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Statement by the Taoiseach, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, T.D.,
in Dáil Éireann on his visit to the United States
and Canada, Wednesday, 15th May, 1985.

A Cheann Comhairle, I feel it is appropriate that I report to the House on the outcome of my visit to Canada and the United States over the last couple of weeks. I am glad to be able to tell the House that it was both a busy and very successful visit, and one which I believe will contribute substantially to furthering interests shared by all members of the House, especially the interest we have in the major issues of peace on our island and progress towards the goal of reducing unemployment.

Official Visit to Canada

A highlight of the journey was, of course, my official visit to Canada at the invitation of the Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Brian Mulroney. This was the first such official visit by a Taoiseach since 1949 and I was very warmly received by Mr. Mulroney and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Joe Clark at the Federal House of Commons in Ottawa.

Relations between Ireland and Canada have not, in my view, been sufficiently developed over the past 35 years despite the many common bonds of history we share and the numbers of our people who have made their homes there. My visit improved the

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understanding and cordiality of the relationship between Ireland and Canada. This process will develop further when the Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney, makes his visit to Ireland at my invitation sometime in the future.

At my meeting with the Prime Minister we discussed the recent Summit of major industrial countries in Bonn, from which he had just returned, with particular reference to the emerging danger of protectionism as it could affect our countries and world trade generally. I explained to the Prime Minister the current position of the Northern Ireland dialogue and was extremely glad to hear from him that he would be prepared to contribute to the maximum of his ability to any steps which we might find it possible to devise, leading to a peaceful and durable arrangement in that area.

We discussed other matters of mutual interest including the supply of Irish beef to the Canadian market, industrial development policy in Canada and Ireland, budgetary arrangements and strategies and the exchange rate policies in both countries. We also discussed East/West relations and world trade.

At a meeting with Secretary of State Clark, we talked in some detail on Central America and of the Middle East, including the place of UNIFIL there, and the role of the Irish contingent in

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that force. I invited the Secretary of State to Ireland for further discussion between our two countries, on the major aspects of foreign policy in which our two countries have a common interest. Arrangements are in hand to formalise contacts on certain of these aspects to an even greater degree.

I briefed the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State and the Canadian media on the achievement of the parties to the Forum Report which I presented as the first real movement made by any of the three parties to the crisis: the British, the Unionists and the Nationalists in Ireland. I will be returning to this topic later in my statement as it refers to various aspects of my work both in the USA as well as in Canada.

In a message after my departure from Canada I remarked on the fact that so much of our time in the discussions, both with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, was devoted to issues of peace, both in Northern Ireland and in other parts of the world, reflecting the particular vocation of our two countries to peace.

Before leaving this topic, I feel obliged to express my revulsion at the comment from Fianna Fail made on the first day of my official visit to Canada, referring to engagements "of no consequence". This graceless remark can be interpreted only as a gratuitous insult to the people and Government of Canada, and

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is one which I hope Fianna Fail have come to regret - and for which the Leader of that Party may, perhaps, wish to express contrition in his statement later.

Attracting Foreign Investment

In relation to one of the two major themes of my trip, namely the question of attracting foreign investment to Ireland, and the jobs it can create, I am glad to be able to tell the House of two very successful meetings with leading American industrialists.

The first of these was in New York on Thursday, May 2nd when I met a group that included the Chairman of a dozen of the 100 largest Corporations in the U.S. *indeed several / re-based companies fall*

In Boston on the 6th May I met the Leaders of 20 Companies from the New England area, most of whom are discussing projects with the IDA.

Many of the companies whose Chairmen or Chief Executives I met are now in the process of deciding to locate projects in Ireland. The projects now at the final stages of decision-making involve over 1000 jobs. Many other companies I met are involved in serious discussions about prospects for future investment in Ireland, and several of my discussions were with Chief Executives of companies already located here who are considering the possibility of expansion.

The importance of these kinds of contact cannot be overestimated. Ministers on this side of the House, and indeed former Ministers now sitting on the benches opposite, will know only too well how seriously such contact is taken by the companies involved. ^{of course} They want to know directly from members of the Government what Government policies are and in what way they are likely to develop; how their investments are likely to be viewed in the countries in which they decide to locate; and they have questions covering a multitude of areas, ranging from industrial relations to legislation covering safety at work, which can best be dealt with at the political level. The assurances they can receive from Government Ministers - especially from the highest level - are often of critical importance in the decision-making process.

