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FOR: ASST SEC GALLAGHER

FROM: BRENDAN SCANNELL, EMBASSY WASHINGTON

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL: SPEAKER FOLEY'S STATEMENT ON RECENT  
IRA BOMBINGS.

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30 OCTOBER 1990

TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON  
FOR ASST SEC GALLAGHER FROM BRENDAN SCANNELL

SUBJ: STATEMENT BY SPEAKER FOLEY ON IRA BOMBING

1. Only in exceptional circumstances has it become the tradition of the Speaker of the House of Representatives to seek the floor of the House to make a statement. On Saturday, 27 October, at the opening of business on the floor of the House, the first item of which was the consideration of the Immigration Bill, Speaker Foley stepped down from the Chair and asked for the floor to make a statement on the IRA bombings of the 24 October.
2. The Speaker, we understand, consulted with Congressman Donnelly, Chairman of the Friends and Mr Bob Michel, Republican Leader in the House before making the statement. The Speaker, speaking on behalf of the Friends of Ireland (which he remarked he served as Honorary Chairman), condemned the IRA bombing and methods "unequivocally". You will recall that the Speaker also denounced the IRA in similar circumstances on 2 August for the murder of Ian Gow.
3. Comment

The Speaker continues to follow Irish matters closely. He had privately been involved in the negotiations in the last few days in securing an additional US \$20 million for the IFI. The Speaker, by requesting the House floor before an important debate on Immigration which concerned Ireland, also helped to reinforce to House members his continuing interest in Irish affairs and the Friends of Ireland.

ENDS

ANOTHER IRA ATROCITY

MR. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in both anguish and outrage. Two days ago, on Wednesday, October 24, 1990, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) exceeded even its gory record of infamy when it took hostage at gunpoint three separate Catholic families in Northern Ireland and forced a family member from each to become human car bombs. Using terror tactics no doubt learned from their Middle Eastern counterparts, the IRA threatened death for the remaining family members to force those they had kidnapped to drive explosive-laden vehicles to military checkpoints where they were then detonated.

The tragic toll of these attacks was 7 dead and 37 wounded. One of the dead and 21 of the wounded were simple bystanders, as is so often the case with IRA attacks. These innocents were added to a long and shameful list of others who recently fell victim to IRA slaughter - among them a nun, 2 tourists, an infant, a soldier's wife. The IRA kills many more innocent passersby than it ever has members of the British army or security forces.

A truly frightening aspect of these murders was that, although prominently reported, they have excited so little public condemnation in this country. I fear that the IRA has succeeded, as have other terrorist groups, in perpetrating so many grisly atrocities that their egregious brutality seems to many Americans the commonplace and expected in Northern Ireland. Such numbness must, for humanity's sake, be overcome. As defenders of the rule of law and of human dignity, we must voice abhorrence for terrorist acts. We must dwell on their cruelty and on their ultimate futility.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I speak today for myself and for the bipartisan Friends of Ireland. The Friends of Ireland include 168 Members of the House dedicated to promoting peace and reconciliation in Ireland. I serve as the honorary Chairman of the Friends along with the Republican Leader, Mr. Michel. The Executive Committee of the Friends is chaired by Mr. Donnelly, and includes Mr. McDade, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Madigan, Mr. Williams and Mr. Lowery.

All of the Friends of Ireland, Democrats and Republicans alike, have an interest in Irish affairs. Many of us share Irish ancestry. But none of us share any illusions about the nature of the conflict in Ireland. We see no romance in the tactics of the IRA, no glory in its policy of assassination and massacre. IRA atrocities do not support sectarian dialogue. IRA destruction cannot bring unification. That is why this latest, most cold blooded group of murders must be condemned unequivocally.

Mr. Speaker, the IRA identified those it forced to transport its bombs as "collaborators." Their connection to British forces

seems to have been either nonexistent or remote. The point to be taken from the IRA's appalling rationalization is that any person - Protestant or Catholic - is a potential victim of its wide-ranging, indiscriminate violence. That violence, and the obscene indifference to life it embodies - must be constantly exposed, decried and renounced. And always, such barbarism must be remembered for what it is - savagery that can only destroy, never rebuild, the Ireland the IRA says it wants to see.