provisional. Conflict in Northern Ireland could be managed by taking into account the complexity of the issue.

Last but not the least, Christine Bell (2005) delved on the different guidelines in the context of peace agreements, ceasefire agreements, peace settlements, conflict transformations, negotiations and resolutions of conflicts. The whole range of agreements from the phase of pre-negotiation to the implementation of the agreement matters in the study of conflict management, domestically and internationally.

Conflict management may be defined as the nature in which the conflict of interests has been contained so that they do not spiral beyond control. It is not necessarily the absence of conflict but the art of holding the conflicting parties by using diplomatic means like mediation, third-party intervention, bargaining, negotiations and other techniques like coercive diplomacy, preventive diplomacy, sanctions and sometimes use of force (Hauss 2001: 24). The end result of conflict management is to bring the conflicting parties to a negotiating table wherein their differences could be sorted out using political and legal mechanisms.

The aim of doing this research is to study the management of conflict, as to how it was contained from escalating further, in the trouble torn Northern Ireland. Ample information is given in the background about the transformation of the conflict from extreme violent struggle to the desire for peace among the conflicting parties. The conflict of Northern Ireland manifests issues of varying complexity. These include the centuries old political and religious issue and the 'Irish Question' encompassing questions such as British presence in Ireland, the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, tensions between pro-UK unionism and Irish nationalism and above all the incidents of terrorism. The manner in which the above-mentioned issues have been addressed by the Good Friday Agreement that was initialised in 1998 is the subject of the research.

The involvement of United States of America after the end of the Cold-War will be analysed in detail. The rationale is clear: it is being observed that only with the intervention of US under Clinton's Administration that the conflicting parties of

Northern Ireland came together, and demonstrated eagerness in ending their differences and signed the historic Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998.

The scope of the study will be confined to the factors that have culminated in the Good Friday Agreement. The study aims to elucidate the following research question: What are the factors that have contributed to the success of the Good Friday Agreement in terms of reducing the intensity of conflict? and the hypothesis is that the momentum of the peace process can be attributed to the United States mediation and the finalisation of the Good Friday Agreement which was brought about by the end of the Cold War. The method underlying the study is inductive. By examining the peace process in Northern Ireland, the study attempts to generate a broader understanding of conflict management in post-modern states.

The study comprises the following chapters and a brief content outline of the chapters is shown below:

The second chapter of the dissertation is the study of the most prominent super power in international structure, their behaviour and perception of the new international structure after the end of the Cold War. Being the only super power left after the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the United States had the opportunity to intervene freely without facing any challenge from rival states.

The third chapter dwells in the domestic political dimensions of the peace process. The change in governments in Washington, London and Dublin had impact upon the rapidity of the peace process in coming to a peaceful settlement. Besides, this chapter intends to explain the role of statesmen and politicians as a crucial factor in running the course of the peace process.

The fourth chapter shows the core element of the Irish conflict by looking at the historical background of the whole of Ireland. This chapter analyse the peace process in Northern Ireland from the social constructivist's point of view. The ascendancy of social identities in the form of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland is seen as the social constructed images to differentiate one another. There are different discourses and ideas that act as an instrument of conflict in Northern Ireland.

However the study established that the conduct of the society from the grassroots level drives the peace process by persuading the state actors of what best suited the society. The peace process is concluded by the political elites of state but through the voices of the citizens that they represent.

The fifth chapter is the concluding chapter. It summarises the findings of this dissertation.

**CHAPTER TWO:  
INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AFTER THE COLD WAR  
AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: UNITED STATES  
MEDIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the dominating present world order from time to time and deals with the consequences that arises as each world order changes. Focussing upon the present world order, this happens to be an assertive multilateralism but evolved into cautious unilateralism after 9/11 attack on the world trade centre, this chapter examines the transition and look into how United States emerges victorious from the tense bipolar world of the Cold War era. The focus is also upon the international system using the realist spectrum to explain the peace process that prevails around the world as the Cold War ends. Narrowing down to the peace process of the Northern Ireland which led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April, 1998 will be the subject of analysis. Dwelling upon certain questions, the discussion look into the questions like: does the timing of the conflict management in Northern Ireland have to do with the change in polarity? Does the change in foreign policy of the most powerful state in the present system – the United States brought about the rapidity of peace process around the world? Does the change in power structure be attributing to the momentum of peace process in Northern Ireland?

Strong argument like the peace process that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement is the product of the structural change in international politics after the end of the Cold War gains ground. Hence, this is in tune with the assumption of realism which also happens to be the dominating theory in explaining the behaviour of states in international relation. Among the different school of thoughts in realism, a theory that emphasise the influence of world power structure on the behaviour of state with the global hierarchy, defined primarily by the distribution of power explains the induction accurately. This school of thought is called structural realism. The United Nations Organisation (UNO) does not totally served as a central institution above all the states as the Cold War ends. The United States can execute their interest unilaterally and so other aspiring regional hegemon. Therefore the realist analysis of states as the primary actor and act according to the dictate of self-help and seeking to secure their own survival remains applicable. The United States, in spite of their special alliances with Great Britain which remain an all time ally, act unilaterally in the case of Northern Ireland. States do not differ in the tasks they face, only in their capabilities. Capabilities also define the position of states in the system, and the

distribution of capabilities defines the structure of the system and shapes the way the units interact with each other. (Kegley Jr. and Wiltkopf 2004:41)

First of all, the question ‘What is a world order?’ arises in order to facilitate the understanding and aim of this chapter. Academics and analysts define it from the change in the structure of international system. Anne-Marie Slaughter (2004) describes the concept of ‘world order’ as a system of global governance that institutionalise co-operation and sufficiently contains conflicts such that all nations and their peoples may achieve greater peace and prosperity, improve their stewardship of the earth, and reach minimum standards of human dignity. The concept of ‘new world order’ has been used and overused to refer everything from George H.W. Bush’s vision of a post-Cold War world. The world experience a sudden change from 1989-91 and soon it was evident that the international system had transformed from a tense bipolar into a unipolar structure. As a result, a new order was at play. In order to be more familiar with this concept let briefly discuss from the historical point of view.

Historically, from the Concert of Europe, 1815 to the end of the Second World War in 1945 the world system was a multi-polar world order with each states had the potential and capabilities to dismantle the hegemonic ambition of other state. This situation led to two world wars with a vast devastating effect upon the power and capabilities of European states. However, from 1945 the international system saw the emergence of bipolar world from a multi-polar world. The powerful states of Europe like Great Britain, France and Germany lost heavily in the war in terms of infrastructure and economic and military capabilities which were eventually replaced by United States and Soviet Union as the world order changed. The two emerging powers, because of their ideological differences, create a situation that begot tensions thus turning the world into two hostile blocs for up to almost half a century. Yet there were no untoward incident that leads to direct confrontation of the two great powers which is likely to make another more devastating world war that could led to total annihilation of the world. The Cold War, however, ends peacefully because of the negating effect of nuclear weapons.

The strife for geostrategic advantage by the two powerful states leads to some notable conflict around the world. Many war like situation was experienced by the

two powers in the Korean peninsula, in the Indo-China, Afghanistan, etc. Especially, the Cuban Missile Crisis, when Soviet Union tried stationing their missiles in Cuba the backyard of United States, become the most noted one since the situation that follows was so tense that the two nuclear superpowers were in the state of what analysts termed as 'brinkmanship' of a full scale nuclear war. However it was avoided due to a sheer excellent diplomacy played by leaders of the two sides. There were also other conflicts that arises during these span of time but the nature of conflict were fuelled to gain strategic position by powerful states driven by their national interest in that particular region.

The change in the structure of international relation had had to do much about the timing of the management of conflict around the world. The structure saw the change in polarity from a bipolar to an allegedly unipolar world. The end of the Cold-War between the United States and the then Soviet Union marked an end to one era and the beginning of a new era affecting nearly every aspect of international relations. It brought about a change in the international system. International politics entered a new era, and for the first time in modern history, the world was unipolar. It had only one centre of economic, military and political power. The United States emerges victorious as the Soviet Union crumbles into pieces and being unable to challenges but to acknowledge the American supremacy both in economic and military might for a time being. The erstwhile enemy, the Soviet Union, is now an ally, a partner of the US in 'war on terror' and in settlement of regional conflicts around the world. Therefore it had at times often disparaged and disregarded the rules of international institutions, and often ignored the preferences of their old allies, Great Britain and other Western European countries. It comprehends the Cold War alliances systems are only temporary marriages of conveniences.

It is evident from the end of the Cold War that the US is the most powerful state in the international system. A spirit of triumph swiftly followed the ideological collapse of communism. Fukuyama (1989) proclaimed that history has finally ended with the universal victory of western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. The US, the most powerful state, effectively resolves important international issues unilaterally and no other state, even a combination of other states, have the potential and power to prevent it from doing so.



With no single clear and dangerous threat on the horizon to replace the Soviet menace, the United States is free to pursue strategies other than containment; America's surplus of security means that it can now devote greater resources than ever before to its traditional mission of fostering liberal democracy abroad (Schweller 2000: 46).

The first Gulf war in 1991 demonstrated the 'Supremacy of the US' and the beginning of the new world order. Though Iraq was a recipient of economic and military aid of the erstwhile Soviet Union and almost an ally, the war was waged by the US with little resistance or protection from Russia. Although Russia still possess the nuclear arsenal of the Soviet era and holds a 'veto' in the United Nations Security Council, it was in no position then to veto against the American onslaught in the Gulf. Thus the US supremacy was unchallenged. Therefore, the new world order ushered the coming of the unilateral world order. It also reflected the supremacy of US in almost every domain of global politics. To mention again, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European Communist groupings implies the emergence of a unipolar world order. The last decade of the twentieth Century witnessed the domination of the US in military and economic sphere, in trade and technology. Therefore, one might expect that the US would be facing a coalition of opponents, states opposing American power as they once opposed the rise of France, Germany, Japan and other aspiring hegemon. Yet it does not (Mowle and Sacko 2007: 1).

In fact, this argument echoes with the general 'realist' notion of international politics. According to Mearsheimer (2001), it is the behaviour of states to search for opportunities to gain power over their possible rival whether there is a threat or not in order to survive in an anarchical system of international politics, with hegemony as their final goal. He further writes,

"The best way to ensure survival is to be the most powerful state in the system... Given the difficulty of determining how much power is enough for today and tomorrow, great power recognize that the best way to ensure their security is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibility of challenge by another great power." (Mearsheimer 2001:33-35).

The United States is in a position of unmatched preponderance. America's economy is 40 per cent larger than that of its nearest rival, and its defence spending equals that of the next six countries combined. Among them four of the six countries

are close US allies, so America's advantage is even larger than these figures suggest. The United States leads the world in higher education, scientific research and advanced technology, which will make it hard for other states to catch up quickly. This extraordinary position will endure well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Walt 2000: 64). He further writes:

“Because the United States is so secure and has a large surplus of economic and military power, it leaders can pursue objectives that no other states would contemplate. This situation stands in marked contrast to the Cold War, when the Soviet threat gave US leaders a clear set of priorities and imposed disciplines on the conduct of foreign policy. But with the Soviet Union gone, US leaders can pursue wide range of goals without worrying much about how others will respond.”

For a great power to enhance its superiority, it need not necessarily maintain an isolationist posture: it could have its presence felt in every catastrophe. Although it may try hard to maintain a non-interventionist posture, the natural law of international relations would have dragged it into the core of every existing crisis. Every state would have counted on it to maintain and promote stability as the crisis flares up. Thus the status being enjoyed by a great power to freely intervene in the internal matters of states is an acquired one. However, this acquired status is strongly exercised by US to its advantage. In the political sphere, it uses the UN Security Council to serve its interest. To elaborate further, the US being the greatest among the great, used the platform of the UN to propagate its interests and control the world system.

On the account on the history of the Peloponnesian war of Thucydides in the Melian Dialogue, it is written as follows:

“... the standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept” (Warner 1954: 402).

The behaviour of US can be explained by the utilisation of power which is also a central concept of neorealism. States always pursue power as a means of survival. The United States, though willing or unwilling, had to utilise its power to show the world that it is its right to mediate or sometimes force intervention in order to accommodate loss of political control. If it had not intervened in some vital states it could have result in a change in the government in these states; this is not in the interest of the US. Therefore, no matter what kind of government it happened to

support in certain states, it has to do so in order to accommodate its interest and ensure its survival for the future. A number of political gains and technological developments have added up to the American power thereby enhancing opportunities for the United States to use its power, especially military might effectively. The erosion of groupings as in the Cold War era makes it easier, in the political sense, to use force against individual states (Haas 1994: 5).

The concern for power and its utilisation for United States does not directly relate with its survival but with its position among other states since US survival had been secured already in the system today. The international system forces great powers to maximise their relative power because that is the optimal way to maximise their security. In other words, survival mandates aggressive behaviour. Great powers behave aggressively not because they want to or because they possess some inner drive to dominate but because they have to seek more power if they want to maximise their odds of survival (Mearsheimer 2001: 21).

However, the above argument can be strongly contested when the domestic affairs of other regional powers is involved. For instances, US will take extra-precautionary measures before intervening in the former Soviet Union or to enrage China or India in any matter whatsoever. The relations with such countries will be thoroughly premeditated before executing any move, diplomatically and strategically. For instance, when the assault on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan began after the 11 September 2001 attack, the US needed an air base around Central Asia and chose Tajikistan as the prominent location to launch its attack. However, this move was done only after acquiring an affirmative nod from its Russian counterpart. Although it can make its move directly to the Tajikistan government by supplying economic and development packages, it needed Russia's approval. The anarchical structure of the system compels states to be sensitive to their relative position in the distribution of power (Waltz 1979: 49).

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Could the momentum of peace process around the world, especially the conflict situation in Northern Ireland be attributed to US mediation? In fact, US is the only power that maintains a military presence in all parts of the world. It is evident from the model of intervention by US around the world after the Cold War that peace



process in different conflict zones are gaining momentum. The global interest of American political elites and public opinion began to tilt towards an idealist notion of 'world peace' as the new world order began. The acknowledgement of US supremacy in the post Cold War era seems inevitable; however, there are contradictions that arise regarding its nature of mediation in the 'new world order'. Keeping in mind the various peace processes, every peace process has its own unique character and serves the interest of US in its own distinctive ways.

A powerful state has the potential and reliability to intervene in the affairs of its weaker neighbours at some time or the other. According to some international lawyers, a country has the right to intervene in the affairs of another whenever it sees a threat to its own peace and security. Today, it is generally believed that intervention should take place only under the authority of an appropriate international organisation, such as the United Nations and NATO. But as mentioned, they are tools and platforms for the strong to pursue its dominance. From the point of view of maintaining peace, there is something to be said for the suppression of internal discord in another state. In many instances, this is used as an excuse but not the justification.

America's mediation around the world is unnecessary when looked through the realist prism. This argument holds true in those regional conflicts that did not in any way directly imperil vital American interests. Those cases of human rights violations, self-determination movements, ethnic conflicts, etc. were internal affairs of a state that do not illustrate a requirement in the international system. With the end of the Cold War, after half a century of intensified conflict with a mighty enemy, the American political elites were engulfed by an idealist mindset of promoting peace and harmony around the world. Each intervention in the domestic affairs of other state is cautiously calculated and made to serve the national interest and security of the protagonist. Therefore the uncertainty in analysing the nature of intervention gains momentum. What explains the nature of America's mediation in its unique fashion? What explains the inconsistency in response from one state to the other?

The realist theory explains in part the behaviour of United States. US intervention or mediation is driven by 'national interest'. To get access to maintaining

influence upon the Indian Ocean region; and to get a strong hold of the oil rich middle-east and Mediterranean region, the horn of Africa holds the key. The intervention in the Balkans is driven by strategic interest: this intervention is crucial in checking Russian influence in the region. The case of non-intervention in Rwanda is explained by the lack of strategic interest.

On the other hand, intervention in the first Gulf-War of 1991 is guided by the objective of liberating a state from an occupying force; the role of US in the Arab-Israeli conflict had a different dimension. It is pertinent to analyse whether the pressure groups of the US domestic politics influence the government in terms of protecting Israel.

Emphasising upon the nature of mediation in the Northern Irish conflict, the US mediation was a surprise jolt to Great Britain. For the past two and half decades, the British government single-handedly contained the Irish menace. What will it be if the ghost of Cold war still lingers and American needs Britain to thwart off the Soviet threat? But with the end of the Cold War, minus Soviet debacles, even old and an all time ally was not spared. This experience clearly signalled a new chapter in the history of international politics.

As we have mentioned above, the United States mediation in Northern Ireland is somewhat different when compared to conflicts in other parts of the world. It did not actually produce a human tragedy like ethnic cleansing as in the case of Bosnia or like apartheid in South Africa, at least in global terms. Northern Ireland and its surrounding region have no serious resources like oil and natural gases. Also it is situated at the edge of Europe surrounded by American sphere of influence and Soviet threat had no access in the region even in the past. Even the superpowers took no interest at all during the Cold War. The crisis in Northern Ireland from the beginning was carefully managed by Great Britain that it had little impact on the outside world. After all, what makes United States to intervene in the Northern Irish conflict giving disregard to its 'special relationship' with Britain, their all time ally in world politics? This mediation eventually produced resentment in Britain and the 'special relationship' had become a complicating factor for a while. Although the United States had a long standing geo-political interest in its approach to the western

hemisphere and especially Western Europe, the attitude of Ireland towards NATO, which is to keep itself neutral, became a problem. It definitely troubled American minds. There happens to be a strong assumption that the then Soviet Union sympathised the Irish Republican Army (IRA) because of its continuing campaign against the most special ally of the US – the UK (Cox 1997: 681). This has not been forgotten by the US. Therefore, the US was in no position to keep itself distant from the Irish cause; the aim is to prevent the Island from becoming another Cuba, in case if Russia makes a comeback from the ashes of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The United States relationship with Britain can be definitely argued as Mearsheimer suggests ‘temporary marriage of conveniences’ (Mearsheimer 2001: 33). This argument is illustrated from the past history with ally becoming archenemy in the case of US-Soviet relation and US-Japan becoming strategic partner after the Second World War. Further elaborating, when the United States was at war and armed to teeth in fighting the Vietcong guerrillas, they formed an alliance with the Saigon based Vietnamese government. As the war ended with a defeat the alliance itself vanished. However, in the case of its alliance with Britain, the relationship is still crucial since the Soviet threat still existed at that point of time. But with the end of the Cold War and Russia embracement of the liberal capitalist economy, the need for Britain wane away.

The political dynamics of the United States in this part of the world is exclusively strategic. Traditionally, interest of the US in Northern Ireland has been minimal, which makes the level and the extent of the interest shown during the peace process in the 1990s quite remarkable. A Cold War driven ‘special relationship’ with Great Britain meant that successive US administrations were happy and content to regard Northern Ireland as the crisis in an issue within the internal affairs of the United Kingdom (MacGinty 1997: 31). However, one argues that could the US still need the help of Britain today; this is evident in the context of Iraq and Afghanistan and other global issues. Thus their relationship is as special as ever. This defines the exact nature of great power alliance making which is to suit the national interest of the propagator and gain absolutely from it.

Another reason as to why United States mediated in Northern Ireland is because it, as William Hazleton points out, “presented a far fewer risks” when compared to its intervention in Bosnia and Haiti. He writes

“...at the time of possible military ventures in Bosnia and Haiti and the further disintegration of an unstable Russian Federation, intervention in Northern Ireland appeared more ‘do-able’ and promised to be comparatively inexpensive. It also presented a far fewer risks.” (Hazleton 2000: 108).

Although American mediation in Northern Ireland caused a severe strain on its ties with Britain, the closeness and complexity of the Anglo-American ‘Special Relationship’ allowed the United States to forge ahead in ways that would have been unthinkable in dealing with other states. Despite repeated disagreements, occasional diplomatic protests and outbursts from the British press, any damage to the Anglo-American cooperation was largely temporary and was always contained.

Traditionally, it is not in the interest of the United States to engage in Northern Ireland, which is predominantly, regarded Britain’s internal affairs. However, it began to change its policy from indifference to involvement on the behest of Irish-American lobby group. Thus began the political drama of the US at playing an active role in the peace process and demonstrating concern about the slow pace of political developments. The US role was pragmatic in this sense, helping where the opportunities arose rather than intervening and handle the crisis. The US had to consider the interest of the population back home and shape the national interest accordingly (Rachman 2001: 8).

