

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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Proposal for a US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Representative James F. McNulty introduced a concurrent resolution in both Houses of the US Congress last October which called on the President to "appoint a highly qualified and appropriately experienced special envoy to investigate and report how best the United States could actively assist the governments of Ireland and Great Britain and the communities in Northern Ireland to arrive at an early, just and peaceful resolution of the present conflict in Northern Ireland".

The resolution was co-sponsored by other leading members of the Friends of Ireland. (The text of the resolution and a list of co-sponsors are attached at Annex 1.) At present, US Special Envoys are active in relation to international tensions in areas such as the Middle East (Mr. Donal Rumsfeld) and Central America (Mr. Richard Stone).

When introducing the resolution, Senator Moynihan emphasised that "my co-sponsors and I do not intend that Americans should intervene and attempt to impose settlements". He also said "the appointment of a Special Envoy to actively search, through communication with all interested and responsible parties, for means through which the United States could assist in the settlement of the conflict is consistent with, and builds upon, the official statements of recent American presidents".

In his speech, Senator Moynihan acknowledged that "the initiative for such a proposal had come from the Irish American community in New York State". In a series of meetings in that State, seven candidates for the Democratic Presidential nomination were canvassed on whether, if elected, they would appoint a special envoy for Northern Ireland. The campaign to make this an issue in this year's Presidential election was initiated by members of the New York State Assembly, Mr. John Dearie. Assemblyman Dearie first mooted the idea of special envoy in a letter to the New York Times in March 1983.





He subsequently introduced a resolution in the State legislature which has now been adopted by both Houses, the Assembly and the Senate.

The "Dearie resolution" is not as moderate in tone as the "Moynihan proposal". Whereas, under the Moynihan resolution, the Special Envoy's task would be to assist the governments of Ireland and Great Britain and the communities in Northern Ireland to arrive at a resolution of the conflict, under the Dearie Resolution, the Special Envoy would initiate diplomatic negotiations with all interested parties to achieve peace in Northern Ireland. In addition, the Dearie resolution in no way condemns the use of violence.

Congressman Mario Biaggi of the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee on Irish affairs (see separate note) introduced a separate concurrent resolution in the US Congress calling for a Special Envoy. Congressman Biaggi's proposal is largely based on the Dearie resolution and, like it, is not as reasonable in approach as the Moynihan resolution. It does not explicitly condemn violence in Northern Ireland but merely notes that the violence "serves to impede progress towards a peaceful political solution and has claimed thousands of innocent lives". In contrast, the Moynihan resolution states that "terrorism ..... on all sides is thoroughly rejected by all Americans of good will".

The supporters of the Special Envoy proposal at grassroots level clearly hope to make it an issue in the Presidential election campaign. They see the Moynihan resolution embodying the proposal, as eventually leading to congressional hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Most of the pressure for hearings has so far focussed on Senator Charles Percy (Republican) Chairman of the Committee who however, does not want hearings on the issue. Our opposition to Congressional hearings on the Northern Ireland situation based on the likelihood that they would be exploited by extremists such as the INC and NORALD is, of course known to Senator

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Moynihan and the FOI. He is seeking to deflect the pressures for hearings and it is unlikely that any will be held in the life of the current Congress (to January 1985).

Anglo-Irish Section

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