

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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For Immediate Release

March 17, 1982

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

St. Patrick's Day reminds us of the power of joy. It is a day when spirits are lifted, when millions join together in friendship; when strangers greet each other with affection.

The spell cast on us by a small island 3,000 miles away began more than a century ago when Irish immigrants first came to this land -- immigrants whose sweat and labor built our economy, whose hearts and minds shaped our literary and intellectual history, whose smiles and mirth gave us the gift of laughter, whose conscience and spirituality reminded us of the importance of religious faith in our lives.

Today all Americans -- of Irish descent and honorary Irish descent -- celebrate one of the happiest days of the year in our country -- a day marked by peace, friendship and harmony.

Yet today our thoughts cannot be entirely joyful -- we who owe so much to the "land across the Irish sea" cannot help but reflect on a tragic irony: Northern Ireland is troubled by conflict and violence. We in America who owe so much to our kinsmen of both Irish and British heritage, Protestant and Catholic alike, can never be indifferent to the problem of violence in Northern Ireland. That is why we seek to contribute in any way we can to a lasting, peaceful solution that will bring to an end years of conflict and violence.

The twelve months since last St. Patrick's Day have brought both hope and sorrow in Northern Ireland. There have been grounds for optimism for the future. The level of violence continued its generally downward trend. In this country, U.S. law enforcement authorities confiscated a large number of weapons intended for terrorist hands in Ireland. Perhaps most important despite the sorrows of the past year, there are signs that the climate has improved for moderate political solutions.

We will continue to stand by our policy -- to urge the parties in Northern Ireland to come together for a just solution and to condemn all acts of terrorism and violence. We believe a

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lasting solution can be found only through a process of reconciliation between the two traditions in Northern Ireland and between Britain and Ireland. We encourage and applaud such efforts. We particularly welcome the British and Irish governments' widening of the framework of their cooperation to this end.

But as much as we wish for a just and peaceful settlement, we in the United States cannot chart a course for the people of Northern Ireland. If solutions are to endure, they must come from the people themselves.

We stand unalterably opposed to the forces of violence and discord in Northern Ireland, which obstruct the process of reconciliation so necessary to peace. Those who advocate violence or engage in terrorism will have no welcome in the United States.

Last year, I called on all Americans to question closely any appeal for financial or other aid from groups involved in the Northern Ireland conflict to ensure that contributions do not end up in the hands of those who perpetuate violence, either directly or indirectly. Today, I renew that request. Continued violence, even by a misguided few, can only frustrate the desire for peace of the overwhelming majority of the entire community of Northern Ireland.

As we look to the future, we can be proud that the United States already is making an important contribution toward economic and social progress in Ireland. We are proud of our role in strengthening the Irish economy. There are over 300 American companies with manufacturing plants in Ireland. This investment by American industry shows a clear commitment to a future based on peace and well-being for the people who live in Ireland, North and South.

This Administration will maintain the U.S. commitment to facilitate growth of additional job-creating investment -- investment that will benefit all the people of Ireland. In the meantime, we encourage the American private sector to continue to assist in creating more job opportunities in Ireland.

In affirming these principles of our policy toward Northern Ireland, I wish to add my appreciation and support for the many true friends of Ireland in this country, in the Congress and among the public, who continue to speak out against violence and in support of peace and reconciliation. Their efforts are among the most important contributions to the cause of peace in Northern Ireland, and I join them in the prayer that our hopes will soon be realized. It is by assisting in commercial development, combating terrorism and encouraging the process of peaceful reconciliation that we in America can do our part to bring peace to Northern Ireland.