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**Reference Code:** 2003/16/466

**Title:** Message from Taoiseach Jack Lynch to British Prime Minister Edward Heath, relating to Operation Motorman in Northern Ireland and urging that political progress accompany military activity.

**Creation Date(s):** 1 August, 1972

**Level of description:** Item

**Extent and medium:** 2 pages

**Creator(s):** Department of the Taoiseach

**Access Conditions:** Open

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Message from the Taoiseach to the Right Honorable  
Edward R. G. Heath, M.B.E., M.P., Prime Minister

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Thank you for your message of 30th July. I regret that there were two fatal casualties in Derry - the circumstances of one of which are seriously disputed - but, that the military activity taken throughout the North yesterday resulted in so few casualties, is a considerable relief.

As you will know from the conversation Dr. Hillery had with Mr. Whitelaw on the 21st July my colleagues give no countenance to the Provisional I.R.A. as a matter of decided Government policy. We quite agree that political progress is seriously disaffected by their existence.

Following the events of yesterday my colleagues in the Government and I have discussed searchingly among ourselves the next phase in bringing about a settlement of the Northern situation.

You are aware of course of my general views which I believe I stated clearly in a number of speeches and with deliberate detail in my recent Foreign Affairs article. The principal underlying view is that the door to Irish unity, by agreement, must be unlocked. This view is also shared by the political leadership of the minority in the North.

Within this principle our Governments should usefully be able to discuss the whole matter in depth and to use the influence we each have with the various sections of political opinion in the North to find ways and means of ending violence, providing a framework for administration in the North whose main purpose must be to reconcile the communities there and to move on to long term solutions as the opportunities present themselves.

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My Government are fully prepared to play a constructive role in this.

My immediate purpose in this message is to urge most strongly on you the importance of ensuring that yesterday's military activities are followed promptly by political actions and decisions designed to restore confidence among the minority. These must assure them unequivocally that there is no question whatever of their being returned to the control of a sectarian administration or of the RUC as at present constituted. The question of the future policing of minority areas is a matter appropriate to political discussions.

Now that you have demonstrated your determination and military capacity in regard to extremists on one side there is no reason for not facing up to extremists, such as the Ulster Defence Association, on the other, including the taking up of licensed as well as unlicensed weapons especially in Belfast where about thirty individual cases of sectarian assassination occurred in the month of July.

1. 8. 1972.