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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

ENGLISH only

Statement

**In response to the Address by the Prime Minister of Ireland H. E. Bertie Ahern
Delivered by Ambassador Jivan Tabibian
At the 31st (Special) Joint Meeting of the
Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council,
February 27, 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

The Armenian delegation joins others in welcoming with great warmth the distinguished Prime Minister H. E. Bertie Ahern. It is wonderful to hear a Head of Government talk so clearly about many touchy issues; we all know we have few of them.

A personal note about Armenia and Ireland I must say: the effects of the last 30-40 years. Thirty, thirty two years ago one could look for as long as he could in a telephone book in Dublin, and one would be hard put to find an Armenian name. Today, Ireland is one of the new centers of the Armenian Diaspora in Europe, prosperous, active and cooperative. We are happy about that.

The question of “summits” reminds me of a certain observation. In fact, in 1999 some of us were also there; the last summit we have had. May I venture an explanation and describe it in the following way by noticing that we, the OSCE, are not that successful in getting even all 56 Foreign Ministers, let alone the Heads of States. But the Prime Minister’s visit here says: where there is a will and priority, where there is an appreciation of an institution’s role, Heads of State, Heads of Government will inconvenience themselves, move, come, attend, talk, participate and listen. While most of us around here representing our States talk so piously about the importance of this institution, when one looks at what happens at a summit we do not have, it reminds me of the piety for abstinence in a pub: interesting but not likely to make anybody abstinent.

The next point we would like to make is that Ireland demonstrates that a great nation does not have to be a great power. Therefore, perhaps there is a connection between Ireland’s status, activities, mentality and way of looking at the world and its role in the OSCE. Marrying identity to Statehood is not a challenge that is met very easily. And we can say that Ireland’s history and experiences are simultaneously, for many of us both sobering and may inspire us with some faith that things are possible eventually.

In that vein: we know the long and complicated process through which the Northern Ireland problem has reached a level of resolution or a step towards resolution. One may

take any view of that. The interesting thing about that is a lesson to be learned, as we like to learn from successes; we never learn from failures. It would be interesting for us to know

- a) If, an organization like the OSCE played a role in that process, in what was a “protracted” conflict, that appeared to most as essentially intractable?
- b) Do we play a role where we are asked to play a role? Could we have played a positive role?
- c) Perhaps it worked out because we did not play a role or because those who were involved, their long term views and interests co-evolved over a long period of time.

The parties that came to an agreement were not the parties at the inception of the conflict. That co-evolution may take sometimes 10 years, sometimes 30 and in some conflicts over 60 years, and they are not there yet.

I just have a side comment on why, in modern societies, individual rights are foundational notions. That is true, but we must say and I must personally underline, that without the modernization of society, we realize that with the absence of the conditions of modernity and modernization, the second half of the equation with individual rights, is a matter of faith and not necessarily an operational reality.

In conclusion, may we propose a very modest item. H.E. Bertie Ahern told us Ireland has formed in the Foreign Ministry a “conflict research and analysis unit”. What would be interesting to us is if at the very least for those of us who struggle with similar problems, is for that Unit to try to do a profile and an analysis of and present the path to the ups and downs toward the Northern Ireland resolution. That would be a lesson learned. After that one can tackle problems elsewhere.

I thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you to the Prime Minister.