



**RECONCILIATION AND COMMUNITY
THE FUTURE OF PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Report of the Belfast Conference

**Belfast, Northern Ireland
June 6-8, 1995**

cosponsored by

**The Project on Justice in Times of Transition
of The Foundation for a Civil Society**

University of Ulster

INCORE

Mary Albon, Rapporteur

The conference discussed in this report, “Reconciliation and Community: The Future of Peace in Northern Ireland,” was held at the Europa Hotel in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on June 6-8, 1995. The conference was cosponsored by The Project on Justice in Times of Transition of the Foundation for a Civil Society, the University of Ulster and INCORE (Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity). Major funding for the conference was provided by the American Ireland Fund, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Compton Foundation, the European Commission Offices of Ireland, the European Commission Offices of Northern Ireland, the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Mutual of America Life Insurance Company, the National Endowment for Democracy, the Northern Ireland Office, the Rockefeller Family & Associates, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the United States Information Agency, the Winston Foundation for World Peace and anonymous donors. The principal organizers of the conference were Paul Arthur of the University of Ulster and Timothy Phillips and Eric Nonacs of The Project on Justice in Times of Transition of The Foundation for a Civil Society. Special thanks go to Professor Trevor Smith, John Darby, James LeMoyné, Project Planning International, Tinaiste Dick Spring, Sir David Fell, Ambassador Princeton Lyman, Nancy Soderberg, Jim Glenn, Dennis Sandberg, Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, Ambassador Martin Indyk, Maurice Hayes, Wendy Luers, George Biddle, Alex Borraine, Kathy Stephens and Paddy Clark.

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RECONCILIATION AND COMMUNITY THE FUTURE OF PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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Introduction

After 25 years of violence, the roots of which are embedded in a centuries-old conflict, Northern Ireland has reached a historic turning point. Virtually all parties to the conflict have exhibited a new willingness to work together toward a political settlement based on compromise that could serve as the basis for lasting peace. In 1994, both the republican and loyalist paramilitaries put down their arms. While these cease-fires, which have lasted for over a year, may have seemed sudden and unexpected, they were in fact part of a series of incremental steps toward peace. The sources of these efforts were diverse, and included negotiations between the British and Irish governments, between the Northern Ireland ministers and the political parties, and between John Hume of the Social Democrat and Labour Party and Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein; the work of Northern Ireland religious and nongovernmental leaders; and international encouragement and goodwill, especially on the part of the United States.

As a contribution to the growing momentum of peace in Northern Ireland, an extraordinary conference on “Reconciliation and Community: The Future of Peace in Northern Ireland” was convened in Belfast on June 6-8, 1995, to engage over 300 leaders from all sectors of Northern Ireland society in open dialogue on the future of their country. They were joined by political leaders, leading policymakers and other experts from Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, El Salvador, Israel, Poland, South Africa, Spain and the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organization, who shared their own experiences with building peace and national reconciliation. Representatives from the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom also took part in the discussions. This remarkable forum was sponsored by The Project on Justice in Times of Transition of The Foundation for a Civil Society, in conjunction with the University of Ulster and INCORE (Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity), a joint program of the University of Ulster and the United Nations University.

The conference participants were welcomed by Professor Trevor Smith, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ulster; Michael Ancram, MP, Northern Ireland Minister of Political Development, and Dick Spring, TD, Tínaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ireland, who expressed a common theme of hope and cooperation in the effort to bring peace to Northern Ireland and a better future to all of its citizens. They urged the Northern Ireland audience to seek inspiration and practical lessons in the experience of other countries that had successfully faced the challenges of halting violence and bringing

peace to their people. “The most important lesson,” according to Mr. Spring, “is that this journey can be made.”

The three speakers agreed that the process of building peace and political stability cannot be allowed to falter for lack of will, and emphasized that all parts of Northern Ireland’s divided community must come together in support of a plan for peace if it is to succeed. Furthermore, a political settlement cannot be imposed on Northern Ireland from above, but must be based upon the democratic principle of consent. To achieve this, Mr. Spring said, “we must find a basis for consensus between the unionist and nationalist population both within Northern Ireland and on the island as a whole. We have to devise new arrangements which both communities can fully assent to, and feel that they equally own.” Everyone must work to find areas of agreement, with a particular focus on improving living standards for all and encouraging economic and social cooperation between North and South to promote mutual confidence and goodwill. Mr. Smith added that Northern Ireland is entering a phase of constitution-building with the objective of restoring authentic politics and creating an appropriate interface between the state, society and the economy.

The key to the progress that has already been made, the speakers agreed, is a willingness to address the fundamentals of the conflict in new ways. “Well established political positions on all sides, formulated and honed in the fires of violent adversity, now need to be revisited and re-examined,” Mr. Ancram said. “Flexibility on all sides will be required if change for the better for everyone is to be achieved.” Mr. Spring added that “compromise and flexibility are not failings.” Rather, they reflect respect for the rights, beliefs and aspirations of others.

There are three conditions for peace, Mr. Ancram said. First, the politics of confrontation must be replaced by the politics of inclusion. Second, Northern Ireland must move beyond political and historical rhetoric and face the present political realities that need to be addressed. Finally, “we must accept that the process of peace is not a market place in which trade-offs and bargains may be struck, but rather a responsibility on each of us to create by our actions the environment in which that which hitherto has appeared impossible can be made possible.”

While the British and Irish governments cannot coerce the parties into a settlement, Mr. Spring said, they can and must encourage a new framework of cooperation and partnership in which neither the Protestant nor the Catholic community is in a position of privilege. Mr. Ancram said that the two governments must develop, in agreement with Northern Ireland's political parties, political and constitutional structures that are accepted by the entire community because they serve the common good.

Mr. Spring reported that the Irish government wants to see certain key elements in the new arrangements, including “balanced constitutional change on both sides; interlocking and mutually

supportive new arrangements to address relationships within Northern Ireland, between both parts of Ireland and between both islands; and, finally, added protection and enhancement for human rights.”

The British government supports dialogue as an important precursor to roundtable negotiations, Mr. Ancram said, but he emphasized that it must be met with genuine indicators that the commitment to peace is real. He called for a complete halt to paramilitary intimidation and violence to help create trust and confidence within the community. He also stressed that the right to mourn for the victims is essential, and urged those who have information on the fates of individuals who disappeared during the Troubles to provide it to their families.

The Challenge of Peace in a Changing World

Oscar Arias, Nobel laureate in peace and former President of Costa Rica, set the tone for the conference in his keynote address by challenging the people of Northern Ireland to make peace real and lasting. While acknowledging that such a task is difficult, he offered a testament to the ability of people to change and to abandon violence for peace and the common good. “It is not easy. But you will see that others have done it and are doing it today, under the most difficult conditions,” he said. “In the face of deep differences and harsh memories, they have decided that they share one broad roof and must learn to live under it together. They seek common cause in a community of common goals. Can there be any doubt that this is what the vast majority of your people, Protestant and Catholic, want?”

In his own country, after years of strife and a brief but deadly civil war, Costa Rica abolished its army and created a civilian police force in 1948. “Instead of investing in weapons and barracks, we began to invest purposely and massively in education, health care, housing and welfare. Instead of emphasizing our differences, we began to celebrate compromise, community, democracy and freedom. We have not been at war, internally or externally, since that time.”

Costa Rica was long an island of peace and democratic stability in wartorn Central America, where more than a generation has been lost to war, death, torture and exile. When he took office in 1986, President Arias brought with him the conviction that the violence had to stop, and that only Central Americans could end it. “I fought for peace with a single certainty as my guide: I never doubted that, given a chance, the vast majority of Central Americans wanted peace and that no matter how profound their differences and how bitter their memories, they and their leaders had the capacity and the desire to stop the shooting and begin the hard work of reconciliation.”

President Arias was warned that the task was impossible, and that negotiating with guerillas would risk democracy. “As we sought to strengthen reason, another act of violence would devastate a neighborhood or erase another handful of innocent lives. Army generals and hardened guerilla

commanders had to face what were, to them, unthinkable steps of disarming, of re-entering civilian life, of admitting responsibility for their acts of terror before the process of forgiveness, if not forgetting, could begin. Hundreds of thousands of mines, rockets, bombs, bullets and rifles had to be collected and destroyed. And in every home and village people had to learn to hope once again--and to act on that hope." It was a difficult process, not without setbacks, but peace exists today in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Panama, and after a 34-year civil war, Guatemala is also making progress toward peace.

"The change is deep," President Arias asserted. "No one, anywhere, who lifts a gun in Central America today and calls for war has any chance of winning a large following. Ballots have replaced bullets. Investment is growing. Murder and torture are no longer the leading causes of death. Our young people study agriculture, engineering and architecture, rather than infantry tactics, sabotage and fields of fire. We are no longer exiles in our own hearts and homes."

Violence represents the failure of politics, he said. It negates compromise and community. He urged the people of Northern Ireland to reject violence, and instead draw on their shared Christian heritage to work together to build tolerance and peace. "Turn on your televisions and watch the tragedy of Bosnia. Seize the moment now offered to you to avoid such a tragedy and build a new future. Push for peace and you will find the world ready to join and push with you."

He issued a special challenge to the paramilitaries and those who have committed acts of political violence:

The ceasefire has held since last August--nearly a year. Make it permanent. Not one more killing for politics--when politics now so patently demands an end to killing. Those of you who have weapons, face now the future that must come, when you will give up those weapons that no longer defend you or advance your goals. Be prepared to be called "traitor" by some. Be prepared to not easily be pardoned by others. Be prepared to feel vulnerable when you step into public life again without a loaded pistol in your pocket. And then be prepared, one day, to tell your children how you gave them a future by putting down your gun and reaching out your hands to build life rather than to take it.

Central Americans have learned that peace demands a strong and lasting commitment, President Arias said. "We have come to understand that true peace may not be achieved for many years to come. But we persist in our quest, because we know--as you do--that peace is our only option."

