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IRELAND



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THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS ISSUED IN WASHINGTON DC FOR RELEASE IN AM MARCH 17 1979 BY SENATORS EDWARD M KENNEDY DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, SPEAKER THOMAS P O'NEILL JR., GOVERNOR HUGH L CAREY, SENATORS THOMAS F EAGLETON, GEORGE MCGOVERN, GARY HART, JOSEPH R BIDEN JR., CONGRESSMEN THOMAS S FOLEY, FRANK THOMPSON JR., DON EDWARDS, EDWARD J MARKEY, JOHN L CAVANAGH, JAMES M SHANNON AND GOVERNOR BRENDAN T BYRNE.

"JOINT STATEMENT ON NORTHERN IRELAND.

WE SHARE THE CONCERN OF MANY IN IRELAND AND THE UNITED STATES THAT ST PATRICK'S DAY IN 1979 FINDS THE CRISIS IN NORTHERN IRELAND NO CLOSER TO SOLUTION THAN IT WAS A YEAR AGO. IT IS BAD ENOUGH THAT THE PAST YEAR HAS SEEN ANOTHER ROUND OF DRIFT IN THE SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. BUT THE YEAR HAS BEEN EVEN WORSE FOR THE ORDINARY MEN AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF NORTHERN IRELAND WHO HAVE ENDURED THIS ENDLESS FESTERING DECADE OF FEAR AND KILLING AND BOMBING AND DESTRUCTION AND GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

TO OUR FELLOW CITIZENS IN THE UNITED STATES, WE AGAIN RENEW OUR URGENT APPEALS TO REJECT THE PATH OF VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND TO SHUN ANY WORDS OR ACTIONS THAT GIVE ASSISTANCE OR ENCOURAGEMENT IN ANY FORM TO THOSE ENGAGED IN VIOLENCE. TWO THOUSAND PERSONS HAVE DIED AS A RESULT OF THE VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS. THOUSANDS MORE HAVE BEEN MAIMED OR SEVERELY INJURED. IT IS IRRESPONSIBLE FOR ANY AMERICAN PRIVATE CITIZEN OR PUBLIC OFFICIAL TO COMPOUND THE TRAGEDY IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY ACTIVITIES THAT OFFER FINANCIAL OR OTHER SUPPORT TO THOSE ENGAGED IN VIOLENCE OR THAT LEND THEMSELVES TO THE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGNS OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE KILLING AND DESTRUCTION.

WE ALSO CONDEMN ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE VIOLENCE. ACCORDING TO RECENT PRESS REPORTS AND CREDIBLE STATEMENTS BY PRISON DOCTORS, NUMEROUS INSTANCES OF OFFICIAL BRUTALITY AND VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE OCCURRED IN THE POLICE INTERROGATION CENTER IN NORTHERN IRELAND. IF THESE REPORTS AND COMMENTS ARE ACCURATE, THE MASSIVE SCALE OF THE VIOLATIONS, THE LARGE NUMBER OF VICTIMS INVOLVED, AND THE LENGTHY PERIOD OVER WHICH THE ABUSES HAVE OCCURRED MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH PRACTICES COULD EXIST WITHOUT THE ACQUIESCENCE, OR AT LEAST THE NEGLIGENCE, OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. IN EFFECT, IT APPEARS THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE VIOLATED THE SPIRIT OF ITS RECENT PLEDGE TO THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS THAT CERTAIN PRACTICES BY THE SECURITY FORCES AMOUNTING TO BRUTALITY OR EVEN TORTURE HAD BEEN DISCONTINUED IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

WE BELIEVE THAT BRITAIN HAS AN URGENT RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPOND TO THESE ALLEGATIONS AND TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO ELIMINATE THE ABUSES THAT EXIST. IN THIS RESPECT, WE URGE THAT A MORE COMPREHENSIVE INVESTIGATION SHOULD NOW BE UNDERTAKEN, INCLUDING AN INVESTIGATION OF SPECIFIC CASES OF BRUTALITY, THE PROSECUTION AND PUNISHMENT OF ALL OFFICIALS GUILTY OF ABUSES, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE STEPS TO GUARANTEE THAT SUCH ABUSES WILL NOT RECUR. IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR BRITAIN TO BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND TO ACT TO RESTORE ITS REPUTATION FOR FAIR LAW ENFORCEMENT WORTHY OF THE RULE OF LAW IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.