Ireland had tried to encourage the United States to mediate on the Irish partition issue in return for neutral Ireland joining NATO in 1949. The United States flatly rejected the offer because its prime objective at that time was focused on containing communism and Ireland is not vulnerable to the threat. Nevertheless, the United States began to sense the importance of Ireland with the resurgence of Provisional IRA after the ‘Bloody Sunday’ of 1972. For the first time President Jimmy Carter did make a statement on Northern Ireland in August 1977, which displayed an impatience at the lack of British political initiatives on Northern Ireland. However, his statement did not mention the principle of involvement in Northern

Ireland but made a promise of US investment in the event of a Northern Ireland settlement (Stevenson 1998: 41).

The political relationship between Ireland and the United States is an unusual one, mediated by generations of migration from Ireland that has created an organic link between the two countries. Yet, the relationship is influenced by the USA's more important diplomatic relationship with the United Kingdom (Lynch, 2004: 7). But with the interest of most Irish-American community inclining to favour Irish nationalism, the United States had to turn its attention in forging a peaceful mediation on Northern Ireland. Thus the US mediation from the dawn of the Cold War produced numerous agreements and proclamations; Britain was pressurised to negotiate with Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). In the December 1993 Downing Street Declaration, the British government, jointly with the Irish government, embrace the idea of self-determination for the people of Ireland, north and south, and re-iterated the statement that Britain had 'no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland' (MacGinty 1997: 33). This paved way for the United States to mediate unilaterally that eventually led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998.

The involvement of the United States in the Northern Irish conflict had already proceeded to centre stage by 1994. Irish issues have figured in the political discourse in the US for a longer time than any other issue. The US, being the source of financial and armed equipments in every conflict around the globe did the same in providing assistance to the Irish nationalists. The US dimension to the Northern Irish conflict principally relates to the activities of various Irish-American organisations. It also pertains to the use of the United States by the IRA to obtain arms and to the increasing interest shown by the political elites in the US. The reasons for this level of interest are both historical and political, linked in particular to regular waves of Irish migration to the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Today, the United States accounts (officially) for over 40 million Irish-Americans. 1980 and 1990 census figures showed that over 43 million Americans (19 percent of the total population) defined themselves as being Irish-American (Arthur, 2000: 136; O'Hanlon, 1998: 13). It is this which ushered a corridor for implementing



a foreign policy among its trusted allies for the US political elites having a special connection with Irish genealogy. Former US Presidents like Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, etc. had their ancestry close to Irish blood. Although former US Presidents had taken steps to address the Irish issues internationally, the ongoing ideological war with the then Soviet Union that time was never ripe for formulating a proposal. But the end of the Cold War saw the coming of Bill Clinton at the platform in propagating a foreign policy that was directed at addressing the Irish issue. The very peace process in Northern Ireland could be attributed to the mediation of the Clinton administration. Clinton was widely appreciated for bringing about a change in the foreign policy of United States.

The changing international system witnessed United States foreign policy getting tilted towards idealist-liberal values. It had a fascinating and enduring interest in peace, as a major global conflict would jeopardise the pre-eminence of the US. However, the Clinton administration's preferred strategy for preserving peace had been to keep the American pacifier in Europe and Asia while maintaining cordial relations with other great powers and supporting regional peace efforts where appropriate (Walt 2000: 67). President Clinton's handling of international institutions and multilateralism illustrates the central irony in the handling of foreign policy, namely, the degree to which he departed from his initial idealism to embrace *realpolitik*. In 1992, Clinton declared in his campaign that 'the cynical calculus of pure power politics is ill-suited to a new era', but his policies as president have shown an ample appreciation for the realities of power. This is illustrated in his bringing of three Warsaw Pact members into the fold of the US alliance and the way in which the US rejected the landmines treaty. Together with its NATO allies, the US asserted the right to intervene in the sovereign territory of other states, even with Security Council authorisation. Clinton may cloak US policy in the rhetoric of world order and general global interests, but its defining essence remains the unilateral exercise of sovereign power (Walt 2000: 78).

In the context of Northern Ireland, owing to its closeness with Britain and Ireland, the United States chose to mediate politically using the strategy of soft power. The use of soft power is aimed at influencing the interested parties to come to a political negotiation (Nye 2004: 35). The most tangible sign of US interest in the

Northern Irish peace process came with President Clinton's visit to London, Belfast, Derry and Dublin in November 1995. As the Cold War ended and with Moscow no longer a major constraint, President Clinton assumed a level of personal involvement in Northern Ireland that went far beyond the cautious criticism of Jimmy Carter and the behind-the-scene encouragement that Ronald Reagan gave to Margaret Thatcher. Making a distinct break with the past, Clinton did what no other American President had done or dared to do, which is to upset British sensibilities by intervening in what they and others had upto now regarded as a very British matter (Hazleton 2000: 106).

Within the changing milieu of international system, the question that arises is as follows: what makes the Clinton administration to mediate in Northern Ireland and what incentives does it gain in pursuing its foreign policy at the expense of Anglo-American special relationship? The post-Cold War international environment presented Clinton's foreign policy team with a challenge and a realistic opportunity in the case of Northern Ireland. The challenge did gain strength in the absence of Soviet threat. The changing post-Cold War scenario had altered America's security requirements and redefined its special relationship with Britain. While this gave Clinton greater freedom and manoeuvre in the case of Northern Ireland, Britain enjoyed renewed status in Washington as a dependable ally in the Gulf and a valued partner in maintaining peace in the former Yugoslavia (Hazleton 2000: 117). With Clinton becoming a global leader among leaders in the changing structure, he saw the lesser need for Britain and the increasing need for economic interdependence which involves every state around the world. Although Great Britain is reliable in terms of trade and commerce and constitutes a partner for United States, Clinton further saw the need for other European Countries in trade related aspects in the changing global scenario.

Although Clinton made claims towards commitment to a balanced approach and denied any secret agenda, it is absurd that such motives had no goal in international relations. Thinking pragmatically, the objective of the Clinton administration was to secure peace and stability; it was aimed at not ensuring victory for one side over the other. The hidden agenda is to appease the conflicting parties in Northern Ireland in such a way that they abide by the directive of the United States. The US saw itself, in Clinton's words, as 'an interested outsider, not an insider', and

his actions were described as those of a facilitator of a process and not of a broker or a mediator. The role of the US in the peace process and especially the Clinton administration is in influencing the conflicting parties to come to a negotiating table and arrive at a peaceful agreement. Clinton recognised the value of multilateral diplomacy in the post-Cold War world and while his experiences with the United Nations caused disappointment and controversy, a multilateral approach presented a very credible alternative for promoting peace in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland peace process can be explained through the prism of the realist perspective which was the intention of this chapter. Elaborating on the changing structure of international system, the end of the Cold War ushered a new chapter in international relations. Suppose if the Cold War were to go on and the bipolar system lingers, the world system would have been a tight one, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union would be inclined to intervene in the affairs of what others consider their internal affairs at the expense of their larger interest of propagating their ideological influence. The cost would have been high for both powers if the milieu were to resemble that of the Cold War era. For the United States it was in the dilemma of losing its most precious ally, Great Britain while at the same time, experiencing pressure at home, to intervene in the Northern Irish affairs. On the other hand, the hypothetical intervention of the Soviet Union at the behest of the Republican would have led to a catastrophe that would not be very different from the Cuban Missile crisis that was tantalisingly close to a nuclear war. Yet it seems that the parties in Northern Ireland were not so much interested in Soviet Union in terms of interference; they however expected the United States to mediate a peace settlement in the island.

The transition of the world order brought about by the end of the Cold War marked an end to the bipolar system and the beginning of the new era which impacted on most of the domains of global politics. It brought about a lone superpower, United States strong in both economic and military might that began to dominate the system for a quite remarkable span of time. The realignment of power distribution has given the US, preponderance which seems to behave in a manner of what Stephen Walt termed as 'freedom of action' negating all sovereign boundaries and acting unilaterally to pursue its foreign policy. With no other state or collection of states to

stand against the US might, the behaviour began to absorb a hegemonic stance. This largely contributed to the mediation for peace around the world. The US was in a position to dictate as to how to intervene in conflict areas and how best it can divert their intervention to serve its national interest.

Although the United States has intervened unilaterally in conflicts around the world, it happens to neglect instances where it has no strategic or economic interest. The non-intervention in Rwanda to prevent the genocide and the intervention in the former Yugoslavia illustrate this in great clarity. Therefore, the behaviour of the US is consistent with the general realist assumption that great power vies for maximising its power in order to maintain its survival.

In Northern Ireland, the parties from the start were inclining towards United States for bringing a peace agreement to their doorsteps. All the conflicting parties, including Britain and Ireland had a special relationship with the United States. However, US-Britain relation is exceptional. This is because Britain is an old power and regarded as a major player in the international system; it has also been a consistent ally of the US. Throughout the Cold War, the US maintained that the Northern Irish issue falls within the ambit of internal affairs of Britain.

The change comes with the coincidence of the end of the Cold War and a change in America's foreign policy under the leadership of Bill Clinton. Clinton and a number of his key advisors have attempted to rationalise the involvement of the US in Northern Ireland peace process by changing the philosophical aspects of American foreign policy. Clinton further admitted that in the aftermath of the Cold War, United States could afford to be optimistic in terms of bringing change in the world. Thus, when the emergent peace process presented the opportunities for intervention, it was absolutely ready and had an interest in managing the conflict. The US involvement in Northern Ireland had the advantage of being relatively inexpensive as compared to other foreign policy ventures.

**CHAPTER THREE:  
DOMESTIC POLITICAL DYNAMICS AND THE PEACE  
PROCESS**

As the scope of government has broadened, the domestic policies of different countries appear to encroach upon one another more and more. The foreign affairs agenda of a state is no longer merely determined by the contours of the international system but also by the domestic politics within states. Public opinion is beginning to find its way in formulating the foreign policy agenda of even the powerful states in the international system. This chapter will focus on the domestic dynamics of states in influencing their behaviour. It will examine the peace process in Northern Ireland and through the prism of domestic politics. It will analyse as to how the changes in the domestic politics of key players in Northern Ireland have facilitated the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998.

The liberal perspective of international relations posits that states are motivated by the search for opportunities to cooperate, that eventually produced absolute gains for all parties to the cooperative exchange. The peace process in Northern Ireland could be understood as being guided by the incentive to cooperate and negotiate for a lasting peace. With the change in international system, states place a greater priority on economic welfare rather than the military security, which is regarded traditional. This economic welfare priority encourages states to give up their traditional security concern and explore possibilities of cooperation that eventually change the pattern of international politics. Kegley Jr. and Wiltkopf (2004) write:

‘Because they perceive change in global conditions as progressing through cooperative efforts, [neo]liberal theorists maintain that the ideas and ideals of liberal legacy today can describe, explain and predict and prescribe international conduct in ways that they could not during the conflict ridden Cold War era’.

First of all, in response to the crucial question of the preferences of state foreign policy, the emphasis will be on the manner in which states make foreign policy decisions. The process by which states decides on foreign policy will illuminate the factors that influence how transnational actors, which comprises of ethnic immigrants or other bureaucratic pressure groups, makes foreign policy as well (Kegley Jr. and Wiltkopf 2004: 62). As we know, in an anarchic international system, which is the central argument of neorealists, patterns of interdependence and cooperation among states cannot exist. But it is to be noted that the international economy today is driven by trade, production, finance, competition, communication and transportation between states (Buzan 1991: 65). It is a fact that even the

proponent of realism cannot deny such developments in international relations in explaining the behaviour of states. Therefore international capital is becoming increasingly independent of states' interest. The idea of economic security for states dominates the concept of security studies and eventually turns its focus away from warlike conflict and generates states' machinery to provide maximum happiness for its people thereby acquiring maximum gain out of it. Thus the foreign policy of states is influenced by the domestic constituencies.

For analysing and explaining the finale of the peace process in Northern Ireland, the domestic politics of states like Great Britain, Republic of Ireland and that of the United States could be taken into account. Does the liberal assumption of interdependency in international relations attribute to the change in policy of states? For instance, the United States considered the Northern Irish problem as the internal matter of Britain. However, gradual change is observed in the policy of especially the United States as it emerged as the sole superpower in the international system.

On the other hand, the British government also began to amend its policy towards Northern Ireland by adopting a different posture from what it adopted in the early 1970s. Eventually, the Northern Ireland issue became a European matter to certain extent and an international issue as the peace process developed. According to the liberal perspective of state behaviour, although states retain the status of primary actors in international politics, there happens to be a certain determining factor in the policies formulated by states. It is the aspiration of the domestic constituency that translates to this determinant. Thus the domestic politics of state, at the turn of the new international system, influences as to how state should direct its foreign policy towards other states in international relations. It is such that the state's machinery is owned by the people in the form of democratic institutions. The policy of state is the popular policy.

From the historical point of view, after the Second World War till the end of the Cold War, the world has experienced a new transformation. Several states have begun to spring up in the third world and almost every new state that sprang up embraced a democratic form of government, except for a few Central American and South East Asian states. However, the most preferred option is the government by the

people in a democratic way. It is to be noted that democracy is a necessary theme that runs through the liberal thinking of international politics to develop flawlessness in relations between states. Liberals stress the possibilities for cooperation and the key issue becomes devising international settings in which cooperation can be best achieved. Thus the picture of world politics that result from the liberal view is of a complex system of bargaining between many different types of actors including Multinational Corporations (MNCs), transnational actors like terrorist networks, ethnic groups, etc. and international organisations, etc. Such complexity was the situation that only a popular referendum could direct the state policy in formulating agendas both in domestic and international affairs.

Talking about agenda settings of state in interstate relations, Keohane and Nye (1989) suggest that discontented domestic groups will politicise issues and force more issues once considered onto the interstate agenda. To improve their chances of success, government agencies attempt to bring actors from other governments into their own decision-making processes as allies. This is the case that happens in the US; domestic groups went to the extent of accommodating the interests and demands of Irish Americans by promising to actively participate in bringing a settlement in the Irish Island.

### **Primacy of Domestic Politics in International Relations**

International politics from the end of the Cold War to the dawn of the twenty-first century exhibited a twist between domestic politics and international relations. As Robert D. Putnam (1993) noted that 'it is fruitless to debate whether domestic politics really determines international relations or the other way round.' He further elaborated that the answer to the puzzle is clearly 'both' at some point of time. It is observed that every state derives its own policy from the outcome of its domestic political negotiations or shapes its domestic policy in tune with the priorities of the international community. For instance, the European nation-states had to formulate their domestic policy, especially in the environmental context, from the outcome of negotiations conducted by international organisations since they were committed to certain treaties and adhere to the principle of the negotiations.



On the other hand, developing countries like Brazil, South Africa, India, China, etc. had to go by the dictates of the domestic constituency in presenting their issue to the international community. The logic of 'second image' and 'second-image reversed' in which domestic causes has had an impact on international politics and of international causes having domestic effect had dominated the analysis in the international system. The causality is that there are internal parties and interest groups within a state. They become a force which work as domestic determinants of states foreign policy and began to tune their focus on the structural factors, particularly state strength in terms of economic policy.

However, the interaction between the domestic and international policy of a state creates a riddle of which happens to be the primacy of the two. The political complexities of the players in this two-level game are found to be confounding. Any key player at the international table, if dissatisfied with the outcome tends to upset the game board, and on the other hand, any leader who fails to satisfy its fellow player at the domestic table risks being thrown away from the seat. The dilemma of the situation creates a state of affairs such that at the national level, domestic groups have the tendency to pursue their interests by pressurising the government to adopt favourable policies and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups (Putnam 1993: 436).

At the international level, national governments seek to maximise their own ability to satisfy domestic pressure, while minimising the adverse consequences of foreign developments. Neither of them can be ignored so long as the state remains interdependent, yet sovereign (Putnam 1993: 436-437). However, it is not clear as to which level of analysis is more adequate in explaining the international relations between states today.

The primacy of domestic politics beyond the traditional assumption of state behaviour in the international relations attributes to the management of conflict and related issue in the present international system. However, the main focus of this chapter is whether the primacy of domestic politics in the international system contributed to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998 in Northern Ireland. Since the focus is on the peace process in Northern Ireland, the

domestic politics of the main players like the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and the United States of America will be the scope of the study.

The importance of state-society relations rather than the traditional state-state relations are seen to be shaped by domestic institutions, for instance the 'democratic peace', economic interdependence, and ideas about national, political and socio-economic public goods provisions which professed optimism concerning the potential for peace, cooperation and international institutions in world history. Liberal IR theory elaborates the insight that state-society relations *i.e.* the relationship of states to the domestic and transnational societal context in which they are embedded, have a fundamental impact on state behaviour in world politics. Societal ideas, interests and institutions influence state behaviour by shaping state preferences that happens to be the fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations of governments. For liberals, the configuration of state preferences matters most in world politics (Moravcsik 1997: 513-514). Therefore the argument is that the Liberal IR theory fits to some extent in explaining the progress and outcome of the peace process in Northern Ireland.

The different variants of liberal theory each grounded in a distinctive causal mechanism linking social preferences and state behaviour becomes the foundation of the peace process. Ideational liberalism which stresses the impact on state behaviour of conflict and compatibility among social values or identities concerning the scope and nature of public goods provision could be related to the situation that prevails in Northern Ireland. The different ideational problems led to nastier situations that happen to aggravate the conflict beyond reconciliation. There is a central constitutional problem of what should be the political context for the people of Northern Ireland? Do the people aspire for integration with Great Britain or an independent United Ireland? Besides there is a continuing problem of social and economic inequalities, especially in the field of employment and there is a problem of cultural identity, security, a problem of religious differences that certainly added up the fuel of the day-to-day relationships between people living in Northern Ireland (Darby 1995: 36).

In the context of the political aspirations of the people of Northern Ireland, there happens to be numerous players that deny or boost their aspiration that eventually led to the complexity of the Northern Ireland peace process. Therefore it had experienced a series of mediations from the protagonist states till the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998. From the point of view of the commercial liberalism, which stresses the impact on state behaviour of gains and losses to individuals and groups in society from transnational economic interchange, it can be attributed as a basis of analysis for the peace process in Northern Ireland. With the advent of liberal capitalists as champions in marketing economy as the polarity transformed, the world system is such that each state tries to win another state as a trading partner in spite of every hostility it poses during the Cold War. Hence it is the case of Great Britain and United States of America towards Russia and *vice versa*. There happens to be a similar yet unequal gravity of hostilities towards the Republic of Ireland by Great Britain during the Cold War as the issue of Northern Ireland runs as a contention between the two states. But the disagreements are kept aside as the world system transformed and both states perceived each other as an ally rather than a foe in formulating international politics today.

The domestic representation that is focus here elaborated the primacy of state domestic politics in its ventures to the international arena. For example, in 1992, after the Cold War, Clinton made it clear that his Presidential primary campaign signalled a much more pro-active role of the American Presidency in Northern Ireland and it centred around George Mitchell. Clinton began the foreign policy change by promising a group of Irish Americans that he would support sending a special envoy to Northern Ireland, who later turned out to be George Mitchell and would grant Gerry Adams, the President of Sinn Féin, a visa to visit the United States (Geraghty 2000: 209-210). These moves were against the wish of Britain, their ally and all time partners throughout the Cold War.

Yet the underlying policy is credited to the Irish American pressure group. When political representation is biased in favour of particularistic groups, they tend to 'capture' government institutions and employ them for their ends alone, systematically passing on the costs and risks to others. The precise policy of government depends on which domestic groups are represented, wholly or partially.

The simplest resulting prediction is that policy is biased in favour of the governing coalition or powerful domestic groups (Moravcsik 1997: 530). Hence this sole example provides clarity of how much pressure rides prevails over the preferences of a state and how such strong pressure groups direct state policy. Therefore the peace process in Northern Ireland is thus influenced by different interest groups of different states. Since each states domestic preferences on the question of Northern Ireland dominates, at some extent, the policy of the government it led to the complexities of signing the peace process and total settlement of the situation at the earliest time possible.

