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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

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28 FEBRUARY 1996

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MR. F. MURRAY

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SUMMIT: REACTION ON CAPITOL HILL

1. We have been in close touch throughout the day with our friends on Capitol Hill. The reaction to the summit outcome has been universally positive, with a widespread recognition that the arrangements announced by the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister offer an opportunity to get the peace process back on track.
2. Since Canary Wharf, there has been among the leadership of the Ad Hoc Committee, and the Friends of Ireland, a definite sense, muted in public comment, at being let down by Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein. There is a strongly held view among our contacts that today's package provides a basis for reinstating the ceasefire, and they intend to make that clear to Sinn Fein (Richie Neal's statement, attached, is typical of the views being expressed).
3. As it happens, the Ad Hoc will have an opportunity to put their views directly to Sinn Fein at a briefing tomorrow, Thursday, organized (some time ago) by the local Sinn Fein representative, Mairead Keane. The indications are that she will be given a clear message to relay back to the party leadership.
4. Peter King, who of course is close to Adams, has given a number of interviews to both US and British media since the communique was released. He has been unequivocal in describing it as a very positive step forward, and a basis for a Sinn Fein/IRA decision to re-establish the ceasefire. Speaking on BBC Radio he referred to the efforts made by the White House to keep Sinn Fein involved in the process following the London bombings; he suggested that failure to seize the present opportunity could put that support at risk (given his background, a very advanced position for King to adopt).

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 28, 1996

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**STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN RICHARD E. NEAL
ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE INITIATIVE ANNOUNCED
BY THE BRITISH AND IRISH GOVERNMENTS TODAY**

(WASHINGTON) "I am very encouraged by the proposal offered by British Prime Minister John Major and Irish Taoiseach John Bruton to restore the fractured peace process in Northern Ireland. The joint initiative, including the fixed date of June 10th for the commencement of all-party talks, is a significant step forward towards the goal of bringing lasting peace to Northern Ireland. I strongly believe that the formula announced in London today should be acceptable to all sides, and that direct negotiations without pre-conditions should begin immediately.

In the wake of today's developments, I once again urge the IRA and its political allies to reinstate the ceasefire and become a part of the democratic process. If peace is to be achieved, risks need to be taken. At this critical stage, a permanent cessation of hostilities must be declared.

It is clear that the majority of people in Ireland, both North and South, look forward to a day when violence no longer plagues their island. The peace rallies that took place last weekend in Belfast, Derry and Dublin dramatically underscore that point. I sincerely believe that the peace initiative unveiled today provides all-parties with an historic opportunity to achieve that elusive goal."

Congressman Neal is Co-Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs.

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5. Finally, Bruce Morrison also gave us a positive assessment of today's events, and indicated his willingness to use his influence with Sinn Fein in the days ahead. His only concern, and a point on which he felt Sinn Fein might require reassurance, was that the requirement to re-establish the ceasefire not be embellished with further tests or requirements. I suggested that the communique was quite clear on the point, and that, in terms of right of entry to the March talks and to the all-party negotiations, it contained nothing which could be used to justify any additional imposition. He accepted the point, while retaining some nervousness at the possibility of unilateral British interpretation down the road.

[Total no of pages: 3]

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 28, 1996

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I welcome the announcement made today by British Prime Minister Major and Irish Prime Minister Bruton of a path to negotiations for a just and lasting settlement in Northern Ireland. I want to express my admiration for these two leaders, who have shown so much courage and determination in the cause of peace. The clear path they have laid out leads to inclusive talks on the future of Northern Ireland, once the cease-fire has been restored. I am convinced that this is the path supported by the overwhelming majority of the people of Northern Ireland, who have so resoundingly rejected violence and embraced peace. I call on those who have resorted to violence to heed the voice of the people and cease their campaign of terror.

The process that Prime Ministers Bruton and Major have announced will begin with intensive consultations among the governments and the parties to reach agreement on a broadly acceptable elective process, which will lead directly and without preconditions to all-party negotiations by June 10, 1996. The consultations, to begin early next month, will also address the framework for those negotiations and whether to hold a referendum on support for the peace process. I hope all the parties will commit themselves to participate fully in the process announced today in order to create the lasting peace the people of Northern Ireland deserve.

The United States remains fully committed to supporting the search for peace in which the two governments, the parties and the people of Northern Ireland have invested so much. I will remain in close touch with Prime Ministers Major and Bruton, who know they have my full support in their pursuit of peace. We will continue to work with the parties in the same cause.

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