

File

name:

Chapter_12_-_Summit_Close_-_The_Rt_Hon_Michael_Gove_MP,_Minister_of_State_for_Levelling_Up,_Housing_and_Communities_and_Minister_for_Intergovernmental_Relations[1].mp3

Moderator questions in Bold, Respondents in Regular text.

KEY: **Unable to decipher** = (inaudible + timecode), **Phonetic spelling** (ph) + timecode), **Missed word** = (mw + timecode), **Talking over each other** = (talking over each other + timecode).

Moderator: To wind up the summit today, I'm delighted to introduce the Right Honourable Michael Gove, MP, the Minister of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations. Michael has spent many years in senior ministerial positions. He was a journalist after leaving university, working as a reporter for The Press and Journal in Aberdeen, working also for Scottish TV, for BBC TV and, later, as assistant editor of The Times. But, of course, you will most probably know him for his work in government. Michael Gove, MP.

Michael Gove: Thank you very much, Anita. It's wonderful to see so many of you here today. We've just been hearing about an Irish goodbye, and the thing about an Irish goodbye is it always reminds you how much you want to come back. I've been coming back to Northern Ireland since the 1990s. Yes, I am that old. And every time I come back, I am reminded what an amazing part of the United Kingdom Northern Ireland is. Somewhere with a storied past, with an amazing present and with an exciting future. Northern Ireland's past is a past of creativity, of imagination and achievement. Just down the road, you can see Harland & Wolff, the shipbuilders that were responsible for some of the great triumphs in marine architecture and engineering for decades. Ships built there plied trade across the world. Northern Ireland was also the home to Short Brothers, one of the most innovative firms in aviation throughout the 20th century. As we've heard, Northern Ireland was an engine room, not just of the United Kingdom but for the world throughout the 20th century. Not just an area of industrial innovation, but also one of amazing creativity. C. S. Lewis, the author of the Narnia novels, which bewitch children to these days. Louis MacNeice, one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. Seamus Heaney and Paul Muldoon, voices that bridged communities in Northern Ireland and worldwide. All here from Northern Ireland. This small patch of earth has created so much for so many. But, as we know, in the last 25 years of the 20th century, Northern Ireland went through troubled times and it was during that time that the resilience and the optimism of people here were tested as in few parts of Europe.

But what's truly amazing is how the people of Northern Ireland came through that time, how they built peace together, and how the resilience that they showed then has turned into an amazing present now because Northern Ireland is a wonderful place to live, as we've heard. A wonderful place to live, in terms of the quality of life, uniquely beautiful. Whether you're spending time in the cathedral city of Armagh, whether you're in pubs in Belfast, whether you're visiting historic Derry, Londonderry, whether you are stepping across the Giant's Causeway or whether you're playing golf in Portrush, you are experiencing

some of the most naturally beautiful scenery. But you're also enjoying some of the warmest welcomes that you can get anywhere in Europe. And that quality of life is representative of the quality of the people here. Creative, as I've said, resilient, as you know, but also optimistic about that future. We've seen, those of us who are regular visitors to Belfast, this city transformed in the last decade. We've seen investment coming in, we've seen civic-, forgive me, leadership. Sometimes just as difficult to pronounce as it is to provide. We've seen-, hope the parties are listening. We've seen civic leadership demonstrate what it is to transform a city. And if you look at other global cities, other locations for investment, Belfast has something, I think, in common with Berlin. A city that has had division in the past, a city that has overcome difficulties, but now a city that is a centre for tech innovation, young, buzzy and attractive.

For those of you from the United States of America, it might seem odd for me to invoke either Silicon Valley or Boston, Massachusetts as comparisons, but Northern Ireland has what they have. Just like Boston, Massachusetts, Northern Ireland has two world leading universities, Queen's and the University of Ulster. Just like Boston, Northern Ireland has, around those universities, tech spin-offs in AI, in life science and in cyber. And just like Massachusetts, we have our own Kennedy, providing leadership and helping you to know that this is the place to invest. But more than any other city in Europe, Belfast has something special. More than any other part of Europe, Northern Ireland has something special. It's the reason why American presidents, Irish taoiseachs, UK prime ministers, European Union leaders, all come here. Because they know that the future of Northern Ireland matters and they know that the future of Northern Ireland is something in which they've all invested time, care, political capital and energy. And that's why, following on from the conclusion of the Windsor Framework, Northern Ireland is poised. It's on the cusp of one of the most exciting periods in its history. Nowhere else in Europe has unfettered access to the UK's own internal market and the European Union's single market as well. Nowhere else has that potential for growth. Nowhere else can be the entrepot, as Hong Kong was for years to Asia. Now, northern Ireland can be for both the United Kingdom and for Europe. And on that shared access also rests a commitment to a shared future. Public and private sector working together, universities and individuals working together, local government and central government, the United Kingdom and our friends in the Republic of Ireland. After years in the past of division, nowhere will you find teamwork, collaboration and a shared determination to succeed more apparent than in Northern Ireland.

And we've seen, in the last few years, major investments coming here. And talk to anyone, as I'm sure you have, who's made that commitment and chosen to invest in Northern Ireland and you won't find a single word of regret. You will only find that sense of optimism that suffuses this place. I've visited Northern Ireland, as I say, for more than 25 years. I hope, God willing, that I'll have the opportunity to visit this very special part of the United Kingdom for decades to come and I hope you will too. Northern Ireland is where you can smell hope in the air, you can sense optimism in everyone's eyes and where your investment can be part of a global success story. So, thank you all very much. Thank you.

Captions by Verbit Go