Building Trust: The Negotiation Process

Prospects for peace in Northern Ireland hinge on the success of a range of negotiations. However, as Harold Saunders, Director of International Affairs at the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, pointed out, negotiations are part of a larger political process, and their outcome must receive popular legitimization in order to be effective. "The development of trusting relationships among negotiators is important. But the development of a political strategy for changing relationships among citizens outside government is

critical.” Often society can take the lead through what Mr. Saunders termed the “public peace process.” Thus it is vital to take into consideration during the negotiation process the shape relations between the two communities will take during peacetime, and to take steps that strengthen civil society.

The experiences of South Africa and the Middle East shed light on the process of negotiating peace. Both examples underscore the importance of taking advantage of every opportunity for discussion that arises between the two sides--whether in public, in private or in secret--to keep the process moving forward.

The South African Experience

Prior to the elections of April 1994 in which Nelson Mandela was elected to lead a government of national unity, South Africa had a minority-controlled government viewed by most as illegitimate and criminal. The legitimacy of popular will lay with the anti-apartheid opposition. On both sides there existed deep-seated mistrust based on centuries of racial discrimination, decades of government repression under apartheid and violent protest against it. Nevertheless, South Africa’s situation was not irresolvable, according to Roelof Meyer, South African Minister of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, who served as the De Klerk government’s chief negotiator in the multiparty negotiations preceding the landmark democratic elections of 1994. Mr. Meyer credited South Africa’s leaders for having the courage to take the difficult steps that led toward peace and the establishment of genuine democracy: Mr. Mandela, who worked for peace without voicing bitterness about the past, and F.W. De Klerk, who knew that entering into negotiations with the majority opposition meant surrendering power.

Dullah Omar, South African Minister of Defense, who defended numerous victims of apartheid in political and human rights trials under the prior regime, said that the African National Congress (ANC) had envisioned a two-phase process of negotiations, which was spelled out in the Organization of African Unity’s Harare Declaration of 1989. In the first phase, the government would have to meet a series of preconditions, such as releasing all political prisoners and ending the state of emergency and political trials. Once these aims were achieved, the opposition would be willing to move on to constitutional negotiations to set the groundwork for the transition. However, the ANC soon discovered that this orderly approach was not realistic, and that flexibility was a necessity. Instead, the negotiation process began with “talks about talks,” and about both sides’ preconditions. The two sides had to clarify the goals of the negotiations and discuss constitutional aims before achieving all preconditions. Together they had to work out what kind of state the new South Africa would be. Some preconditions, such as the government's insistence that ANC arms caches be destroyed, were not resolved until the very end of the

negotiation process; however, Mr. Omar emphasized, this did not prevent a broad interim constitutional settlement, which helped to create conditions for the ultimate resolution of even the most difficult issues.

There were four phases to the South African negotiation process, according to Mr. Meyer. In the first phase, the two sides got to know each other. He stressed how important it was not to make it impossible for the two sides to come together. In February 1990, the government lifted the ban on the African National Congress, and the ANC in turn announced its willingness to talk to the government.

In the second, preparatory phase, the agenda for talks was set. Both sides put their preconditions for real negotiations on the table. For the government, that meant the termination of armed struggle; for the ANC, the release of all political prisoners. The actual negotiations took place in the third phase, which began in late 1991. Mr. Meyer reported that it took a good two years to conclude the constitutional negotiations, including a major interruption of the talks. The final phase--implementation of the agreement--is a longer-term process that is still under way.

Mr. Omar and Mr. Meyer were in agreement on the keys to successful negotiations:

- It is important to recognize that negotiations are part of a larger process of building peace in which one step leads to another. Both sides must remain committed throughout the entire process.
- Both sides must abandon inflexibility at the beginning of the process and display a willingness to compromise while retaining clarity of principle. Each side must clearly define its own goals, but must also show flexibility in determining how to achieve them. In South Africa, this attitude helped shift the conflict from the arena of armed struggle to the negotiation table.
- Each side must also find some goals in common with the other side. In South Africa, the two sides learned to work together toward the shared aim of establishing democracy for the sake of the whole country.
- Every opportunity to advance the peace process that arises should be seized.
- While the major parties to the dispute share the great responsibility of steering the negotiation process and keeping it on track, they must also recognize that they are not the only actors. All parties, even the smallest, must have a role in managing the process.
- Mistrust must be addressed not only at the outset of the process, but also throughout the negotiations. It is essential to keep lines of communication open. Mr. Meyer described how South Africa overcame an impasse when the multiparty talks came to a halt. He said that the talks were put back on track by means of a dialogue that began on a personal basis, initially behind closed doors, between Cyril Ramaphosa of the ANC and himself on behalf of the De Klerk government. The process took three months, but helped to build understanding and trust on both sides. Even when they disagreed, the negotiators still respected and trusted each other.

- **Good will, good faith and the desire to succeed are important, but in order to achieve them, demonization of the other side must be reversed, especially among ordinary people. In South Africa, Mr. Omar noted, there was demonization at many levels. Portraying the government as a white racist minority regime, for example, was useful for mobilizing the opposition during the struggle, but later this approach had to be tempered in order to gain support for negotiations.**
- **One of the most difficult parts of the negotiation process is negotiating with your own constituents. It is important to prevent a gap from developing between the leadership and its mass support base. The constituency must be kept regularly informed of developments. Mr. Omar said that although this is cumbersome and may slow things down, the constituency should participate in the negotiation process because it is important to the reconciliation process. He said that the ANC held local meetings and sought popular mandates. Nevertheless, the leadership still had to be bold and lead.**
- **The two sides must work together to ensure successes in order to keep the momentum of the negotiations going. Facing only problems and roadblocks can demoralize the negotiators.**
- **It is important to set target dates and worked extremely hard to keep to them.**
- **Both the international community and the international political environment can contribute to the momentum of the peace process. In South Africa, support from abroad for the framework for negotiations helped the ANC gain domestic support for the process.**
- **During the negotiations, and throughout the peace process as a whole, both parties must learn “not to throw the toys out of the cot.” Mr. Omar said that this is a lesson that South Africa is still learning.**

The South African peace process was not without its problems. An all-inclusive agreement could not be achieved because the Inkatha Freedom Party and the right-wing parties left the process at several points and were not effective parts of the constitutional process. But building peace and reconciliation is an ongoing process, and all leaders of races now manage the country together, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

The Middle East Peace Process

The Middle East peace process is particularly difficult and complex, according to Alexander Koll, Political Counselor in the Israeli Embassy to the United Kingdom, both because of the nature of the conflict and the magnitude of the negotiation process. First, the Israelis must conduct separate bilateral talks with the Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese and Jordanians. Once all of these talks are concluded with a peace treaty, multilateral talks will be necessary to ensure a complete change of atmosphere throughout the region in order to maintain long-term peace. Hasan Abdel Rahman, Representative of the Palestine

Liberation Organization (PLO) to the United States, agreed that peace in the Middle East must be comprehensive to be lasting. In his view, successes at the Palestinian-Israeli level and the regional level reinforce each other.

There is no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Mr. Rahman asserted, only a political one. For a long time this was a minority view within the PLO, and some members had even been killed for accepting the principle that mutual recognition by Palestinians and Israelis is a prerequisite for achieving peace. Palestinians view Israel as a colonial state, which long made it impossible for them to deal with the government that had dismantled Palestinian society. Israelis, Mr. Koll said, did not want to negotiate with the PLO because they considered it a terrorist organization pledged to the destruction of the Israeli state. But each side must legitimize the other, Mr. Rahman emphasized, and the two foundations for a successful peace process is mutual recognition of each other's national identity and national rights. The Israeli-Palestinian accord signed by Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat in Washington in September 1993 accomplished this and made serious peace negotiations possible. For the first time, Israel agreed to negotiate with the Palestinians directly instead of through other countries.

The Washington accord emerged from a series of secret talks between Palestinians and Israelis conducted in Oslo, Norway, in 1992-1993. Initially the talks took place between Palestinian and Israeli academics with links to politicians, far from the limelight and the influence of public opinion. Although these talks took place at a time when an Israeli could be imprisoned for meeting with the PLO, meetings outside the region could not be protested. Eventually low-level officials were brought into the talks, and later higher-level officials. The talks were made public only once progress had been achieved. Because both Israelis and Palestinians were shocked by this new course of events, they had to be prepared and educated in order to achieve popular support for the impending agreement. Both sides moved quickly to assuage the fears and objections of their constituents.

Mr. Koll said that the main advantage of secret talks is that the participants are freer to throw out ideas for discussion without committing to them. In public talks, it is difficult to back away from ideas for fear of appearing weak to the other side as well as to one's own constituency. Mr. Rahman said that the Oslo talks were successful because both sides were able to put history and controversial issues like the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees and Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza aside. Instead, they started from points of agreement, creating a framework of trust and a basis for further progress.

In building the peace process in the Middle East, Mr. Koll underscored the importance of leadership, confidence-building measures (such as the handshake and exchange of letters between Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat in Washington) and adherence to a timetable. He asserted that if the lines of communication are kept open and terrorism halted, the parties can reach some agreement. Mr. Rahman

added that whenever an obstacle arises, a way forward must be found because there is no other alternative for either side. Arabs and Israelis must continue with determination and work together to build on success. Mr. Koll also emphasized the importance of frequent meetings--weekly, monthly--at all levels. He pointed out that after only two years, it is no longer news when top Israeli officials meet with Yasir Arafat because now it happens so often.

Mr. Rahman emphasized his conviction that the Middle East peace process is irreversible, but stressed that it remains fragile. The issues are extremely complex, and continued international support is needed. He warned that the most serious challenge to the peace process is that it has not yet gained broad popular support in either the Israeli or the Palestinian community. Religious fundamentalists on both sides oppose the process. Yet Palestinian and Israeli leaders recognize that the two peoples' destinies are intertwined, and that they need to cooperate to protect both communities.

