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Friend of Ireland

Ms. Anderson

*This has been forced
to Washington
PA 20/9/87*

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Morning Ireland

Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King will today try to persuade Irish Americans to support British guidelines on fair employment instead of the MacBride Principles, but one Irish American who will be saying a decisive no to that request is Congressman Joseph Kennedy, son of the late Robert Kennedy. He says Mr. King is a welcome visitor to the United States but when he spoke to Jim Dougall in Washington last night he contrasted Mr. King's reception with the official attitude to other visitors from Ireland.

Cong. Kennedy: I'm saying that there have been specific attempts by the British Government as well as the United States Government to deny visas to particular citizens of the Irish Government. As I say, I think it has been terribly unfortunate that these citizens have been denied, number one. I think, number two, the fact is that we have seen literally tens and tens of thousands of young Irish people come over to the United States illegally and who are here currently illegally. I think that, considering the tremendous benefits that the Irish people have provided to the people of the United States - and in so many different conflicts of every type and nature - it is just a terrible shame that these people aren't welcomed with open arms by our country, and also that we don't demonstrate in some really concrete ways the fact that its time for the British to really reassess their fundamental position with regard to Northern Ireland and begin to adhere to the Anglo-Irish Accord, which provided such great hope over the course of the last year or two but really we've seen no real movement, I don't believe.

Interviewer: What kind of movement would you like to see?

Cong. Kennedy: Well I think that first of all, on the most fundamental level, we've seen some improvement in fair housing but in the basic employment situation, fair employment is a dream in Northern Ireland. You basically find that the workforce is made up in large measure..... there is a terrible unemployment rate no matter how you tell it. The fact is, the people who are employed are in great measure the Protestants. It's about time that, just as we in the United States stand up for fairness in South Africa with the Sullivan Accords (sic) and.....those aren't radical enough for South Africa, it seems to me when you see four or five States begin to take on the MacBride Principles, if the British Government doesn't start recognising that they can't just issue the kind of basic guidelines with no teeth in them that were issued just this past week, then the States in this country are going to start to get tough.

Interviewer: Are you saying the British Government isn't doing enough?

Cong. Kennedy: You bet I'm saying that. If I didn't say that clearly enough, I'll say it again. They are not doing enough.

Interviewer: Is that why you support the MacBride Principles?

Cong. Kennedy: Well I think that fundamentally the reason why you support the MacBride Principles is to give the Catholic minority in the North a reasonable voice in the economic affairs and benefits of Ireland, and any way that that can

be accomplished is something that I would be supportive of, so I'm not wedded to the MacBride Principles, and I don't think that anybody in the United States is wedded specifically to the MacBride Principles. What they are wedded to is the notion that you don't deny rights to a minority simply because they are a minority.

Interviewer:

Now you wrote to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Tom King, asking him to ban the Ulster Defence Association. Why did you do that?

Cong. Kennedy:

It just seems to me that if you look at it even basically, the UDA is not declared to be an illegal organisation, and on the other hand you have the IRA which is considered to be an illegal organisation. I think that this is the kind of dichotomy that we've seen on the part of the British Government towards the Irish people, particularly towards the Catholics, that really has to be objected to.