Following the Liberal IR theory's fundamental principle, the relationship between states and the surrounding domestic and transnational society in which they are embedded critically shapes state behaviour by influencing the social purposes underlying state preferences. Since the fundamental actors in international politics are societal actors, they tend to transform the state's domestic policy and shape their preferences. Therefore such transformation of the domestic policy of states and preferences has contributed to conflict management in different regions around the world. However, the underlying factor that dominates the study of this chapter is as follows: could the peace process in Northern Ireland and the eventual signing of the Good Friday Agreement be attributed to such transformation in domestic policy of states and the development of their preferences in the international political arena? Liberal theory rests on a 'bottom up' view of politics in which the demands of individual and societal groups are treated as analytically prior to politics (Moravcsik 1997: 514).

The core assumptions of liberal theory do emphasise the points that:

"The state corresponds to some subset of domestic society on the basis of which state officials define state preferences and act purposively in world politics. In the liberal conception of domestic politics, the state is but a representative institution. Hence government policy is therefore constrained by underlying identities, interests and power of individuals and groups inside and outside the state apparatus which constantly pressure the central decision makers to pursue policies consistent with their preferences" (Moravcsik 1997: 518).

Taking into account, the domestic constraints of some states towards the situation in Northern Ireland, it is thus observed that due to some underlying variables states have adopted different postures that were in tune with the prevailing

circumstances. For instance, a perceived threat from the then Soviet Union, military and ideology, had made the United States of America to ignore the Irish question that came to the fore domestically since the incident of 'Bloody Sunday' in 1972 and consequent civil rights violations. The fact is that the United States was in need the support of Great Britain in the international arena more than the pressure it experienced from the Irish-American lobbyists in its domestic constituency.

Traditionally, the interest of the US in Northern Ireland had been minimal. Besides, a Cold War driven 'special relationship' with Britain meant that successive US administrations were happy to regard Northern Ireland as an issue within the internal affairs of the United Kingdom. Presidential visits on the Irish soil by two former US Presidents, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan were restricted to genealogical excursions for domestic US audiences. Although President Jimmy Carter did make a statement on Northern Ireland in August 1977, which displayed impatience at the lack of British political initiatives on Northern Ireland, his statement, however, abandoned the principle of not becoming involved in Northern Ireland and made a promise of US investment in the event of Northern Ireland settlement (MacGinty 1997: 31).

Yet this was the posture adopted by the then US administration because of the intervening variable, which is the Cold War driven 'special relationship'. With the international relations minus the Cold War, the level and extent of the interest shown in the long process of the peace process, especially in the 1990s is quite remarkable. Therefore what were the factors that influenced the transformation of the US policy towards Northern Ireland peace process? The answer is obviously that the domestic lobbyists in the US, namely the Irish-American groups that influenced the policy when it came to the issue of Northern Ireland. The Irish-Americans were romanticising the Irish nationalism to a great extent that it eventually promoted the US administration to mediate and intervene for the Irish cause.

Great Britain which had claimed consistently that the Northern Ireland issue was a matter of internal affairs and took all responsibility during the Cold War era also began to adopt a new policy towards Northern Ireland. With the change in the international system, domestic constituencies of Britain and Northern Ireland are

becoming increasingly aware that there is no substantial reason as to why Britain would want to maintain the union with Northern Ireland at any cost. They have had experienced a serial attack of British installations inside and outside its own territory by the extremists republican and nationalists of Northern Ireland. Further, for Great Britain, since the people in the island of Ireland were also under the domain of western liberal influences in terms of culture and religion, there are even no economic or ideological reasons for containing the Irish menace. Because of this sort of British attitude and political transformation, Delanty (1995) writes:

“Unionists feel betrayed by an increasingly anti-monarchist Britain which does not share the nationalistic values of Ulster unionism. It is a great disappointment to unionists that most British people not only fail to differentiate between the cultural differences of the two camps but are in favour of abandoning the province altogether. Polls have indicated that only a minority of British people are in favour of continued integration with the United Kingdom, with the majority supporting either independence or integration with southern Ireland”.

In addition with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the British secretary of state for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke, made a ‘significant intervention’ in a ‘remarkable speech’ declaring in November 1990 that Britain had ‘no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland’ (Dixon 2002: 109). The British did not seem to have any overriding strategic interest in Northern Ireland that could not have been accommodated by an Irish government in the event of a United Ireland. The transformation in the domestic policy in Great Britain saw the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 which gave the Republic of Ireland a say in the running of Northern Ireland, which it totally denied in the past. This move was unthinkable if the era was Cold War. This itself was also done at the cost of British government’s determination confront Unionist resistance to the agreement suggested that the Unionists were not simply the swindle of British imperialism.

On the other hand, policy of the Republic of Ireland towards Northern Ireland is enshrined in Article 2 and 3 of its constitution. Article 2 states:

‘The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and territorial seas.’

According to Article 3:

‘Pending the reintegration of the national territory, and without prejudice to the right of the Parliament and Government established by this Constitution to exercise jurisdiction over the

whole of that territory, the laws enacted by that Parliament shall have the like area and extent of application as the laws of *Saorstát Éireann* and the like of extra-territorial effect.' (Delanty 1995: 262).

The Irish politics and culture had been dominated by the idea of Irish unity and opposition of British rule in the North. This shows a stubbornness of the Republic's policy. It happens to be deeply rooted that it has crept into the manifestoes of political parties like the case of the Kashmir issue, wherein the integration with the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India became the political issue of Pakistan. Any slight tolerance towards this issue could cost upheaval in the domestic constituency.

However, the posture of the Republic of Ireland towards Northern Ireland is no exception as integration with the European Community gathered strength and became a crucial variable in transforming the domestic policy of Ireland. The old nationalist dream of making the Irish Island a home of the Irish people under a single sovereignty looked increasingly irrelevant (Cox 1998: 338). Therefore it led to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 between Britain and Ireland to collaborate upon the governance of Northern Ireland. Such a transformation of domestic policy was expected and eagerly anticipated sensing the situation that brought upon by the changing structure in international system.

With the growth of liberal democracies around the world, international social ties and international institutions flourishes. Do cooperation and interdependence in the international system bring about positive peace? Did different spheres of cooperation between the United States of America, Great Britain and Ireland bring about rapid progress of the peace process in Northern Ireland? Unlike the Realists who believed that the existence of a dominant power is a prerequisite to cooperation, the Liberals are optimistic about increased cooperation based on mutual interests: they believe in the mutuality of interests, which they think they will keep growing with increased interdependencies and the spread of democratic values.

Besides, states venture for interdependencies in international relations which definitely prepare a state to cooperate in terms of trade and commerce, economics, technology and sharing information. Such collaboration enhances peaceful environment between states in the international system. Montesquieu claims that the natural effect of cooperation leads to peace. Two states that trade together become

mutually dependent upon each other (Mansfield and Pollins 2003: 3). Likewise Russett and Oneal (2001) also write that ‘...perhaps economic interdependence is largely a consequence, rather than a cause, of the absence of international disputes’.

After all, commercial agents could be expected to avoid the risks and costs of international violence where possible, and trading with the enemy is unusually prohibited or extensively regulated by national governments. There may well be an association between trade patterns and conflict, but it may be the primary conflict that affects commerce, rather than the other way round. Such a desire for peaceful environment by states creates a stipulation that war is not the solution of conflictual issues. Even the Realists admit that at the domestic level, government and economic bargaining are allocation mechanisms that are employed to make critical decisions affecting the everyday life of millions of people. Only rarely in established states do war, either in the form of civil war or social revolution becomes a way of resolving a political issue (Vasquez 1993: 263). The Realists even spent more time trying to understand and to show why domestic solution to violence cannot be applied globally. However, the international relations seem to be driven by domestic preferences hence cooperation especially in the sphere of conflicting issues direct states to adopt a clear attitude towards the other state.

Therefore, in the relations between Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and the United States, it is observed that, in the sphere of economic interdependence and technological viabilities, there are no other states or combination of states that effectively enhance cooperation more than these states in international relations. From a minute item to the possession of Nuclear weapons, the Anglo-Saxon race of the world tried and cooperate to deny the other part of the world such power and technology. They intend to keep it for themselves and deny the technological knowhow to others. However, in the context of the relations among themselves that can contribute to derail such sacred cooperation they are ever ready to keep aside such issues and prevent it from further escalation and beyond control. This happens to be one of the contributing factors that enhance the peace process in trouble torn Northern Ireland.



Another factor that is held to be a vital reason for fostering cooperation between Britain and Ireland is the European Union factor. The British and Irish governments joined the European Union in 1973 and this has given them incentives to cooperate over Northern Ireland which helped to break down distrust between the two countries. This brought about a transformation in British-Irish relations. The integration of the European community and cooperation in the economic dimension has played a vital role in the Northern Ireland peace process. It provided an illustration that the conflict in Northern Ireland could be overcome by peaceful means. Besides, the process of European integration has had a revolutionising impact on identity in Northern Ireland and helped to create an environment in which the peace process could come to a successful conclusion (Dixon 2002: 117).

The Northern Ireland peace process can be attributed to this factor of cooperation and improved relation in the Anglo-Irish relations. With the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, both states show their acknowledgement that the people of Northern Ireland must decide their own future for themselves. Britain will not force secession against the will of the Protestant or Unionists majority, even if it could be constitutionally agreed as to what constitutes a majority (Delanty 1995: 260). On the other hand, the Republic of Ireland generally has seen Northern Ireland as a far-off place with an alien religion wherein sinister political parties flourish.

Considering the context of the influence of economic conditions and interdependence between states, it is observed that states with strong economies, those that enjoy prosperity and are experiencing economic growth, are mostly disinclined to fight. Their populations are likely to be satisfied with the economic and political status quo and as the liberals have emphasised, violent conflict is inconsistent with many financial and commercial relations. One reason as to why the rich and industrialised countries gave up wars and imperialism in the latter part of the twentieth century was that their prosperity and continuing growth made such wars look unattractive from any reasonable cost-benefit perspective. The higher the rate of economic growth, presumably the greater the popular satisfaction and the less inclined the people will be in engaging in militarised conflict (Russett and Oneal 2001: 151).

This is exactly the case of Britain and Ireland in the context of Northern Ireland. Geographically, these states lie in the most industrialised region of the world and culturally towards a post-modernist nature. Ireland needs Britain for trade and commerce as much as Britain needs Ireland. Valera's isolationist policy for Ireland is already an old fashioned stance in the new world system of globalised world and that the need for interdependence between states *vis-a-vis* international relations brought about cooperation for peaceful solution in any conflictual issues around the world. The liberal theorists anticipated that states that are cooperative and interdependent like the economically advanced countries of the West are most likely to be at peace which is the case in the Anglo-Irish relations.

Liberal theory emphasises the way in which domestic representative institutions and practices aggregate the underlying societal identities and economic interests and transform them into state policy. The key variable in liberalism is the mode of domestic political representation which determines as to whose social preferences are institutionally privileged. It is observed that every domestic institution<sup>1</sup> had its programme outlined and eventually acts accordingly when it is in power. For instance, there is an immense difference between the Republican Party and the Democrat Party of the United States of America in their viewpoint towards environmental issues. In the event of the 2002 Presidential election in which Senator Al Gore of Democrat Party and Senator George Bush of the Republican Party contested, the debate on the environmental issues deserves mention. The stance of Al Gore is that the environment of the world is depleting and becoming a global issue, whereas the Republican view is that environmental issues cannot stand in the way of pursuing developmental projects and national security of the state. Politics finds its domain in every issue and global warming and environmental issues are some contending issues that dominate international politics in the present world.

Therefore it is to acknowledge that domestic representative institutions had their own programme with which they ought to represent the state in international politics and pursue their programme as the foreign policy of the state. Since no

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<sup>1</sup> The domestic institution means those political parties that have their policy and programme indigenous to their counterparts. They pursue their programme both in domestic and international arena and see to it that it becomes the foreign policy and direct towards the interests of the state.

government rests on universal or unbiased political representation, every government has the tendency to represent some groups in the form of pressure groups more than others. But the question that remains unanswered is what makes domestic parties be swayed by societal interests that does not necessary constitute the whole interest of the nation?

In the context of Northern Ireland, the domestic parties of the major states have had a deep impact upon the process of concluding the Good Friday Agreement. Since each domestic institution of the key player states had different perspectives regarding the situation in Northern Ireland, it had to wait for the change in the policy of states that had to be brought about by the change in the governing institutions. Although the international system played a crucial role at some point of time regarding the situation in Northern Ireland, in which it is sometimes projected as a strategic and economic interests of major players in international relations, the change in international system has brought about the primacy of domestic politics in international relations. The change in the ruling party in the United States of America, Great Britain, Republic of Ireland and of course the different conflicting parties within Northern Ireland contributed entirely to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998.

### **Changing of Guard of the Key Players**

In every government that represents the state in the political arena in the domestic as well as international domain, it has its own policy regarding as to what it ought to do to represent its constituency. Be it an authoritative government or a democratic government, it sets out intuitively of what would best suit its policy. However, as we had mentioned that every government happened to represent some section of the people in some way or the other, it seems that the political parties of the states are the key actors in both domestic and international policy formulations. Especially in international negotiations, the political parties of states enjoy the privileges of influencing the representative institutions with regard to the subjects.

Therefore when the government changes in a particular state, it is likely that the policy of the next government in power is in contrary with the former in matters regarding constitutional amendments and issues relating territory. This happens to be

the exact case prevailing among the key actors in the issue pertaining to Northern Ireland. For instance, the policy adopted by the Conservative Party government in many successive years in Northern Ireland was different from the Labour Party government that wrestled out the governance from them. This is similar in the case of United States of America as well. For instance, the territorial claim over Northern Ireland is enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of Ireland and all political parties within it aspire to safeguard the constitution. Yet they concede to acknowledge the provinces of Northern Ireland as a part of Great Britain according to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985.

The changing of ruling party in the domestic political constituencies of the key players in the Northern Ireland conflict witnessed the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998 because such change in ruling parties brought about a change in policies. Since domestic parties of states represent certain sections of the population and eventually set their preferences according to the agendas of that particular section, the preferences of the Irish-American lobbyist group regarding the conflict in Northern Ireland is no exception. The policy of the Labour party to consolidate its influence upon popular demand to keep aloof from the Irish menace also enhanced the peace process. To further understand the policy and agenda of the key protagonists of the Good Friday Agreement, a brief analysis of the policy of the political parties of United States of America, Great Britain and Republic of Ireland with regard to Northern Ireland will enhance the understanding on what kind of politics is played within the domestic domain in terms of conflict management strategies.

### **The United States of America: Republican Party to Democrats Party**

The two largest parties in the United States of America, the Republican and the Democrats, had adopted different postures in pursuing foreign policy. The Republican is observed to be conservative in matters of foreign policy (Schulzinger 2002: 126). This aspect of internationalism made the United States to undertake an act of intervention in its backyard of Latin America but to keep aloof as far as possible from the turmoil of Europe. This has formed the basis of the policy of indifference in the Northern Ireland crisis in every Republican administration in the US.

On the other hand, the Democrats had greater interest in the domestic politics of US and pledge as long as possible not to interfere in the internal affairs of the other states if it is not in the national interest of the US. According to statistics, it is shown that approximately forty million of Americans are of Irish descent and this number retains a strong Irish identity. The general influence of the Irish-American community has been in favour of Irish nationalism and this influence seems difficult to gauge. The Republican administration had always maintained a position of keeping away from the Irish question. On the contrary, the Democrats had no option but to mediate in Northern Ireland at the earliest.

The change in the international system at the end of the Cold War brought an opportunity for the Democrats to address the plight of the Irish-Americans and to make a case for mediation in Northern Ireland. The Republican Party under former president George H.W. Bush appear to have pursued international business as usual. In the election of 1992, Bill Clinton grasped the opportunity and immediately after the election insisted that US foreign policy to be based on moral principles which most Americans share. The idealists' notion of promoting peace and freedom around the world is the driving principle that was adopted. Politically, they advocated the expansion of democratic values and human rights abroad. The administration often deployed armed forces to dampen ethnic tensions and tried to mediate apparently intractable conflicts. It supports the increasing economic interdependence of the world and sought to channel in ways that spread prosperity (Schulzinger 2002: 358-359). Therefore such change in administration in the US has made it convenient for the rapid transformation of the Northern Ireland peace process in favour of positive outcome in the nature of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

### **Great Britain: Conservative Party to Labour Party**

The Conservative Party of Great Britain which had been in power for the past eighteen years, before the advent of Tony Blair and his Labour Party, were seen too pro-Unionist in the Northern Ireland peace process. Although they had contributed massively towards the peace process, the stance they adopted has lacked the catalyst to bring all the conflicting parties to come together for resolution. The Conservative Party did not recognised Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, as a political party

and thereby denied entry to the latter in the negotiating table of the peace process. The Conservative party under the leadership of the 'Iron Lady' of Great Britain, Margaret Thatcher never wanted the mediation of any outside power even the Republic of Ireland in Northern Ireland; any interference was threatened with dire consequences since Northern Ireland is totally an internal matter of Great Britain.

Although the Labour Party does not depart from the claim that Northern Ireland is a part of Great Britain and considered it an internal affair, it took a different perspective in the ongoing peace process in Northern Ireland. The Labour Party believed that the trouble in Northern Ireland had caused irreparable damage in economic and political dimensions, domestically and internationally. The election of Tony Blair and his Labour Party gave the peace process, the needed momentum. They brought more energy and more positive attitude to the talks. Also, with its massive majority in the parliament, the Labour Party of Great Britain had the freedom to manoeuvre in Northern Ireland. Hence, the Labour Party under Tony Blair contributed immensely to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (Haus 2001: 120).

### **Republic Of Ireland: *Fine Gael to Fianna Fails***

Meanwhile, the Republic of Ireland also held an election. While the victory by Bertie Ahearn at the head of the coalition led by his Fianna Fail party did not bring a major change as the one across the Irish Sea, the new Taoiseach was more willing to try new approaches to negotiations than his predecessor, John Bruton had been (Haus 2001: 121). The Constitution of the Republic of Ireland states that the six provinces of the Northern Ireland region are within the territory and sovereignty of Ireland. The partition of Ireland in 1920 under the Republic of Ireland Act was against the aspiration of the Irish nations. The Republic still holds the stand and that makes it difficult on the part of the republic to divert from the aspirations of the majority of the people. Besides, it had become the political manifestation of the domestic parties within Ireland to strive for a United Ireland as a single entity.

However, the new experiment conducted by the government under the leadership of *Fianna Fail* party in Ireland saw a slight distraction from the real politics towards Northern Ireland that every party consider its '*realpolitik*'. The

previous government under the *Fine Gael* had no intention of diverting from the *realpolitik* of Ireland thereby sticking to its stance of pursuing a United Ireland. Yet the peace process, if it has to be a successful one, necessitates that key players divert a bit from their original standpoint and make concessions and sacrifice a part to arrive at a resolution.

The government under the *Fianna Fail* party had been instrumental in bringing about an understanding between Great Britain and Ireland with the conclusion of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985. The agreement states that the people of Northern Ireland must decide their own future for themselves. Britain will not force secession on a reluctant majority, even if it could be constitutionally agreed on what constitutes a majority (Delanty 1995: 260). Such flexibility of the *Fianna Fail* government can be credited to one step further towards the peace process; this step acted as a foundation in further negotiations that finally led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland.

The course of international relations seems to flow with the domestic pressure and incorporates the suitable option emanating from a state's domestic constituencies. The Liberal view of world politics where the configuration of state preferences matters most and state-society relations have the fundamental impact on state behaviour in world politics fits into the description. The underlying importance of state-society relations as shaped by domestic institutions and economic interdependence is what that drives the international relations at present. Although the world has experienced from time to time devastating wars and intractable conflicts throughout the entire history, the liberals are optimistic about the prospects for peace, cooperation and support for international institutions.

The United States of America owing to domestic pressure was provided with a pragmatic opportunity to mediate in Northern Ireland. Britain with its strong sentiments towards maintaining Northern Ireland as a part of Great Britain had to let go the claim because of several intervening variables like the need for greater cooperation in economic terms with the Republic of Ireland and other European states. Likewise the Republic of Ireland also had to make concessions regarding its constitutional provisions that are mandated towards making Northern Ireland as a part

of one United Ireland. The advent of globalisation and most crucially the European integration for strengthening economic cooperation had changed the attitudes of Great Britain and Ireland about their own sovereign claims on Northern Ireland. These states, on December 1993 jointly announced their official neutrality as to whether Northern Ireland stayed British or has become Irish (Stevenson 1998: 45). The British government further announced that 'it had no strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland' (Dixon 2002: 108-109; Delanty 1995: 261). This move was seen as a case of wanting greater cooperation in the global arena between the two states of Ireland and Britain.