The Northern Ireland Response

John Alderdice of the Alliance Party said that while it was clear that many differences distinguish the experiences of Northern Ireland from those of other countries, they can still learn from each other. He expressed appreciation for the tremendous moral support and inspiration that the international guests offered the people of Northern Ireland, remarking that there is a sort of brotherhood among those who have lived through conflict. He sought the speakers' advice in three areas: fostering leadership and responsibility; bringing the community along in the peace process; and dealing with the breaches and blockages that develop in the process.

Mr. Alderdice underscored that while the British and Irish governments engaged in talks with each other and with the paramilitaries of both sides, there are no structures, interim or otherwise, in which Northern Ireland politicians can participate in the process. Moreover, there is little involvement and growing complacency at the popular level now that the violence has stopped. He asked for advice on how to convince the majority of both communities that they cannot just sit and wait for peace. John Robb of the New Ireland Group agreed, noting that while the people of Northern Ireland are politically sophisticated, they have no platform for political participation. He asked what could be done at the community level, and suggested that perhaps it was time for both the United Kingdom and Ireland to withdraw their claims to sovereignty over Northern Ireland and only act as guarantors. Robin Wilson of Democratic Dialogue added that the two sides do not agree on what the basic political unit is, or on who the main protagonists are.

Mr. Omar responded that, in South Africa, the struggle for democracy was carried on the back of community organizations. He underscored the importance of strengthening civil society, nongovernmental organizations and community-based organizations.

Reverend Gordon Grey of the Christian Education Movement defined confidence-building as the key challenge facing a Northern Ireland long dominated by conflict and violence. He challenged the people of Northern Ireland to make the same leap of faith described by the speakers from South Africa and the Middle East, and begin to put trust in their neighbors' good will, even those once regarded as enemies. "Reconciliation of viewpoints is rarely possible, but personal reconciliation always is," he asserted; each individual must begin to build peace on a person-to-person level, drawing on their stores of patience, courage, perseverance, faith, hope and love.

Tom French of the Workers Party said that in order to replace mistrust with trust, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) must take the loyalist paramilitaries' lead and offer an apology for past violence and a guarantee that there will be no more in the future. Peter Hannon asked the speakers what propels people in power to take the leap of faith to let go of it, to which Mr. Meyer responded that in South Africa it was a combination of factors, including international pressure, domestic pressure from the business and church communities, and acceptance of the notion that they had to bring justice to South Africa themselves. Mr. Rahman remarked that while public statements by the leadership help to build confidence, a working process is also needed. Waiting for apologies may halt the process, and should not be a precondition for negotiations. Mr. Meyer added that confidence in the process must be built on all sides, as well as within individuals. Expressing regrets for the wrongs of apartheid helped to build that confidence, and also allowed the National Party to become a part of South Africa's future instead of remaining mired in the past. Mr. Koll emphasized the importance of language: the first step can be calling the other side "partners for peace" and ending the demonization of the other side. But he cautioned that the existence of a process does not mean there will be a sudden "love affair" between the two sides; the education process necessary to change perceptions and realities takes time.

Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Fein, reminded the audience that the people of Northern Ireland still live in a state of emergency, and that the unionists view the peace process as destabilizing. He said that the gap in trust in Northern Ireland is deep, and that there is reason to distrust him and the Irish Republican Army. In such a tense situation, he said, the only way that progress can be achieved is through dialogue. Northern Ireland now has a unique opportunity to move forward, but good faith negotiations are needed. Everyone must acknowledge responsibility for their own part in the conflict, he said, and by the same token, everyone must be a part of the peace settlement and contribute to reconciliation and building peace. Mr. Adams said that a time frame was needed, noting that London's plans were unknown and no date had been set for multiparty talks to begin or for an agreement to be

reached. He suggested that British Prime Minister John Major and the unionists could learn from F.W. De Klerk that governments are not neutral, and he challenged the British government to move to all-party talks without preconditions. Although there are practical matters that need to be addressed, such as the release of prisoners and demobilization of the paramilitaries, Mr. Adams asserted that these are not preconditions for talks. He also appealed to the unionists to come to the table, underscoring that negotiations are the only alternative for everyone involved.

Demobilization and Reintegration: Recent International Experiences

Although both republican and loyalist paramilitaries declared a cease-fire in Northern Ireland in 1994, they continue to possess large caches of arms, the existence of which has become an obstacle to further progress in negotiations. How to disarm these underground forces and bring them back into the political and economic mainstream, as well as what to do about their comrades in prison for politically motivated crimes, are among the most troublesome challenges of building peace in Northern Ireland. The experiences of Colombia, El Salvador and South Africa offer insights into these difficult tasks.

El Salvador and Colombia

Both Colombia and El Salvador endured lengthy civil wars rife with violence. Ana Guadalupe Martinez, Vice President of the National Assembly of El Salvador and a founding member of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) within the Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), said that demobilizing thousands of guerilla forces and government troops at the end of El Salvador's bloody civil war was not easy, particularly since the demobilization was mandated to take place within a specific time frame in accordance with the United Nations-brokered peace agreements. The Salvadoran government did not trust the FMLN to disarm, she said, and the rebels' initial lack of commitment led to the first crisis of the peace process. The surrender of arms was gradual, and while it was not a decisive element in the peace process, demobilization did create trust.

Ms. Martinez emphasized that the involvement of the United Nations in the implementation of the agreements over a period of approximately two and a half years helped to overcome Salvadorans' initial lack of faith in the peace process. Managing to meet the various deadlines, including the time frame for demobilization, increased trust in the process and offered hope for the future.

Antonio Navarro Wolff, one of the founding leaders of the M-19 movement, offered no apologies for M-19's past guerilla actions in Colombia's civil war. Emphasizing that today he is a man of peace, Mr. Navarro said that sometimes it is necessary to rebel when there is no other route to bring about political

change. M-19 had to seek peace when it realized that it could not defeat the Colombian government in war. In 1990, M-19 laid down its arms and joined the political process, and in 1991, it took part in the constitutional assembly representing all political and social groups that drafted a new constitution. Now, as President of Democratic Alliance/M-19 and Mayor of the city of Pasto, Mr. Navarro is working within the Colombian political system to bring about changes that he once struggled for with arms.

However, despite great constitutional change, Mr. Navarro said that the structures of power in Colombia have not been deeply affected. In order to change the balance, Colombia must create greater participatory democracy and put greater emphasis on local government.

It is important to recognize that former combatants are agents of change, Mr. Navarro said, but their social situation must be improved in order to allow them to rejoin society and make a positive contribution. After almost five years and significant economic investment, Colombia has almost achieved the full reintegration of former combatants through a process of education, training and empowerment. Reintegrating El Salvador's paramilitaries into society was also complicated and difficult, Ms. Martinez reported. After wielding considerable power and controlling a great deal of territory, the former combatants of both sides needed opportunities to support themselves by peaceful means, within society. The new government had to persuade the people to treat these soldiers as citizens of the community, and had to provide them with job opportunities. Allowing them to join El Salvador's new national civil police force also helped build trust in the peace process, and made them feel a part of the changes that had taken place. Failing to reintegrate former combatants into society may lead them to conclude that peace is not advantageous, she warned, and could return them to the path of violence.

South Africa

The task of creating a new National Defence Force (NDF) for South Africa has been extremely difficult, according to Alex Boraine, Executive Director of Justice in Transition in South Africa, yet failing to do so would jeopardize the peace process. "However successful the political transition might be," he warned, "if the security forces were suspect, divided and divisive, the peace and accord achieved would be extremely vulnerable."

The challenge facing the new South African National Defence Force is not merely integrating a guerilla force into a conventional army. Rather, the guerilla forces of the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress (PAC), as well as the standing armies of four mini-states within South Africa, had to be joined with the South African Defence Force, which itself had to adapt to the new political situation. All of these troops considered themselves patriotic South Africans, but they did not share the same conception of the nation. On one side, the highly professional South African Defence Force had

served as the bulwark of apartheid. On the other were highly dedicated yet largely unconventional guerilla troops committed to bringing down the apartheid regime. Both black and white soldiers felt threatened: whites feared change, while blacks feared a lack of change. Now all of these forces, which varied greatly in size, racial composition and level of professionalism, have come together to form a new, apolitical force charged with defending the new democratic state and all of its citizens.

Particular emphasis has been placed on building up esprit de corps in the new South African military. "In order to boost morale, a commitment was made that the NDF should be truly representative in terms of language, race, culture and gender," Mr. Boraine said. The recruitment and promotion processes must be fair and transparent. He emphasized that this is not a short-term policy, but an ongoing process. A special effort has also been made to work with the officer corps from all the old forces in order to develop "a common commitment and a standing together" and to prevent the process from ending in failure.

The new National Defence Force offers extensive training opportunities to its troops, ranging from courses on developing military skills to literacy classes and adult education. In order to meet international standards, as many South African troops as possible participate in foreign courses and joint military exercises. Mr. Boraine noted that South Africa did not receive international assistance for reforming its military, but it did contract the British Military Advisory Training Team to assist with the integration process. "Because of so much suspicion, distrust and even hostility, it was important to have an 'honest broker' who could assist with this process and also to further the training needs of different individuals."

Integrating the new National Defence Force has been relatively successful, Mr. Boraine said, thanks in large part to the willingness of all sides to make concessions and compromises deriving from their common commitment to the new South Africa. When government troops and rebel troops met, they found that they shared similar fears, hopes and concerns, as well as a military bent toward practicality, determination and reliability. All sides recognized that failing to create a unified, integrated, apolitical and professional National Defence Force could lead to infighting and disorder within the military and cost it its popular legitimacy. "A worst-case scenario," he warned, "could be even a military coup or reverting to the armed struggle or crime and violence, or both."

