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Taoiseach's statement to Dáil. 26 June, 1974.

I move that Dáil Éireann takes note of recent events affecting Northern Ireland.

We have had two debates in this House on Northern Ireland since December last. The necessity for the present debate arises from the Collapse of the power-sharing Executive there and the proroguing of the Assembly and I welcome the opportunity to hear the views of Deputies on the matter. Our debate here to-day can make an important contribution to lessening tension and bringing about a calm atmosphere in Northern Ireland in which fruitful discussions can take place.

I have already put on record my views on the causes of the collapse of the political institutions in that part of the country before they got a chance to fulfil their promise for the peace and prosperity of all its people. I will simply say again to-day that I regret this untimely breakdown. These institutions derived from a valid election on a proportional representation basis. I regret, particularly, the collapse of the power-sharing Executive, made up of politicians of different traditions and backgrounds working

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together as a team. Shortlived it may have been - but remember that governments with as short a life-span have not been uncommon in some of the countries with which we are associated in the European Economic Community. The men who made up this Executive deserve our respect for their courage and dedication. We had met these men. We had tested them in negotiation. We respected them as a team. Representatives of the majority worked with their partners with complete conviction and integrity. The minority, once given legislative guarantees of their rights in its turn took a full part in the institutions of government. And, in the short period they were in office, their representatives showed that they have the capacity as well as the will to play the fullest part in the administration of Northern Ireland in the interest of all its people. ~~It would be ungracious of me not to~~ 9  
acknowledge the great efforts of the SDLP over the past few years in continuing, despite setbacks to influence the members of their community in the North towards the paths of political action rather than violence.

In the end the Executive fell just as the effects of its work and the evidence that persons from the two parts of the Northern Community could co-operate were beginning to be apparent and to command respect throughout the North and indeed throughout this island and elsewhere. It is not a surprise to me that many people in the North believe that the events which caused the fall of the Executive were not primarily directed or motivated by the desire for destruction of that body. I say this because there

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remains a basis for the construction of an administration in the North in which all sections of the community there can work together for the common good.

Part of the base for such a development is the response, which we should all acknowledge and commend, of those on the majority side who laid aside their doctrinal position and were prepared to accept, in the manner in which it was given, the agreement to participate in Northern institutions by the representatives of the minority. I have also noted with interest, statements made recently by some of the ~~younger~~ spokesmen who have emerged in the Loyalist groups. They are saying - and this is part of the reality of which proposals for future progress must take account - that there cannot be any peaceful settlement in Northern Ireland without the consent of the Protestant majority. They also seem to recognise that the arrangements for such a settlement cannot be effected without the consent of the minority.

This is a welcome development as I am convinced that any lasting settlement must be based on an agreed form of power-sharing.

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The evidence we have had of how the two sections of the Northern Ireland community can work together effectively and constructively is in stark contrast to the results of violence, perpetrated by ruthless men who stop at nothing in their efforts to see that their particular abstraction will prevail.

We have seen the effects over five long years of this type of intransigence. We have seen violence kill and maim the people of the North and destroy the hearts of their towns and cities, and to a far lesser extent, we have seen this happening in some of our own streets and in the cities of Britain. We have heard of more than 1,000 dead and more than 10,000 injured in the bombings and shootings in the North. We have heard of the destruction of property there to the extent of some £120 million.

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But these figures do not, nor could any figures ever, adequately describe the human misery and suffering which violence has brought to the ordinary people of the North. They do not show the value in human terms of the opportunities that have been destroyed - the jobs that in more favourable circumstances would have come into existence for the lasting benefit of the people of Northern Ireland. They do not show the corrosion of everyday life - the deprivation of the simple human pleasure of being able to do a day's work, or take a day of rest, in an atmosphere free of fear and hatred. They do not show the impact on the children of Northern Ireland, above all on those in the most severely affected areas who have lost their childhood and in many cases also, perhaps lost the opportunity of a future as stable and balanced human beings. These things are nonetheless real although they cannot be assessed in terms of arithmetic. The lives of a whole generation in Northern Ireland have been blighted.

We have not borne the sort of burden, which, whatever its causes, has been inflicted on the Northern people. Nevertheless what has been happening in the North has had its real and direct consequences here.

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Measured simply in financial terms, Northern violence in the five years to 31st March, 1974, has cost us an extra £40 million in public expenditure - in meeting the costs of expanding the police and army, in compensation for the destruction of property, in increased industrial grants and other similar types of expenditure. These extra costs are now running at an annual figure of the order of £17/18 million - and they are likely to rise

In comparison with our total budget now approaching £1,500 million, these figures may not, perhaps, seem significant. In the abstract they may even be meaningless. It is only if we speak of them in terms of what they could have achieved for people that they begin to have meaning. The £40 million could have built 7/8,000 houses - accommodating eventually some 30/40,000 people. Used as industrial grants, the money might have provided jobs for an extra 20,000 workers. It could have financed a school building programme for two years or a programme for building hospitals for four years.