However what grasps the attention of the study in this chapter is the mediation of US after adopting such a long posture of indifference in the Northern Irish affairs. It was because of the strong pressure imposed by the Irish-Americans, who get pretty romanticised about Ireland, that the US administration under the then President Bill Clinton actively participated in the peace process unlike his predecessor, who kept aloof owing to the dynamics of the Cold War. Therefore it is evident that this changing posture of the United States towards Northern Ireland marked the end of its indifference. With Britain, its all time ally pursuing to maintain its outlook through the Unionists perspective, it happened to be on the other side with the nationalists because of domestic pressure. These behavioural patterns of states validate the liberal perspective that international politics is influenced by domestic factors that need to be accommodated. The core assumptions of the liberal IR theory do specify the primacy of societal actors, which claims that the fundamental actors in international politics happen to be individuals and private groups (Moravcsik 1997: 518).

Talking about individual actors in international politics, the peace process in Northern Ireland did witness the rise of such charismatic leaders who have contributed to the conclusion of the Agreement. Since the popular mood tilted towards peace in Northern Ireland, the likes of Mitchell, who had a great deal of experience in the field of reconciliation, had the support and cooperation of the vital states with regard to Northern Ireland. Besides Clinton, Gerry Adams, John Hume, David Trimble, etc. had been essential individual actors who have shaped the course of the peace process that finally led to the signing of the momentous Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998.



**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE CONFLICT IN NORTHERN**  
**IRELAND**

A sociological study of the conflict in Northern Ireland is considered essential for achieving a deeper understanding of the issue. This chapter is an attempt in that direction. The questions that merit attention are as follows: could the conflict in Northern Ireland be interpreted as a product of rising nationalism among the Irishmen? Can it be defined in terms of movement of self-determination against a colonial power and a kind of national liberation war by the Republicans in Northern Ireland? Or is it a product of the Protestant and Catholic identity that grows from the historical confrontation between the two sects of the religion? It can be argued that the Northern Ireland crisis is the product of all the factors combined. Social construction theory holds that as long as domestic and international actors continue to conceive of the state as viable, it will be; when they no longer do so, it will not be (Desch 1996: 256).

The conflict in Northern Ireland grasps more attention compared to other trouble torn areas because it happens to be one of the post-modern states. Cox (1998) describes Northern Ireland as the Cinderella at the intellectual ball – the ugly duckling of regional conflicts. He further elaborates by saying that the construction of the conflict is no accident and reflects what seems to be the considered view that the war in Northern Ireland had nothing to do with the otherwise quite normal people, but was, rather, a blood feud arising from primitive historical hatreds that had always been there and presumably would remain forever. However, the underlying sociological factor encompasses all the other factors by which the conflicting parties in Northern Ireland despite their deep rooted differences came to sign the historical Good Friday Agreement.

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the peace process in Northern Ireland, which culminated in the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, from the social constructivist point of view. Unlike the realists and liberals – for whom the unit of analysis is the state – the constructivists assert that state behaviour in international politics is being shaped by individual's beliefs, collective norms and social identities. The basic reason for the conflict coming to an end especially in Northern Ireland has to do less with the exercise of military power, than policy makers from legitimate states working to resolve the conflict that most people had till then thought to be irreconcilable.

The social theory of international politics had based its foundations on the issue of formation of identity and interests. What actors do in international relations, the interests they hold, and the structures in which they operate are defined by social norms and ideas rather than by objective or material conditions (Barkin 2003: 326). Unlike the realists who intend to maximise and propagate that power derive from the material capabilities of state, the constructivist thinks that power is something that is generated from the social basis. In the same vein, conflict resolution theory also focuses extensively on the interests and understands that in most cases, it is in the interests of everyone to reach a mutually satisfying agreement.

The conflict in Northern Ireland is a complex one. It is a combination of variables with a conflict over religion, civil rights movement and a self-determination movement asserted by deep rooted feelings of nationalism. These complexities have produced a series of conflicts with the arrival of numerous players within Northern Ireland that began to assert their own identities. However, in order to know the complete background of the Irish conflict, the doubts and questions that are engraved in the social fabric needs to be answered. Likewise, the other elements of self-determination, nationalism and religion and cultural aspects happen to smoulder the conflict in Northern Ireland. The following paragraphs provide a historical background of the conflict.

### **Brief Historical Background**

The conflict in Northern Ireland can be traced to the medieval times like in the times of the Norman invasion of England in the twelfth century AD. Henry II of England claimed and attempted to include Ireland to his kingdom and by doing so; he succeeded in establishing control around the present day Dublin known as the Pale. However, he did not succeed in conquering the whole island of Ireland but installed a puppet instead which adopted English administrative practices and the English language and sought the assistance from London for protection and leadership. A number of attempts were made to extend English control over the rest of Ireland but the major expansion of English dominion did not take place until the sixteenth century. By the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, military conquest had established English rule over most of the island of Ireland, with the principal exception of the

northern province of Ulster. According to Darby (1995), the Ulster clans, under Hugh O'Neill, had succeeded in overcoming their instinctive rivalries to create an effective alliance against Elizabeth's armies. After a long and damaging campaign, Ulster was eventually brought under English control and the Irish leaders left the island for Europe. Their land was confiscated and distributed to colonists from Britain.

The aftermath saw the coming of the Plantation of Ulster in 1609 which bears a uniqueness in that it sets out to attract colonies of all classes from England, Scotland and Wales by generous offers of land. Essentially, it sought to transplant a society to Ireland. The native Irish remained but were excluded from the settlement area by the newcomers. They were banished to the mountains and bog on the margins of the lands they previously owned. Right from the start, such development has created diversity between the people who had come to inhabit the land and the native Irish people since they spoke different languages and adopted different cultures. In addition, most of the newcomers were Protestant by religion, while the native Irish were Catholic. So the broad outlines of the current conflict in Northern Ireland had been sketched out within fifty years of the plantation: the same territory was occupied by two hostile groups, one believing that the land had been usurped and the other believing that their tenure was constantly under the threat of rebellion. They often lived in separate quarters. They identified their differences as religious and cultural as well as territorial (Elliot and Hickie 1971: 29-31).

The next two centuries consolidated the differences. Ireland was formerly declared a part of United Kingdom in 1801 in a manner that saw an attempt to secure more direct control of Irish affairs. An Act of Union abolished the Irish parliament and government and all the responsibilities with regards to Ireland were taken over by Westminster. However, right from the beginning there were risings and rebellion because of the Act. The risings with the opposition gained momentum and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, many rebellions that were close to overthrowing the Union occurred. Some of these movements, including the Repeal movement in the 1840s and the 'home rule' movement from the 1870s were parliamentary. Others, like the Fenians and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, were dedicated to overthrowing the union by the use of physical force. Because of such movements and litigation the

Westminster government was likely to succumb but the First World War forced the postponement of further consideration of home rule.

Irish leaders, disappointed with the failure of the Home Rule Bill and seeking complete independence organised an Easter Uprising in Dublin in 1916. The uprising failed to receive wide support and was brutally suppressed by the British forces which inflamed popular resentment against the British by executing the leaders. A number of Irish politicians elected to Westminster refused to take their seats and instead declared their own parliament in 1919 to proclaim their sole authority over Ireland. However, following the uprising, guerrilla fighting has continued between the newly named Irish Republican Army (IRA) on the one hand and the Royal Ulster Constabulary on the other. Finally, the guerrilla effort succeeded and the British and the Irish negotiated settlement in 1921 also known as the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 thereby creating the Irish Free State. In 1949, this state became a republic and left the British Commonwealth. However, Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom but was given its own parliament in Belfast with certain limited powers, including policing, education and social services (Doherty 2000: 49-53).

### **The Partition of Ireland: Territorial and Ethnical**

What made the British to demarcate the island of Ireland into two separate entities? Is this development the wish of the people of Ireland or a creation of the British to turn the trouble to a governable region within a region? It can be argued that since the Britain was unable to contain the whole of Ireland – and yet wanted to felt its presence because of some underlying interests – it had to settle for a strategic calculation thereby appeasing the larger section yet does not give away its interests. Therefore the partition of Ireland, territorially and on the lines of ethnicity is the product of agents that shaped the preferences of state and its outcome.

The Government of Ireland Act, 1920 provides for the partition of Ireland into a six county north and a twenty-six county south, each with its own government and parliament. This partition marked the beginning of contention especially in the Northern provinces. A sense of betrayal was rooted in most of the republicans even in the southern provinces. Northern Ireland, the name given to the six county administrations, had been created through demographic compromise. It happens that

the partition of Ireland was never intended to provide a permanent solution to the Anglo-Irish conflict as well (Haus 2001: 109). Consequently, although it had the effect of shifting the geographical location of the conflict, it did nothing to address the intercommunal tensions and resentments at its core. It is well known that the inhabitant of the Irish island had latecomers who had different cultures and languages apart from the Irish. In religion terms too, the newcomers were Protestants whereas the Irish were predominantly Catholics.

Ever since Northern Ireland emerged as a political entity in 1921, its history had been marked by varying degrees of low intensity violence, consisting primarily of paramilitary and terrorist attacks on both civilian and military targets. This intensity of violence had its roots in the stratification of the social background on ethnic lines. On the one hand, the Protestant community asserts for survival as it can be on the verge of assimilation if Northern Ireland is to be merged with the Republic of Ireland. On the other hand, the Catholic minority of Northern Ireland had experienced a series of oppression, which have aroused the feelings of fighting for civil rights; it also strives to acquire a status quo within the territory. The harder elements of the nationalists had pursued for the unification of Ireland which is the constant fear that is embedded among the Protestant community. This is because of the fact that in what Doherty terms as 'double minority and double majority'. Doherty (2000) writes,

'At the heart of the problem lies the fact that both ethnic groups perceived themselves as being a minority under threat and they have mutually exclusive political objectives. One way of conceptualising this is by means of Double Minority model, which is helpful in that it draws attention to the complexity of the problem and to the importance of different political and territorial scales.'

In Northern Ireland, the Protestant community forms the majority, while the Catholic community is the minority. However, at the scale of Ireland as a whole to which Northern Ireland, although politically separate, is territorially bound, the Protestant community is a minority in numerical terms while the Catholic community is part of a larger majority Catholic population. In the United Kingdom, in which Northern Ireland, although territorially separated, is politically bound, the Protestant community is again a minority with ultimate political power beyond its control. From the demographic perspective, more than half a million Catholic/Nationalists constitute about 40 per cent of the population within Northern Ireland. However, taking the whole of Ireland the Protestants/Unionists – the majority of almost one million within

Northern Ireland – form a minority of less than 20 per cent of just over five million in the whole island of Ireland (Doherty 200: 54).

This determination in both communities makes the Catholics and Protestants to maintain their separate identities and aspirations and led to normal pattern of domination, discrimination and exclusion. The Protestant communities' fears of absorption in a predominantly Catholic Ireland made it easy for them to arrange a systemic discrimination in employment and in the exclusion of Catholics from any effective role in government in the governance of Northern Ireland. The Catholic rejection of a sectarian state in which they found themselves and the refusal of many of their representatives to become involved in this institution made it easier for the conflict to intensify (Boyle & Hadden 1995: 270).

The subordination of Catholics prior to partition was perpetuated and even intensified after Northern Ireland became a distinct political entity. Northern Ireland's Protestant majority used the newly acquired instruments of government to entrench itself and suppressed the Catholic minority. This kind of discrimination goes on for another half decade. In the beginning of the 1960s, the Catholic minority began to organise and demand an end to Protestant abuse of political and economic power. By the end of the 1960s, it became intensified in the form of a non-violent civil rights movement modelled after the United States civil rights movement under the leadership of Martin Luther King. This effort put forth by the Catholic community to bring about a peaceful change resulted in violent clashes with the Northern Ireland's authorities and segments of the Protestant community.

The infamous 'Bloody Sunday' in 1972 further resulted in the escalation of the conflict in Northern Ireland. On Sunday, 30 January 1972, in Derry, a peaceful movement turned into a riot and troops belonging to the Parachute Regiment, began firing live rounds at people. Thirteen died at the scene and eighteen were wounded, one of whom later died. The troops claimed they were fired upon although independent witnesses at the scene disputed this (White & White 1995: 331; Hauss 2001: 111). The incident of Bloody Sunday provided a reliable excuse for the nationalists and republicans to take up arms against the dominating state structure

thereby strengthening the ideological influence and leading to the resurgence of the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

Prior to the incident of the 'Bloody Sunday', the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Associations organised several movements which were retaliated by the Protestants loyalists with violence that was perpetuated on the Catholic community. By then, the British government had already sent troops to Northern Ireland in 1969 to provide assistance in maintaining law and order. They were initially welcomed by the Catholics hoping that their presence would reduce Protestant violence and aid in their struggle for civil rights. However, in practice the British were biased toward the Unionists. After 'Bloody Sunday', the British presence and power grew dramatically and was followed by the dissolution of Stormont and the imposition of direct rule from Westminster (Hauss 2001: 110-112). These events have eventually made the conflict in Northern Ireland complicated. From the territorial partition to the civil rights movements, the inhabitants of Northern Ireland began to be divided along communal, religious and ethnic lines.

### **The Core Elements of the Irish Conflict**

Wendt (1992) emphasised the effects of socialisation to structures of identity and interest. He stresses that possibilities lie in the distinction between the social determination of the self and the personal determination of choice. Analogous to this proposition, Northern Ireland possesses in the social dimension, the element of self description apart from others. The partition of Ireland is not only of the territory but also on the lines of ethnicity. Hence, the divide that exists between the communities in Northern Ireland consists of a complex layering of differences that transcends religion and encompasses ethnicity, culture, historical experience and so on. Together, these differences tear the communities apart thereby reducing opportunities for improvement in relationships.

The divide is wide since demographic records shows that the Catholics and Protestants tends to live in separate areas, attend different schools and often work in different settings. Demographics illustrate a clear tendency for people in Northern Ireland to live in areas populated by members of their own community. This phenomenon appears to be driven by a search for security. It takes only one brick



through a window or a scribbled graffiti to make a family move out of a mixed into a safer area (Boyle and Hadden 1995: 272). This is an extension of a self-imposed segregation that formulated a way for most researchers in the field of conflict management and resolution to assume that conflicts in most part of the world are the creation of social elements that grow up from the bottom-up level of the analysis.

Therefore the uncertainty that lingers is the basis of the conflicting parties. What explains the participation of key players like Britain, Ireland and especially United States if it is the case that the trouble in Northern Ireland is the product of the land itself? The answer to this question lies with the determination of the conflicting parties of what is the basis of their struggle and their intention in doing so. To what extent, the deep rooted aspiration for survivability has shaped the parties? Or is it a larger perspective of interest in kind of unification or self-governing that drives the struggle? Therefore, the identification of the parties and issues pertaining to the conflict hold the key for addressing questions that this study aims to address.

The conflict in Northern Ireland is an intercommunal struggle over the political future of the province. The principal antagonists are the province's Protestant and Catholic communities, each represented by political movements that embody their political aspirations. These movements, generally referred to as Unionism and Nationalism, are not monolithic, but encompass numerous factions and subgroups. Besides, the roles of British and Irish governments are historical in origin. However, the role of United States is the most crucial since it has act as a brokerage in the form of mediation for peace with influential strategies.

The parties to the conflict and their underlying issues are complementary to the core element of the Northern Irish conflict. The partition did happen since the fight for independence gained momentum yet there are elements that form the antithesis of the struggle and because of this element; it is observed that Northern Ireland has come into being as a separate entity. However, as we have mentioned before, the creation of Northern Ireland is never a manifestation of an intention to provide a permanent solution to the Anglo-Irish conflict but to contain the menace. The social agents that propagated their objective during the struggle and the diverse view that was generated afterwards seem to dominate the social element in the, so to

say, newly borne country. Therefore, these are the elements that dominate the core of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

First of all, there are the Unionists. They were mostly Protestants who wanted to remain a part of Great Britain and operate through the constitutional system. The Unionists were the successors of those who opposed the Home Rule movement of the nineteenth century. As the movement gained momentum and on the verge of triumph, it is this party that was instrumental in partitioning the island to make a separate entity in the Northern provinces which ought to be purely a Protestant state. The main Unionist parties are the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), which forms all governments from 1921 to 1972 and the more recently established Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which is more populist, more anti-nationalist, but less popular in electoral support. The Unionists are opposed to the involvement of the Republic of Ireland in Northern Ireland and are unwilling to share executive power with non-Unionist parties. They also share a suspicion of Britain's commitment to the union. There are splinter groups within the Unionists. They claim to be Loyalists as they are loyal to Great Britain, but through their paramilitaries. They have been willing as the IRA to attack the British. They can be classified as the right wing segment of the Unionists camp (Hauss 2001: 112-113).

Secondly, there are the nationalists who were mostly Catholics which favour the unification of Ireland but only through constitutional means. The main constitutional party is the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), which contests the nationalists vote with Sinn Féin, generally accepted to be the political arm of the IRA. The SDLP campaigns for internal reforms and had accepted that unity must await the support of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland (Darby 1995: 32). Sinn Féin argues that force is necessary to remove the British presence and had refused to condemn the IRA of its violent tactics. Because of this adventure Sinn Féin had been denied a place in any official talks. Like the Unionists, the nationalists also have a hard core element that had produced a considerable damage to Northern Ireland's political image. They are identified as the republicans who believe that only force will remove the British from Ireland which is a needed in their pursuance for unification. Initially, the IRA saw themselves as the defenders of the Catholic community of Northern Ireland in the aftermath to the 'Bloody Sunday' incident.

They later spread their influence and intensified their military activities throughout Northern Ireland, Britain and Europe attacking every possible British establishment.

Thirdly, the two states that are most significant in the Northern Ireland conflict from the start are Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Right from the start, the British government had been viewing Northern Ireland from the Unionists perspective. However, from the 1980s, it has acknowledged that the Republic of Ireland had to be involved and began to act in a more impartial way towards both Catholics and Protestants (Haus 2001: 110). As we have mentioned in the previous chapter, it is the domestic political factor within Britain that has changed this perception since the Conservative party of Great Britain was unwilling to give in to the struggle of the nationalists and even used force if necessary. Although other parties like the Labour party do support this view, they have had concessions for the aspiration of Irish unity when the majority in Northern Ireland supported it.

The 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement provided for the consultant of Ireland in the affairs of Northern Ireland. On the other hand, the Republic of Ireland also laid claim over the whole of Northern Ireland as a single entity. Article 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution called for unification. The two main parties of the republic, *Fianna Fáil* and *Fine Gael*, have their roots in the civil war of the 1920s that was fought in large part over the fate of the north. Therefore the question related to Northern Ireland had become the dominating factor for the political parties of the republic that has found support with the people of the republic. Any diversion from this unification provision hampered the social consciousness and could cause the government to fall (Haus 2001: 110).

Finally, the mediation of the United States in the Northern Irish conflict sums the study of the parties to the conflict. It is assumed that it is on the behest of the Irish-Americans that the United States involved in Northern Ireland against the wishes of Great Britain. Despite the experience of special relationship *vis-a-vis* Great Britain during the Cold War, the US Administration, especially under the then President Bill Clinton, actively interfered in the Northern Irish conflict with the dawn of the new world order. The deteriorating human rights violation and the inhumane subjugation of the Catholics in Northern Ireland caught the attention of the world and that the US

which had the opportunity to intervene did so to cement its position as the only super power in the new world order. What the United States did was pragmatic although it can be taken as a deception from the British perception.

All the conflicting parties of Northern Ireland are primarily concerned about the future of the province and central to the discourse is the constitutional problem. What should be the political milieu for the people of Northern Ireland? Sometimes it is assumed that the people of Northern Ireland prefer to be integrated with Britain rather than Ireland since the former could act as a guardian to its religious background and ethnically they are more of a British origin than that of the Irish. However, this is the assumed perspective of the Protestants/Unionists sect. But on the other hand, although they are fewer in number they could cause a demographic change in the future; the Catholics/Nationalists have had the tendency to control the government establishment and will be able to compel the constitutional referendum in favour of the Irish unification. As John Lloyd (1998) observes,

‘The rarely voiced but always present factor in Northern Ireland’s is the ticking clock of demographics. Catholics were little more than 30 percent of the population in Northern Ireland in the 1920s, at the time of partition; they now account well over more than 40 percent and are still growing relative to the Protestants. While a significant minority of the Catholics probably vote for the unionist party, the overwhelming majority vote for nationalists and can be expected to do so. At this pace, when the number of Catholics approaches a majority, the thought of becoming a united Ireland is a possibility.’

