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1. There have been contacts in Washington in recent months on the subject of a proposed statement on Northern Ireland by the US Government. A telex received this morning from Ambassador Molloy requests urgent guidance on the attitude the Embassy should take in connection with a meeting arranged for tomorrow morning between representatives of Cyrus Vance and Senators Kennedy and Moynihan, Speaker O'Neill and Governor Carey. The purpose of the meeting is to settle the text of a statement which the Secretary of State would then recommend to President Carter.

Background

2. The background to the proposed statement is as follows: in the course of a visit to Washington on 23/24 May, Mr. John Hume suggested to Senator Kennedy and Speaker O'Neill that they avail of a meeting which, together with Governor Carey and Senator Moynihan, they had arranged with Secretary of State Vance to suggest that the United States Government issue a statement on Northern Ireland along the following lines:-

United States has no desire to involve itself in the situation in Northern Ireland. The Government and the people of the United States would wish to see an end to the suffering of the people of Northern Ireland caused by violence and they call on those who are waging the campaigns of violence to end these activities. The Government of the United States moreover, calls on all Americans not to assist in any way the violence that is taking place in Northern Ireland.

It is not for the United States to suggest the form of a solution to their problems to the people of Northern Ireland but the Government of the United States would wish the political leaders and the people of Northern Ireland to know that if the democratically elected political leaders of the two main communities in Northern Ireland can come together and reach an agreed solution to their problems, the United States Government would stand willing to assist the people of Northern Ireland to develop their community in any appropriate way.

Senator Kennedy and the other Irish-American leaders reacted favourably to this suggestion and agreed to raise the matter with Secretary Vance.

3. The Embassy in Washington was in close contact with those involved in this initiative and on instructions from the Department indicated to the Irish-American leaders that the Government would support a statement along the lines proposed. The desirability of a positive reaction by the British Government, without which the US would be unwilling to proceed, was urged by the Department on the British Ambassador and by Mr. Hume on the NIO. The matter was also raised by Mr. Lillis with the Northern Ireland desk officer at the British Embassy in Washington. The British reaction, as reported from Washington, was one of support in principle, but reservations.

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in regard to certain forms of assistance which were being proposed. The British were in particular opposed to the suggestion that a special fund might be appropriated by Congress for use in Northern Ireland. It was indicated that there would probably be no objection to a statement which encouraged industrial investment.

4. The meeting with Secretary Vance took place on 9 June. Subsequent press reports stressed that the US policy of non-involvement remained unchanged and referred to the statement issued by the four politicians on 17 March. The Ambassador in Washington was officially informed of the suggested initiative by the State Department on 13 June. The following day he conveyed the Government's views on the proposal to the State Department.

5. The Ambassador said the Government believed that a great deal of good could come from a public reiteration by the US Government of its call for an end to violence, support for a negotiated settlement and the renunciation of a direct role for the United States. In regard to the reference to economic assistance in the proposed statement, the Ambassador said that such an undertaking could, if appropriately drafted, make a positive contribution to the lowering of community tension and thereby enhance the prospects for a political settlement. The Ambassador suggested a number of forms this assistance might take - investment guarantees, loan guarantees, job subsidies, statement of encouragement to US companies, tax incentives - but advised that any public statement from the US Administration should not be specific as to the form of assistance envisaged. He also said that while we would not object to a special Congressional fund if it was acceptable to the British Government, we thought it unlikely that they would agree to such a proposal. It was also probable that such a fund would be misinterpreted and rejected by loyalist opinion. The Ambassador stressed the importance of the timing of the statement and suggested that it should not be issued during the "marching season". (The text of the Ambassador's speaking note is filed opposite.)

6. Following the general election here, the project was not pressed by the four Irish-American politicians with the US Government, pending the formation of a new Government here. However,

matters have now moved ahead and Secretary of State Vance is now ready to recommend to President Carter that the latter issue a statement.

Questions for Decision

7. The questions on which Ambassador Molloy has requested instructions are set out in paragraphs 5 and 6 of his telex. His main concern is to have guidance on the general attitude the Government would take on the initiative, and he also suggests explicit support for the idea of linking favourable political developments in Northern Ireland with the promotion of US industrial investment there.

H. Swift

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18 July 1977