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AS REQUESTED

EMBARGO UNTIL 12.30 P.M.
SUNDAY, 27TH JULY, 1980.

Addressing members of the Fianna Fail Organisation
in the Metropole Hotel, Cork,
on Sunday, 27th July, 1980, at 12.00 noon,
the Taoiseach said:

Since taking office as Taoiseach I have, on a number of occasions, fully set out Government policy on Northern Ireland and Irish unity. In statements in the Dail and elsewhere and in press, radio and television interviews I have dealt with the major aspects of our policy. I believe that no reasonable person can be in any doubt as to where we stand, what our objectives are and how we seek to achieve them.

Despite this, however, recent statements by the leaders of the Opposition Parties indicate that they seem to have been able to persuade themselves that there is some element of doubt or ambiguity about our policy and in particular with reference to its application in the United States. For our part, to put it no stronger, we are entitled to question whether this approach on the part of the opposition parties is likely to serve the national interest or to promote the peace and reconciliation which all responsible people are seeking to achieve.

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On the 13th December last, in the debate on the nomination of the Government, I said:

"We totally reject the use of force as a means of achieving that end".

Later in that speech, I said:

"We are determined that that principle of the rejection of force will be clearly translated into practice".

In the course of my speech to the Fianna Fail Ard Fheis on 16th February last, I said:

"All but a tiny minority understand that violence can never bring a solution and that it serves only to perpetuate division and hatred".

Again in the course of my speech in the Dail on 29th May, I said:

"We totally reject force as a means of obtaining our aim. We seek our objective only by peaceful means".

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I cannot, therefore, accept that there can be any genuine doubt in any quarter as to our attitude to violence whether it is politically motivated or sectarian in origin. We condemn and reject all such violence whoever commits it and for whatever purpose.

The principles I stated have been translated fully into action. The strength and equipment of the Gardai devoted to fighting this kind of violence has been increased. There have been innovations in organisation and improvements in methods which have shown results. There has been widespread recognition of the successes of our security forces in the seizure of arms and explosives and in bringing those responsible for crimes of violence to justice. This is not to say that the Government are yet satisfied with the position.

We are dealing with a type of terrorism that is difficult to suppress fully and no Government anywhere has been entirely successful in the area of security. We are determined, however, to take all the measures necessary for this purpose. A recent meeting between the Minister for Justice, the Attorney General, the Garda Commissioner and myself was devoted to ensuring that all the measures necessary to combat armed robbery and murder will be intensified and it was confirmed at that meeting that

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whatever resources are required for this purpose will be provided. The Garda Commissioner will shortly submit a plan outlining what additional measures can be taken to deal as comprehensively and effectively as possible with the situation.

That is the record of what we have said and done here in Ireland. I believe that it is equally clear that there flows unambiguously from our total rejection of violence a corresponding rejection of the action of individuals and organisations at home, in the United States or elsewhere, who provide financial or any other support for the cause of violence.

That is our position and it has been so from the outset. A response to press queries, issued on my behalf as far back as 20th December last, underlined that the Government would continue to advocate that no support or encouragement should be given to any organisation in the United States which sends to Ireland funds which may be used in the promotion of a violent campaign in this country.

When I came to office, I indicated that there would be no departure from the fundamental policies of Fianna Fail on Irish unity.

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I have consistently maintained that the problem of Northern Ireland cannot be solved by security measures alone nor solely in the context of Northern Ireland. The whole situation must be raised to a new inter-governmental level that will bring permanent peace and stability to the peoples of Ireland and Britain.

I have made clear the view of the Government that any definitive settlement should take into account relations between North and South in Ireland, between Ireland and Britain, and between both parts of the community in Northern Ireland. I have suggested that the way would be opened towards political progress if the British Government were to declare their interest in Irish unity by consent and in peace, and their readiness to participate in the progress for achieving it. These are the essential elements of a policy designed to achieve peace in Northern Ireland. This policy was fully supported by the SDLP, representing a substantial body of opinion in Northern Ireland when I met them in Dublin last Thursday week.

The SDLP are deeply concerned, and we fully share that concern about the increasing number of sectarian killings in Northern Ireland. We condemn these wanton murders,

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whoever commits them and urge that every possible effort be made to prevent them until a political settlement can bring permanent and lasting peace.

I believe that our policy on Northern Ireland is fully supported by the great majority of Irish people everywhere, not least among those 20 million Americans of Irish birth or descent. They subscribe to our view that Irish unity is the only eventual answer to the political problems of our country and I know that the vast majority of them favour the use of peaceful political means to attain that end.

