

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Northern Ireland and the November Presidential Election

1. The Foreign Policy section of the Democratic Party's platform for the November election contains the following reference to Northern Ireland:

"Consistent with our traditional concern for peace and human rights, the next Democratic administration will play a positive role in seeking peace in Northern Ireland. We condemn the violence on all sides. We will encourage progress towards a long-term solution based upon consent of all parties to the conflict, based on the principle of Irish unity. We take note of the St. Patrick's Day statement "that the solution offering the greatest promise of permanent peace is to end the division of the Irish people" and its urging of "the British Government to express its interest in the unity of Ireland and to join with the Government of Ireland in working to achieve peace and reconciliation". New political structures which are created should protect human rights, and should be acceptable to both Great Britain and Ireland^{and}/to both parts of the community in Northern Ireland."

The text was a compromise between the Carter and Kennedy delegates and draws on the 1980 St. Patrick's Day statement. The language marks an advance from our point of view on the language of the 1976 Democratic platform, and of President Carter's statement of 1977, neither of which made any reference to Irish unity.

2. There is no reference to Ireland or the situation in Northern Ireland in the Republican Party platform for the November election. (Neither was there any mention in 1976 or 1972.) However, in April 1980 Governor Reagan issued a statement on Northern Ireland as follows:

"The divisions in Northern Ireland are deep and of long standing. The wounds can be healed only through the goodwill of reasonable men and women on both sides. Compromises will

be needed and these must be arrived at by those involved. It is not for the United States to interfere in this process or prescribe solutions, but rather to urge the parties to come together to work for a solution and to join in condemnation of terrorism by either side.

Peace cannot come from the barrel of a terrorist's gun. Americans should question closely any appeal for funds from groups involved in the conflict to make sure that contributions do not end up in the hands of gun-runners. Further, as terrorists of either side are apprehended and jailed, extradition procedures should not be relaxed on the grounds these are "political" prisoners. Terrorism is just that and must not be allowed to be condoned or excused."

3. Mr. John Anderson, the independent candidate, is reported to have replied to a question on Ireland during a television interview in New York on 7 September 1980 as follows:

"I think that the British are among the oldest, our most trusted allies. They have been as supportive of us in some of our recent troubles as any other country. This is a matter that has to be carried on within the framework of that kind of relationship, that kind of diplomatic framework. But within that context, I would like to see a unified Ireland, I would like to see one country, and I would like to see it accomplished peaceably. I certainly don't subscribe to the gun-running or to any of these efforts that are made by force and violence to affect that situation on that island. But I think we have the kind of relationship with the British where we might be able to sit down and talk to them and try to use our influence in some way to bring about a peaceful resolution of the question that could lead to a unified country."

Department of Foreign Affairs

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