

A real opportunity now offers to end this centuries-old conflict between Britain and Ireland and to break the deadlock on Partition. For the first time, Britain and Ireland share a common cause. All the irritants and causes of conflict, with the exception of Partition, have been removed. There is a genuine feeling of admiration and friendship for the British people, which is only marred by what we consider to be a completely indefensible and undemocratic anomaly.

The creation of the Atlantic Pact is a matter of importance. The United States Government has been charged with the task of approaching us in relation to it on behalf of the six other countries. We are willing and anxious to join it, if the one obstacle in the way can be removed. This situation enables an approach to the problem which has not hitherto been possible. If the Atlantic Pact is the necessity which I believe it is, then it seems to me that every effort should be made to remove the obstacles that stand in the way. This should enable a new approach to the difficulties which, I think, preclude the British Government from seeking a solution; in other words, it affords a new opportunity of breaking the deadlock which has hitherto existed.

As already indicated, I believe that members of the British Government, and, indeed, many of the public men in Britain, inwardly desire to see this position ended. But, for internal political reasons, they are inclined to shelve the question so as not to get their fingers burnt and because they do not consider it an urgent problem. The proposed Atlantic Pact, in my view, provides a new background against which the problem could be discussed and straightened out without placing the British Government in a political difficulty. While British Statesmen would not admit this, I think that in the long run, they would be grateful for any step that ended this deadlock without causing them political difficulties.

Of the convening nations, it occurred to me that Canada would be the one that could most appropriately take the initiative in this matter, because of Canada's close relationship with both Britain and Ireland. British Statesmen would I think, take proposals of this nature from Canada more readily than they would from any other participating country. British public opinion would feel that it is only right and proper that this approach should come from Canada. In the context of the proposed Atlantic Pact and of the invitation to Ireland to join it, I do not see how the British Government could refuse to discuss the matter. Partition is clearly an international problem, just as much as Palestine and Indonesia are international problems. It is an international problem that stands clearly in the way of the cooperation that should exist in the Atlantic. It is, therefore, but natural that it should be examined by the convening countries and that every effort should be made to remove it.

I am afraid this letter is somewhat long and possibly repetitious, but I felt that I should write freely and frankly to you. Above all, I want to make it clear that our reply is not a tactical one. It is a genuine effort to remove an obstacle in the way of a closer understanding we are keen to bring about. It is not much use having international contacts and holding international conferences unless we can freely discuss the difficulties and the realities without shirking them because they are troublesome.