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PAGES: 4

FAX

9 JULY 1997

TO HQ
FOR E HUTCHINSON

FROM WASHINGTON
FROM P HENNESSY

Please copy C O'Floinn, E McKee

PARADES: ACTION ON THE HILL

Further to my earlier fax, the attached will be of interest.

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CONGRESSMAN JOE KENNEDY
Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 9, 1997

CONTACT: AMY SIMMONS (202) 225-5111
BRIAN O'CONNOR (617) 242-0200

KENNEDY URGES CURB ON MARCHES ALONG DISPUTED ROUTES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

U.S. Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II (D-Mass.) today filed a House Resolution urging the British government to ban Orange Order marches along disputed parade routes.

"The Resolution sends a clear and simple message to the British government and to Prime Minister Tony Blair: Orange Order marches should be banned along disputed routes. Without the consent of local residents, such parades only serve to inflame tensions and further undermine the fragile peace process," said Congressman Kennedy during a press conference on Capitol Hill.

The filing of the resolution came three days before Orange Order parades were scheduled to march along disputed routes in Belfast and Derry and less than a week after an Orange Order parade along the Garvaghy Road in Portadown sparked widespread civil disorder.

"The Blair government's adoption of a policy banning marches through disputed routes is critical as we face another round of marches this coming Saturday, July 12 -- the 307th anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne," said Congressman Kennedy. "We urge British officials to either ban or re-route the parades to prevent ancient enmities from boiling over once more into needless confrontation."

Congressman Kennedy and his colleagues on Capitol Hill also called on members of the Orange Order to voluntarily refrain from pushing marches through Catholic neighborhoods.

"In the absence of such a gesture, however, it is up to the Blair government to act," said Congressman Kennedy. "We all abhor violence but we must speak out against policies that promote rancor rather than reconciliation."

A copy of the Resolution along with Congressman Kennedy's recent letters to Prime Minister Blair and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Mo Mowlam are attached.

-- END --

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U.S. Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II
Statement at Press Conference on
Resolution Urging British Government
Ban on Orange Order Marches
Along Disputed Parade Routes
July 9, 1997

I want to thank you all for coming here today as we address a serious human and civil rights issue -- Orange Order marches through Catholic neighborhoods of Northern Ireland where residents have strongly voiced their objections to triumphalist displays of Unionism.

I want to particularly thank my colleagues from the Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs and the Friends of Ireland for joining me today. We all have grave concerns over Orange Order marches that simply bring back memories of Protestant victories over the Catholics of Ulster over 300 years ago.

For these marches to take place at a time we are trying to bring lasting peace to Ireland flies in the face of reason.

We understand everyone's right to free assembly but we also understand the obligation of the government to protect the rights of the Catholic minority in the province.

The Resolution we have filed in the House of Representatives sends a clear and simple message to the British government and to Prime Minister Tony Blair: Orange Order marches should be banned along disputed routes. Without the consent of local residents, such parades only serve to inflame tensions and further undermine the fragile peace process.

Prime Minister Blair has taken some encouraging steps toward building trust with the Nationalist community, but that trust is being sorely tested. To date, the British government has placed

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decisions about marches in the hands of the police authority, but this issue requires leadership from the highest level -- from 10 Downing Street and not just the headquarters of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

We also call on members of the Orange Order to voluntarily refrain from marching through Catholic neighborhoods. At this moment in time, efforts that are underway to avoid conflict need to be encouraged. A generosity of spirit is needed to repair the violent breaches in mutual trust, and such a gesture would go a long way towards building confidence and discouraging paramilitary elements from manipulating tensions for their own gain.

In the absence of such a gesture, however, it is up to the Blair government to act. We all abhor violence, but we must also speak out against policies that promote rancor rather than reconciliation.

Peace cannot exist without justice. There will be no justice in Northern Ireland as long as the British government allows Orange Order marchers to trample on the rights of Catholics.

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SUBCOMMITTEE
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MONETARY POLICY
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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

July 3, 1997

The Rt. Hon. Marjorie Mowlam, MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST

Dear Madame Secretary:

I am writing to commend you for the steps for peace you have taken since assuming office and to ask you to proceed with particular caution as the Orange Order prepares for its annual march this coming Sunday in Portadown. In that spirit, I would urge you to deny permission to the Orange Order to proceed with its march in order to avoid a repeat of last year's confrontation at Drumcree and the widespread rioting that followed.

