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FM WASHINGTON

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 660

OF 120135Z MARCH 88

AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO(L), NIO(B)

INFO IMMEDIATE BIS NEW YORK, BTDO NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES

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ADVANCE

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(AOC)

LOS ANGELES (FOR PS/MR STANLEY)

MIPT: ST PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT BY FRIENDS OF IRELAND

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT (STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 17 MARCH):

AS FRIENDS OF IRELAND IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, WE JOIN AGAIN ON THIS ST PATRICK'S DAY TO HONOR THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND AND RENEW OUR CALLS FOR PEACE, JUSTICE, FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

WE BELIEVE THE UNITED STATES HAS A VITAL INTEREST IN THE CONFLICT IN NORTHERN IRELAND. OUR NATION HAS A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH BOTH IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN, AND WE MUST DO MORE THAN WE HAVE DONE SO FAR TO ASSIST BOTH OF THESE FRIENDS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A LASTING PEACE.

WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE HISTORIC ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT, SIGNED IN NOVEMBER 1985, IS THE ONLY REALISTIC MEANS OF ACHIEVING AN END TO THE VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND. WE COMMEND THE IRISH AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENTS FOR THEIR DETERMINATION IN MAINTAINING AND IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT IN THE FACE OF STRONG OPPOSITION FROM EXTREMISTS IN BOTH COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND WE URGE BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN THE STRUCTURES ESTABLISHED IN THE AGREEMENT.

WE REMAIN DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE INADEQUATE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE CONTINUING SENSE OF MISTRUST AND ALIENATION FOSTERED BY THIS SYSTEM IN THE NATIONALIST COMMUNITY. THE ABSENCE OF JURY TRIALS COMBINED WITH THE USE OF SINGLE JUDGE QUOTE DIPLOCK COURTS UNQUOTE IS A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS, AS IS THE EMERGENCY LEGISLATION USED TO ADMINISTER THE SYSTEM OF JUSTICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND. WE URGE THE BRITISH AND IRISH GOVERNMENTS TO ACCELERATE THEIR SEARCH FOR NEW WAYS TO ADDRESS THESE SERIOUS PROBLEMS UNDERMINING THE TRUST OF THE NATIONALIST COMMUNITY.

WE SHARE THE DISMAY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND, OF MANY IN GREAT BRITAIN AND OF MANY AMERICANS OVER THE RECENT DECISION BY THE BRITISH ATTORNEY GENERAL -- ON SO-CALLED QUOTE NATIONAL

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SECURITY UNQUOTE GROUNDS -- NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE PROSECUTION OF THE CRIMES REVEALED BY THE STALKER-SAMPSON INVESTIGATION OF THE QUOTE SHOOT-TO-KILL UNQUOTE POLICY BY BRITISH SECURITY FORCES IN NORTHERN IRELAND. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THE SENSITIVE NATURE OF THIS INVESTIGATION, IT IS INTOLERABLE NOT TO PURSUE AND BRING TO JUSTICE INDIVIDUALS KNOWN TO HAVE PERVERTED JUSTICE. IF LEFT UNCHANGED IT COMPROMISES THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT. IT ERODES PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY TO ACHIEVE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT TO THE CRISIS. WE CALL ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO PROSECUTE ANY MEMBER OF THE SECURITY FORCES WHO HAS ENGAGED IN CRIMINAL CONDUCT IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

WE ARE OUTRAGED AT THE EARLY RELEASE OF A BRITISH SOLDIER CONVICTED OF MURDER AND HIS RETURN TO ACTIVE DUTY. ADDITIONALLY, THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND CALL FOR A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION WITH IRISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON (SIC) THE RECENT KILLING OF A CIVILIAN ATTENDING A GAELIC FOOTBALL MATCH AT AUGHNACLOY, NORTHERN IRELAND BY A BRITISH SOLDIER. THESE INCIDENTS HAVE CREATED THE PERCEPTION THAT THE BRITISH SECURITY FORCES ARE ABOVE THE LAW.