Hence the social construction of events hold the political future of Northern Ireland be its integration with Britain or option for a complete independence under a platform of United Ireland and so on and so forth.

Besides, there are many underlying social elements which add up to the situation in Northern Ireland conflict. There are problems of social and economic inequalities, especially in the field of unemployment. There is a problem of cultural identity and religious apathy that is deeply engrained in the social consciousness. All these are elements of the problem but it is hard to specify the element that has dominated the discourse which has led to the conflict. It is all interrelated and any attempt to solve the conflict needs to be addressed by all these elements together. Therefore unlocking the social perceptions holds the key to wholly address the Northern Irish conflict.

## **Constructing the Northern Irish Conflict: Social Identities and Enemy Images**

Unyielding conflicts within and between states often revolve around issues of identity and threats to identity in the form of enemy images and ethnic security dilemmas. Such issues are readily found in the conflict in Northern Ireland. According to Jesse and Williams (2001) individuals and groups have a social psychological 'need to belong', and they express this need through their social identity or categories such as ethnic group, nationality or any political identification. It tells to function as to tell you who you are and who other were. This function of telling you who you are thereby revealing your identity indicates interests and preferences. This is true in the case of Northern Ireland since the Catholics perceived themselves as Irish while the Protestants perceived themselves as British.

Therefore, this categorisation of social element makes the trouble in Northern Ireland complicated as the two groups view each other in negative term as enemy images that constantly threaten the others' identity. In such environment, a lack of trust exists and an assumption of hostile intention has led to counter-intention and eventually a spiral of escalation of the conflict (Jesse and Williams 2001: 574). Now if this perception of enemy images had been taken away from the social element of Northern Ireland, is it likely that the negotiation for conflict resolution would be tilted toward in favour of peace? Although the identities of the conflicting parties lingers, this inauspicious perception as enemy images is crucial in conveying peace in the conflict torn Northern Ireland.

This image perception also makes the parties to secure the threat by dominating all important features of the state machinery. When such moves succeed, it results in subjugation of one group by the dominating majority group. This kind of incident happens all around the world especially in states where the kind of government is authoritarian. However, a post-modern society like Northern Ireland is no exception. When power is in the hands of the dominating group, the resultant outcome is that they do whatever they can in order to strengthen their control for future survival. Looking into the political conditions of Northern Ireland, it is observed that the Protestants are the majority and use the state machinery in the areas of police forces and in the field of employment. This dominance of Protestants in

these areas had led to inequality and a sense of subjugation to the Catholics minority which has led to tensions.

So, does this act of subjugation by the majority extend to the other intervening parties, like the British, as a threat to their existence for the Catholics? The answer is a definite yes. From the historical backdrop, the nationalists inferred that it was the handiwork of the British that the northern province of Ireland was separated from the republic, at the behest of the unionists. Hence, when the Westminster dissolved the Stormont as a step to maintain law and order situation, the nationalists were much enraged than ever as the fear of being once again being subjugated by an alien force haunted the social mindset. Therefore, such move makes the image of Great Britain as a formidable enemy that needs to be eliminated to attain the long cherished union. The enemy image grew stronger and as such any concession given to the nationalists even though with good faith was received with suspicion by the nationalists.

The enemy image of Britain to the nationalists in Northern Ireland was further toughened since Britain had maintained a relationship with Northern Ireland that can be termed as 'post-colonial'. Northern Ireland had never been fully integrated with Britain by Westminster. Even the polls of the British population in the mainland in the early 1990s reveal that nearly half of the British – who had polled – believed that Northern Ireland should leave United Kingdom (O'Leary 1992: 143). Moreover, no poll from 1974 to 1996 had shown that even a meagre of one-third British masses support the position of maintaining union with Northern Ireland (Trumbore 1998: 556-557).

On the question of identity, the people of Northern Ireland had varied representation which is the contending factor that could increase the likelihood of conflict escalation. As Samuel P. Huntington (1996) writes

'Spurred by modernisation, global politics is being reconfigured along cultural lines. Peoples and countries with similar cultures are coming together. Peoples and cultures with different are coming apart. Alignments defined by ideology and superpower relations are giving way to alignments defined by culture and civilisation. Political boundaries increasingly are redrawn to coincide with cultural ones: ethnic, religious and civilisational. Cultural communities are replacing Cold War blocs, and the fault lines between civilisations are becoming the central lines of conflict in global politics.'

Hence, fitting the conflict of Northern Ireland into this category we observe that although the Protestant community identify themselves as British, the British on the mainland and especially the politicians still refer to them as Irish. In the perceptions of the British political elite, Northern Ireland is seen more as an integral part of the island of Ireland than as a part of Great Britain (O'Leary & McGarry 1993: 23). This is because of the cultural differences of the settlers and the previous occupants of the island of Ireland.

In terms of the larger picture, the role images of Great Britain and Ireland also determine the intensity of the conflict in Northern Ireland. For the British, although it claimed that it had 'no strategic and economic interest' in keeping Northern Ireland in the latter part of the twentieth century the method in which they conduct the governance of Northern Ireland was contested by Ireland and the nationalists of the province. This stance of Britain cemented the enemy images from the nationalists and republicans. On the other hand, the role of the Republic of Ireland was again perceived by the unionists and its paramilitaries with a sense of threat for their survival. The constitution of Ireland holds that the whole island of Ireland is to be united under a single entity under Article 2 and 3 of the constitution. The unionists who had long feared that such a move would diminish their survival strongly opposed the interference of Ireland in the context of Northern Ireland. Hence, the enemy image towards Ireland breeds for the unionists and its paramilitaries.

Besides, the image of Great Britain to the Unionists also deteriorated with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) in 1985. This Agreement holds the key for the Republic of Ireland, as a partner for Britain, to consult matters pertaining to Northern Ireland. This agreement was viewed by the unionists as a deception committed by the British government and henceforth the perception towards Britain as a guardian of the Unionist in Northern Ireland changed. The Unionists' paramilitaries began to attack the British installations in Northern Ireland as the image perception changes. Such image perception is seen to intensify the conflict in Northern Ireland. Statistics also shows that from 1969 to the signing of the AIA in 1985, it is the IRA that launched attacks but had declined after the agreement. But after the agreement it is the Loyalist paramilitaries that took the turn of violent attack.

Indeed, they killed more people than the IRA from the mid-1980s onward (Hauss 2001: 112).

On the contrary, the image perception of United States in the affairs of Northern Ireland is different. It is at the behest of the Irish Americans that the US interferes in Northern Ireland. However, this interference is done at the expense of 'Anglo-US special relationship' of the Cold War era. The people of Northern Ireland welcomed the mediation of the US in the conflict. Likewise the Republic of Ireland had always been in favour of US mediation and Britain had no option but to accept the changed reality. It had no option since the source of support for the IRA is from United States, which Britain had attempted to defeat militarily. Hence, the role of the US at the behest of Irish Americans cannot be portrayed negatively in terms of intensifying the conflict. The role of the US tilted towards in favour of building peace settlement in Northern Ireland. Therefore, it is in the interest of this social constructed effort that the signing of the Good Friday Agreement came into being.

### **Social Constructed Road to the Good Friday Agreement**

Could finalisation of the Good Friday Agreement be attributed to the changing perception of the Unionists towards the Nationalists? The abandonment of the traditional standpoint of exclusion of nationalists in government is crucial for the peace process to be a success. Could the inclusion of the Republic of Ireland as a consulting partner by Britain in matter relating to the governance of Northern Ireland be considered a crucial factor in the success of the peace process? To what extent, the pan-nationalist factor that originated from the Irish-Americans be attributed to the road that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement? It is observed that the study of the Good Friday Agreement from this dimension is a crucial factor that has led to the success of the peace process, which can be attributed to the social element in Northern Ireland.

In the auspicious day of 10 April 1998, the conflicting parties of Northern Ireland finally reached an agreement on a new political settlement. This agreement has marked a decisive stage in the conflict that has haunted the province for the past three decades. The structure of the conflict that lies in the unbalanced relationship between the Protestant/Unionist majority backed by Great Britain against the



Catholic/Nationalist minority is the construction of the social system. The British government had viewed Northern Ireland from the prism of the Unionists lens and holds that the majority community of the province should have a greater share in the governance of the province.

However, this asymmetry changed as the British government in Westminster became increasingly impatient with the Unionists' handling of the situation of the Civil Rights movement organised by the Catholic intellectual elite. Ultimately, it led to the suspension of Stormont and the imposition of direct rule, which put the Unionists in the same position of exclusion as the Nationalists. This factor made the Unionists to rethink about the status, which was unconditionally taken away from their hand, with the option that they can govern the province again but with an expense of sacrificing their traditional standpoint of excluding nationalists in the governing system (Miall *et al* 1999: 177).

Another factor that contributed to the success of the peace process with the conclusion of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland is the step taken by Britain in consulting the Republic of Ireland in matters pertaining to Northern Ireland. The British managed it so carefully that it had real impact on the outside world. Great Britain had always maintained that the trouble in Northern Ireland is its internal matter and barred the involvement of other actors, including the US and European Union (Cox 1998: 327, Stevenson 1998: 42). The nationalists' minority traced that their identity tilted towards preferring union with Ireland. Britain had no option but to yield to the fact and invite Ireland to subdue the nationalists' demand, especially the IRA, since it has already paid a heavy price for confronting the outfit, both in the military and political milieu. Hence, the structure of the conflict had a tremendous change with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 between the government of Britain and Ireland. This agreement made it clear that the Northern Irish affairs can no longer be seen as 'Britain and Northern Ireland unionists' versus 'Ireland and Northern nationalists' (Miall *et al* 1999: 178).

The Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) of 1985 was signed between two governments on mutual concerns to work together towards a settlement to recognise the existence and aspirations of two communities in Northern Ireland. As mentioned

earlier, Britain constantly claimed that the Northern Ireland conflict is an internal issue. On the other hand, the constitution of Ireland was embedded with uniting the whole of Irish island under a single entity. This led to the establishment of the New Ireland Forum in 1983, in which all the major nationalist parties, from north to south, began to rethink their simplistic attitudes to Irish unification and to treat more seriously, other possible resolutions, of sharing sovereignty with Britain and most importantly to take into account, the commitments and aspirations of the Protestants/Unionists in the north.

Under these given circumstances, the AIA was signed. It proclaimed that the British government would establish permanent structures for consultation with the Irish government. The Irish government on the other hand would accept that it was in the interest of the people of Northern Ireland as a whole to decide whether to remain in the United Kingdom or join with a united Ireland and that both the governments would cooperate in measures which would accommodate the rights and interests of both communities in Northern Ireland and ensure that those who sought to achieve their ends by violent methods would not succeed (Boyle and Hadden 1995: 274).

This agreement constitutes the initial steps taken by both governments to further collaborate and cooperate in matters concerning Northern Ireland in the future. There are numerous documents and frameworks that came into being from the basis of the AIA between the two governments. Since the AIA excludes the representatives of the Protestants/Unionists community when the negotiation is in progress, it does not achieve any immediate progress towards an agreed settlement. The process for attaining an agreed settlement was underway to include the major unionist party with the exception of Sinn Féin, the second largest nationalist party behind John Hume's Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP).

This motion had led the Unionists to agree to pursue talks with both governments, including Ireland, which it never considered doing before. This initiative involved a careful separation of the discussions on the internal relations within Northern Ireland between the Unionists and Nationalists, relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and relations between British and the Irish states. Hence some progress was accomplished and some of the issues on which

the consensus was reached during these inter-party talks have been reflected in the wording of the Downing Street Declaration in December 1993 (Boyle and Hadden 1995: 274-275).

In the course of this lengthy period of intergovernmental and interparty talks, a number of fundamental principles that came into being make the extreme sect of the parties to rethink their attitude in the context of their standpoint for the future of Northern Ireland. The possibility of a ceasefire by the extremist outfits on both sides began to emerge. The IRA announced a ceasefire on 31 August 1994 after the Downing Street Declaration of 1993 because of British assurance that it had no economic or strategic interest. It was followed by the Loyalist paramilitaries after six weeks (Mansergh 1995: 156). This development drags the peace process in Northern Ireland towards the path of confidence measures and relieved environment. According to Cox (2002), the IRA ceasefire would have been unthinkable without the declaration. This development can be attributed to the Downing Street Declaration of 1993 because of its carefully balanced statement of principles and assurances designed to communicate that a permanent ceasefire would guarantee inclusion of all-party talks (Hazleton 2000: 109).

The most important of these are the principle of consent, which in effect recognised the rights of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland to decide their constitutional status and the principle that the rights and interests of both communities must be recognised and accommodated in any of the new structure for government. International lawyers and activists classify these principles respectively as the right of self-determination and the acknowledgement of communal or minority rights. The additional principles – that the rights and responsibilities of both the British and Irish governments must be recognised in respect of an area in which their respective peoples are intermingled – might be less readily recognised in international law but is nonetheless of paramount importance (Boyle and Hadden 1995: 275).

The Downing Street Declaration was followed up by the Framework Documents in 1995, a new framework for agreement within a shared understanding between the British and Irish governments to assist discussion and negotiation involving the parties in Northern Ireland. The proposal emphasised the importance of

parity of esteem, in keeping with the recognition of cultural traditions which had emerged from community relation work. It reiterated the principle of consent but also accepts the right of self-determination of the people of Ireland, by agreement between the two parts, respectively, including their right to bring about a united Ireland if that was their wish.

The Framework Documents of 1995 suggests that the two governments set out detailed proposals for a settlement, based on the three-strand framework that had emerged from the Brooke Initiatives of 1989-1991. First, a North-North strand, with the provision from a devolved assembly, proportional representation of power sharing in the North. Second, a North-South strand, in which a new body would emerge to take on functions to be decided later. Lastly, an East-West strand with the British-Irish intergovernmental council to underwrite the settlement and the interests of both communities. (Miall *et al* 1999:179).

These twin developments had lifted the peace process of becoming a broadly acceptable political settlement and an end to political violence that has engulfed in Northern Ireland. These two declarations or so to say, intergovernmental documents were clearly interdependent as it made a path for the peace process to move smoothly irrespective of some loopholes that it produced in excluding those prominent and important social actors that have had huge impact on the society. On the other hand, Britain, which strongly denied any outside involvement in the Northern Irish affairs, had agreed to accept a third party, the United States of America. The mediation of the US resolved this stalemate in the form of the Mitchell Commission that mandated the decommissioning of weapons by extremists groups as prior to all-party talks.

The Mitchell Commission laid down five principles of non-violence and democratic methods. In conformity to these principles, the IRA announced their total cessation of military activities on August 1994 to enter the talks. This development raised hopes that a rapid movement to all party talks would follow, but instead, with deep mistrust on all sides, the process reached a sticking point over decommissioning of paramilitary weapons, which the Unionists and the government demanded as a precondition. This position was not acceptable to the IRA.

However, then came the Irish-Americans factor and the task played by Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, in convincing the IRA to give up armed struggle and opt for a political settlement. Gerry Adams and his collaboration with the pan-Irish nationalists abroad were instrumental in the path that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. The pan-Irish nationalists abroad especially from the US were crucial in bringing the IRA and its political wing, Sinn Féin, back to the negotiating table prior to the Good Friday Agreement in 1997. It is argued that Irish American soft power was a vital factor in convincing the nationalists and republicans that democratic politics rather than paramilitary violence was the way forward for the peace settlement (Doherty 2000: 60).

Given the relative failure of the IRA's military campaign by the beginning of the 1990s, the international dimension stressed by Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, was the means by which republicans could achieve political change. The engagement with the US administration as soft power actors outside Britain's domestic policy context was crucial to the IRA's decision to end its armed campaign (Cochrane 2007: 217). The role of the Irish-Americans accurately fits into this category as their influence grew in the domestic politics of the US, especially in the 1992 presidential election campaign. They became a significant pressure group (MacGinty 1997: 32-33).

The financial and political support of the Irish-Americans helped the IRA to intensify its armed campaign and the political support helped the Irish republicans to internationalise their 'cause' and 'armed struggle'. However, it is again the Irish-American influence that made the IRA to give up its armed campaign in its later stage of the struggle. The society of Irish-Americans comprises of journalists, lawyers and labour and corporate business leaders under the banner of Americans for New Irish Agenda (ANIA) (O'Hanlon 1998: 202). Therefore the Irish-Americans were influential in bringing about a settlement in Northern Ireland.

Before the twentieth century, Ireland was a part of Britain. While the Irish are of Catholics religion, a majority of the people of Northern Ireland are Protestants. After a prolonged struggle by the Irish for independence in the nineteenth century, Home Rule followed by independence was granted to Ireland in the early twentieth

century. However, the northern part of the island, because of its Protestant majority, was retained and, continued to be a part of the United Kingdom. For a long time, Ireland laid claims to this part because of its historical, geographical and cultural links to the island. The Protestant majority of the Northern provinces contested this. The Catholic minority of the northern part organised a struggle against the subjugation that they were experiencing. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) and its political arm, Sinn Féin was instrumental in this cause.

Meanwhile, Britain did not concede to their demands even in the international governing body, the United Nations Organisation (UNO). The struggle turned violent. A compromise of sorts was arrived on 10 April 1998 which is also known as the Good Friday Agreement. The Agreement has given autonomy to Northern Ireland and a share in the political power to the Catholic minority and its representative Sinn Fein. It has also made a connection between the North and South of Ireland. However, the question of the union with Ireland is put on hold.

From the study of the historical background to the signing of the auspicious Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998, society has played a crucial role in motivating the key players to come to a peaceful settlement despite a dreadful past. In the absence of international norms to bring about international negotiations with regard to Northern Ireland conflict, it is the standard that was set by the society that has played a vital role in managing the conflict. Hence, there developed a kind of international parliamentary institution comprising the key players, Ireland and Britain. The inter-governmental talks between the two governments with regard to the situation and future of Northern Ireland proved effective for the conflicting parties with Northern Ireland to come together to all-party negotiations. Britain has always maintained that the conflict in Northern Ireland as an internal issue thereby strongly opposing the interference of any third party. However, a change in perception brought about a change in the policy that made the peace process to succeed.

However it could be questioned as to what made the British change its policy towards Northern Ireland. There can be numerous responses like the structural change in the international system, the need for cooperation and interdependence between states, etc. The new approach adopted by Britain in inducting the government of the

Republic of Ireland, particularly its inclusion in many of the newly proposed councils was effective. Nevertheless, these changes flow from the society, so to say – grassroots level – that have driven the peace effort and persuaded states to rethink their dogmatic position.

From the study of the sociological history of Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland as a whole, it is observed that the conflict is the handiwork of the states perception. The partition of Ireland has not being aimed at ending troubles of Ireland but is seen as shifting the trouble from a large uncontrollable territory to a compressed territory where the interests of state could practiced with little resistance. The nastiest experience to the Irish had been that the partition is not only of territorial separation but along the ethnic lines. The partition of the Irish peoples into Catholics and Protestants was deeply embedded such that they assert their identities into different components. While the Catholics identify themselves as Irish nationals, the Protestants community identify themselves as British. However the problem is that the British in the mainland find it hard to accept their claim.

This classification of identities explode in the social psychology wherein there is the need to belong to certain group and express this need through categorising themselves on nationality ground. It also creates a sense of insecurity in comparison with the other ethnic groups. They even perceive the other group in negative terms as a threat to its own identity and a lack of trust thereby develops. Such mistrust reinforces the negative perceptions and creates hostile intentions and thus each group is inclined to threaten the other leading to counterthreats and an escalation of the conflict. This exactly fits the description of the society in Northern Ireland.

From the social constructivist point of view, the Northern Ireland conflict and the peace process that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement is the handiwork of state through mutually implicating dialectical process. The assertion made by certain ethnic nationalities and that of the communities in Northern Ireland may be explained by the constructivist point of view, which is that after the end of the Cold War and the change in international system that follow suit, the system experienced a lesser need of state as a principal actor (Jesse and Williams 2001: 590). Thus it witnessed the rise of nationalism and self-determination movements to quench

**CHAPTER FIVE:  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**



The dissertation aims to address the research question: what are the factors that have contributed to the success of the Good Friday Agreement in terms of reducing the intensity of conflict in Northern Ireland?