It was clear as long ago as the mission of the late President De Valera in 1919, that the world of Irish-American politics and organisations is a vibrant and complex one. It has been so throughout this century. A variety of different causes and personalities exist. Groups and organisations come together, diverge and merge again. Alliances form and reform in a constantly changing pattern. It is a situation which must be handled on a practical basis from day to day with skill and discretion by those who are closely in touch with developments.

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Clearly, there are individuals and organisations in a country as large and diverse as America whose outlook and actions will not be in line with the policy of the Government here on Northern Ireland. My belief is that these organisations and individuals are misguided and that many persons who subscribe to them do so out of genuine sympathy with the goal of Irish unity but without realising the channels into which their subscriptions may be diverted. To the extent that some of them provide financial or moral support with full knowledge of the nature of the campaign involved we must deplore their actions.

And yet the sort of simple, ritualistic condemnations now demanded are not enough. We must seek to understand the sentiments and traditional loyalties of our compatriots in America and their feelings as exiles. It can be no part of our policy to deflect any Irish-American from supporting the achievement of Irish unity or expressing that support. On the contrary we welcome and encourage it.

But we must separate that legitimate wish and aspiration clearly from any whisper of support for violence and terrorism. That is the real task in America today.

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That is the distinction which we must make and continue to make. What is required is not mere condemnation as such but effective action to provide those who are in sympathy with the objectives of Irish unity with an alternative - a clearly defined Irish Government policy to which they can dedicate themselves. This is a need also stressed by our friends among the major political leaders in the United States; a clear objective and a policy which Irish-Americans can support and evidence that progress is being made towards that objective, through the implementation of that policy.

For over a hundred years, those charged with the leadership of our people have recognised the potential influence of that great number of Americans of Irish origins and have sought to harness it to help in the attainment of national objectives. We acknowledge and pay tribute to so many of the American-Irish who have laboured on Ireland's behalf. In recent years, we have been fortunate in having the support of major U.S. Congressional and State leaders - Speaker Tip O'Neill, Senators Edward Kennedy and Patrick Moynihan, Governor Hugh Carey, Congressman Thomas Foley and many others - who share our approach and objectives and who have made a substantial and greatly valued contribution in promoting progress towards these aims. I have, during the week,

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received encouraging and sustaining messages of support for the policy which I have enunciated from those leaders.

There can be no doubt that all American men and women of Irish birth and descent wish our country well and that Ireland's welfare is close to their hearts. But free American citizens do not welcome dictation. What is required is leadership and guidance. Experience has shown that repeated denunciations by government leaders of the type now sought can be to some extent counter-productive, particularly in a country where the freedom of the individual to decide for himself is so highly valued and cherished.

I would not wish to present any organisation sponsoring or supporting violence with gratuitous publicity which, however adverse, may have the very opposite effect to that intended. The efforts of the Government will be directed primarily at promoting our own positive policies on as wide a front as possible. By winning support for them everywhere we can isolate the men of violence.

Nevertheless, since Opposition spokesmen have provided these peripheral organisations with the sort of free publicity on which they thrive, I believe that not much more harm can be done by dealing with specific organisations on this one occasion. There is clear and conclusive evidence available to the Government here from security and other sources that NORAIID has provided

support for the campaign of violence and indeed direct assistance in its pursuit. On the basis of these activities, it stands condemned and I appeal to all in America who have the interests of Ireland at heart not to give this body any support, financial or moral.

The evidence available to us also of the associations that exist between NORAIID and the Irish National Caucus casts grave suspicion on the latter organisation. That is not to say that there are not among the members of that body or its supporters, many fine people who are not aware of its undesirable associations. It is important that they should be aware of the realities. The situation in Ireland today is such that no individual, whether private citizen or elected member of Congress, should by any statement or association, lend support to those whose actions serve only to delay Irish unity. I say now to all supporters of the bodies I have mentioned that they should carefully consider whether the cause they profess to serve would not now best be served by uniting in firm support of the policy of the Irish Government which is directed towards bringing about the unity and prosperity of the Irish people.

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Our wish is to see all Americans of Irish descent and their friends rally behind the positive policies of the Government, satisfied that they have an objective worthy of support and convinced of the reality of our prospects of success through peaceful, political means. And I wish to send this message to all our friends in that great democracy and especially to our own kin. We at home draw great strength and encouragement from your close interest in Ireland and are grateful for your support for our efforts to unite our people and to promote their welfare. It is our deepest wish that you will always continue to do so.