

*INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY PADRAIC WHITE , EISENHOWER FELLOW IRELAND AT OPENING RECEPTION IN HOME OF DANIEL M ROONEY, US AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND ON TUESDAY MAY 4, 2010 FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE “ BUILDING COMMUNITY ACROSS DIFFERENCES “ CONFERENCE JOINTLY SPONSORED BY KELLOGG FELLOWS LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE ; THE EISENHOWER FELLOWSHIPS, AND THE LOEB FELLOWSHIPS*

AMBASSADOR ROONEY AND MRS ROONEY , AMBASSADOR MICHAEL SULLIVAN \* , DISTINGUISHED GUESTS:

I AM HONOURED TO JOIN WITH LESSA PHILIPS OF THE KELLOGG NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE AND CAMILLA WEEN , LOEB FELLOW AND MICHELLE SULLIVAN , KELLOGG AND LOEB FELLOW IN THESE INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

WHAT ALL FELLOWS OF ALL PROGRAMS HAVE IN COMMON IS A DEBT OF HONOUR TO THE FELLOWSHIPS, FOR WHAT THEY HAVE GIVEN EACH OF US. WE SEEK TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK FOR WHAT WE HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO RECEIVE IN OUR FELLOWSHIPS. I WAS AN EISENHOWER FELLOW IN 1980 AND IN THE INTERVENING YEARS HAVE DONE MY BEST TO PAY OFF THAT DEBT OF HONOUR.

THE THEME OF THE EXCHANGES THIS WEEK IS “ BUILDING COMMUNITY ACROSS DIFFERENCE “ AND THE THREE FELLOWSHIP ORGANISATIONS HAVE SHOWN A GOOD EXAMPLE THEMSELVES IN REACHING OUT BEYOND THEIR OWN PERIMETERS TO FIND COMMON CAUSE WITH THE OTHERS. I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WORK OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE AND ESPECIALLY ON BEHALF OF THE IRISH EISENHOWER FELLOWS THE CONTRIBUTION OF DIANE SHOEMAKER, DIRECTOR OF THE EISENHOWER ALUMNI NETWORK ALONG WITH JOYCE O’CONNOR AND JOHN DUNLOP OF OUR IRISH NETWORK.

ONE OF THE CORE AIMS OF THIS WEEK IS TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF “ BUILDING COMMUNITY ACROSS DIFFERENCES “ HERE IN IRELAND AS WELL AS THE EXPERIENCES FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS BRING WITH THEM .

IT IS CO-INCIDENTAL THAT THIS THURSDAY, MAY 5<sup>TH</sup> , ELECTIONS TO THE UK PARLIAMENT WILL TAKE PLACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHEN YOU WILL BE THERE. MOST COMMENTATORS HAVE REPORTED THE CAMPAIGN AS BEING MORE CONCERNED WITH WHAT ARE TERMED “ BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES “ LIKE HAVING A JOB AND THE BUDGET AVAILABLE TO NI RATHER THAN THE TRADITIONAL “ CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES “. THAT IS ONE MEASURE OF THE SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND TO NORMAL POLITICAL LIFE.

THE IRISH EISENHOWER NETWORK HAS TO-DAY 30 FELLOWS, FAIRLY EVENLY DIVIDED, NORTH AND SOUTH AND 15 USA FELLOWS WHO HAVE BEEN IN IRELAND DURING THEIR FELLOWSHIPS AND ARE HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE IRISH NETWORK. SINCE THE MID 1980S , AS THE NUMBER OF FELLOWS INCREASED WE HAVE CONSCIOUSLY MET AS AN ALL-ISLAND GROUP AND THROUGH OUR PERSONAL LINKS AND OUR ORGANISATIONAL ACTIVITIES SOUGHT TO MAKE OUR OWN CONTRIBUTION TO A MORE HARMONIOUS ISLAND .

INDEED, THE VERY FIRST TIME I WAS IN BELFAST , WAS IN THE MIDST OF THE TROUBLES AROUND 1986 WHEN THE SMALL NUMBER OF FELLOWS THEN ON THE ISLAND – SOME FIVE OF US – DECIDED TO CROSS THE POLITICAL BOUNDARY AND MEET INFORMALLY . I REMEMBER DRIVING THERE ON A SATURDAY MORNING WITH MY WIFE , MARY, AND DISCOVERING THAT BELFAST WAS ONLY TWO HOURS BY CAR FROM OUR HOME IN DUBLIN – AND NOT ON ANOTHER PLANET.

HAPPILY, THE EEF SUPPORTED THAT ALL-ISLAND PERSPECTIVE EVER SINCE.

ON BEHALF OF ALL THE IRISH EISENHOWER FELLOWS , I WISH THE PARTICIPANTS A PRODUCTIVE AND ENJOYABLE WEEK ON THIS ISLAND.

ENDS

\* MICHAEL SULLIVAN WAS THE US AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND FROM 1998-2001. HIS DAUGHTER MICHELLE SULLIVAN IS A MEMBER OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF THE KELLOGG FELLOWSHIPS.