The study proceeds by analysing two hypotheses which are as follows:

1. The momentum of the peace process can be attributed to the United States mediation.
2. The finalisation of the Good Friday Agreement is explained by the change in British domestic politics.

The discussion analyses the changes in the behaviour of international actors with regard to certain issues that enveloped the international politics at a given point in time. The thesis establishes that there is a difference in how the main actors in the Northern Ireland conflict – the United States, Great Britain and Republic of Ireland – manage their policy towards the Irish conflict. The trouble in Northern Ireland began way back in the ‘Battle of Boyne’ in 1609 came into the fore in the 1960s and had overlapped into two world order *i.e.* bipolarity, till 1991 and unipolarity, thereafter. After the partition of Ireland under the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, the marginalisation of Catholics in Northern Ireland nourished Irish nationalism and eventually led to the Catholic civil rights protest by the end of the 1960s. It resulted in public disorder and finally transformed to terrorism by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and its Loyalists adversaries. The nationalists believe that only an outright change in sovereignty *i.e.* the unification of Northern Ireland and the Irish republic could ensure their civil rights status and their physical protection. However, the Unionists suggest that such development would threaten the existence of the Protestant community which would then look towards Britain for protection. This had been the root of the conflict within Northern Ireland.

Of course, the role played by several international actors had impacted on the peace process in Northern Ireland and its resultant signing of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) on 10 April 1998. Consequent US administrations had declined to interfere in the Northern Irish conflict since it has always value the cooperation with Great Britain. The Cold War politics had been instrumental in explaining the

behaviour of US in this regard. However, the sudden change in the US policy towards Northern Ireland and its interference right after the end of the Cold War had an interesting impact on the study of the behaviour of great power in international politics. Great Britain had been a natural and reliable ally for the Americans to pursue its imperialistic design throughout the world. The relation between the two states had been a Cold War driven 'special relationship'. Hence minus the Cold War, the relationship crumbled as a pack of cards since the need for such kind of cooperation is assumed to be detrimental for any aspiring hegemon in relative terms.

On the other hand, Great Britain with its hard-line policy towards the conflict in Northern Ireland had been unable to provide a resolution to the conflicting parties within Northern Ireland. The Unionists/Loyalists party which rely heavily upon Britain for protecting its rights against the encroachment of Irish nationalism from the south even became discontented as Westminster dissolved the Stormont Assembly and imposed a direct rule. Similarly, it stirred the Nationalists/Republicans to take up arms and pursue a violent means that added upto the bitterness of the conflict. It does not mean that Great Britain had no role to play in the management of conflict. However, the stubborn policy of Britain produced more stubborn politicians within Northern Ireland that happened to complicate the peace process in Northern Ireland. Great Britain had always been instrumental in dousing the fire if a conflict were to arise but it would not completely heal the wound since their policy is seen as discrimination and it needed the participation of the Republic of Ireland in this regard.

Geographically, the Republic of Ireland is close to Northern Ireland and the spirit of nationalism that evolved during the Home Rule Movement at the beginning of the twentieth century had spilled over to large part of the Northern Irish province although Britain assumes the ownership of the territory. The constitution of the Irish republic is also embedded with the aspiration of the unification of the whole Irish island under a single entity. With this commitment, the peace process cannot be a success if the involvement of the Irish republic is negated. However, the constant opposition of the Unionists groups combined with the international pressure had made the republic to reconsider Article 2 and 3 of its constitution that has led to the conclusion of the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) of 1985. The AIA had legitimised the involvement of the republic as a consulting partner to the British on the matter of

Northern Ireland. Therefore together with Britain, the Republic of Ireland is also instrumental in dousing off the fire.

Moreover, the trouble in Northern Ireland is not the problem of the outside actors. It is unquestionably the Irish problem that originates within. The marginalisation of the Catholics within Northern Ireland had been regarded as the root cause of the problem. Seen in a different perspective, it could be said that the international actors added up to the conflict by supporting either sides. The British acted as a caretaker of the Unionists and perceived the conflict only through the lens of the Unionists. The Irish republic encouraged the nationalists of their aspiration of uniting the whole island under a single entity which was in conformity to their own objective. Hence without the involvement of these two states, the conflict in Northern Ireland seems to have subsided. However it was the other way. The Irish republic and Britain acted as a guardian to their causes and restrained the conflicting parties to incite chaos and disorder. If the conflicting parties could manage to come together for a settlement despite their differences, both the guardian states welcomed their decision in accordance with the AIA of 1985 between the two states. Hence the situation for peace and stability solely rest upon the extent to which Northern Irish would shed their differences and search for a settlement.

Focusing on the politics of conflict management, it appears that the involvement of several actors in Northern Ireland is such that either the circumstances compelled or opportunities arose in such a way that there was no other option. Great Britain despite its consistence stance that the problem in Northern Ireland is an internal issue was compelled to change its position. This policy shift is mainly due to the changes in international order in the post-Cold War period. Great Britain had to adjust with the changing international environment and change its attitude towards Northern Ireland to encompass the plight of the nationalists there. Suppose if Britain were to hold on to Northern Ireland by using only the Unionist lens, it is likely to fall into international condemnation because of the degrading human rights violations. As the new international order saw the state as not the only unit of analysis Britain is left with no choice but to take into account the individuals plight in formulating its policy. Likewise the Republic of Ireland had to respond to the circumstances in terms of a changing attitude of Britain. The reassessment of Article 2 and 3 of the Irish

constitution by the republic demonstrated its commitment to the peaceful solution to the Northern Irish conflict.

On the other hand, the US perceiving a changing international order grasped the opportunity and mediated in Northern Ireland despite the Anglo-American special relationship of the Cold War era. With the end of the Cold War the US had adopted a policy of maintaining peace and stability throughout the world to liberate every subjugated nation in the world. The presence of Irish nationals in great number in the US at the point of formulating the policy was advantageous for the nationalists to propagate for greater American involvement in the Northern Ireland conflict. Also, for the Americans to involve, it had far lesser risks compared to their quest in the Balkans, Middle-East and in Africa. The democratic principles in Northern Ireland had been providing favourable circumstances for low-risk mediation and a higher probability of successful mediation that can encourage and thereby enhance the credibility of the US in the handling of other conflicts in the world.

The US administration under the then President Bill Clinton had been appreciated for containing the conflict and the eventual signing of the GFA. The Clinton administration's involvement in Northern Ireland peace process is the culmination of a long period of lobbying by Irish-American groups. This engagement is a result of the new foreign policy agenda of the US, which was formulated after the end of the Cold War. After the presidential election of 1992 directly after the Cold War, Clinton began his venture by sending a special envoy, George J. Mitchell in Northern Ireland. Against much opposition from the Department of State and an all time ally *i.e.* Britain, Clinton proceeded to grant Gerry Adams, the president of Sinn Féin a visa to visit the US. This move was not detrimental to the peace process since Gerry Adams was able to influence the nationalist supporters in America to pursue a more moderate approach to the Irish question. Further, Gerry Adams also convinced the Republicans that the British cannot be defeated by military means and that the political settlement is the solution. Although at first Clinton appeared like playing with fire by treating what others labelled as terrorist, say, Gerry Adams, the same fire proved to be a source of light for the success of the peace process.

The study of the Good Friday Agreement is the culmination of several multi-party talks between state actors as well as non-state actors. Of course, there are agreements between the Irish republic governments and British governments that paved a way for the peace process to prosper towards a positive end. But such talks between the two governments are not sufficient for bringing a stable peace. There are other actors who have greater influence upon the masses at the grass root level, inducting them to the negotiating table holds a greater potential for the peace process to be a successful conclusion. In several instances, the negotiations are done by the political elites at the negotiation table and their ideas and proposals were sold to the people. Undoubtedly, the nationalism of the Irish island had been strong. However, for the peace process to prosper, the opposition and grievances at all corners are taken into account since a slight spark of dissent may spark violence that upset the peace process. It is observed that the AIA had been concluded by the political elites of both Irish and British governments for bringing an end to the conflict. Based on the principle of AIA, the likes of Downing Street Declaration of 1993 and Joint Framework Document of 1995 were created. They were the other actors for consideration and eventually the time had produced a ripe moment for all party to come to a conclusion on 10 April 1998, which became to be widely known as the Good Friday Agreement.

The Good Friday Agreement concludes that all the conflicting parties of Northern Ireland are obliged to seat-sharing in the governance of the country. The agreement laid out plans to hand control over much of the province's internal affairs to a new parliament and cabinet in which all the major parties – Unionists and Nationalists; Protestants and Catholics – would share power. It has also creates a cross-border institutions through which the British and Irish governments could assure the progress and process of peace. Most important of all, the paramilitary groups – the IRAs and their Loyalists counterparts – were asked to completely give up arms and shun violence altogether that had wreaked havoc both in Northern Ireland and the British mainland since the beginning of the trouble. It also showed the advent of co-existence between the communities in dignity as the previous effort to the peace process failed to address the 'cultural division' on the ground as the efforts were purely done on the governments' level or the 'structural' level.

Of course, there are ambiguities and loopholes to the GFA as it failed to address many critical issues, especially, on the question of 'decommissioning of weapons' by the paramilitaries of both sides. This issue had been the contention of the parties. The Unionists party refused to participate in the talks until and unless the IRA gives up their arms and bombs. The IRA, on the other hand, made it known that it would not start decommissioning its weapons before the new government was formed. But these stumbling issues were passed over with sheer diplomacy played by the peace propagators at the structural level. The parties agreed that the peace process should not suffer owing to the 'decommissioning' issue. Hence, the agreement had set May 2000 as a deadline for decommissioning.

With regard to the Irish experience of the peace process in Northern Ireland we see that there are matters to be attended which need to be prioritised. As the momentum gradually began to shift towards an agreement, there is no hesitation for the players to go beyond the issue of decommissioning of weapons. It is as if the structural level and the grass-root level communicated with each other and agreed not to hamper the peace process with any issue; signing the peace agreement is the most important. It is believed that the agreement would encompass all the necessary variables and give peace a chance in Northern Ireland. The need for peace runs deep in the veins of both the key players and the society which is why the GFA is a success in terms of conflict management.

The dissertation concludes by arguing that the momentum of the peace process in Northern Ireland and the subsequent signing of the Good Friday Agreement are the product of United States mediation as well as the readiness of the conflicting parties to give peace a chance. The change in British domestic politics, to a limited extent, explains the success of the peace process. Therefore the end of the Cold War and the advent of the new international order is the most important variable that made the conflicting parties to shed their cultural and identity differences and makes the Good Friday Agreement possible on 10 April 1998.

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**APPENDIX:**  
**THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT**

**The Good Friday Agreement**  
**Agreement reached in the multi-party negotiations (10 April 1998)**

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**ANNEX:**

**Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Ireland.**

## DECLARATION OF SUPPORT

1. We, the participants in the multi-party negotiations, believe that the agreement we have negotiated offers a truly historic opportunity for a new beginning.
2. The tragedies of the past have left a deep and profoundly regrettable legacy of suffering. We must never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families. But we can best honour them through a fresh start, in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all.
3. We are committed to partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between these islands.
4. We reaffirm our total and absolute commitment to exclusively democratic and peaceful means of resolving differences on political issues, and our opposition to any use or threat of force by others for any political purpose, whether in regard to this agreement or otherwise.
5. We acknowledge the substantial differences between our continuing, and equally legitimate, political aspirations. However, we will endeavour to strive in every practical way towards reconciliation and rapprochement within the framework of democratic and agreed arrangements. We pledge that we will, in good faith, work to ensure the success of each and every one of the arrangements to be established under this agreement. It is accepted that all of the institutional and constitutional arrangements - an Assembly in Northern Ireland, a North/South Ministerial Council, implementation bodies, a British-Irish Council and a British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference and any amendments to British Acts of Parliament and the Constitution of Ireland - are interlocking and interdependent and that in particular the functioning of the Assembly and the North/South Council are so closely inter-related that the success of each depends on that of the other.



6. Accordingly, in a spirit of concord, we strongly commend this agreement to the people, North and South, for their approval.

### CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

1. The participants endorse the commitment made by the British and Irish Governments that, in a new British-Irish Agreement replacing the Anglo-Irish Agreement, they will:

(i) recognise the legitimacy of whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland with regard to its status, whether they prefer to continue to support the Union with Great Britain or a sovereign united Ireland;

(ii) recognise that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish, accepting that this right must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland;

(iii) acknowledge that while a substantial section of the people in Northern Ireland share the legitimate wish of a majority of the people of the island of Ireland for a united Ireland, the present wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, freely exercised and legitimate, is to maintain the Union and, accordingly, that Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom reflects and relies upon that wish; and that it would be wrong to make any change in the status of Northern Ireland save with the consent of a majority of its people;

(iv) affirm that if, in the future, the people of the island of Ireland exercise their right of self-determination on the basis set out in sections (i) and (ii) above to bring about a united Ireland, it will be a binding obligation on both Governments to introduce and support in their respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to that wish;

(v) affirm that whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, the power of the sovereign government with jurisdiction

there shall be exercised with rigorous impartiality on behalf of all the people in the diversity of their identities and traditions and shall be founded on the principles of full respect for, and equality of, civil, political, social and cultural rights, of freedom from discrimination for all citizens, and of parity of esteem and of just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos, and aspirations of both communities;

(vi) recognise the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments and would not be affected by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland.

2. The participants also note that the two Governments have accordingly undertaken in the context of this comprehensive political agreement, to propose and support changes in, respectively, the Constitution of Ireland and in British legislation relating to the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

## **ANNEX A**

### **DRAFT CLAUSES/SCHEDULES FOR INCORPORATION IN BRITISH LEGISLATION**

1. (1) It is hereby declared that Northern Ireland in its entirety remains part of the United Kingdom and shall not cease to be so without the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland voting in a poll held for the purposes of this section in accordance with Schedule 1.

(2) But if the wish expressed by a majority in such a poll is that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the United Kingdom and form part of a united Ireland, the Secretary of State shall lay before Parliament such proposals to give effect to that wish as may be agreed between Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of Ireland.

The Government of Ireland Act 1920 is repealed; and this Act shall have effect

2. notwithstanding any other previous enactment.

## **SCHEDULE 1**

### **POLLS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SECTION 1**

1. The Secretary of State may by order direct the holding of a poll for the purposes of section 1 on a date specified in the order.
2. Subject to paragraph 3, the Secretary of State shall exercise the power under paragraph 1 if at any time it appears likely to him that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the United Kingdom and form part of a united Ireland.
3. The Secretary of State shall not make an order under paragraph 1 earlier than seven years after the holding of a previous poll under this Schedule.
4. (Remaining paragraphs along the lines of paragraphs 2 and 3 of existing Schedule 1 to 1973 Act.)

## **ANNEX B**

### **IRISH GOVERNMENT DRAFT LEGISLATION TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION**

Add to Article 29 the following sections:

1. The State may consent to be bound by the British-Irish Agreement done at Belfast on the ... day of ... 1998, hereinafter called the Agreement.
2. Any institution established by or under the Agreement may exercise the powers and functions thereby conferred on it in respect of all or any part of the island of Ireland notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution conferring a like power or function on any person or any organ of State appointed under or created or established by or under this Constitution. Any power or function conferred on such an institution in relation to the settlement or resolution of disputes or controversies may be in addition to or in substitution for any like power or function conferred by this Constitution on any such person or organ of State as aforesaid.
3. If the Government declare that the State has become obliged, pursuant to the Agreement, to give effect to the amendment of this Constitution referred to therein, then, notwithstanding Article 46 hereof, this Constitution shall be amended as follows:
  - i. the following Articles shall be substituted for Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish text:

"2.[Irish text to be inserted here]

3. [Irish text to be inserted here]

(ii) the following Articles shall be substituted for Articles 2 and 3 of the English text:

## **Article 2**

It is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of the Irish nation. That is also the entitlement of all persons otherwise qualified in accordance with law to be citizens of Ireland. Furthermore, the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage.

## **Article 3**

1. It is the firm will of the Irish nation, in harmony and friendship, to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Ireland, in all the diversity of their identities and traditions, recognising that a united Ireland shall be brought about only by peaceful means with the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed, in both jurisdictions in the island. Until then, the laws enacted by the Parliament established by this Constitution shall have the like area and extent of application as the laws enacted by the Parliament that existed immediately before the coming into operation of this Constitution.

2. Institutions with executive powers and functions that are shared between those jurisdictions may be established by their respective responsible authorities for stated purposes and may exercise powers and functions in respect of all or any part of the island."

iii. the following section shall be added to the Irish text of this Article:

"8. [Irish text to be inserted here]" and

iv. the following section shall be added to the English text of this Article:

"8. The State may exercise extra-territorial jurisdiction in accordance with the generally recognised principles of international law."

4. If a declaration under this section is made, this subsection and subsection 3, other than the amendment of this Constitution effected thereby, and subsection 5 of this section shall be omitted from every official text of this Constitution published thereafter, but notwithstanding such omission this section shall continue to have the force of law.

5. If such a declaration is not made within twelve months of this section being added to this Constitution or such longer period as may be provided for by law, this section shall cease to have effect and shall be omitted from every official text of this Constitution published thereafter.

## **STRAND ONE**

### **DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

1. This agreement provides for a democratically elected Assembly in Northern Ireland which is inclusive in its membership, capable of exercising executive and legislative authority, and subject to safeguards to protect the rights and interests of all sides of the community.

#### **The Assembly**

2. A 108-member Assembly will be elected by PR(STV) from existing Westminster constituencies.

3. The Assembly will exercise full legislative and executive authority in respect of those matters currently within the responsibility of the six Northern Ireland Government Departments, with the possibility of taking on responsibility for other matters as detailed elsewhere in this agreement

4. The Assembly - operating where appropriate on a cross-community basis - will be the prime source of authority in respect of all devolved responsibilities.

#### **Safeguards**

5. There will be safeguards to ensure that all sections of the community can participate and work together successfully in the operation of these institutions and that all sections of the community are protected, including:

- (a) allocations of Committee Chairs, Ministers and Committee membership in proportion to party strengths;

(b) the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and any Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland supplementing it, which neither the Assembly nor public bodies can infringe, together with a Human Rights Commission;

(c) arrangements to provide that key decisions and legislation are proofed to ensure that they do not infringe the ECHR and any Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland;

(d) arrangements to ensure key decisions are taken on a cross-community basis;

(i) **either** parallel consent, i.e. a majority of those members present and voting, including a majority of the unionist and nationalist designations present and voting;

(ii) **or** a weighted majority (60%) of members present and voting, including at least 40% of each of the nationalist and unionist designations present and voting.

Key decisions requiring cross-community support will be designated in advance, including election of the Chair of the Assembly, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, standing orders and budget allocations. In other cases such decisions could be triggered by a petition of concern brought by a significant minority of Assembly members (30/108).

(e) an Equality Commission to monitor a statutory obligation to promote equality of opportunity in specified areas and parity of esteem between the two main communities, and to investigate individual complaints against public bodies.

### **Operation of the Assembly**

6. At their first meeting, members of the Assembly will register a designation of identity - nationalist, unionist or other - for the purposes of measuring cross-community support in Assembly votes under the relevant provisions above.

7. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Assembly will be elected on a cross-community basis, as set out in paragraph 5(d) above.

8. There will be a Committee for each of the main executive functions of the Northern Ireland Administration. The Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Assembly Committees will be allocated proportionally, using the d'Hondt system. Membership of the

Committees will be in broad proportion to party strengths in the Assembly to ensure that the opportunity of Committee places is available to all members.

9. The Committees will have a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Department with which each is associated, and will have a role in initiation of legislation. They will have the power to:

- consider and advise on Departmental budgets and Annual Plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- approve relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee stage of relevant primary legislation;
- call for persons and papers;
- initiate enquiries and make reports;
- consider and advise on matters brought to the Committee by its Minister.

10. Standing Committees other than Departmental Committees may be established as may be required from time to time.

11. The Assembly may appoint a special Committee to examine and report on whether a measure or proposal for legislation is in conformity with equality requirements, including the ECHR/Bill of Rights. The Committee shall have the power to call people and papers to assist in its consideration of the matter. The Assembly shall then consider the report of the Committee and can determine the matter in accordance with the cross-community consent procedure.

