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Statement by Senator Edward Kennedy issued following
President Carter's Statement on Northern Ireland

President Carter's statement today on Northern Ireland is the most important and constructive initiative ever taken by an American President on the Irish issue. Coming at this time, it is a significant step toward peace that should be welcomed by all Irish-Americans and by all persons of goodwill on both sides in Northern Ireland.

While properly avoiding any specific U.S. involvement in the details of a settlement, the President has unequivocally endorsed a solution involving a form of Government in Northern Ireland broadly acceptable to both the Protestant and Catholic communities. By endorsing this concept of partnership between the two communities, the President has given strong and much needed support to moderate political leaders on both sides in their continuing negotiations to achieve a peaceful settlement.

Even more important, the President has made a new and far reaching contribution to the cause of peace by suggesting the possibility of substantial U.S. aid for jobs and investment in Northern Ireland, once a settlement of the present conflict is achieved. My hope is that this bold and generous offer by President Carter will be a significant new catalyst for peace, and will encourage the parties, including the British and Irish Governments, to make a greater effort to negotiate a settlement.

American assistance could take a variety of forms, including not only direct appropriations by Congress under the foreign aid program, but also loans, loan guarantees, and other incentives and subsidies for U.S. firms to invest in Northern Ireland and to provide desperately needed jobs for the people there.

My hope is that once a peaceful settlement is reached, the United States would undertake a Marshall-type program of assistance to heal the wounds of the present conflict and to benefit all the people of Northern Ireland, Protestants and Catholics alike. I believe there would be broad support in Congress for such a program of jobs and other assistance, linked to a peaceful settlement.

Finally, by strongly denouncing the violence on both sides and by calling for vigorous federal law enforcement efforts against those who violate U.S. laws, the President has taken the strongest possible step to ensure that American guns and dollars will not be used to support those engaged in violence.

President Carter deserves great credit for the initiative he has taken. I commend him for this valuable and hopeful step toward peace.