IN THE TWO YEARS SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT, THERE HAS BEEN SOME PROGRESS IN OTHER AREAS. MOST NOTABLY, THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE HAS PROVIDED AN IMPORTANT FORUM IN WHICH BRITISH AND IRISH MINISTERS HAVE MET REGULARLY TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS AND GRIEVANCES AT THE HEART OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND CRISIS. IN ADDITION, THE JOINT SECRETARIAT IN BELFAST SERVES AS A USEFUL CHANNEL FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON THE DAY-TO-DAY AFFAIRS OF NORTHERN IRELAND.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN ADDRESSING LONGSTANDING GRIEVANCES OF THE NATIONALIST COMMUNITY, INCLUDING ADVANCES TOWARD A MORE BALANCED REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE JUDICIARY, IMPROVED PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING POLICE COMPLAINTS, AND REPEAL OF LEGISLATION RESTRICTING THE DISPLAY OF IRISH FLAGS AND EMBLEMS. THE AGREEMENT HAS ALSO BROUGHT ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS IN HOUSING, VOTING RIGHTS, AND THE RULES GOVERNING PARADES AND MARCHES.

DESPITE THESE ACHIEVEMENTS, THERE REMAIN NUMEROUS AREAS WHICH REQUIRE INCREASED ATTENTION AND FASTER AND MORE POSITIVE RESULTS. EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND ON THE BASIS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF REMAINS WIDESPREAD AND DEEP-ROOTED. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT DECLINE IN UNEMPLOYMENT SINCE THE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED, THE OVERALL JOBLESS RATE OF CATHOLICS IN NORTHERN IRELAND REMAINS TWICE AS HIGH AS THE RATE FOR PROTESTANTS - AND IN SOME AREAS, THE CATHOLIC UNEMPLOYMENT RATE REACHES SIXTY PERCENT.

WE WELCOME THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO

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ALLEVIATE THIS CRITICAL SITUATION. THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND RECOGNISE THE NEED FOR STRONG LEGISLATION WITH SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION GOALS AND TIME FRAME. MAJOR REFORMS IN THE CURRENT SYSTEM ARE ESSENTIAL, INCLUDING STRONG, NEW STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS TO END THE CURRENT INGRAINED SYSTEM OF JOB DISCRIMINATION, AND STIFF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR EMPLOYERS WHO DEFEY THE LAW. WE LOOK FORWARD TO EARLY ADOPTION BY THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF NEW JOB-CREATING INVESTMENT IN ENDING SUCH DISCRIMINATION. WE URGE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO USE ITS POWERS TO GUIDE NEW PUBLIC INVESTMENT INTO AREAS OF HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT.

AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT IS THE INTERNATIONAL FUND CREATED TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE ROLE OF THE FUND WILL BE INDISPENSABLE IN THE CRITICAL YEARS AHEAD AND DESERVES BROAD INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT.

IN ADDITION, WE URGE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO INFORM AND CONSULT WITH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT FULLY ON THESE AND ANY FUTURE ISSUES RELATING TO NORTHERN IRELAND, AS REQUIRED BY THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT.

WE ALSO NOTE THE DEEP AND WIDESPREAD CONCERN IN BRITAIN, IRELAND AND THE UNITED STATES REGARDING THE RECENT BRITISH APPEALS COURT DECISION IN THE CASE OF THE SO-CALLED QUOTE BIRMINGHAM SIX UNQUOTE. WE URGE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AT EVERY POSSIBLE LEVEL TO CONSIDER STEPS TO RESOLVE THIS CONTROVERSY IN A FAIR AND JUST MANNER.

AS FRIENDS OF IRELAND, WE ONCE AGAIN AFFIRM OUR ABHORRENCE OF VIOLENCE IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS. TAKING NOTE OF ATAST YEAR'S BARBARIC BOMBING IN ENNISKILLEN, WE CONDEMN ABSOLUTELY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY THE EFFORTS OF ALL WHO ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL PROGRESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND THROUGH THE BOMB AND THE BULLET. WE CONDEMN THOSE IN IRELAND AND IN THE UNITED STATES WHO LEND SUPPORT TO THIS TERRORISM, AND WE CALL ON THEM TO CEASE ANY SUCH POLITICAL OR FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

TODAY MARKS RONALD REAGAN'S LAST ST. PATRICK'S DAY AS PRESIDENT. WE JOIN IN PAYING A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO HIM AND HIS ADMINISTRATION FOR THEIR GENEROUS, COMMITTED AND LASTING SUPPORT FOR THE LAND OF HIS ANCESTORS.

FINALLY, WE RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO THE GOAL OF IRISH UNITY. LET US BUILD ON THE FOUNDATION OF RECENT YEARS TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS TOWARD MEANINGFUL RECONCILIATION OF THE RICH TRADITIONS OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND, SOUTH AND NORTH, CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT. AS FRIENDS OF IRELAND, WE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGE ALL WHO SHARE OUR CAUSE AND WHO ARE WORKING TO ACHIEVE IT.

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