Problem areas and challenges remain, such as persistent distrust among the ranks, difficulties in institutionalizing professional discipline, the cumbersome selection and placement process for troops from all the old forces and the lack of a demobilization package for those who do not want to join the new force. Nevertheless, Mr. Boraine underscored, the process of building an apolitical and professional military loyal to the new South Africa is well under way.

The Northern Ireland Response

Reverend Roy Magee of Farset Youth and Community Development said that the reintegration of Northern Ireland's paramilitaries cannot take place without demobilization. But government attempts to bring those on the periphery into the center do not address the underlying problem: reintegration is not a one-sided affair; it can only take place when the community is ready to accept the former combatants. In his view, it is not yet ready or willing to accept them. The halt to politically motivated violence is not enough; all violence--vandalism, gangsterism, drug-pushing--must end. These crimes are what divide the community.

Stephen McBride, Chairman of the Alliance Party, said that those who have arms have the ability and the duty to move the peace process forward. He urged them to stop the violence once and for all, and take the first steps toward working out a framework for decommissioning their arms. He said that the two sides do not have to agree on the issues--other than that wrongs were committed by both sides--but they do have to agree on the future.

Rev. Magee asserted that prisoners must be addressed as part of the reintegration process. Although both London and Dublin maintain that there are no political prisoners, both governments need to acknowledge that many crimes had political roots. In his view, many prison sentences responded not only to the nature of the crime, but also to the political situation. Without wishing to condone violence, Rev. Magee called for a readjudication process, and some kind of phased release of prisoners--but not an amnesty.

In response to these comments, Ana Guadalupe Martinez said that El Salvador had instituted a general amnesty for all political prisoners of both sides because it was considered essential to the healing of the country's wounds. Also, the FMLN asked the nation for forgiveness, and hoped that the other side would do the same. Antonio Navarro Wolff agreed that amnesty is essential to the peace process, at whatever stage it occurs. Mr. Boraine reported that South Africa introduced a general temporary indemnity to allow exiles to return, and it will deal with the amnesty issue through a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

John Robb of the New Ireland Group suggested that Northern Ireland needed a broad-based commission to deal with political prisoners, and should consider the eventual possibility of an amnesty as a move toward atonement. If Northern Ireland fails to demobilize the "politically active," Mr. Robb warned, it may be sowing the seeds for future violence. Though the paramilitaries have done wicked things, an attempt must be made to understand their motivations and to address the problems at their root. He said that this anger must be converted to constructive purposes. Ms. Martinez said that providing jobs and economic opportunities poses one of the greatest problems to reintegrating former

combatants into the community. Rev. McGee pointed out that many of Northern Ireland's paramilitaries have never had gainful employment.

Mr. McBride asserted that many prisoners--on both sides--have been a force supporting the peace process. Nonetheless, the pain of the victims of the Troubles and their families, as well as the fears of the rest of society, must be taken into account and addressed. Rev. Magee agreed, noting that there are far more casualties of terrorism than prisoners, and that the victims and their families must be helped. David Ervine of the Progressive Unionist Party said that Northern Ireland society has nurtured hate, and warned that some people could use the victims for their own political ends.

One conference participant asserted that the paramilitaries do not accept that democracy exists in Northern Ireland, and that the violence has not really ended. In her view, the prisoner discussion cannot really begin until the violence truly stops. Another participant suggested that rather than focusing on reintegrating individuals who have been involved in violence, Northern Ireland should instead concentrate on reintegrating their communities, which have been marginalized over time, and giving them a stake in society. Mr. Boraine suggested that in order to rebuild communities, the people of Northern Ireland must find a new dimension together rather than judging each other, because no one has clean hands.

Policing in a Post-Conflict Situation

Can an institution like the police, which is identified with the state, be politically neutral? The relationship between Northern Ireland's police, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and the community it serves has long been plagued by tensions and distrust. A political settlement is likely to change the role of the RUC in Northern Ireland. The experiences of South Africa, El Salvador and Haiti in creating new police forces offer valuable lessons. In each of these instances, a fundamental reassessment of the role of the police within society and their relationship to the community was required.

Jesus Rodés, former Director of the Police Academy of Catalunya, Spain, who was called upon by United Nations General Secretary Perez de Cuellar in 1991 to create a new police force in El Salvador, described the old force as "a cancer," involved in repression and violence. Peter Gastrow, Advisor to the South African Minister for Safety and Security, noted that the South African police played a central role in enforcing apartheid, and thus were hated by a large portion of the population. In Haiti, according to Raymond Kelly, former Police Commissioner of New York and Chief of the international police monitors in Haiti, the police were almost indistinguishable from the armed forces; the worst crimes were sanctioned by the state and carried out by these forces and their attaches. But with democracy came a new conception of the police in each of these countries. "A new police culture had to take root," according to Mr. Gastrow. "The police service had to be legitimatised and made more effective at the same time." Mr.

Rodés agreed, stressing that the new police force must be based in a culture of human rights and must protect the rights and freedoms of all citizens, including those formerly considered enemies of the state. The police must function as independent and apolitical guardians of society.

The process of reforming the South African police has not been without problems, Mr. Gastrow reported. Morale problems and racial tensions exist within the force, and relations between the black communities and the police remain strained. Nonetheless, rapid changes have been largely accepted by the police. “The fact that the government of national unity can now count on the new South African Police Service to be loyal to the constitution and to act in the national interests, speaks volumes for the shifts which have taken place.” In El Salvador, Mr. Rodés said that the new police force has been well accepted by society, the government and former combatants of both sides, though some problems persist. The Salvadoran police are still learning what society wants and expects from it. Nonetheless, El Salvador has demonstrated to the rest of the world that progress has been made, and in his view, the transformation of the Salvadoran police force could serve as a model for other countries.

The three speakers agreed that the police must be made accountable not only to the government but also to the community. They must also develop internal measures to increase professional and managerial accountability. Mr. Gastrow emphasized that, given the traditionally military culture of the police, greater civilian control of the police is particularly important because it facilitates fundamental change that might not occur if left to the police themselves to implement.

Mr. Rodés strove to include both former government troops and former FMLN combatants in El Salvador’s new National Civil Police to ensure the link between the police and society, especially those who were victims of the war. In his view, the new institution should come out of the war, but should not carry its baggage. El Salvador’s new police force will be better educated and better trained. The breakdown of its composition is roughly 20 percent from the old police force, 20 percent from the old national security forces, 20 percent from the ranks of the guerillas, and 40 percent new recruits. In Haiti, until a completely new police force can be recruited and trained, about half of the interim force is made up of officers from the old force. In South Africa, the situation was even more complex, Mr. Gastrow said: 11 existing police forces--the national police, plus the forces of four quasi-independent states and six autonomous regions--with major disparities in structures, procedures and resources had to be amalgamated into the new force.

In both Haiti and El Salvador international monitors established new national police forces. Nearly 1,000 police officers from a range of countries took part in the process in Haiti. South Africa implemented its own police reform, but took great care to involve all players--including police unions, nongovernmental organizations and independent experts--in the process.

South Africa began by introducing a code of conduct for the police in the September 1991 National Peace Accord. The aim of this code, Mr. Gastrow said, was to promote sound policing practices and establish a cooperative relationship between the police and communities. The code spelled out concepts such as the minimum use of force and equal treatment of all citizens, and it stressed that the police should be politically neutral. Each member of the South African police force had to sign the code of conduct, which Mr. Gastrow said sensitized the police to the new political realities and gave them signals about what kind of policing style would be expected in the new conditions of democracy. Affirmative action programs, mentoring and training programs were introduced, particularly for new recruits, who, Mr. Gastrow pointed out, “for the first time reflected the realities of the South African population.” Training was designed to demilitarize the approach to policing and shift the emphasis to serving civilian values.

South Africa also introduced a process of internal restructuring of the police. “The new focus was placed on the service which the police should render to the public,” Mr. Gastrow said. “This required a user friendly police service which was in touch with communities and which was proactive in its approach. The change of name from the South African Police Force to the South African Police Service was indicative of the new approach.” Toward this end, the security police were combined with the criminal investigation division, a step that was intended to signal that the police were now politically neutral. A separate riot control unit was created with the intention of separating the more controversial aspects of policing, such as maintaining public order, from ordinary operations. Community policing was also introduced in order to increase cooperation and trust between the police and black communities. The National Peace Accord established local peace committees, which brought together black township activists and police officers to begin to jointly address issues of concern in the black communities. These committees demonstrated to the communities that it was possible to work with the police for the common good. Community police forums, Mr. Gastrow said, have empowered the communities and cemented a partnership between the police and the communities in pursuing mutual objectives.

Mr. Kelly added that community policing can help to improve the image of the police, especially when they are regarded as part of an occupying force. In New York City, community policing has meant more foot patrols; establishing relationships and a familiar presence within the community; regular meetings between the police and the communities; and a credible system of dealing with complaints against the police that makes clear to officers that violations will not be tolerated. Community policing is especially important in minority communities, where fear of and contempt for the police are greatest. Because it is important for minorities to identify with the police, Mr. Kelly said that the underrepresentation of minorities on the police force is a problem. New York City has addressed the challenge of increasing minority representation on the police force through heavy recruitment, including an intensive campaign of community outreach that includes visiting churches in minority neighborhoods

to recruit new officers. Mentoring programs and study groups have also been set up to help these new recruits prepare for exams.

The Northern Ireland Response

The gap in viewpoints on policing in Northern Ireland is very wide, according to David Cook, Chairman of the Police Authority for Northern Ireland, and it is difficult for both the police and society at large to debate the issue. Flexibility, the development of trust and a lack of ultimatums are necessary to facilitate the discussion. Mr. Cook emphasized that the police are not and have never been the cause of political differences in Northern Ireland. He added that larger issues, such as the introduction of emergency legislation, court decisions, prisoner policies and human rights concerns also affect the police. Resolving policing questions cannot take place without first knowing the constitution of the state.

