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C.S.

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29 MAR 1976

MINISTER'S OFFICE,

PERSONAL

22nd March 1976

The Hon. George Wallace
Governor
Capitol Building
Montgomery, Ala.

*Copy this letter also
Sent to Senator Jackson
and other Presidential candidates*

Dear Governor,

I have been visiting the U.S. in the past week in the company of the Irish Prime Minister and I am taking this opportunity to write personally to candidates in the forthcoming Presidential election on the following important matter.

The Irish Government are aware that supporters of the IRA in the United States are endeavouring to secure statements of support from candidates in the Presidential election campaign e.g. for their fund-raising organisation Noraid, or their front organisation, the Irish National Caucus, or on the occasion of propaganda demonstrations such as that organised recently following the death and funeral of Frank Stagg. My Government are concerned that candidates for the Presidency who may come under pressure of this kind should be aware of certain facts and of the views of the Irish people about the IRA and its activities.

First, the Provisional IRA does not have support in Ireland. In the only election they have contested - district elections held throughout the Republic in 1974 - they presented candidates in half the districts but secured only 14% of the votes. The IRA is unreservedly condemned by every one of the ten political parties represented in the Parliament of the Republic or the Convention in Northern Ireland - to both of which candidates are elected by a proportional representation system that gives fair representation to minority groups.

Second, the IRA's activities have since early last year been effectively confined to sectarian murders of Protestant fellow-Irishmen, bombings of buildings in Northern Ireland (including crowded taverns) and of restaurants and underground trains in Britain, and attacks on public figures - such as that which almost cost Caroline Kennedy her life in London several months ago.

Since January 1975 they have announced and - with a few lapses - have operated a "cease fire" vis-a-vis their declared enemies, the British Army in Northern Ireland.

In the part of Ireland over which my Government exercises jurisdiction they have concentrated on robbing banks and post offices, to the tune of \$1.5 million last year. A number of members of the IRA are, however, serving sentences in prison in the Republic for the brutal murder two years ago of a Senator of my own political party - a young man whom they surprised on a visit to his fiancée, whose parents' house they were in the process of burning down at the time.

As part of their campaign of intimidation during the past six years scores of members of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland have been murdered by them and they have "knee-capped" (shot in the knee) something approaching one hundred Northern Ireland Catholics annually.

A front organisation for the IRA in the United States is the Irish National Caucus, whose National Director, Sean Walsh, has registered with the Justice Department as representative in the United States of Provisional Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Provisional IRA. The Irish National Caucus has claimed to represent certain Irish-American organisations. We have been informed by the Presidents of a number of the more important of these organisations that they have no link whatever with the Irish National Caucus.

The Information Director of the Irish National Caucus, Fred Burns O'Brien, is the man who has published a statement in the "Irish People" (a propaganda weekly of the Irish Northern Aid Committee) on February 8th 1975 to the effect that my government's police force, in cooperation with the SDLP (the political party in Northern Ireland which in every election since its foundation has secured the votes of the vast majority of the Catholic population there), has undertaken the murder of Catholics in Northern Ireland with a view to increasing sectarian tensions in the area. You can make your own judgment of the credibility of this man and of the organisation whose information he co-ordinates".

The support which Prime Minister Cosgrave has been receiving from representatives of the whole range of Irish-American organisations during his current official visit to Washington, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston and New York demonstrates the untruth of the claim by IRA supporters here that they have general support from the Irish-American community and explains why the Irish National Caucus has felt it necessary to claim falsely the

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support of leading Irish-American organisations. Mr. Paul O'Dwyer, President of the New York City Council was quoted by Bill Shannon in the New York Times of 14th March, as estimating that less than 1% of Irish-Americans support the IRA.

In the light of the facts cited above I feel that you would not wish those associated in the United States with this criminal organisation, which is waging war on the Irish people and its democratically elected representatives, to claim during this campaign that they have any support or sympathy from you.

You will be aware of the joint statement issued by President Ford and my Prime Minister during our recent visit to Washington, in which they said:

"The President and Prime Minister noted with regret the continued violence arising from the Northern Ireland situation. They deplored all support for organisations involved directly or indirectly in campaigns of violence and reiterated in particular their determination to continue and to intensify their cooperation in the prosecution of illegal activities. They appealed to the American and Irish people to refrain from supporting with financial or other aid this violence".

My Government and the whole Irish people welcome such support from U.S. political leaders for the policy of peace and reconciliation in Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Garrett FitzGerald, T.D.
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Ireland