12. The above special procedure shall be followed when requested by the Executive Committee, or by the relevant Departmental Committee, voting on a cross-community basis.

13. When there is a petition of concern as in 5(d) above, the Assembly shall vote to determine whether the measure may proceed without reference to this special procedure. If this fails to achieve support on a cross-community basis, as in 5(d) (i) above, the special procedure shall be followed.

#### **Executive Authority**

14. Executive authority to be discharged on behalf of the Assembly by a First Minister and Deputy First Minister and up to ten Ministers with Departmental responsibilities.

15. The First Minister and Deputy First Minister shall be jointly elected into office by the Assembly voting on a cross-community basis, according to 5(d)(i) above.

16. Following the election of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the posts of Ministers will be allocated to parties on the basis of the d'Hondt system by reference to the number of seats each party has in the Assembly.
17. The Ministers will constitute an Executive Committee, which will be convened, and presided over, by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.
18. The duties of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister will include, inter alia, dealing with and co-ordinating the work of the Executive Committee and the response of the Northern Ireland administration to external relationships.
19. The Executive Committee will provide a forum for the discussion of, and agreement on, issues which cut across the responsibilities of two or more Ministers, for prioritising executive and legislative proposals and for recommending a common position where necessary (e.g. in dealing with external relationships).
20. The Executive Committee will seek to agree each year, and review as necessary, a programme incorporating an agreed budget linked to policies and programmes, subject to approval by the Assembly, after scrutiny in Assembly Committees, on a cross-community basis.
21. A party may decline the opportunity to nominate a person to serve as a Minister or may subsequently change its nominee.
22. All the Northern Ireland Departments will be headed by a Minister. All Ministers will liaise regularly with their respective Committee.
23. As a condition of appointment, Ministers, including the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, will affirm the terms of a Pledge of Office (Annex A) undertaking to discharge effectively and in good faith all the responsibilities attaching to their office.
24. Ministers will have full executive authority in their respective areas of responsibility, within any broad programme agreed by the Executive Committee and endorsed by the Assembly as a whole.
25. An individual may be removed from office following a decision of the Assembly taken on a cross-community basis, if (s)he loses the confidence of the Assembly, voting on a cross-community basis, for failure to meet his or her responsibilities including, inter alia, those set out in the Pledge of Office. Those who hold office should use only democratic, non-violent means, and those who do not should be excluded or removed from office under these provisions.



## **Legislation**

26. The Assembly will have authority to pass primary legislation for Northern Ireland in devolved areas, subject to:

- (a) the ECHR and any Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland supplementing it which, if the courts found to be breached, would render the relevant legislation null and void;
- (b) decisions by simple majority of members voting, except when decision on a cross-community basis is required;
- (c) detailed scrutiny and approval in the relevant Departmental Committee;
- (d) mechanisms, based on arrangements proposed for the Scottish Parliament, to ensure suitable co-ordination, and avoid disputes, between the Assembly and the Westminster Parliament;
- (e) option of the Assembly seeking to include Northern Ireland provisions in United Kingdom-wide legislation in the Westminster Parliament, especially on devolved issues where parity is normally maintained (e.g. social security, company law).

27. The Assembly will have authority to legislate in reserved areas with the approval of the Secretary of State and subject to Parliamentary control.

28. Disputes over legislative competence will be decided by the Courts.

29. Legislation could be initiated by an individual, a Committee or a Minister.

## **Relations with other institutions**

30. Arrangements to represent the Assembly as a whole, at Summit level and in dealings with other institutions, will be in accordance with paragraph 18, and will be such as to ensure cross-community involvement.

31. Terms will be agreed between appropriate Assembly representatives and the Government of the United Kingdom to ensure effective co-ordination and input by Ministers to national policy-making, including on EU issues.

32. Role of Secretary of State:

- (a) to remain responsible for NIO matters not devolved to the Assembly, subject to regular consultation with the Assembly and Ministers;
- (b) to approve and lay before the Westminster Parliament any Assembly legislation on reserved matters;
- (c) to represent Northern Ireland interests in the United Kingdom Cabinet;

(d) to have the right to attend the Assembly at their invitation.

33. The Westminster Parliament (whose power to make legislation for Northern Ireland would remain unaffected) will:

(a) legislate for non-devolved issues, other than where the Assembly legislates with the approval of the Secretary of State and subject to the control of Parliament;

(b) to legislate as necessary to ensure the United Kingdom's international obligations are met in respect of Northern Ireland;

(c) scrutinise, including through the Northern Ireland Grand and Select Committees, the responsibilities of the Secretary of State.

34. A consultative Civic Forum will be established. It will comprise representatives of the business, trade union and voluntary sectors, and such other sectors as agreed by the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. It will act as a consultative mechanism on social, economic and cultural issues. The First Minister and the Deputy First Minister will by agreement provide administrative support for the Civic Forum and establish guidelines for the selection of representatives to the Civic Forum.

#### **Transitional Arrangements**

35. The Assembly will meet first for the purpose of organisation, without legislative or executive powers, to resolve its standing orders and working practices and make preparations for the effective functioning of the Assembly, the British-Irish Council and the North/South Ministerial Council and associated implementation bodies. In this transitional period, those members of the Assembly serving as shadow Ministers shall affirm their commitment to non-violence and exclusively peaceful and democratic means and their opposition to any use or threat of force by others for any political purpose; to work in good faith to bring the new arrangements into being; and to observe the spirit of the Pledge of Office applying to appointed Ministers.

#### **Review**

36. After a specified period there will be a review of these arrangements, including the details of electoral arrangements and of the Assembly's procedures, with a view to agreeing any adjustments necessary in the interests of efficiency and fairness.

**ANNEX A**  
**PLEDGE OF OFFICE**

To pledge:

- (a) to discharge in good faith all the duties of office;
- (b) commitment to non-violence and exclusively peaceful and democratic means;
- (c) to serve all the people of Northern Ireland equally, and to act in accordance with the general obligations on government to promote equality and prevent discrimination;
- (d) to participate with colleagues in the preparation of a programme for government;
- (e) to operate within the framework of that programme when agreed within the Executive Committee and endorsed by the Assembly;
- (f) to support, and to act in accordance with, all decisions of the Executive Committee and Assembly;
- (g) to comply with the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Ministers must at all times:
- observe the highest standards of propriety and regularity involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relationship to the stewardship of public funds;
- be accountable to users of services, the community and, through the Assembly, for the activities within their responsibilities, their stewardship of public funds and the extent to which key performance targets and objectives have been met;
- ensure all reasonable requests for information from the Assembly, users of services and individual citizens are complied with; and that Departments and their staff conduct their dealings with the public in an open and responsible way;
- follow the seven principles of public life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life;
- comply with this code and with rules relating to the use of public funds;
- operate in a way conducive to promoting good community relations and equality of treatment;

- not use information gained in the course of their service for personal gain; nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests;
- ensure they comply with any rules on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality that might be offered;
- declare any personal or business interests which may conflict with their responsibilities. The Assembly will retain a Register of Interests. Individuals must ensure that any direct or indirect pecuniary interests which members of the public might reasonably think could influence their judgement are listed in the Register of Interests.

## **STRAND TWO**

### **NORTH/SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

1. Under a new British/Irish Agreement dealing with the totality of relationships, and related legislation at Westminster and in the Oireachtas, a North/South Ministerial Council to be established to bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government, to develop consultation, co-operation and action within the island of Ireland - including through implementation on an all-island and cross-border basis - on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the Administrations, North and South.
2. All Council decisions to be by agreement between the two sides. Northern Ireland to be represented by the First Minister, Deputy First Minister and any relevant Ministers, the Irish Government by the Taoiseach and relevant Ministers, all operating in accordance with the rules for democratic authority and accountability in force in the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas respectively. Participation in the Council to be one of the essential responsibilities attaching to relevant posts in the two Administrations. If a holder of a relevant post will not participate normally in the Council, the Taoiseach in the case of the Irish Government and the First and Deputy First Minister in the case of the Northern Ireland Administration to be able to make alternative arrangements.
3. The Council to meet in different formats:
  - (i) in plenary format twice a year, with Northern Ireland representation led by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Irish Government led by the Taoiseach;

(ii) in specific sectoral formats on a regular and frequent basis with each side represented by the appropriate Minister;

(iii) in an appropriate format to consider institutional or cross-sectoral matters (including in relation to the EU) and to resolve disagreement.

4. Agendas for all meetings to be settled by prior agreement between the two sides, but it will be open to either to propose any matter for consideration or action.

5. The Council:

(i) to exchange information, discuss and consult with a view to co-operating on matters of mutual interest within the competence of both Administrations, North and South;

(ii) to use best endeavours to reach agreement on the adoption of common policies, in areas where there is a mutual cross-border and all-island benefit, and which are within the competence of both Administrations, North and South, making determined efforts to overcome any disagreements;

(iii) to take decisions by agreement on policies for implementation separately in each jurisdiction, in relevant meaningful areas within the competence of both Administrations, North and South;

(iv) to take decisions by agreement on policies and action at an all-island and cross-border level to be implemented by the bodies to be established as set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 below.

6. Each side to be in a position to take decisions in the Council within the defined authority of those attending, through the arrangements in place for co-ordination of executive functions within each jurisdiction. Each side to remain accountable to the Assembly and Oireachtas respectively, whose approval, through the arrangements in place on either side, would be required for decisions beyond the defined authority of those attending.

7. As soon as practically possible after elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly, inaugural meetings will take place of the Assembly, the British/Irish Council and the North/South Ministerial Council in their transitional forms. All three institutions will meet regularly and frequently on this basis during the period between the elections to the Assembly, and the transfer of powers to the Assembly, in order to establish their modus operandi.

8. During the transitional period between the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the transfer of power to it, representatives of the Northern Ireland transitional Administration and the Irish Government operating in the North/South Ministerial Council will undertake a work programme, in consultation with the British Government, covering at least 12 subject areas, with a view to identifying and agreeing by 31 October 1998 areas where co-operation and implementation for mutual benefit will take place. Such areas may include matters in the list set out in the Annex.

9. As part of the work programme, the Council will identify and agree at least 6 matters for co-operation and implementation in each of the following categories:

(i) Matters where existing bodies will be the appropriate mechanisms for co-operation in each separate jurisdiction;

(ii) Matters where the co-operation will take place through agreed implementation bodies on a cross-border or all-island level.

10. The two Governments will make necessary legislative and other enabling preparations to ensure, as an absolute commitment, that these bodies, which have been agreed as a result of the work programme, function at the time of the inception of the British-Irish Agreement and the transfer of powers, with legislative authority for these bodies transferred to the Assembly as soon as possible thereafter. Other arrangements for the agreed co-operation will also commence contemporaneously with the transfer of powers to the Assembly.

11. The implementation bodies will have a clear operational remit. They will implement on an all-island and cross-border basis policies agreed in the Council.

12. Any further development of these arrangements to be by agreement in the Council and with the specific endorsement of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Oireachtas, subject to the extent of the competences and responsibility of the two Administrations.

13. It is understood that the North/South Ministerial Council and the Northern Ireland Assembly are mutually inter-dependent, and that one cannot successfully function without the other.

14. Disagreements within the Council to be addressed in the format described at paragraph 3(iii) above or in the plenary format. By agreement between the two sides, experts could be appointed to consider a particular matter and report.

15. Funding to be provided by the two Administrations on the basis that the Council and the implementation bodies constitute a necessary public function.
16. The Council to be supported by a standing joint Secretariat, staffed by members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Irish Civil Service.
17. The Council to consider the European Union dimension of relevant matters, including the implementation of EU policies and programmes and proposals under consideration in the EU framework. Arrangements to be made to ensure that the views of the Council are taken into account and represented appropriately at relevant EU meetings.
18. The Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas to consider developing a joint parliamentary forum, bringing together equal numbers from both institutions for discussion of matters of mutual interest and concern.
19. Consideration to be given to the establishment of an independent consultative forum appointed by the two Administrations, representative of civil society, comprising the social partners and other members with expertise in social, cultural, economic and other issues.

#### ANNEX

Areas for North-South co-operation and implementation may include the following:

1. Agriculture - animal and plant health.
2. Education - teacher qualifications and exchanges.
3. Transport - strategic transport planning.
4. Environment - environmental protection, pollution, water quality, and waste management.
5. Waterways - inland waterways.
6. Social Security/Social Welfare - entitlements of cross-border workers and fraud control.
7. Tourism - promotion, marketing, research, and product development.
8. Relevant EU Programmes such as SPPR, INTERREG, Leader II and their successors.
9. Inland Fisheries.
10. Aquaculture and marine matters
11. Health: accident and emergency services and other related cross-border issues.
12. Urban and rural development.

Others to be considered by the shadow North/ South Council.

### **STRAND THREE**

#### **BRITISH-IRISH COUNCIL**

1. A British-Irish Council (BIC) will be established under a new British-Irish Agreement to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands.
2. Membership of the BIC will comprise representatives of the British and Irish Governments, devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, when established, and, if appropriate, elsewhere in the United Kingdom, together with representatives of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.
3. The BIC will meet in different formats: at summit level, twice per year; in specific sectoral formats on a regular basis, with each side represented by the appropriate Minister; in an appropriate format to consider cross-sectoral matters.
4. Representatives of members will operate in accordance with whatever procedures for democratic authority and accountability are in force in their respective elected institutions.
5. The BIC will exchange information, discuss, consult and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant Administrations. Suitable issues for early discussion in the BIC could include transport links, agricultural issues, environmental issues, cultural issues, health issues, education issues and approaches to EU issues. Suitable arrangements to be made for practical co-operation on agreed policies.
6. It will be open to the BIC to agree common policies or common actions. Individual members may opt not to participate in such common policies and common action.
7. The BIC normally will operate by consensus. In relation to decisions on common policies or common actions, including their means of implementation, it will operate by agreement of all members participating in such policies or actions.
8. The members of the BIC, on a basis to be agreed between them, will provide such financial support as it may require.
9. A secretariat for the BIC will be provided by the British and Irish Governments in co-ordination with officials of each of the other members.



10. In addition to the structures provided for under this agreement, it will be open to two or more members to develop bilateral or multilateral arrangements between them. Such arrangements could include, subject to the agreement of the members concerned, mechanisms to enable consultation, co-operation and joint decision-making on matters of mutual interest; and mechanisms to implement any joint decisions they may reach. These arrangements will not require the prior approval of the BIC as a whole and will operate independently of it.

11. The elected institutions of the members will be encouraged to develop interparliamentary links, perhaps building on the British-Irish Interparliamentary Body.

12. The full membership of the BIC will keep under review the workings of the Council, including a formal published review at an appropriate time after the Agreement comes into effect, and will contribute as appropriate to any review of the overall political agreement arising from the multi-party negotiations.

#### **BRITISH-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE**

1. There will be a new British-Irish Agreement dealing with the totality of relationships. It will establish a standing British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, which will subsume both the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council and the Intergovernmental Conference established under the 1985 Agreement.

2. The Conference will bring together the British and Irish Governments to promote bilateral co-operation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest within the competence of both Governments.

3. The Conference will meet as required at Summit level (Prime Minister and Taoiseach). Otherwise, Governments will be represented by appropriate Ministers. Advisers, including police and security advisers, will attend as appropriate.

4. All decisions will be by agreement between both Governments. The Governments will make determined efforts to resolve disagreements between them. There will be no derogation from the sovereignty of either Government.

5. In recognition of the Irish Government's special interest in Northern Ireland and of the extent to which issues of mutual concern arise in relation to Northern Ireland, there will be regular and frequent meetings of the Conference concerned with non-devolved Northern Ireland matters, on which the Irish Government may put forward

views and proposals. These meetings, to be co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, would also deal with all-island and cross-border co-operation on non-devolved issues.

6. Co-operation within the framework of the Conference will include facilitation of co-operation in security matters. The Conference also will address, in particular, the areas of rights, justice, prisons and policing in Northern Ireland (unless and until responsibility is devolved to a Northern Ireland administration) and will intensify co-operation between the two Governments on the all-island or cross-border aspects of these matters.

7. Relevant executive members of the Northern Ireland Administration will be involved in meetings of the Conference, and in the reviews referred to in paragraph 9 below to discuss non-devolved Northern Ireland matters.

8. The Conference will be supported by officials of the British and Irish Governments, including by a standing joint Secretariat of officials dealing with non-devolved Northern Ireland matters.

9. The Conference will keep under review the workings of the new British-Irish Agreement and the machinery and institutions established under it, including a formal published review three years after the Agreement comes into effect. Representatives of the Northern Ireland Administration will be invited to express views to the Conference in this context. The Conference will contribute as appropriate to any review of the overall political agreement arising from the multi-party negotiations but will have no power to override the democratic arrangements set up by this Agreement.

## **RIGHTS, SAFEGUARDS AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

### **HUMAN RIGHTS**

1. The parties affirm their commitment to the mutual respect, the civil rights and the religious liberties of everyone in the community. Against the background of the recent history of communal conflict, the parties affirm in particular:

- the right of free political thought;
- the right to freedom and expression of religion;
- the right to pursue democratically national and political aspirations;
- the right to seek constitutional change by peaceful and legitimate means;
- the right to freely choose one's place of residence;

- the right to equal opportunity in all social and economic activity, regardless of class, creed, disability, gender or ethnicity;
- the right to freedom from sectarian harassment; and
- the right of women to full and equal political participation.

### **United Kingdom Legislation**

2. The British Government will complete incorporation into Northern Ireland law of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), with direct access to the courts, and remedies for breach of the Convention, including power for the courts to overrule Assembly legislation on grounds of inconsistency.

3. Subject to the outcome of public consultation underway, the British Government intends, as a particular priority, to create a statutory obligation on public authorities in Northern Ireland to carry out all their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to religion and political opinion; gender; race; disability; age; marital status; dependants; and sexual orientation. Public bodies would be required to draw up statutory schemes showing how they would implement this obligation. Such schemes would cover arrangements for policy appraisal, including an assessment of impact on relevant categories, public consultation, public access to information and services, monitoring and timetables.

4. The new Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (see paragraph 5 below) will be invited to consult and to advise on the scope for defining, in Westminster legislation, rights supplementary to those in the European Convention on Human Rights, to reflect the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland, drawing as appropriate on international instruments and experience. These additional rights to reflect the principles of mutual respect for the identity and ethos of both communities and parity of esteem, and - taken together with the ECHR - to constitute a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Among the issues for consideration by the Commission will be:

- the formulation of a general obligation on government and public bodies fully to respect, on the basis of equality of treatment, the identity and ethos of both communities in Northern Ireland; and
- a clear formulation of the rights not to be discriminated against and to equality of opportunity in both the public and private sectors.

### **New Institutions in Northern Ireland**

5. A new Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, with membership from Northern Ireland reflecting the community balance, will be established by Westminster legislation, independent of Government, with an extended and enhanced role beyond that currently exercised by the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights, to include keeping under review the adequacy and effectiveness of laws and practices, making recommendations to Government as necessary; providing information and promoting awareness of human rights; considering draft legislation referred to them by the new Assembly; and, in appropriate cases, bringing court proceedings or providing assistance to individuals doing so.

6. Subject to the outcome of public consultation currently underway, the British Government intends a new statutory Equality Commission to replace the Fair Employment Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission (NI), the Commission for Racial Equality (NI) and the Disability Council. Such a unified Commission will advise on, validate and monitor the statutory obligation and will investigate complaints of default.

7. It would be open to a new Northern Ireland Assembly to consider bringing together its responsibilities for these matters into a dedicated Department of Equality.

8. These improvements will build on existing protections in Westminster legislation in respect of the judiciary, the system of justice and policing.

### **Comparable Steps by the Irish Government**

9. The Irish Government will also take steps to further strengthen the protection of human rights in its jurisdiction. The Government will, taking account of the work of the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution and the Report of the Constitution Review Group, bring forward measures to strengthen and underpin the constitutional protection of human rights. These proposals will draw on the European Convention on Human Rights and other international legal instruments in the field of human rights and the question of the incorporation of the ECHR will be further examined in this context. The measures brought forward would ensure at least an equivalent level of protection of human rights as will pertain in Northern Ireland. In addition, the Irish Government will:

- establish a Human Rights Commission with a mandate and remit equivalent to that within Northern Ireland;

- proceed with arrangements as quickly as possible to ratify the Council of Europe Framework Convention on National Minorities (already ratified by the UK);
- implement enhanced employment equality legislation;
- introduce equal status legislation; and
- continue to take further active steps to demonstrate its respect for the different traditions in the island of Ireland.