The base and senseless murder of two Royal Ulster Constabulary officers by the IRA in Lurgan last month has heightened tensions during the marching season, and I know you have worked hard to achieve some accomodation between the Nationalist and Unionist communities in Portadown.

At this critical moment in the drive for peace, allowing a march of the Orange Order through the Catholic enclaves along the Garvaghy Road would only undermine the spirit of cooperation you have tried to create. Even more seriously, such a move could provoke another tragic round of disturbances while jeopardizing attempts to defuse tensions over disputed marching routes in other areas of the province.

Ireland's new prime minister has already asked the British government not to force such a march through the Catholic community. What's at stake is not just the short-term goal of avoiding senseless violence but achieving a higher degree of confidence in the Nationalist community that the British policing authority is not a tool of Unionism but is committed to protecting the rights of all. Such confidence-building is essential to reaching the broader goals of lasting peace.

In disputes over Orange Order marches in Dunloy, the RUC has blocked paraders from marching through Catholic neighborhoods, making it clear that statements of cultural pride and identity are welcome while provocative acts of triumphalism are not. Clearly, allowing a march along Garvaghy Road would incite rancor rather than reconciliation.

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Like you, I hope the Orange Order decides not to provoke conflict in Portadown. However, if they choose confrontation, I urge you to stand firm and not permit a march down the Garvaghy Road. Threats of violence, whether from Loyalist or Republican paramilitaries, must not deter us from choosing the path of peace.

Prime Minister Blair, in his first official visit outside London, discussed the "shadow of this summer's marching season" in a May speech to the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society in Belfast. "No one with any sense," he said, "wants more Drumcrees." I couldn't agree more. Allowing the Orange Order march through the Garvaghy Road could guarantee such a disastrous result.

Once again, I want to thank you for all you've done to work toward peace, and I stand ready to assist in any way I can to reach across the divide and unite all the communities of Ireland in a lasting bond.

Sincerely,

Joseph P. Kennedy II
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

JPK/boc

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

July 7, 1997

The Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, England

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I am writing to express my disappointment over your government's decision to allow Orange Order marchers to parade down the Garvaghy Road in Portadown this past Sunday and to urge you to adopt a policy of respecting local consent as the marching season now moves to other communities in Northern Ireland.

I am particularly concerned about the Orange Order's disputed plans to march down the predominantly Catholic Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast this coming Saturday. The already fragile peace process, rocked by the show of police force in Portadown and rioting in other areas of the province last weekend, would suffer further blows if marchers are once again allowed through a neighborhood where residents have clearly stated their opposition to triumphalist displays of Unionism.

Such a decision would risk setting off further outbreaks of civil disorder and further alienating the good will of the Nationalist community, whose participation in the peace process is essential to a lasting settlement of the conflict. As recent events have proved, backing down to militant Unionism does nothing to encourage good faith on the part of those committed to peace and simply inflames those who are looking for any excuse to return to a protracted campaign of violence.

There are a number of my colleagues on Capitol Hill who share my concerns. When Congress reconvenes tomorrow, I plan to file a resolution asking the House of Representatives to express its opposition to allowing marches through disputed areas.

Since taking office, your government has taken a number of encouraging steps toward building better ties between divided communities and raising the confidence of the Catholic community in your commitment to justice. That confidence was sorely tested by the events in Portadown.

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Disallowing marches along disputed routes in Belfast, Derry and other communities -- wherever no local consent exists -- is the best way to send a message that you are committed to protecting the lives and property of all and to respecting the voice of every community in Ireland.

Last May, you told the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society: "No one with any sense wants more Drumcrees." Nevertheless, another Drumcree did occur this weekend.

To prevent Drumcree from falling again across the landscape of Ireland, I urge you to respect the wishes of local residents and ban marches where no consent is reached.

Sincerely,

Joseph P. Kennedy II
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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THE BOSTON GLOBE • SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1997

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JOSEPH P. KENNEDY II

Who will police the Ulster parade?

Violent conflicts over Orange Order marching routes in Northern Ireland are so tragic because they are so avoidable.

Every year, Protestant Orangemen, decked out in collarettes and bowlers, march in celebration of ancient English military victories over the Irish of Ulster.

Trouble predictably arises when paraders, accompanied by fifes and the pounding beat of lambeg drums, march through Catholic neighborhoods, where displays of Unionist triumphalism are met with resentment.