LAW IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT CARTER SPOKE FOR US AND FOR ALL AMERICANS WHO CARE ABOUT PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHEN HE CALLED NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO FOR "A JUST SOLUTION THAT INVOLVES BOTH PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND PROTECTS HUMAN RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION". IN SUPPORT OF THAT CALL FOR ACTION, PRESIDENT CARTER PLEDGED TO WORK WITH OTHER NATIONS TO ENCOURAGE JOB-CREATING INVESTMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND ONCE A SETTLEMENT IS ACHIEVED.

WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER THE CONTINUING LACK OF PERCEPTIBLE PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT. A GENERATION OF CHILDREN NOW BEAR THE SCARS OF THIS DECADE OF KILLING. THE SUFFERING PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND DESERVE RELIEF FROM THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE. THEY ALSO DESERVE A BRIGHTER SOURCE OF HOPE ABOUT THEIR FUTURE.

THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THE LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT HAS BEEN THE INTRANSIGENCE OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE YEARS, THEY HAVE CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN REASONABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SHARING OF POWER WITH THE CATHOLIC MINORITY.

BUT A MAJOR ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS THE DELAY AND NEGLECT ON THE PART OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. IN EFFECT, BRITAIN HAS ALLOWED THE PROTESTANT MAJORITY TO EXERCISE A VETO OVER ALL EFFORTS TO PRODUCE AN ACCEPTABLE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT.

ON OCCASION, AS IN THE DECISION THIS PAST YEAR TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF NORTHERN IRELAND'S REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT, BRITISH POLICY HAS GONE BEYOND DELAY AND NEGLECT, AND HAS BECOME A POLICY OF CONSPICUOUS TILT IN FAVOR OF THE MAJORITY AND TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE MINORITY.

THE TIME IS LONG PAST FOR THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO REAPPRAISE ITS FAILING POLICIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND TO INITIATE A MORE EFFECTIVE EFFORT TO END THE VIOLENCE IMPASSE. BUT THIS CANNOT HAPPEN ABSENT THE POLITICAL WILL WITHIN BRITAIN THAT IT SHOULD HAPPEN. IN THIS RESPECT WE WERE DISMAYED BY THE LACK OF PRIORITY GIVEN BY THE TWO MAJOR BRITISH POLITICAL PARTIES TO THE SUBJECT OF NORTHERN IRELAND AT THEIR RECENT PARTY CONFERENCES.

BY ACTION AND POLICY, BRITAIN MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT IT INTENDS TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT THAT FAIRLY PROTECTS THE RIGHTS OF BOTH THE MAJORITY AND THE MINORITY. SPECIFICALLY, IF THE PROTESTANT MAJORITY PERSISTS IN ITS UNWILLINGNESS TO ENTERTAIN REASONABLE PROPOSALS FOR SHARING POWER WITH THE CATHOLIC MINORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND AS PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, THEN BRITAIN MUST BE PREPARED TO PURSUE BOLDER ALTERNATIVES. FOR EXAMPLE, BRITAIN SHOULD INDICATE ITS WILLINGNESS TO GIVE ACTIVE CONSIDERATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE WIDELY DISCUSSED PROPOSALS FOR A CONFEDERATION OR OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT LINKING NORTHERN IRELAND WITH THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND. WE RECALL THAT THE BIRTH OF THE AMERICAN NATION ITSELF COINCIDED WITH THE CREATION OF A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ENTITY LINKING THE SEPARATE COLONIES UNDER THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION.