Mark Durkan of the Social Democrat and Labour Party agreed that the problem of policing in Northern Ireland stems from the absence of consensus on the nature of the polity and long predates the Troubles. He said that brutal honesty and vision are necessary to create a new polity, as well as a new police force and police culture. What is entailed is not a matter of merely asking people to change their minds; rather, everyone must make a fundamental readjustment. Mr. Durkan asserted that it is useless to seek refuge in slogans like “Disband the RUC” or “Hands Off the RUC.” The people of Northern Ireland need to be honest and open about the problems with the RUC, and reach a consensus on the requirements for policing. It is possible to make progress toward meeting the policing needs of all the people without a final idea of the polity, he said, but improved communication with the communities is needed, and the government must stop clinging to emergency legislation.

Mr. Cook said that the RUC is striving to consult the communities on policing through a variety of measures. In his view, community policing needs further investigation. There are a host of issues that must be explored, such as creating mechanisms for policing on the ground and communicating with the community; ensuring impartiality and political independence; democratizing police practices (i.e., increasing openness, consultation and accountability); improving professional standards and conduct; improving procedures for dealing with complaints against the police; improving religious and gender balances on the force; training and retraining; and reassessing interagency cooperation. The level at which police can be integrated into the community in Northern Ireland is unclear. For example, can police officers begin to live in the communities where they work? Would they be accepted by their neighbors and be able to live free of harassment or intimidation?

Ken Maginnis, MP, Security Spokesman for the Ulster Unionist Party, said that, whereas in South Africa, a minority government had to adjust to the reality that eventually the majority would achieve its

aims, in Northern Ireland, the majority and minority will remain, and most people are content with the status quo. The challenge, he said, is how to use the democratic process to bring the real dissidents on both sides into the political center where 80-90 percent of the population fall. If the cease-fires are maintained, then Northern Ireland can move quickly toward political consensus and cooperation. In that case, Mr. Maginnis said, Northern Ireland will need an experienced police service to ensure that the vacuum left by terrorism is not filled by crime, drugs, prostitution and other antisocial activities.

Mr. Maginnis also noted that when the RUC was established, roughly one-third of its positions was supposed to be reserved for members of the minority community. But for 70 years, he said, there has been community pressure on Catholics not to join the police because it is seen as a British service. Inevitably this created suspicions among Catholics when approximately 90 percent of the police were Protestants. It also led to the expectation among Protestants that the police should behave more favorably toward their community. But by and large, Mr. Maginnis asserted, the RUC has given very balanced service to the entire community, despite the incredible pressures on Northern Ireland society. Traditionally, 80 percent of violence has been perpetrated by republicans and 20 percent by loyalists, but the rate of conviction has been higher among loyalists. Nevertheless, Mr. Maginnis said that Northern Ireland must encourage greater balance within the RUC.

While acknowledging that the police have suffered at the hands of paramilitaries, Raymond Murray, who served as a prison chaplain for 19 years, asserted that the state does not occupy the moral high ground. Unlike the paramilitaries, the state has not apologized for past violence. The police are used as a standing army, backed up with emergency powers and shoot-to-kill orders, he said. Yet police officers and soldiers involved in beatings and torture have been granted immunity and amnesty. In his view, Northern Ireland only needs 3,500 instead of 14,000 police officers, and they must be trained to respect human and civil rights. He was not confident that Britain could provide adequate training, and suggested that perhaps Northern Ireland should rely upon international training for its police. Mr. Maginnis responded that an initial reduction to about 7,500 police officers, perhaps followed by an additional cut of 20 percent, would be appropriate, as long as organized crime does not gain a foothold in Northern Ireland.

Bronagh Hinds of Ulster People's College asked if it is possible to achieve religious and gender balance on the police force in the context of a phased reduction. Mr. Rodés said that there is no ideal number of police per population; it depends on the social structure and the political culture of the country, as well as training and salary levels of the police. In his view, the fewer police, the better, and he noted that a democratic society can generate security outside the police forces. While it was clear that there was no national consensus on policing in Northern Ireland, he urged one to be built. Mr. Rodés also suggested offering voluntary retirement as a means of weeding out human rights violators on the force.

Mr. Gastrow added that the prerequisite for the transformation of the police is settling the broader political issues, such as instituting a bill of rights and racial and gender equality. He reported that South Africa's Police Commissioner said publicly that the South African police had to make a fundamental break with the past, and his statement greatly increased the credibility of the police in the eyes of the nation.

Beyond Negotiations: Coexistence and Community

Achieving a negotiated settlement in Northern Ireland is not merely a question of politics. Rather, the peace process must take place within society at large in order to legitimize and safeguard the process. The challenge now facing Northern Ireland is how to build peace within the community and foster the peaceful coexistence of Protestants and Catholics. The experiences of Poland and El Salvador offer some valuable lessons.

Poland

In Poland, the communist government of General Wojciech Jaruzelski and the leadership of the democratic opposition Solidarity successfully negotiated a peaceful transition of power in 1989. At the time, such an achievement was believed impossible. Yet the gradual transfer of power that had been mapped out by the negotiators in roundtable talks dramatically accelerated when Solidarity was swept into parliament in the June 1989 elections. The pace of the process further increased with the collapse of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe later that year and the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself in 1991.

But in 1993, the process of democratic transition took a new turn in Poland, when Solidarity was defeated in democratic elections by reformed communists. It came as a surprise to many that the Polish people did not view Solidarity as the only legitimate political force in Poland. The democratic opposition lost power so quickly, according to Hannah Suchocka, former Prime Minister of Poland, because it had viewed the 1989 elections as an "eternal mandate" and failed to take into consideration the role of society in the transition process. Solidarity had not recognized that it was difficult for people to understand that roles within society were changing (e.g., workers were no longer the key players). By losing sight of the needs and concerns of the people, Solidarity enabled the newly constituted left opposition to win the 1993 elections by using many of the same social arguments once employed by Solidarity itself. In 1993, the

communists defeated Solidarity because it had not fulfilled all of society's expectations. However, Ms. Suchocka said, it is now clear that no one can meet all of society's demands.

According to Jerzy Wiatr, a leading communist negotiator during the roundtable talks and now Deputy Chairman of the Party of the Democratic Left (SLD), Polish communists were able to preserve a degree of credibility both domestically and internationally because they negotiated away their power instead of hanging on until being overthrown like the communists in neighboring countries. In his view, Poland has achieved many of the aims of the transition, including democratic governance, national sovereignty and economic recovery. He asserted that Poland's former communists have no desire to obstruct democracy, and, in fact, have benefited from it.

In order to preserve reform and stay on the democratic path, Ms. Suchocka said that Poland must avoid rebuilding a centralized state and must strengthen local government and community structures. This can be achieved by creating a clear party system with real parties with real programs. After the 1989 elections, Solidarity began to create different groups within the movement--the so-called "war at the top"--but this was the beginning of the end, she said. They thought that they were working toward pluralism, failing to recognize that it already existed. As a result, Solidarity's political power became diffused and divided. In the current presidential campaign, she said, a repetition of the past is evident: there is one strong candidate on the left, while Solidarity remains disunited, fielding four or five candidates.

Although the divide between the communists and the former opposition has not been overcome in Poland, it has been transformed into a civil political process in which differences are debated in parliament. While some wounds will take many years to heal--especially the most flagrant violations of human rights committed under communism--Mr. Wiatr said that there is a consensus in Poland that these crimes should be dealt with in accordance with due process of law. Retribution has not been taken on those who were merely "on the wrong side" in Poland, unlike in some of the other formerly communist countries. Mr. Wiatr asserted that the true threat to democracy in Poland today comes from right-wing populists, who are organizing violent and provocative demonstrations and trying to upset the democratic system. He and Ms. Suchocka agreed that Poland will soon have a government that is not dominated by one party, and that both sides will be able to work together to create common solutions. When this happens, the transition will finally be complete.

El Salvador

Perhaps it is easier to kill one another than to agree with each other, posited Joaquín Villalobos, former military commander of the FMLN. Even though war is cruel, somehow it is easier to

accommodate war than peace, which necessitates greater intellectual stretching. Although war requires courage, seeking peace demands twice as much.

El Salvador's political institutions had not evolved sufficiently to prevent a civil war, according to Ambassador Ricardo Castaneda, Salvadoran Ambassador to the United Nations. As a consequence, El Salvador endured 12 years of civil war involving three-quarters of the nation's territory. Out of a nation of 5.5 million, 75,000-80,000 people were killed, 10,000 were wounded and many thousands more went into exile. The economy also suffered tremendous damage. It was impossible to conceive that the war could be stopped, Mr. Villalobos said, because Salvadoran society was only looking inward. But the conflict took place within an international political context, and the end of the Cold War presented new conditions that offered an opportunity to seek peace, he said. The peace process became the only alternative.

In 1987, the Arias Plan laid out a Central American framework for peace. In 1989, Alfredo Cristiani was elected President of El Salvador in democratic elections, and the FMLN leadership appealed to the United Nations to help El Salvador end the civil war. Mr. Castaneda pointed out that the 1989 election represented the first peaceful transition of the presidency in Salvadoran history, free from interference by the army. Nevertheless, El Salvador was not yet a genuine democracy, he said, because a significant part of society had not participated in the election.

By 1990, the war had reached a stalemate, and both the Salvadoran government and the FMLN were exhausted. The Cold War was over, freeing both sides from the strictures of ideology. Both parties had the courage to seek peace. In January 1992, the two sides signed an agreement in Tepultepec, Mexico, that became served as a blueprint for peace. It introduced a constitutional process, the protection of human rights and allowed the FMLN to take part in Salvadoran political life.

