

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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JOINT ST. PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT

MARCH 1980

As St. Patrick's Day approaches, we join again with millions of Americans in celebrating the valued contribution of Ireland to the history and heritage of the United States.

For the fourth successive year, we also join in opposing the violence in Northern Ireland and in expressing our strong desire for an early end to the conflict that has brought so much suffering and tragedy to the people of that land.

We are dismayed by the increase in violence over the past year. We are dismayed by the continuing lack of significant progress toward a political solution of the conflict.

We condemn the violence. We urge our fellow citizens to condemn the killing, and to avoid any words or deeds that encourage violence or provide assistance in any form to those engaged in violence. The path of the bullet and the bomb is not the path to peace in Northern Ireland. Support for those who live by violence can only postpone the day of peace and prolong the daily agony of the people of Northern Ireland.

Let each of us heed the words of Pope John Paul II, who said on the first day of his historic trip to Ireland in 1979:

Peace cannot be established by violence: peace can never flourish in a climate of terror, intimidation and death. Each of the historical communities in Ireland can only harm itself by seeking to harm the other. Continued violence can only endanger everything that is most precious in the traditions and aspirations of those communities. Let none concerned with Ireland have any illusions about the nature and the eminence of political violence.

While we welcome the implementation during the past year of some of the recommendations of the Bennett Committee of Inquiry, we are concerned over the British Government's continued rejection of recommendations made by its own Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights.

We believe that 1980 could bring significant new progress toward peace through a negotiated political settlement acceptable to both sides of the community in Northern

Ireland. A hopeful sign for the future was the election in 1979 of a new government in Great Britain with a clear majority in Parliament. We believe the British Government should use this opportunity to move to the next stage in the important discussions under way with the parties of Northern Ireland. Such an initiative should move to end the present conflict and to put in place a solution that will ensure a lasting peace.

We feel the British Government should reverse its long-standing policy of permitting the Protestant majority to veto every reasonable proposal that could lead to peace.

We believe that the solution offering the greatest promise of permanent peace is to end the division of the Irish people. We therefore urge the British Government to express its interest in the unity of Ireland and to join with the Government of Ireland in working to achieve peace and reconciliation.

We recognize that there are complex questions involving financial issues, constitutional arrangements and security considerations that must be resolved in achieving the goal of Irish unity.

We must of course recognize the legitimate concerns of the Protestant community and the need to provide for conditions in which the two great traditions of Ireland flourish in a common and more hopeful future.

Lesser steps have been tried and failed. The horizons of past policies are too limited: they promise nothing but greater failure for the future. It is time for bolder vision in the name and cause of peace.

And we pray that, on this St. Patrick's Day 1980, a hopeful avenue toward peace may at last be opening for all who seek an end to the tragic conflict in Northern Ireland.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Hon. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., Speaker, House of Representatives

Hugh L. Carey, Governor, State of New York

Senator Thomas F. Eagleton

Senator Gary Hart

Senator Joseph R. Biden, R

Representative Edward Boland

Representative John J. Cavanaugh

Representative Don Edwards

Representative Edward J. Markey

Representative James M. Shannon

Representative Frank Thompson, R.

Brendan P. Byrne, Governor, State of New Jersey.