The £17/18 million of annual costs would finance here an increase of about 50% in children's allowances or in the non-contributory old age pensions - or almost double the rates of unemployment assistance. It could finance a reduction in income tax almost equivalent to the reductions effected by the Minister for Finance in his last budget. I do not need to go on with this sort of

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argument. There is hardly a person in this country who could not, if asked, produce a worthwhile scheme or worthwhile project for spending money of this order for the real benefit of the people of this island.

But this is far from being the whole story. Our whole economy has suffered from the events in Northern Ireland - most directly through its impact on tourism. It has been estimated that the volume of tourist activity in Ireland today might have been twice its present level, if pre-1969 growth rates had been maintained, and if we had not suffered the drop in tourism brought about by those events. The calculation of the full measure of the economic loss we have suffered is highly conjectural but we do know it has been significant.

But as I have said, these are relatively small losses when measured against the appalling impact of violence on the people of Northern Ireland. The aggregate result in terms of suffering and misery there, in lost jobs and lost opportunities, in the ordinary lives of ordinary people, is beyond measure. Can the perpetrators of violence explain to those without housing what it is they are offering that is so much better than the comfort of a decent home.

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Can they offer anything to those whose employment prospects are put in jeopardy? Can they tell the relatives of the dead or the living victims of a bomb blast what it is that they wish to bring about which is worth so much in terms of human suffering? This is the sort of question which those who deal in violence must answer. They have killed for long enough for abstractions. Let them now deal in realities.

The reality of the situation in the North is daily death by violence. The first priority now is to put an end to that tragedy. I suggest that the basic need is to effect a community settlement which will allow all the people of Northern Ireland to live in peace. Anything we can do to advance such a settlement, we will do. However, we must recognise that our most helpful contribution may be to do nothing, by word or deed, that will prejudice the outcome of discussions between the various groups in Northern Ireland. It is now up to the people there to reach an agreement among themselves which will allow them to live and work together in peace.

For our part, in this part of the country, we must ensure that we do everything within our power to eradicate violence. I have frequently pointed out that most of the violence in the North is perpetrated by people from within that area and, of course,

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that is the simple fact of the matter. Nevertheless, the Government has recognised that our territory might be used as a haven by those responsible for bombings and killings in the North or might be a source of arms and explosives. We were resolved that this should not be allowed to happen. We have acted on this resolution. As the House knows, we have substantially increased the strength of our security forces, both Army and Gárdaí, and we are for some time now engaged in a recruiting campaign for the Army. We have nearly 3,000 men engaged on security duties in the Border area. British observers have had to pay tribute to the effectiveness of our security in these areas. We have taken effective steps to ensure that arms and explosives do not fall into the hands of illegal organisations.

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Our security forces have apprehended and our courts have convicted and sentenced hundreds of those engaged in crimes connected with the campaign of violence. We have undertaken to introduce legislation to deal effectively with the problem of fugitives wanted for such crimes. The Government will continue to take every action open to it to prevent the killing and destruction.

In this, we need the whole-hearted support of all our people and it must be clear to all that we have it. If we propose to encourage the establishment of the necessary conditions for the securing of communal peace in Northern Ireland, we must, all of us, clearly demonstrate that there is no sympathy here for those who would contribute to the wrecking of those conditions. People must not be tricked into lending credibility to demonstrations which play on natural sympathy for human suffering. They must beware of misleading propaganda which trades on false analogies with events in our history. No vestige should remain of an idea which <sup>fails to</sup> ~~does not~~ recognise the humanity of some of our fellow-countrymen, <sup>and</sup> which regards in some circumstances their murder, or a crippling injury, as a justifiable act. Any condoning of violence can only encourage those standing in the wings of the

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two traditions in Ireland waiting for their ultimate opportunity - the wrecking of the entire democratic institution of this island.

I believe the vast bulk of our people realise fully the potential for chaos and anarchy inherent in the violence we have seen, in addition to its intrinsic evil. They have been sickened by the crimes we have seen. But we must be vigilant. The small number in our midst who are not sick of violence must be made aware of our detestation of their methods and of their ideas. We must accept our responsibilities. I believe we do now, more than ever.

We have only to look to the North to see the damage to prospects for economic and social progress which violence brings. For some years, the Northern economy weathered the storm surprisingly well. More recently, however, there have been ominous signs. For example, the numbers of professional and skilled men and women and their families leaving Northern Ireland at the moment is disquieteningly large. These are the people who have decided that Northern Ireland has no future. They do not come down here, nor is the emigration from one community only. Their road is the same road that all Irish emigrants have taken when oppressed - and they are by violence - their road takes them to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, America. Anywhere far away where they might give their children a chance.

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Our primary concern is for peace in Northern Ireland and justice and prosperity for all its people. How this is to be achieved must be a matter for agreement between the divided sections of the Northern community. It is they who will have to live with the institutions yet to be established there. But these institutions if they are to endure and to achieve these aims must necessarily provide access for both sections of the community to a share in Government, through participation of valid representatives of majority and minority alike in the running of the affairs of Northern Ireland, however this participation be described.