Trust was difficult to achieve during the negotiation process, Mr Villalobos said, and it felt like both sides were hostages of the war. He said that he had learned that a political context must be found to serve as a basis for trusting the other side. In the Salvadoran case, it was the recognition that peace was more advantageous than war for both sides, and that both sides needed a dynamic of peace. Mr. Castaneda and Mr. Villalobos agreed that it is important to accept the adversary as legitimate, with real concerns and real powers. Fanaticism denies the existence of the adversary. If you are negotiating, you cannot continue fighting, and consultation becomes part of a new political culture. Mr. Villalobos cited General Wojciech Jaruzelski, who introduced martial law in communist Poland in 1981, who stated at a similar conference in Nicaragua in 1994 that taking an all-or-nothing stance will result in nothing. In El Salvador, neither side could be considered a winner or a loser because the peace was based on compromise. The true winner, Mr. Villalobos said, was civil society. The people of El Salvador now live in peace and have opportunities to improve their lives.

Negotiations imply forgiveness and reconciliation, Mr. Villalobos said. In El Salvador, it was important that both sides acknowledged having committed wrongs. Amnesties were also important, though they were difficult for some to accept. He reported that the FMLN began handing over its weapons during the negotiation process, and noted that when some arms were kept back, it harmed the trust that was developing. Therefore the FMLN decided that a complete disarmament was best.

Ideological polarization ended along with the Salvadoran conflict, Mr. Villalobos said; today former guerillas are able to unite with moderate political forces to build peace and stability. Negotiation has become the norm. Although extremists still resist this development, he emphasized that human concerns and the good of the nation as a whole are the most important goals. The national adjustment in mentality to peace and the financial costs of making changes have been difficult. But El Salvador has the political commitment of its leadership and international support. The process of building peace and democracy is ongoing, and it must involve the entire nation.

The Northern Ireland Response

Jeffrey Donaldson, a young leader of the Ulster Unionist Party and Assistant Grand Master of the Orange Order, said that Northern Ireland can learn from the experiences of Poland and El Salvador that the transition process does not begin or end with a negotiated settlement. Another important lesson, he said, is that there may not be an all-inclusive solution for Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, everyone must try to resolve today's problems to build a better future for their children.

Lack of trust is Northern Ireland's biggest problem, Mr. Donaldson said, but both sides must recognize that efforts are being made, and that taking an all-or-nothing stance is counterproductive. Recognizing the real fears of people on both sides, trust must be built at the broad political level, not just among politicians. Neither group can be coerced, so Northern Ireland must reach a political settlement that recognizes the traditions and rights of both groups and work at the community level to achieve peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Donaldson was encouraged by other countries that have achieved peace or at least interim settlements despite having to cope with difficulties far greater than those facing Northern Ireland, and he urged the audience to share this hope with the people of Northern Ireland.

Alex Atwood of the Social Democrat and Labour Party commended Mr. Donaldson for his balance and leadership, and agreed that Northern Ireland could learn a great deal from the experience of other countries. In Poland, the transition process accelerated beyond all expectations, which he considered an important lesson for the British government. Both before and during the transition to democracy, Polish communists began to give up power. In Northern Ireland, Mr. Atwood said, those institutions of the state

that have been unaccountable for 20 years--the police, the courts, the civil service--must likewise cede power.

The lesson El Salvador offered, according to Mr. Atwood, was that the peace process did not work until it involved everyone, including those waging the war. The need for forgiveness and reconciliation must be acknowledged. In Northern Ireland, he said, this need is mentioned quite frequently, but only addressed begrudgingly. What is needed is sincerity, and all the people of Northern Ireland must take part in creating a new order, united by hope and a conviction to build peace.

According to Bronagh Hinds of Ulster People's College, Northern Ireland must not only seek accommodation at the political level, but also at the level of the community and civil society. The peace process must not only focus on the two sides in the conflict, but also on the relationship between the community and politics, and between women and men. She said that the common depiction of Northern Ireland's local communities as struggling, marginalized and lacking an active role for women is one-sided and deceptive. Actually, she said, the local communities have found strength in survival and organization, and are creating new forms of democratic interaction. Mr. Atwood added that the strength of Northern Ireland's communities is a result of the political vacuum; by being forced to assert themselves, the communities have become empowered.

Ms. Hinds also pointed out that women are extremely involved in politics in Northern Ireland, although not through the parties or the sectarian process, where women are not taken seriously. She lamented that the political process in Northern Ireland has completely marginalized women's views and participation, and wondered how to compensate for this. Inez McCormack said that Northern Ireland's political settlement will determine the nature of society, and who is at the negotiating table affects the settlement. The absence of women from the formal negotiation process has a democratic implication, she said, particularly on issues that affect women's ability to have control over their lives, such as abortion.

Ms. Hinds said that she would welcome a human rights framework for Northern Ireland. It is absolutely essential to invest in civil society, which must be underpinned with equality, rights and justice. Northern Ireland has a well developed and sophisticated civil society, but integrating it into the peace process and helping it to interact with the political parties to enhance democracy and political participation without making politicians fearful pose a very big challenge. She also emphasized that economic opportunities must be provided: not just fair employment, but a fair distribution of investment. This will require strategic management.

Several Northern Ireland participants expressed concerns about the British government and its role in the peace process. One remarked that the British government clearly wants to give up power in Northern Ireland, but it is impossible to devolve power until it is clear where it will come to rest. With whom should the British government be dealing when the parties cannot agree among themselves? A

councillor from Down said that this is a political problem that existed before the Troubles began; the violence has only been a vicious distraction. Political problems are not being addressed because those in positions of authority will not address them until the violence ceases. The British government is the only element in the equation that has not yet been honest about what it wants, he said; despite statements that the solution can only be found in Northern Ireland, London keeps obstacles in place and tries to make it appear that the men of violence are the problem.

Jeffrey Donaldson remarked that the unionists have not trusted the British government for a long time either, for, like all of Northern Ireland's citizens, they too have been powerless for 25 years. He said that he was tired of the British and Irish governments talking over the heads of the people of Northern Ireland, when it should be precisely these people who are working out their own future. He said he was willing to talk to the nationalists.

Colin Craig was not sure that Northern Ireland has reached the point where the two sides can sit together without preconditions, and he sought encouragement from the panelists. Mr. Castaneda responded that one must have faith in the people on the other side, and try to understand their problems and grievances. It is critical to recognize that everyone has a right to live there, and that no one can be excluded. Then both sides must address the real problems together. Mr. Villalobos, who was long feared and hated by many of his compatriots, said that he asked for forgiveness from everyone at the outset of the peace process. He did not want future generations to bear the burden of festering resentment and hatred fed by the memory of old crimes. Forgiveness is not only a moral but a political issue, he said; without both forgiving each other and asking for each other's forgiveness, it is difficult to coexist.

Memory and Acknowledgement: Exploring a Common History

History plays a role in building nations and shaping national identity, yet it can also be put to use as a weapon against political opponents, according to Maurice Hayes, former Northern Ireland Ombudsman and Chairman of the Ireland Funds. In Northern Ireland, although the two communities share the same history, they interpret it very differently, and the very history of the conflict has created its own set of values. Is it possible, he asked, to draw a line under the past? Would such a step enable the two communities to reconcile, to apologize to each other and to forgive each other? Does Northern Ireland need to create a new myth? If so, how can such a task be accomplished?

Coming to Terms with History

Reexamining history is like opening a mass grave, according to Czech journalist Jan Urban, who was a prominent political dissident in communist Czechoslovakia. Once opened, the naked facts are

visible: the bones, the bullet holes in the skulls. Yet even if history is repressed, he said, eventually the bones will still come up.

According to the poet Michael Longley, the people of Northern Ireland “are good at claiming a monopoly on human suffering. We are good at resurrecting and distorting the past in order to evade the present. In Ireland we must break the mythic cycles and resist unexamined, ritualistic forms of commemoration. If we don’t, it will all happen again.”

Not only are those who forget history condemned to repeat it, asserted the Dublin-based journalist Fintan O’Toole, but so too are those who cannot forget the past. “Too many people seem intent on remembering the wrongs they have suffered,” he remarked, “whether in actual memory of recent atrocities or in the cultural memory of past defeats or betrayals--and too few on remembering also the wrongs they have inflicted.” These memories have shaped the political identity of the Irish, he said: “We have been taught on this island to think of our political identity as an inheritance from the past, an inheritance of wounds and grievances. We are who we are because we have suffered what we have suffered or survived what we have survived.” That is not to say that the memory of these sufferings should be consigned to oblivion, however. “The cruelties of the past need to be remembered, but remembered in order to release us from their consequences rather than tie us to them.” Acknowledgement and forgiveness offer a means to do this.

Acknowledgement is more than merely remembering. “Memory,” according to Mr. O’Toole, “exists *within* a community, as a common, agreed, and usually highly selective history of triumphs and sufferings. Acknowledgement is directed outside, towards another. It is a matter of respect, not just of self-respect.” But acknowledging the past is not easy, particularly “for communities in conflict, especially when each of them can, with some justice, see itself as the victim,” Mr. O’Toole said. “Sorrow is where, in a place shaped by violence, many people live, and it may, for some, be an impregnable castle.” He underscored that the “bereaved have a right to their grief and even to their bitterness, and that glib calls to forget the past, to forgive and forget, do them no justice. But we do them no justice either if we forget that for many of the victims, the process of remembering and honouring the dead has also included a demand that there be no revenge.” Mr. Urban said that acknowledgement of past wrongs is much more important than punishing their perpetrators because it contributes to reconciliation rather than retribution and the perpetuation of hatred and fear. Mr. Longley agreed, noting that often the victims are the most willing to forgive. As Mr. O’Toole remarked, “They have shown us that remembering wrongs is not the same thing as perpetuating them.”

Nevertheless, “concepts such as ‘a clean slate’ or ‘drawing the line’ are offensive,” Mr. Longley insisted. “If we are not ever going to know who bombed Enniskillen and Birmingham, Dublin and Monaghan, we can at least go on asking ‘Where are all the missing bodies of the last twenty-five years?’

