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AMBASSADE D'IRLANDE
HOLY SEE

20/54

6th May, 1981

Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin

Mr. Murphy

TH 11/5

Attention: Anglo-Irish Division

I attach the text of Pope John Paul II's remarks on the situation in Northern Ireland during his customary Angelus message on Sunday 3rd May, as published in "L'Osservatore Romano" dated 4/5 May 1981. An unofficial English translation follows:-

"I invite you to pray for our brothers, Catholics and non-Catholics, of the North of Ireland, who are living in hours of growing tension with the fear of a possible break-out of new grave acts of fratricidal violence. You know that in the past few days a personal Envoy of mine, Father John Magee, went on a mission of good will to that area and visited the prisoners, and some families of prisoners and also of soldiers who have been killed and he had contacts with the civil Authorities. Let us pray so that the Lord may cause men to discover the means to a solution which will help the populations of Northern Ireland to turn themselves to a prospect of reconciliation and of peace, as already so many times and from so many parts it has been invoked up to now in vain".

In its edition dated 2/3 May 1981 "L'Osservatore Romano" carried (beginning on its front page) an Italian translation of remarks by Cardinal O Fiaich and of the statement by Fr. Magee in Armagh at the end of the latter's visit to Northern Ireland. In an attached commentary the paper says that "the very tenacity with which the prisoners are determined, despite such authoritative exhortations, to persist in the protest, shows what level of severity and imponderable repercussions the crisis has reached". The commentary goes on to quote from the double appeal of the Holy Father at Drogheda against violence and for adequate political solutions from "those who carry political responsibilities in the affairs of Ireland" and states that this twofold appeal would seem to be even more dramatically relevant today. "L'Osservatore" has carried regular wire reports from London and Belfast as the hunger strike developed.

F. J. Coffey
Ambassador.

*cc. Mr. Nelson
Mr. Smith
Mr. F. Murphy*