I was able to develop for those I met, both in the U.S.A. and Canada - and in an interview devoted to this subject specifically on prime time television on the NBC To-Day Programme - a number of important points about the welcoming environment of Ireland for new industry and investment; our young and well-educated workforce who are mobile, innovative and encouraging of change; our system of low corporate taxation accepted by all the major parties in this House and which offers industrialists a secure advantage at least to the

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year 2000. I was able to demonstrate the political stability of our State, and to outline the range of grants and other facilities which are on offer for those who wish to join us in facing the future.

Taking all the contacts I made together, I am confident that several thousand jobs will be developed over time. Indeed, I note with pleasure that one of the companies I met is about to announce a high technology project which will bring 145 badly-needed jobs to Cork. It is my intention to emphasise, at every level, both here and abroad, the continuing advantages of Ireland as a manufacturing and servicing base, in a unified market of 320 million people. I would be very glad, in doing so, to have the support of all sides of this House - real patriotism would suggest that this is necessary, and infinitely preferable to opportunistic sniping.

Presenting the Forum Approach in North America

I referred at the start of this statement to the issue of peace on our island. This visit presented me with an invaluable opportunity, both in Canada and the United States, as well as with the media and more general audiences, to outline the achievement of the parties to the Forum Report. I explained on every occasion that it was on the basis of the Forum Report that the current Anglo-Irish dialogue is proceeding.

I told the American and Canadian leaders and the audiences whom I addressed that I believed that the Forum's call for equal

recognition of the rights of the nationalist and unionist traditions in Northern Ireland is the sine qua non for progress, and that this is, in the words I used in addressing the Press Club of Canada "a problem which must be addressed by both Governments through joint co-operative arrangements if a fair and durable solution is to be found" - something that can be done only in the wider context of Anglo-Irish relations through the kind of discussions now proceeding between the Irish and British Governments.

I presented the Forum Report as an expression of nationalist philosophy articulated on behalf of 90% of nationalist opinion in this island, which completely cuts the ground from under the IRA and INLA, because it draws a clear and fundamental line between constitutional Irish nationalism and the nationalism that the terrorists have distorted and besmirched with innocent blood. I stressed that the terrorists have thus been denied by representatives of the overwhelming majority of nationalist opinion in the island any possible shred of political legitimacy for their campaign of intimidation and murder, which, in the words of one of their proponents is designed to move on to the 'the destabilisation of the south.'.

It may be of interest to the House if I mention briefly the people I met and with whom I discussed the importance of the Forum Report as I have outlined it above. Apart from Prime

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Minister Mulroney and his Secretary of State, I had very helpful and positive discussions with Speaker O'Neill and Senator Kennedy, Governor Dukakis of Massachusetts, Governor Cuomo of New York and Mayor Flynn of Boston. In Boston I addressed the House of Representatives on this theme, and I had a meeting with Cardinal-designate O'Connor in New York.

Because of the importance to Ireland of the friendship and support of Irish Americans, I make a point on my visits to the US to have the closest possible contact with Irish American organisations. As Minister for Foreign Affairs, as Leader of the Opposition and ^{or} Taoiseach, I have availed of every opportunity to meet with, talk to and listen to those Irish Americans who have in so many ways shown their support for the achievement of Irish political, economic and cultural objectives.

On this visit, I had an opportunity for informal contact with a representative gathering of Irish Americans at a reception in Boston. In New York, I invited to what was in fact a very cordial meeting at our Consulate General, representatives of almost a score of organisations which included:

AFL/CIO

Irish American Labour Coalition

Ancient Order of Hibernians

United Irish Foundation

Grand Council of United Emerald Societies

The Corkmen's Association

The Kerry-men's Association

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The St. Patrick's Day Committee
The Irish American Cultural Institute
American Irish Historical Society
American Committee for Irish Studies
American Irish Immigration Committee
The Louth Society
Project Children
The Irish Businessmen's Association
United Irish Counties
The Donegalmen's Association

These bodies will no doubt be interested to learn that Fianna Fail regard them as organisations "of no consequence".