### **A Joint Committee**

10. It is envisaged that there would be a joint committee of representatives of the two Human Rights Commissions, North and South, as a forum for consideration of human rights issues in the island of Ireland. The joint committee will consider, among other matters, the possibility of establishing a charter, open to signature by all democratic political parties, reflecting and endorsing agreed measures for the protection of the fundamental rights of everyone living in the island of Ireland.

### **Reconciliation and Victims of Violence**

11. The participants believe that it is essential to acknowledge and address the suffering of the victims of violence as a necessary element of reconciliation. They look forward to the results of the work of the Northern Ireland Victims Commission.

12. It is recognised that victims have a right to remember as well as to contribute to a changed society. The achievement of a peaceful and just society would be the true memorial to the victims of violence. The participants particularly recognise that young people from areas affected by the troubles face particular difficulties and will support the development of special community-based initiatives based on international best practice. The provision of services that are supportive and sensitive to the needs of victims will also be a critical element and that support will need to be channelled through both statutory and community-based voluntary organisations facilitating locally-based self-help and support networks. This will require the allocation of sufficient resources, including statutory funding as necessary, to meet the needs of victims and to provide for community-based support programmes.

13. The participants recognise and value the work being done by many organisations to develop reconciliation and mutual understanding and respect between and within communities and traditions, in Northern Ireland and between North and South, and

they see such work as having a vital role in consolidating peace and political agreement. Accordingly, they pledge their continuing support to such organisations and will positively examine the case for enhanced financial assistance for the work of reconciliation. An essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education and mixed housing.

## **RIGHTS, SAFEGUARDS AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

### **ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES**

1. Pending the devolution of powers to a new Northern Ireland Assembly, the British Government will pursue broad policies for sustained economic growth and stability in Northern Ireland and for promoting social inclusion, including in particular community development and the advancement of women in public life.

2. Subject to the public consultation currently under way, the British Government will make rapid progress with:

(i) a new regional development strategy for Northern Ireland, for consideration in due course by a the Assembly, tackling the problems of a divided society and social cohesion in urban, rural and border areas, protecting and enhancing the environment, producing new approaches to transport issues, strengthening the physical infrastructure of the region, developing the advantages and resources of rural areas and rejuvenating major urban centres;

(ii) a new economic development strategy for Northern Ireland, for consideration in due course by a the Assembly, which would provide for short and medium term economic planning linked as appropriate to the regional development strategy; and

(iii) measures on employment equality included in the recent White Paper ("Partnership for Equality") and covering the extension and strengthening of anti-discrimination legislation, a review of the national security aspects of the present fair employment legislation at the earliest possible time, a new more focused Targeting Social Need initiative and a range of measures aimed at combating unemployment and progressively eliminating the differential in unemployment rates between the two communities by targeting objective need.

3. All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.

4. In the context of active consideration currently being given to the UK signing the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the British Government will in particular in relation to the Irish language, where appropriate and where people so desire it:

- take resolute action to promote the language;
- facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life where there is appropriate demand;
- seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language;
- make provision for liaising with the Irish language community, representing their views to public authorities and investigating complaints;
- place a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with current provision for integrated education;
- explore urgently with the relevant British authorities, and in co-operation with the Irish broadcasting authorities, the scope for achieving more widespread availability of Teilifis na Gaeilge in Northern Ireland;
- seek more effective ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in Northern Ireland; and
- encourage the parties to secure agreement that this commitment will be sustained by a new Assembly in a way which takes account of the desires and sensitivities of the community.

5. All participants acknowledge the sensitivity of the use of symbols and emblems for public purposes, and the need in particular in creating the new institutions to ensure that such symbols and emblems are used in a manner which promotes mutual respect rather than division. Arrangements will be made to monitor this issue and consider what action might be required.

## **DECOMMISSIONING**

1. Participants recall their agreement in the Procedural Motion adopted on 24 September 1997 "that the resolution of the decommissioning issue is an indispensable part of the process of negotiation", and also recall the provisions of paragraph 25 of Strand 1 above.
2. They note the progress made by the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning and the Governments in developing schemes which can represent a workable basis for achieving the decommissioning of illegally-held arms in the possession of paramilitary groups.
3. All participants accordingly reaffirm their commitment to the total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations. They also confirm their intention to continue to work constructively and in good faith with the Independent Commission, and to use any influence they may have, to achieve the decommissioning of all paramilitary arms within two years following endorsement in referendums North and South of the agreement and in the context of the implementation of the overall settlement.
4. The Independent Commission will monitor, review and verify progress on decommissioning of illegal arms, and will report to both Governments at regular intervals.
6. Both Governments will take all necessary steps to facilitate the decommissioning process to include bringing the relevant schemes into force by the end of June.

## **SECURITY**

1. The participants note that the development of a peaceful environment on the basis of this agreement can and should mean a normalisation of security arrangements and practices.
2. The British Government will make progress towards the objective of as early a return as possible to normal security arrangements in Northern Ireland, consistent with the level of threat and with a published overall strategy, dealing with:
  - (i) the reduction of the numbers and role of the Armed Forces deployed in Northern Ireland to levels compatible with a normal peaceful society;
  - (ii) the removal of security installations;
  - (iii) the removal of emergency powers in Northern Ireland; and
  - (iv) other measures appropriate to and compatible with a normal peaceful society.



3. The Secretary of State will consult regularly on progress, and the response to any continuing paramilitary activity, with the Irish Government and the political parties, as appropriate.

4. The British Government will continue its consultation on firearms regulation and control on the basis of the document published on 2 April 1998.

5. The Irish Government will initiate a wide-ranging review of the Offences Against the State Acts 1939-85 with a view to both reform and dispensing with those elements no longer required as circumstances permit.

### **POLICING AND JUSTICE**

1. The participants recognise that policing is a central issue in any society. They equally recognise that Northern Ireland's history of deep divisions has made it highly emotive, with great hurt suffered and sacrifices made by many individuals and their families, including those in the RUC and other public servants. They believe that the agreement provides the opportunity for a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole. They also believe that this agreement offers a unique opportunity to bring about a new political dispensation which will recognise the full and equal legitimacy and worth of the identities, senses of allegiance and ethos of all sections of the community in Northern Ireland. They consider that this opportunity should inform and underpin the development of a police service representative in terms of the make-up of the community as a whole and which, in a peaceful environment, should be routinely unarmed.

2. The participants believe it essential that policing structures and arrangements are such that the police service is professional, effective and efficient, fair and impartial, free from partisan political control; accountable, both under the law for its actions and to the community it serves; representative of the society it polices, and operates within a coherent and co-operative criminal justice system, which conforms with human rights norms. The participants also believe that those structures and arrangements must be capable of maintaining law and order including responding effectively to crime and to any terrorist threat and to public order problems. A police service which cannot do so will fail to win public confidence and acceptance. They believe that any such structures and arrangements should be capable of delivering a policing service, in constructive and inclusive partnerships with the community at all levels, and with

the maximum delegation of authority and responsibility, consistent with the foregoing principles. These arrangements should be based on principles of protection of human rights and professional integrity and should be unambiguously accepted and actively supported by the entire community.

3. An independent Commission will be established to make recommendations for future policing arrangements in Northern Ireland including means of encouraging widespread community support for these arrangements within the agreed framework of principles reflected in the paragraphs above and in accordance with the terms of reference at Annex A. The Commission will be broadly representative with expert and international representation among its membership and will be asked to consult widely and to report no later than Summer 1999.

4. The participants believe that the aims of the criminal justice system are to:

- deliver a fair and impartial system of justice to the community;
- be responsive to the community's concerns, and encouraging community involvement where appropriate;
- have the confidence of all parts of the community; and
- deliver justice efficiently and effectively.

5. There will be a parallel wide-ranging review of criminal justice (other than policing and those aspects of the system relating to the emergency legislation) to be carried out by the British Government through a mechanism with an independent element, in consultation with the political parties and others. The review will commence as soon as possible, will include wide consultation, and a report will be made to the Secretary of State no later than Autumn 1999. Terms of Reference are attached at Annex B.

6. Implementation of the recommendations arising from both reviews will be discussed with the political parties and with the Irish Government.

7. The participants also note that the British Government remains ready in principle, with the broad support of the political parties, and after consultation, as appropriate, with the Irish Government, in the context of ongoing implementation of the relevant recommendations, to devolve responsibility for policing and justice issues.

## ANNEX A

### COMMISSION ON POLICING FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

#### Terms of Reference

Taking account of the principles on policing as set out in the agreement, the Commission will inquire into policing in Northern Ireland and, on the basis of its findings, bring forward proposals for future policing structures and arrangements, including means of encouraging widespread community support for those arrangements.

Its proposals on policing should be designed to ensure that policing arrangements, including composition, recruitment, training, culture, ethos and symbols, are such that in a new approach Northern Ireland has a police service that can enjoy widespread support from, and is seen as an integral part of, the community as a whole.

Its proposals should include recommendations covering any issues such as re-training, job placement and educational and professional development required in the transition to policing in a peaceful society.

Its proposals should also be designed to ensure that:

- the police service is structured, managed and resourced so that it can be effective in discharging its full range of functions (including proposals on any necessary arrangements for the transition to policing in a normal peaceful society);
- the police service is delivered in constructive and inclusive partnerships with the community at all levels with the maximum delegation of authority and responsibility;
- the legislative and constitutional framework requires the impartial discharge of policing functions and conforms with internationally accepted norms in relation to policing standards;
- the police operate within a clear framework of accountability to the law and the community they serve, so:
  - they are constrained by, accountable to and act only within the law;
  - their powers and procedures, like the law they enforce, are clearly established and publicly available;
  - there are open, accessible and independent means of investigating and adjudicating upon complaints against the police;

- there are clearly established arrangements enabling local people, and their political representatives, to articulate their views and concerns about policing and to establish publicly policing priorities and influence policing policies, subject to safeguards to ensure police impartiality and freedom from partisan political control;
- there are arrangements for accountability and for the effective, efficient and economic use of resources in achieving policing objectives;
- there are means to ensure independent professional scrutiny and inspection of the police service to ensure that proper professional standards are maintained;
- the scope for structured co-operation with the Garda Síochána and other police forces is addressed; and
- the management of public order events which can impose exceptional demands on policing resources is also addressed.

The Commission should focus on policing issues, but if it identifies other aspects of the criminal justice system relevant to its work on policing, including the role of the police in prosecution, then it should draw the attention of the Government to those matters.

The Commission should consult widely, including with non-governmental expert organisations, and through such focus groups as they consider it appropriate to establish.

The Government proposes to establish the Commission as soon as possible, with the aim of it starting work as soon as possible and publishing its final report by Summer 1999.

## **ANNEX B**

### **REVIEW OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

#### **Terms of Reference**

Taking account of the aims of the criminal justice system as set out in the Agreement, the review will address the structure, management and resourcing of publicly funded elements of the criminal justice system and will bring forward proposals for future criminal justice arrangements (other than policing and those aspects of the system relating to emergency legislation, which the Government is considering separately) covering such issues as:

- the arrangements for making appointments to the judiciary and magistracy, and safeguards for protecting their independence;
- the arrangements for the organisation and supervision of the prosecution process, and for safeguarding its independence;
- measures to improve the responsiveness and accountability of, and any lay participation in the criminal justice system;
- mechanisms for addressing law reform;
- the scope for structured co-operation between the criminal justice agencies on both parts of the island; and
- the structure and organisation of criminal justice functions that might be devolved to an Assembly, including the possibility of establishing a Department of Justice, while safeguarding the essential independence of many of the key functions in this area.

The Government proposes to commence the review as soon as possible, consulting with the political parties and others, including non-governmental expert organisations. The review will be completed by Autumn 1999.

### **PRISONERS**

1. Both Governments will put in place mechanisms to provide for an accelerated programme for the release of prisoners, including transferred prisoners, convicted of scheduled offences in Northern Ireland or, in the case of those sentenced outside Northern Ireland, similar offences (referred to hereafter as qualifying prisoners). Any such arrangements will protect the rights of individual prisoners under national and international law.
2. Prisoners affiliated to organisations which have not established or are not maintaining a complete and unequivocal ceasefire will not benefit from the arrangements. The situation in this regard will be kept under review.
3. Both Governments will complete a review process within a fixed time frame and set prospective release dates for all qualifying prisoners. The review process would provide for the advance of the release dates of qualifying prisoners while allowing account to be taken of the seriousness of the offences for which the person was convicted and the need to protect the community. In addition, the intention would be that should the circumstances allow it, any qualifying prisoners who remained in

custody two years after the commencement of the scheme would be released at that point.

4. The Governments will seek to enact the appropriate legislation to give effect to these arrangements by the end of June 1998.

5. The Governments continue to recognise the importance of measures to facilitate the reintegration of prisoners into the community by providing support both prior to and after release, including assistance directed towards availing of employment opportunities, re-training and/or re-skilling, and further education.

## **VALIDATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

### **VALIDATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

1. The two Governments will as soon as possible sign a new British-Irish Agreement replacing the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, embodying understandings on constitutional issues and affirming their solemn commitment to support and, where appropriate, implement the agreement reached by the participants in the negotiations which shall be annexed to the British-Irish Agreement.

2. Each Government will organise a referendum on 22 May 1998. Subject to Parliamentary approval, a consultative referendum in Northern Ireland, organised under the terms of the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc.) Act 1996, will address the question: "Do you support the agreement reached in the multi-party talks on Northern Ireland and set out in Command Paper 3883?". The Irish Government will introduce and support in the Oireachtas a Bill to amend the Constitution as described in paragraph 2 of the section "Constitutional Issues" and in Annex B, as follows: (a) to amend Articles 2 and 3 as described in paragraph 8.1 in Annex B above and (b) to amend Article 29 to permit the Government to ratify the new British-Irish Agreement. On passage by the Oireachtas, the Bill will be put to referendum.

3. If majorities of those voting in each of the referendums support this agreement, the Governments will then introduce and support, in their respective Parliaments, such legislation as may be necessary to give effect to all aspects of this agreement, and will take whatever ancillary steps as may be required including the holding of elections on 25 June, subject to parliamentary approval, to the Assembly, which would meet initially in a "shadow" mode. The establishment of the North-South Ministerial Council, implementation bodies, the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish

Intergovernmental Conference and the assumption by the Assembly of its legislative and executive powers will take place at the same time on the entry into force of the British-Irish Agreement.

4. In the interim, aspects of the implementation of the multi-party agreement will be reviewed at meetings of those parties relevant in the particular case (taking into account, once Assembly elections have been held, the results of those elections), under the chairmanship of the British Government or the two Governments, as may be appropriate; and representatives of the two Governments and all relevant parties may meet under independent chairmanship to review implementation of the agreement as a whole.

#### **Review procedures following implementation**

5. Each institution may, at any time, review any problems that may arise in its operation and, where no other institution is affected, take remedial action in consultation as necessary with the relevant Government or Governments. It will be for each institution to determine its own procedures for review.

6. If there are difficulties in the operation of a particular institution, which have implications for another institution, they may review their operations separately and jointly and agree on remedial action to be taken under their respective authorities.

7. If difficulties arise which require remedial action across the range of institutions, or otherwise require amendment of the British-Irish Agreement or relevant legislation, the process of review will fall to the two Governments in consultation with the parties in the Assembly. Each Government will be responsible for action in its own jurisdiction.

8. Notwithstanding the above, each institution will publish an annual report on its operations. In addition, the two Governments and the parties in the Assembly will convene a conference 4 years after the agreement comes into effect, to review and report on its operation.

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN  
AND NORTHERN IRELAND  
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND**

**The British and Irish Governments:**

Welcoming the strong commitment to the Agreement reached on 10th April 1998 by themselves and other participants in the multi-party talks and set out in Annex 1 to this Agreement (hereinafter "the Multi-Party Agreement");

Considering that the Multi-Party Agreement offers an opportunity for a new beginning in relationships within Northern Ireland, within the island of Ireland and between the peoples of these islands;

Wishing to develop still further the unique relationship between their peoples and the close co-operation between their countries as friendly neighbours and as partners in the European Union;

Reaffirming their total commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence which have been fundamental to the multi-party talks;

Reaffirming their commitment to the principles of partnership, equality and mutual respect and to the protection of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights in their respective jurisdictions;

Have agreed as follows:

**ARTICLE 1**

**The two Governments:**

(i) recognise the legitimacy of whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland with regard to its status, whether they prefer to continue to support the Union with Great Britain or a sovereign united Ireland;

(ii) recognise that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish, accepting that this right must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland;



(iii) acknowledge that while a substantial section of the people in Northern Ireland share the legitimate wish of a majority of the people of the island of Ireland for a united Ireland, the present wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, freely exercised and legitimate, is to maintain the Union and accordingly, that Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom reflects and relies upon that wish; and that it would be wrong to make any change in the status of Northern Ireland save with the consent of a majority of its people;

(iv) affirm that, if in the future, the people of the island of Ireland exercise their right of self-determination on the basis set out in sections (i) and (ii) above to bring about a united Ireland, it will be a binding obligation on both Governments to introduce and support in their respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to that wish;

(v) affirm that whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, the power of the sovereign government with jurisdiction there shall be exercised with rigorous impartiality on behalf of all the people in the diversity of their identities and traditions and shall be founded on the principles of full respect for, and equality of, civil, political, social and cultural rights, of freedom from discrimination for all citizens, and of parity of esteem and of just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos and aspirations of both communities;

(vi) recognise the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments and would not be affected by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland.

## **ARTICLE 2**

The two Governments affirm their solemn commitment to support, and where appropriate implement, the provisions of the Multi-Party Agreement. In particular there shall be established in accordance with the provisions of the Multi-Party Agreement immediately on the entry into force of this Agreement, the following institutions:

- (i) a North/South Ministerial Council;
- (ii) the implementation bodies referred to in paragraph 9 (ii) of the section entitled "Strand Two" of the Multi-Party Agreement;
- (iii) a British-Irish Council;
- (iv) a British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference.

### **ARTICLE 3**

- (1) This Agreement shall replace the Agreement between the British and Irish Governments done at Hillsborough on 15th November 1985 which shall cease to have effect on entry into force of this Agreement.
- (2) The Intergovernmental Conference established by Article 2 of the aforementioned Agreement done on 15th November 1985 shall cease to exist on entry into force of this Agreement.

### **ARTICLE 4**

- (1) It shall be a requirement for entry into force of this Agreement that:
    - (a) British legislation shall have been enacted for the purpose of implementing the provisions of Annex A to the section entitled "Constitutional Issues" of the Multi-Party Agreement;
    - (b) the amendments to the Constitution of Ireland set out in Annex B to the section entitled "Constitutional Issues" of the Multi-Party Agreement shall have been approved by Referendum;
    - (c) such legislation shall have been enacted as may be required to establish the institutions referred to in Article 2 of this Agreement.
  - (2) Each Government shall notify the other in writing of the completion, so far as it is concerned, of the requirements for entry into force of this Agreement. This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the receipt of the later of the two notifications.
  - (3) Immediately on entry into force of this Agreement, the Irish Government shall ensure that the amendments to the Constitution of Ireland set out in Annex B to the section entitled "Constitutional Issues" of the Multi-Party Agreement take effect.
- In witness thereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto by the respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

Done in two originals at Belfast on the 10th day of April 1998.

Tony Blair Marjorie ('Mo') Mowlam  For the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Bertie Ahern David Andrews  For the Government of Ireland
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#### ANNEX 1

The Agreement Reached  
in the Multi-Party Talks

#### ANNEX 2

Declaration on the Provisions of  
Paragraph (vi) of Article 1  
In Relationship to Citizenship

The British and Irish Governments declare that it is their joint understanding that the term "the people of Northern Ireland" in paragraph (vi) of Article 1 of this Agreement means, for the purposes of giving effect to this provision, all persons born in Northern Ireland and having, at the time of their birth, at least one parent who is a British citizen, an Irish citizen or is otherwise entitled to reside in Northern Ireland without any restriction on their period of residence.

