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EMBASSY OF IRELAND
4234 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

URGENT

F A X

23 FEBRUARY 1993

TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON
FOR G CORR FROM B SCANNELL

(5 PAGES TOTAL)

Ple. see to Doinneach
Perhaps you would
mention this to the
Doinneach.
Jhr 24/2
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DR Doinneach
TO see P!
24/2
cc: PSS
A/S O'Brien
M. Friday
Joint Sec
Mr F. Murray, DIT
Mr T. Dalton, O/S
Amb-Lon
Counsellors AT

Letter to President Clinton on the Human Rights situation in N Ireland from U S Senators

1. The attached letter was circulated yesterday by Senator Dodd to a number of his colleagues in the Senate in respect of the human rights situation in Northern Ireland. While only Senators Kennedy and Kerry have signed the actual copy we received, I understand that the other ten senators listed will more than likely add their signatures to the letter.
2. The timing of the letter is significant given that Prime Minister Major is meeting President Clinton tomorrow. The letter unequivocally denounces the IRA but goes into some detail on human rights abuses by the British security forces in Northern Ireland.
3. Particular issues addressed in the letter are the use of lethal force, the operation of the Emergency Provisions Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and the Brian Nelson

- case. The letter acknowledges that some positive, if belated, steps have however been taken by the British Government to end some previous injustices.
4. The letter urges President Clinton to raise the human rights situation with the British Prime Minister. In a broad reference to the Envoy issue, the letter states "we appreciate your many statements in support for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, such as your suggestion that the United States send an Envoy to help mediate a political solution to the conflict".
 5. I understand that the Irish Times and London Independent will feature this letter prominently in view of Prime Minister Major's visit here.

ENDS

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CHRISTOPHER J. DODD,
CONNECTICUT

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0702

February 22, 1993

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to raise the subject of human rights in Northern Ireland during your upcoming visit with British Prime Minister John Major.

We appreciate your many statements in support of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, such as your suggestion that the United States send an envoy to help mediate a political solution to the conflict. Indeed, it is our hope that such statements presage a significant change in U.S. policy toward Northern Ireland. With over 3,000 dead in "the Troubles" since 1969, such a change is urgently needed.

We continue to condemn the violent actions of the Irish Republican Army, a clandestine paramilitary organization that has waged a relentless and bloody war against British rule in Ulster. The ruthless tendencies of the IRA were underscored once again in the past few months, in the course of a violent bombing campaign during the holiday shopping season.

But another element in the conflict stands out as deeply troubling: the continuing human rights abuses of the British security forces. These abuses, long documented by the State Department and organizations like Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch, have only served to fuel and extend the conflict. We believe the hour has come for the United States to end its long tradition of silence on this very important subject.

Perhaps the most serious charge of human rights abuse in Northern Ireland concerns the use of lethal force. The actions of security forces continue to suggest a de facto "shoot-to-kill" policy, such as the recent shooting of an 18-year-old Catholic youth, Peter McBride, while he was reportedly running away from police. According to human rights monitors in Belfast, there have been 358 killings by security forces since 1969 but only 33 officers charged for such killings -- and only two convicted.

Grave concerns have also been raised about the protection of civil liberties in Northern Ireland. Under the Emergency Provisions Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, for example,

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The President
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authorities have wide discretion to make arrests without a warrant and to detain suspects. In addition, the use of jury trials can be suspended in certain cases and a suspect's right to remain silent is often limited. These practices are in clear violation of accepted international standards.

Finally, there have been serious allegations of collusion between British security forces and Loyalist paramilitary factions such as the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Volunteer Force. These allegations were brought to light by the recent case of Brian Nelson, a British army agent who was accused of giving UDA officials detailed military intelligence that was later used to carry out attacks on suspected IRA members. In the last two decades, Loyalist paramilitary groups have accounted for roughly 800 deaths, including 38 of the 84 terrorism-related killings recorded in 1992.

We recognize that the British Government has taken some positive, if belated, steps to end some previous injustices in Northern Ireland. We note, for example, the overturning of the wrongful convictions of the "Guildford Four" and the "Birmingham Six," along with the establishment of a Royal Commission to examine the justice system. However, recent events such as the shooting of Peter McBride and the Brian Nelson episode raise serious questions about the commitment of British security forces to true and lasting reform.

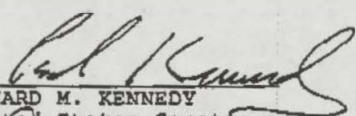
In short, we look to the British Government to take further steps to improve the human rights climate in Northern Ireland -- and we look to the Clinton Administration to encourage those changes. We value the long-held friendship between the United States and Great Britain, and we are committed to seeing that friendship endure. But we believe this "special relationship" also carries with it a special responsibility: to engage in an honest and forthright manner with one another about the protection of human rights and the preservation of civil liberties.

We have no illusions about the conflict in Northern Ireland or the many violent, disparate forces that shape it. But of one thing we are utterly confident: the discussion on human rights in Ulster must not be removed from the political dialogue. British human rights abuses may not be the sole cause of the violence in Northern Ireland. But reform of those abuses, in our view, must be an integral part of the solution.

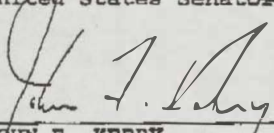
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We hope you will keep this principle in mind during your upcoming meeting with Prime Minister Major. We appreciate your attention to our concerns and your longstanding interest in the difficult question of Northern Ireland, and we look forward to working with you in the future on this very important issue.

Sincerely,


EDWARD M. KENNEDY
United States Senator

CHRISTOPHER J. DODD
United States Senator


JOHN F. KERRY
United States Senator

PAUL SIMON
United States Senator

PAUL WELLSTONE
United States Senator

RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD
United States Senator

HARLAN MATHEWS
United States Senator

ALFONSE M. D'AMATO
United States Senator

HARRIS WOFFORD
United States Senator

DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN
United States Senator