I should say that on all of these occasions I was encouraged by the support, so evidently growing now, for solutions to the problems of Northern Ireland that reject the doctrine of violence. There is now much more awareness of, and support for, policies which seek peace through dialogue and the democratic process.

This growing perception among Irish-Americans is due in large part to the unremitting efforts of Irish leaders - including my predecessors in this office, to sow the seeds of a commitment to dialogue and to peaceful means in all of their travels to North America. I consider it important that I was able to further that process.

In my absence abroad, the Leader of the Opposition criticised my presentation of the Forum Report and of the Irish Government's position in relation to this Report in the United States and Canada on the basis of press reports of my remarks at one function. Had he checked the record he would have found that what I did at that function was first to quote verbatim from Par. 4.15 of the Forum Report to which both our Parties subscribe viz:

"The solution to both the historic problem and the current crisis of Northern Ireland and the continuing problem of relations between Ireland and Britain, necessarily requires new structures that will accommodate together two sets of legitimate rights:

- the right of nationalists to effective political, symbolic and administrative expression of their identity, and
- the right of unionists to effective political, symbolic and administrative expression of their identity, their ethos and their way of life."

I then went on to say that the solution to the accommodation of these two rights has to be found in Northern Ireland - which is where the problem of accommodating two sets of rights exists,

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not in this part of Ireland. That is blindly evident. But, and here I quote the words that were omitted from the very middle of that sentence as it was published here, I added "obviously the two Governments have a fundamentally important role to play in resolving it".

I then went on in the immediately following sentences to describe the acceptance of this principle by the British Prime Minister in the Chequers Communique; and I continued by referring to the task facing our two Governments in turning this principle into practical form in terms of actual political action on the ground; and the need for the two Governments to find together the right approach to the task.

Everything I said about Northern Ireland on that occasion, as on others, related to the fact that this problem can be resolved only by the two Governments working together, not by the British Government alone acting within Northern Ireland. No one at that meeting nor at any other meeting or discussion I had during my visit to North America could have been in any doubt about my insistence that the problem cannot be resolved within the narrow context of Northern Ireland, but requires, as I reiterated over and over again, radical action by the British Government with the Irish Government to end the alienation of the Northern nationalist minority from the system of Government, the security system, and the legal/judicial system in Northern Ireland.

That the Leader of the Opposition should have chosen to launch an attack on me as Head of Government, while outside the country, on the basis of one sentence of press reports of one speech which was both taken out of its context of the Forum Report and which omitted the central part of the sentence complained of, is a measure of his gross irresponsibility so far as our national interest and the Northern Ireland problem are involved.

Influencing Media Opinion

During my visit I also met a wide range of influential media representatives including some of the most important opinion formers in the United States.

Thus, in New York, on 2 May, I hosted a press breakfast to brief the media. This was attended by representatives of such major New York and U.S. media as the Wall Street Journal, Time Magazine, Newsweek Magazine, New York Daily News, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, America Magazine, and also representatives of the major television networks and in Canada I addressed the Press Club of Canada in Ottawa. I was the guest at a luncheon hosted by the publisher of the New York Times, Mr. Arthur Sulzberger, at which I had an opportunity to meet the editorial board of that newspaper and to explain Irish

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Government policies with particular reference to the Northern Ireland situation, and had a similar meeting in Boston with the editorial board of the Christian Science Monitor.

In addition, apart from the To-day Programme, on which I had the opportunity to tell a huge audience about the attractions of Ireland for industry, I undertook six other TV and radio interviews and my appearances before both the Canadian House of Commons and the Massachusetts legislature were broadcast live.

Meeting with Secretary-General of U.N.

On the 2nd May I had an important meeting with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar at the U.N. Building in New York during which we discussed the situation in the Lebanon in detail. I took the opportunity of underlining the concern felt by the Irish people about incidents there involving attacks on Irish army personnel and assured him of our continuing commitment to making a concrete and positive contribution towards peace in that troubled area. We discussed the situations in the Middle East, the Iran/Iraq War and its consequences, as well as the situation in South Africa and particularly Namibia. The Secretary General outlined his views on Central America and I briefed him on the outlook in relation to Northern Ireland and the Anglo-Irish process. We also discussed the appalling famine tragedy in Ethiopia and Sudan and the Secretary General paid tribute to the

