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19th August, 1971

Text of telegram sent by the British Prime Minister, Mr. Edward Heath, to the Taoiseach in reply to the Taoiseach's telegram earlier that day.

- 305/14/494
- 1) Your telegram of today is unjustifiable in its contents, unacceptable in its attempt to interfere in the affairs of the United Kingdom and can in no way contribute to the solution of the problems of Northern Ireland.
 - 2) You should know that the principle of equality of treatment for everyone in Northern Ireland irrespective of political views or religion is the accepted policy of the governments of the United Kingdom and of Northern Ireland and is being fully implemented. By seeking to obscure this fact you do no service to any of the people of Northern Ireland.
 - 3) The military operations to which you refer are designed solely for the defence of the people against armed terrorists whose activities, many of which originate in or are supported from the Republic, I hope you would deplore and join me in suppressing. These operations are thus a necessary prelude to the restoration of greater harmony between the communities in Northern Ireland.
 - 4) While I naturally welcome contacts with you as the head of a friendly government, and while Mr. Faulkner and I have often made clear our desire to see greater cooperation between all governments concerned in promoting the mutual prosperity and wellbeing of the peoples of Northern Ireland and the Republic, I cannot accept that anyone outside the United Kingdom can participate in meetings designed to promote the political development of any part of the United Kingdom.
 - 5) I find your reference to supporting the policy of passive resistance now being pursued by certain elements in Northern Ireland calculated to do maximum damage to the cooperation between the communities in Northern Ireland which it is our purpose, and I would hope would be your purpose, to achieve.
 - 6) I deeply regret the fact that, when a meeting has already been arranged between us to discuss the whole range of matters of common interest to our two countries, you should have publicly taken up a position so calculated not only to increase the tension in Northern Ireland but also to impair our effort to maintain good relations between the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic.
 - 7) Since the text of your telegram was given to the Irish press before it was received here, I am also releasing the text of this message to the Press.