We have legitimate interests in these arrangements because failure to resolve the divisions that have torn Northern Ireland apart threatens our peace and our prosperity too. Moreover in an increasingly interdependent world two parts of a small island linked together as closely as we are economically and socially, cannot succeed in developing their full potential without close co-operation. It is this, a recognition of this kind of reality, that has prompted the establishment of groups like the Nordic Union and Benelux, as well, of course, as the larger EEC-membership of which has created new bonds of common interest between North and South. In certain respects indeed this island must be treated as one for the practical purpose of the working of the Community - this is evidently true of plant health and animal health. But in many other areas there are strong common interests which we share and which, understandably, at times diverge from the interests of Great Britain - a great industrial power with a minimal agricultural sector. Both parts

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of Ireland find themselves in a very different situation because agriculture is relatively more important in Ireland North and South, and because neither part of Ireland has the resources within its own boundaries to provide adequately for the needs of peripheral areas.

*These comments*

Interests in such areas of community policy as agricultural and regional policy suggest that consultation and joint action ~~would be~~ *are necessary in* ~~the interest of~~ both parts of the country. I have made an offer of co-operation which I hope will be received in the spirit in which it is intended. For our part, we must continue and, indeed accelerate the process of creating the kind of society in the Republic with which the Northern majority would wish to be closely linked with a view to our common benefit. The sort of development of which I am speaking means more than the development simply of the right mental or psychological climate. It means the creating here of an economy which is strong and growing - as ours has been growing recently. It means the creating within our island, by co-operation and effort, of the wealth of which to build a society which cares for people and has the ability to match that care with the resources to give it substance. Prosperity can bring us a unity of hearts and of purpose far more valuable than the bitter fruits of violence.

I have not spoken at any length on the interest of the British Government in Northern Ireland. I have not done so because I believe that while the British Government has an important influence for good or ill in

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Irish affairs, the problems of Northern Ireland must essentially be settled in Ireland between Irishmen. I will make just a few brief points.

Some people say that the British Government should be asked now to make a declaration of their intent to withdraw at some time in the future to be determined by parties in Ireland, or to withdraw their troops to barracks as a first step in a phased withdrawal. Suggestions of this kind ignore reality - for example, the reality of the exposed position of the minority in many parts of the North and the absence of any Northern Ireland security force acceptable to the whole community there. The fact is, moreover, that British decisions on these matters will be taken, not exclusively by reference to the views of Irish parties or to the interest or convenience of people here but also on the basis of Britain's own interests and priorities.

The Government will continue to seek that the British Government will shoulder its share of the responsibility to create the conditions in which the problems in Northern Ireland can be settled by agreement. The Government were greatly heartened and encouraged by the broad acceptance of the necessity for this which was shown by the British Government, the Opposition Front Bench, and M. P. s of all parties in the recent Westminster debate.

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For our part, we cannot ignore that what is happening in Northern Ireland today is a direct threat to the security and the lives of the people in this part of Ireland. It is important that we fully acknowledge that here today. We have had tragic evidence of this reality and it is only prudent in the present situation to keep our security arrangements under review, in particular, the strength of our security forces. The Government are doing this on a continuing basis. I would ask young men who are finishing their education to consider the desirability of a period of service in the army.

The Government have decided that the time has come for us to ask for more involvement in security by the people themselves in a structured way. We are setting up in each city and town voluntary local security service units, based on the local Garda Stations, to carry out rostered patrolling and to report to the Gardaí any activity arousing suspicion. Unattended vehicles, which now constitute the sneak artillery of the dealers in violence, will be a particular object of attention for <sup>the</sup> new force.

We want to ensure that our citizens will be able to carry on their normal commerce in our cities and towns in the knowledge that they are being protected by the Gardaí with

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the assistance of the new force,

We want to promote a general spirit of vigilance in our citizens. We want to make it difficult for the violent to leave their deadly packages in public places with impunity.

Many of the people who, I am sure, will volunteer for this force will already be members of existing organisations such as the Red Cross and the Civil Defence Force. The present intention is that people so involved already would be eligible and acceptable on the basis that their commitments to their original organisations would have priority.

I know that when the arrangements will be announced in each city and town I can count on generous support from our citizens.

Our primary obligation is to safeguard the institutions which have been entrusted to us as elected representatives of the people and to safeguard the lives and property of our citizens. Likewise it is the duty of the elected representatives of Northern Ireland to act on behalf of all their people. They must surely realise the terrible consequences of the failure to achieve a political settlement between themselves. They must recognise that

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the effects of such a failure will not be confined to Northern Ireland but must determine not alone what we do here, but what the British Government may do. The political leaders of these islands have devoted considerable time and energy to the formulation of policies for securing peace with justice in Northern Ireland. In the past it was to a large extent on the initiatives of the British and Irish Governments that such formulations were devised. I think that it is to the Northern political leaders that we should now look for the next steps in this process.