WE EMPHASIZE THAT A SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT CANNOT BE IMPOSED ON ANY OF THE SIDES. IT MUST BE ACHIEVED BY NEGOTIATION, AGREEMENT AND CONSENT AMONG ALL THE PARTIES AND THEIR POLITICAL LEADERS. WE REJECT THE ARGUMENT THAT NORTHERN IRELAND CAN BE BOMBED INTO UNITY WITH THE REPUBLIC, JUST AS WE REJECT THE ARGUMENT THAT THE CATHOLIC MINORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND CAN BE COERCED INTO ACCEPTANCE OF A PROTESTANT-DOMINATED STATE. IN THIS RESPECT WE WOULD WISH TO RECORD OUR GREAT ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR THE VIEWS SET FORTH IN AN EDITORIAL IN DECEMBER OF LAST YEAR WHICH APPEARED IN THE CHURCH OF IRELAND GAZETTE, A PUBLICATION OF ONE OF THE MAJOR PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN IRELAND. CAREFUL, COMPASSIONATE, AND DEEPLY RELIGIOUS IN ITS ASSERTION OF BROTHERHOOD, THE EDITORIAL STATED THAT AS IRISH UNITY WOULD BE CERTAINLY SOME DAY, PERHAPS THE PRESENT WAS THE BEST TIME, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE PROTESTANT MAJORITY, TO DISCUSS ITS IMPLICATIONS.

WHILE CRITICAL OF THE ROLE OF THE PROTESTANT MAJORITY IN THE PRESENT IMPASSE, WE ALSO RESPECT THE LEGITIMATE CONCERNS THEY HAVE ABOUT THEIR FUTURE AND ABOUT THE PRESERVATION OF THEIR IDENTITY IN ANY FUTURE SETTLEMENT. WE WELCOME IN THIS RESPECT THE COMMITMENT OF EACH OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE SOUTH TO ENSURE THAT THESE CONCERNS ARE RESPECTED.

WE RECOGNISE THE DIFFICULTY OF BREAKING DOWN THE ANCIENT FEARS AND PREJUDICES THAT FUEL THE CURRENT CONFLICT. INCREASINGLY, HOWEVER, OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS SUGGESTS THAT NO ONLY THE LONG-RUN BUT ALSO THE NEAR-TERM ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS OF THE MAJORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND MAY WELL BE SERVED MORE APPROPRIATELY BY LINKS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND THAN WITH GREAT BRITAIN. THE RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THE REPUBLIC IN RECENT YEARS HAS EFFECTIVELY CLOSED THE GAP BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH.

THE EMERGING RECOGNITION OF THE COINCIDENCE OF INTERESTS BETWEEN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE REPUBLIC - AND THE DIVERGENCE OF INTERESTS BETWEEN NORTHERN IRELAND AND BRITAIN - IS ALSO TAKING PLACE AS A RESULT OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. EUROPE ITSELF IS CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR

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WHICH ITSELF IS CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR IRISH DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN MODERN EUROPE. IT WOULD BE A LOGICAL OUTGROWTH OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT IN 1977 FOR THE UNITED STATES TO JOIN WITH BRITAIN AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL OR OTHER ASSISTANCE TO A UNITED IRELAND REACHED BY AGREEMENT OF THE PARTIES.

THE WHOLE CAN BE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS. A WHOLE IRELAND, WITH INSTITUTIONS THAT LINK THE PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES AND THAT PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF EACH COMMUNITY, CAN BRING GREATER BENEFITS TO BOTH PARTS OF THE DIVIDED ISLAND THAN EITHER PART NOW ENJOYS, AND ENHANCE THE TWO GREAT AND POWERFUL TRADITIONS OF THE IRISH PEOPLE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES STAND READY TO PROVIDE ALL APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE TO ACHIEVE THIS IMPORTANT GOAL."

END OF MESSAGE
MARCH 16 1979.