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For my own part, I regard the Meeting, my attendance at which was included in the programme for my North-American visit made available before my departure, as an extremely useful place at which to make contact with, or to renew contact with, influential people whose goodwill can be of considerable benefit to this country. For instance, at this year's Meeting I had useful discussions with the new Secretary General of the OECD, with Ministers of such countries as Austria, Sweden, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain, with all of whom we share many interests and aspirations, and with two members of the British Cabinet, the Secretary of State for Industry and Trade, Mr. Norman Tebbit and the Minister without Portfolio, Lord Young. With regard to the agenda, while I missed the opening session on social and economic developments on both sides of the Atlantic, I attended a very informative session of the Meeting on relations with developing countries. I contributed to this debate my own view that the debt problem of some of these countries, which is as much a problem for the lending as the borrowing countries, was being given undue attention, at the expense of recognition of the desperate need for increased aid by the least-developed countries of south-east Asia and Africa. I also urged recognition of the scale of public support in many of the developed countries for aid, as exemplified not just by the aid levels attained in Scandinavia and the Netherlands, but by the

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voluntary response in Ireland to the Ethiopian Famine - which I pointed out was the equivalent to a sum of \$1.5 billion in the United States.

I had the opportunity of listening also to informative discussions on the East/West problem, and on the US budget. I did not attend, nor was it ever my intention to attend (although Ministers from other neutral countries did so without any problem from their point of view) a session on NATO, which took place on the last day of the Conference when I was on my way home via Halifax, Nova Scotia. There I had conferred upon me an Honorary Degree by the University of St. Mary's which since its foundation by an Irish priest has had close links with this country. *I noted $\frac{1}{4} \rightarrow \frac{1}{5}$ had given 2000*

Only the deepest of inferiority complexes could induce the kind of reaction that some persons have displayed to my attendance at this Meeting, the participation in, and agenda of which are, incidentally, always made available to the Press, contrary to an impression that some people have sought to convey. I do not share this kind of paranoia and have no intention whatever of allowing it to inhibit me from furthering our national interests by maintaining and extending the range of international contacts, which during the past decade and more I have developed and from which this country has, I believe, benefited. If there are those who believe that I

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would ever, consciously or unconsciously, in either my official or my private capacity, take part in any forum where Ireland's interests can be threatened in any way, either in terms of our neutrality or in respect of any of our other interests - if there are those who suffer from such a delusion, then they totally misunderstand all that I stand for in politics.

In concluding, A Cheann Comhairle, I would emphasise my absolute conviction of the great importance of Government Ministers even at the highest level, travelling abroad to promote the official Government view on the national question and to promote as vigorously as possible the economic and commercial interests of our country. Our far flung race give evidence of the degree to which we have had an open relationship with the world throughout the centuries and beckon us to avail of the great opportunities with which it now presents us in commercial and investment terms. We must develop and cultivate our contacts and relationships with the Governments and peoples of friendly countries and mobilise their support for our various national concerns. This is a duty that falls particularly on me as Taoiseach, on the members of my Government and indeed on every member of this ~~House~~ House. It is our duty jointly to represent our people and our country well abroad, and to have a sense of national solidarity in this regard. The traditions of the past, whereby a Taoiseach, travelling abroad on the nations business, was fully supported by all at home, needs to be reasserted in the national interest.

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My firm view is that it is wrong for anybody at home to seek to disrupt and belittle an Irish Taoiseach when he is on the world stage about the nation's business.

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*I have a duty
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I do not object *to* criticisms of Garret FitzGerald. *But* when those criticisms are directed at me in the office I occupy while I am visiting two of the most powerful nations in the world - one of them on an official visit - endeavouring to secure investment and jobs for this country; fostering and developing the strong ties that bind us; clarifying and spelling out the message of the New Ireland Forum; trying to turn the concern of those with an interest in Irish affairs away from support for the shallow and destructive men of violence - when I am trying to do all of these things through contact with opinion formers and people of real media influence in both countries, with the one and only purpose of striving to further the interests of this country abroad, then those criticisms are no longer attacks on Garret FitzGerald, the man.

Then they constitute an attack on the office I occupy, and on the country and the people I am proud to represent. In this context, the criticisms by the Opposition can be seen only for what they were - a mean, narrow, and warped attempt to gain short-term political advantage at the expense of the best interests of the people of Ireland.