Where have they been buried?” Mr. Urban agreed, and underscored that every victim should have a name, and every family must be free to mourn. He said that he had learned through working in Bosnia and Central America that the best way to help victims of violence is to involve them in helping other victims deal with their own suffering.

Mr. O’Toole highlighted the importance of memory and acknowledgement to creating a lasting peace. Acknowledgement entails recognizing the point of view, as well as the suffering, of the other side. It is the first step toward forgiveness. “A political settlement, growing out of that kind of genuine acknowledgement of others, is a promise about the future that is built on forgiveness for the past,” he said. “Forgiveness disarms the past and empowers the present.” Achieving a political settlement does not depend on a common past, but on a shared commitment to a common future. “The connection between forgiving and promising should remind us that the two have to go hand in hand in the peace process,” Mr. O’Toole said. “Only when acknowledgement of the past and commitment to the future are uttered in the same breath will the power to act politically be fully released.”

A political settlement will challenge the way the people of Northern Ireland think about their political identity, Mr. O’Toole said. But he stressed that it is possible to conceive of political identity as a set of promises about the future: “By entering into long-term commitments to each other, each community in the North can re-enforce its own identity. By placing islands of certainty in the ocean of an unknown future, it can guarantee for itself a real continuity with its own past.”

The key, Mr. O’Toole said, “is not to forget the past or to be trapped by it but to find a way of remembering it that releases us from the belief that its consequences are inevitable and inescapable. We have to find a way of telling the story in which it remains possible to re-write the ending.” Forging a political settlement based on compromise and commitments about the future will allow people in both communities to reexamine and reshape their past. In his view, local history and art will play central roles in this process of exploring old wounds, honoring grief and coming to terms with past wrongs, and will help to restore to Northern Ireland’s history the ambiguity and complexity that were lost in the years of conflict. Mr. Urban agreed, and said that television in particular can be an extremely effective means of helping society deal with the issues of the past, citing the effect the American television drama *Holocaust* had on the German public when it was broadcast in Germany in 1979.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission

“Reconciliation can never be at the expense of morality or human rights norms,” according to Dullah Omar, South African Minister of Justice. It is critical to set standards of justice, accountability and the rule of law. Furthermore, the state is obliged to obey international law, which requires the

establishment of accountability for crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights. “If this is not done in respect of the past,” he underscored, “we shall not be able to establish it in the future.”

In its own attempt to deal with the past on a morally acceptable basis, the new South African parliament established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Although this proposal was controversial, Mr. Omar was convinced that it offers South Africa the best means of establishing accountability, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The Commission will provide a mechanism and a process for dealing with gross human rights violations committed during the apartheid period. It will not be a court of law and will not conduct trials or mete out punishment or in any way interfere with the criminal justice system. Its presidentially appointed membership will comprise 11-17 impartial and respected South African men and women representing a broad spectrum of society.

The objective of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to “promote reconciliation in the spirit of understanding which transcends the divisions of the past,” Mr. Omar said. The hope is to create a mechanism through which the truth about the past will be established and acknowledged. Its mandate is fourfold:

- “Establishing as complete a picture as possible of the causes, nature and extent of the gross violations of human rights” committed between March 1, 1960, and December 6, 1993.
- Granting amnesty to individuals who voluntarily confess to committing politically motivated abuses during the period of the conflict.
- Establishing and making public the fate of the victims of gross violations of human rights and restoring their human and civil dignity by giving them the opportunity to give their own accounts of the violations they suffered, and by making recommendations for reparations.
- Compiling a comprehensive report of the Commission’s activities and findings, as well as its recommendations for measures to be taken to prevent future violations of human rights.

The Commission will have three subcommittees that will address human rights violations, amnesty, and reparation and rehabilitation measures. The subcommittee on human rights violations will investigate gross violations, identify victims and recommend ways to prevent further violations and to restore dignity to the victims. The subcommittee on amnesty will hold hearings for individuals who committed politically motivated, gross violations of human rights. Many such crimes remain unsolved, though their perpetrators know what happened. The victims and their families need to know the truth, and will have the right to be present at these hearings. The subcommittee on reparation and

rehabilitation will provide victims with an opportunity to tell their stories, and will consider what steps to take to restore their dignity and provide them with appropriate reparation.

The South African constitution makes provision for amnesty within a very specific framework. But instituting an amnesty without dealing appropriately with past human rights violations or addressing the need to restore the dignity of victims would undermine South Africa's attempt to establish accountability, the rule of law and a culture founded on the principles of human rights, Mr. Omar said. Moreover, it would signal to the victims and their communities "that the new South Africa refuses to make a clean break from the past and refuses to deal with the past on a morally acceptable basis." The result could be vigilantism and a return to violence in pursuit of vengeance or retribution. In short, he said, "It would have meant that the new South Africa would have been no different from the old."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will serve as a mechanism through which the truth about South Africa's past will be established and acknowledged. It will address not only "the truth about individual cases, but also the global truth and the reason why such violations of human rights took place," Mr. Omar said. The Commission will allow South Africa to put the past behind it and enable its citizens to move into the future: "The new democratic state will be able to say to victims and victim communities that it is sorry for what happened in the past, that what happened in the past should never be allowed to happen again, and that together we need to build a new order based on respect for human life and human dignity. On the basis thereof South Africa and the victims will be able to forgive but not to forget."

The Northern Ireland Response

The people of Northern Ireland have a powerful memory, according to Belfast City Councillor Tom Hartley, a member of Sinn Fein, and they use it like a vast intelligence network to define themselves and their course. But now old certainties are disappearing, and new certainties and new memories must be created, which is a difficult challenge, he said. The people of Northern Ireland must recognize that negotiations require a new mind-set. Brian Keenan of the Department of English at Trinity College, Dublin, who was held hostage in Beirut, remarked upon the ease with which people can become accustomed to living with something monstrous and how difficult it can be for them to move on. In his view, memory releases people from the awful consequence of suffering. He said that everyone becomes a collaborator when they do not think or reason. He agreed with Mr. Urban that it is best to confront and open the mass graves of history, for it is impossible to walk forward into the future with one foot in the grave of history.

Everyone in Northern Ireland has suffered, according to Gary McMichael, the leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, and all bear responsibility for this suffering. He agreed with several other speakers

that those who suffered the most often are the most willing to forgive, and he suggested that perhaps Northern Ireland's politicians have not suffered enough.

In Mr. McMichael's view, both communities are hostage to the past and use history as a weapon and a justification for actions taken. But now they must take on the responsibility of dealing with the past and dispelling its myths. The unionists, he said, must dispel the myth of a Protestant Ulster for Protestants, and recognize that the "good old days" were really about not having power. He asked the republicans to convince him that they share a future together.

Mr. Hartley said that he wanted to draw a line on the demonization of the other side, and on his own suffering. He did not want to be paralyzed by his own history, or that of others. Negotiations can bring about change that will result in a common future: perhaps both communities can learn how the other side perceives the past and try to come to terms with that. Mr. McMichael emphasized that Northern Ireland should learn the lessons of the past and harness the suffering of the last 25 years as an engine for a new future.

Mr. Keenan said that South Africa has found a way forward that will allow it to confront the stench of the past and use it to prevent such horrors from recurring. In his view, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission offers an approach that Northern Ireland could take to dealing with the violence in its past.

One Northern Ireland participant asked about the role of education in the healing process. In response, Mr. Urban discussed a study that had been made of children in wartorn Sarajevo. The study concluded that the war had not yet damaged the children because they retain the memory of the normalcy of peace. If the war continues, however, their lives will be dominated by war, and they will come to see violence as the norm. Mr. Longley added that in Northern Ireland, the schools must have a balanced curriculum that does not pursue the official mythologies.

In response to a question about the role of women in creating history, Mr. O'Toole noted the connection between mythmaking and women's exclusion from Northern Ireland's history. In his view, women's experiences are often more ambiguous, and usually reflect a perspective from outside the power structures, closer to how most people experience, rather than shape, history.

Dependency and Interdependence: New Economic and Political Realities in Transitional Societies

Northern Ireland's economic problems are deep-rooted and affect both Catholics and Protestants. Historically they can be seen as one of the factors that gave rise to the conflict itself. Addressing economic issues that have an impact on both communities, as well as on Northern Ireland's relations with

both London and Dublin, could encourage cooperation and help sustain the momentum of the peace process. Poland and El Salvador have had a measure of success using economic development to strengthen democracy.

Poland: The Economics of the Transformation Process

Although in many respects a success story, Poland still faces challenges and difficulties, according to Jerzy Osiatynski, MP, former Minister of Finance of Poland. The countries of Eastern Europe secured political independence from the Soviet Union in 1989, but their revolutions also had an economic impact. Their centralized economies broke down, and the old trade mechanisms collapsed along with Comecon (the East bloc counterpart to the European Economic Community) and the USSR. In 1990-1991, Poland suffered a seven-percent decline in output. Full employment, which was guaranteed under communism, has given way to 16-percent unemployment as the Polish labor market rationalizes, and labor productivity remains low. Huge income disparities have developed, and the social safety net has contracted.

Nonetheless, Poland has managed to create the essentials of a market economy and is continuing to introduce structural changes like privatization that are designed to strengthen the economy. After its initial decline in the early 1990s, the Polish economy has recovered and now experiences an annual growth rate of five percent. Despite the loss of Eastern markets, Polish exports are beginning to increase. According to Mr. Osiatynski, Poland's experience offered the lesson that dramatic shocks to the economy should be avoided if possible in favor of medium-term changes such as the gradual phasing out of markets.

Mr. Osiatynski also remarked that foreign assistance is tailored to the needs of the donor rather than those of the recipient. To maximize its impact, foreign assistance should address specific problems. Sometimes money is not even what is most helpful. For example, the European Union provides aid to Poland, but in his view, access to EU markets would be more beneficial.

