

H. Res. 744

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

April 4, 2006.

Whereas the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998, in Belfast, was endorsed in a referendum by the overwhelming majority of people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland;

Whereas the parties to the Good Friday Agreement made a clear commitment to “partnership, equality, and mutual respect” as the basis for moving forward in pursuit of lasting peace in Northern Ireland;

Whereas the parties to the Good Friday Agreement also affirmed their “total and absolute commitment to exclusively democratic and peaceful means” in pursuit of lasting peace in Northern Ireland;

Whereas inclusive power-sharing based on these defining qualities is essential to the viability and advancement of the democratic process in Northern Ireland;

Whereas paramilitary activity by both traditions in a democratic society undermines the trust and confidence that are essential in a political system based on inclusive power-sharing in Northern Ireland;

Whereas on September 26, 2005, the International Independent Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) con-

firmed the Irish Republican Army had destroyed its full arsenal of weapons;

Whereas the Good Friday Agreement called for police reform and establishment of a “new beginning” in policing in Northern Ireland with an effective, accountable, and fair police service capable of attracting support from the entire community, maintaining law and order, and adhering to the principle of the protection of human rights;

Whereas the new Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has made great strides in becoming an integrated, professional, and impartial police force under civilian control and responsive to all community concerns, and has worked to protect both communities from violence;

Whereas significant further work in police reform, and in fostering community acceptance of the PSNI, must still be accomplished;

Whereas the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ireland continue to strongly support the Good Friday Agreement as the way forward in the peace process and have committed themselves to its implementation; and

Whereas the Government of the United States continues to strongly support the peace process in Northern Ireland: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives—

(A) reiterates its support for the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998, in Belfast, as the blueprint for a lasting peace in Northern Ireland;

(B) commends the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair and the Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern for their leadership and persistence in seeking a peaceful resolution in Northern Ireland;

(C) commends the Sinn Fein leadership in successfully urging the Irish Republican Army to end its armed struggle and verifiably put its weapons beyond use;

(D) commends Sir Hugh S. Orde, Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), for his leadership and for working to protect both communities;

(E) commends the PSNI for the institution of the Historical Enquiries Team, which will provide a thorough and independent examination of unresolved deaths that occurred in connection with the Troubles from 1968 to 1989;

(F) commends Nuala O'Loan and the Police Ombudsman's Office for the work they have done in promoting human rights in law enforcement and in fostering community confidence in the PSNI; and

(G) commends the work of the Northern Irish Policing Board and its District Partnerships for

promoting genuine community policing in Northern Ireland; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(A) all groups and organizations should end their involvement in paramilitary activity;

(B) all political parties in Northern Ireland should—

(i) agree to share power with all parties according to the democratic mandate of the Good Friday Agreement; and

(ii) commit to work in good faith with all the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement, which established the Northern Ireland Assembly and an inclusive Executive, the North-South Ministerial Council, and the British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference, for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland;

(C) since policing reform is a significant part of winning public confidence and acceptance in the new form of government in Northern Ireland, all political parties should cooperate fully with the PSNI in preventing and investigating crimes; and

(D) the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ireland should work to

achieve full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, including devolution of policing and justice, the normalization of the security presence, and of the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland reforms, including long-term senior-level exchanges between the Garda Síochána, the police service of the Republic of Ireland, and the PSNI.

Attest:

Clerk.