Mr. Osiatynski warned that politicizing economic issues makes it far more difficult to accomplish tasks of critical importance to the nation. When politicians make promises that they cannot keep, he said, they undermine democracy because people become disillusioned with the political process. This phenomenon helped to explain the recent wave of strikes and labor unrest in Poland, Mr. Osiatynski said, because the ex-communists have not delivered on their promises to improve standards of living and increase employment. He underscored the importance of providing opportunities for the unemployed, women and other marginalized groups within society to sustain social peace and consolidate democracy.

El Salvador: Democracy and Development

“The new name of peace is development,” according to Carmen-Maria Gallardo Hernandez, Executive Director of Fundapaz (the Foundation for Peace) in El Salvador. In the aftermath of conflict, an extraordinary degree of strategic coordination is needed among the various domestic and international actors in the transition process. Particularly critical is the reconciliation of the central strategic priorities of peace, democracy and social development with economic stability. Moreover, “there cannot be a long-term social and economic recovery after an internal conflict without the persistence of the national political will and determination that prevailed during the negotiation process.”

In El Salvador, programs to build peace follow long-term strategies that address the historical causes of the conflict. Social stability, employment and antipoverty policies are all interrelated, and integral to social reconstruction, the establishment of democracy and lasting peace. Centuries-old social inequalities demand sound strategic programs in the areas of education, health care, housing, employment and other basic human needs. Yet economic measures alone cannot guarantee the success of the peace process. A culture of peace is also needed, one that “promotes a profound change in attitudes and values of the citizenship, in which violence is replaced by a continued quest for the values and behaviors of peace.”

El Salvador’s chief economic problems--poverty, environmental degradation, high population growth--were exacerbated by the conflict. Ms. Gallardo reported that an estimated 60 percent of the population lives in poverty, and another 20 percent has emigrated, either for political or economic reasons. “What seems to be saving the economy,” she said, “are massive remittances from Salvadorans living mainly in the U.S.” that total more than \$1 billion annually--three times the amount El Salvador earns from coffee, its chief export.

“At the heart of the notion of peace building,” she added, “is the idea of meeting needs for security and order, for a reasonable standard of living, for recognition of identity and worth and creating mutual respect and creative exchange.” The 1992 peace agreement called for programs to reinsert 30,000 former combatants into the productive life of the country, to create and strengthen democratic institutions and to rebuild the areas most harmed by the war. El Salvador’s National Reconstruction Program, which in June 1995 was incorporated into the Social Development Coordination Ministry, aims to help consolidate peace and democracy, resolve social inequalities and build a foundation for more equitable growth. The Salvadoran government also has a comprehensive Economic and Social Development Plan for 1994-1999 that addresses the economic, social and political challenges of peace. The economic dimension of the plan was formulated with input from all sectors of society as well as from the country’s regional trading partners. The social dimension targets resources to the most vulnerable groups; reduces the role played by government; promotes community and private participation and the decentralization of public services; and the modernization of social institutions.

Northern Ireland: The Cycles of Dependence

The coming of peace does not necessarily pave the way for economic prosperity in Northern Ireland, according to Professor Vani Borooah of the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Ulster. While it is easy to argue that the Troubles are the cause of Northern Ireland's economic problems because the resulting destruction and fear have kept out investment and created a brain drain, he emphasized that there is a deeper problem of dependence--in fiscal, welfare, educational and industrial terms.

While the number of jobs in Northern Ireland has been virtually static since 1951, the composition of the job market has changed. Today 32 percent of jobs in Northern Ireland are in the public sector, and only 18 percent are in industry. There is a political aspect to this development, Mr. Borooah noted: the expansion of the public sector was accompanied by growth of the middle class, particularly among Catholics, with the aim of raising Northern Ireland to British living standards. The economic cost of this expansion is increased dependence on the British taxpayer. As the labor force grows in Northern Ireland, where will new jobs come from? The public sector is running out of steam. In his view, the best that can be expected from the British government is a soft landing.

The paradox of unemployment, Mr. Borooah said, is that creating jobs does not reduce unemployment because the number of people searching for work rises as opportunities increase. Many jobs that have been created in Northern Ireland are part-time and in the service sector, and are subsequently shunned by men and filled instead by women. This has created a polarization among couples: either both spouses work, or, because of the way the British welfare system is structured, neither works. This dependence on welfare has given rise to a hardcore underclass that is largely concentrated geographically. To break the cycle of unemployment it is not enough to create jobs, Mr. Borooah stressed, but attitudes and motivations that enable people to hold down jobs must also be created.

Because there no longer is a market for unskilled labor in Northern Ireland, education and training are necessary to obtain employment. But Mr. Borooah pointed out that the British educational system is extremely elitist and ignores the large majority of school leavers. He asserted that the system needs to become much more egalitarian, developing job skills and offering vocational training. If the educational system cannot be dismantled, then the barriers to the grammar school network should be lowered for working class children to increase their access to the best schools.

Forty percent of Northern Ireland's jobs are in foreign-owned companies. The problem is that these industrial jobs are fragile, dependent on the situation in the parent headquarters. It is fine to attract foreign investment, Mr. Borooah said, but Northern Ireland should try to secure research and

development and management positions as well as assembly-line jobs. Northern Ireland also needs to foster domestic industry that will remain in good times and in bad.

What should the role of the government be? Mr. Borooah said that state intervention is neither good nor bad; rather, it is the quality of the intervention that matters. He supported an active role for government in the economy, but said that it should also invest in infrastructure and try to encourage the development of the private sector.

The Northern Ireland Response

Economic development is central to the peace process, according to John Hume, MP, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party and a member of the European Parliament, because it is the common ground that can bring people together. He said that the European Union was the most successful example of conflict resolution in the world because it has created institutions that respect national differences and its members have worked out an economic common ground together. This process built trust and overcame the old barriers of Europe.

In Northern Ireland, the dialogue involving the British and Irish governments and all the parties is being delayed too much, Mr. Hume said. But focusing on economic issues can help build common ground and trust. He noted that the parties are already beginning to talk to each other about economic issues and have even approached the British government with joint proposals for economic development. While seeking U.S. and other foreign investment, Northern Ireland must also develop small and medium-sized enterprises with domestic roots. The people of Northern Ireland have to work together and take advantage of international contacts, especially among the Irish diaspora. Technology is making the world a smaller place, he said, and industry no longer needs to be centralized. Northern Ireland can offer quality of life and foster decentralization.

David Ervine of the Progressive Unionist Party maintained that politics and economics are inseparable. Economic development can help to reconstruct a new society that includes everyone who wants to be a part of it. He reminded the audience that not all unemployed people have killed people. Insisting that there is no excuse for a return to violence, Mr. Ervine offered his personal recommendation that the guns must remain silent. Although sometimes those most removed from the war want to maintain the politics of division, he said, the victims of the conflict testify to the necessity of finding a better way. In his view, Northern Ireland must invest in its people, especially its young people, and help them to feel a part of society and vested in the community.

Inez McCormick emphasized that there is an integral link between economic growth and the fragile political transformation. She said that a consensus is building in Northern Ireland on the need for

economic cooperation, but noted that the government is largely absent from the debate. What is needed is a constructive agenda that everyone supports. In her view, economic development policies must begin with the communities and groups that are most disadvantaged, not because they are unqualified, but because of the way Northern Ireland society is structured. Ms. McCormick said that these communities neither see themselves nor want to be seen as victims. It is not the amount of money but the political will, the imagination and energy expended that lead to real changes in society. She recommended that decisions on how to spend money must be put as close to the ground as possible, into the communities, trusting them to build. Strategic coordination must involve all levels, not just the top. According to Mr. Hume, economic cooperation is key not only at the political level, but also at the grassroots level, where it builds trust and cooperation within the community.

Robin Wilson said that he was impressed by Mr. Borooah's arguments, but he wondered how to address the issues he had raised. In his view, the government does not want to face the problems. Nor do community organizations, because they imply that there may be other reasons for unemployment for which the communities would have to take responsibility. Mr. Borooah replied that to address the problem of the hardcore of long-term unemployed (or even never employed), greater investment in preparing people--building skills before providing jobs--is needed. But Terry Carlin of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Congress of Trade Unions countered that job creation does not help enough of the unemployed. He also remarked that the long-term unemployed are most concerned about their children having jobs. Mr. Osiatynski suggested that perhaps the most important step would be to establish more development agencies and decentralize as much power and resources as possible to the local authorities. They will know who is unemployed and who needs the most help.

Ms. McCormick cited Mr. Osiatynski's contention that women, or any group within society, must be factored into the peace process from the beginning, or they will be factored out. Mr. Ervine agreed that Northern Ireland needs to address the gender balance, and said that it now has an opportunity to pick up on new ideas that include everyone. Ms. Gallardo said that there is a big gap between opportunities available to men and women in El Salvador, and she highlighted the important link between education, jobs and international cooperation. Sean Wallace [?] of Focus on Children said that investing in early childhood education is the key, yet children and education are not high on the list of economic priorities in Northern Ireland. Bronagh Hinds added that the role of education in human rights and democracy is also being left out. Ms. Hernandez responded that they must fight to get these issues onto the agenda. Education either makes peace or violence.

Conclusion

The experiences of the peacemakers and negotiators who came from all over the world to address the Northern Ireland participants in the Belfast conference suggest a number of conclusions concerning the process of building peace that may have bearing on Northern Ireland's prospects. The overriding lesson was that compromise and cooperation are vital to lasting peace. All parties to a conflict must abandon violence and work together toward a common future. Both sides need each other, and must seize historic opportunities for change when they arise. While it may not be possible to resolve all dimensions of a conflict at once, all parties should address them together with creativity and flexibility. A concrete process complete with a timetable to which both sides must strive to adhere will help prevent the peace process from stalling or going off the track, although different approaches and schedules may be employed in dealing with critical issues such as disarming former combatants, building an inclusive and workable political process, and improving economic opportunities. These approaches have proved successful in South Africa, Central America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East; the international speakers shared the conviction that they can work in Northern Ireland too.