Last December, during a fact-finding trip to Northern Ireland, I met a resident of the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast whose son was one of five Catholics murdered by Protestant Loyalist gunmen in 1992 when they opened fire on a bookmakers shop along the thoroughfare.

During a subsequent parade, a number of Orange Order marchers held up five fingers as they trooped past the shop – a cruel reminder of the murders and a gesture symbolic of the sectarian hatred that accompanies so many of the marches.

The annual marching season, always a flashpoint for tensions, broke out last year into widespread rioting during a standoff between police and marchers on the outskirts of a Catholic enclave in Portadown, a community about 30 miles south of Belfast.

In the wake of the disturbances, the British government formed a commission to study the issues surrounding the marches and file recommendations aimed at mediating disputes over parade routes in time for this year's marching season.

Last week, with less than two months to go before the drums start beating once again, the commission, chaired by Peter North, vice chancellor of Oxford University, filed as its central recommendation that a five-member independent panel replace the Royal Ulster Constabulary as the statutory body empowered to make decisions about disputed parades.

The North Commission's sensible and long-overdue approach was no sooner deposited at Stormont Castle than Northern Ireland's outgoing minister of state, Sir Patrick Mayhew, announced the need for a new round of consultations before any action would be taken.

Given the fact that the commission had already consulted just about everyone in a position to be consulted, the delay seems aimed at averting controversy during the run-up to the upcoming British parliamentary elections.

Prime Minister John Major and his Conservative Party, struggling to hold onto power in Westminster, are evidently willing to trade the North Commission's groundbreaking work for a continued alliance with Northern Ireland's pro-British Unionists, who have denounced the panel's recommendations.

The delay recalls the similarly shortsighted response of the Conservatives to the advice of the commission chaired by George Mitchell, the former US senator, to begin all-party peace talks while holding parallel talks on weapons decommissioning.

Major's swift rejection of the Mitchell plan gave an opening to hard-line elements within the Irish Republican Army to end their 17-month cease-fire, which has yet to be restored.

The latest opportunity for mediation offered by the North Commission, which included the participation of a Catholic priest and a Presbyterian moderator, should not be undercut at such a critical moment in the drive toward restoring a cease-fire in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland knows little of conciliation and compromise, and the refusal to institute a panel aimed at achieving a measure of both sends the wrong message to those who have little regard for peaceful mediation and seek other ways to settle differences.

In addition, delaying action on the North Commission's key recommendation sets back efforts to reform and depoliticize police authority in Northern Ireland, where law enforcement, is widely viewed by Catholics as an arm of Unionism.

Though the 92 percent Protestant Royal Ulster Constabulary has a long way to go to establish a reputation for fairness and neutrality, Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan has won praise for the way his force has handled an ugly dispute arising from its decision last year to block Orange Order marchers from parading through the predominantly Catholic town of Dunloy.

In response to the blockade, protesters have attempted over the past few months to harass Catholics arriving to attend Saturday evening Mass in the nearby community of Ballymena. The constabulary, under Flanagan's direction, has contained the protesters and allowed the parishioners to come and go in peace.

If the constabulary, or any reconfiguration of the police service, is to win the confidence of the public and maintain civil order without civil abuses, it must be perceived as acting in the best interests of all citizens.

Crucial decisions about marching routes should therefore not depend on the good faith of a particular chief constable in the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

In the long run, only an independent body, representative of all communities in the province, can provide such assurance.

If the British government is serious about averting the anarchy of last summer and instituting a long-term solution to marching disputes, the North Commission's recommendations should be introduced without delay and without regard for the election calendar.

Joseph P. Kennedy II is the US representative from the Eighth District.

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News from Congressman PETE KING

3rd Congressional District, Nassau County, New York
224 Cannon Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 • 1003 Park Boulevard, Massapequa Park, New York 11762

FOR RELEASE: July 9, 1997 4
CONTACT: Dan Michaelis (202) 225-7896

REP. KING JOINS WITH REP. KENNEDY IN URGING BRITISH GOVT. TO HELP DEFUSE SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Congressman Pete King (R-Seaford, NY), Co-Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for Irish Affairs, today joined a number of colleagues in calling on the British government to prevent unionist marchers from parading through nationalist neighborhoods in the north of Ireland. The British government's decision to permit such marches through predominantly Catholic neighborhoods has resulted in nearly ceaseless violence since Sunday.

"The British government has once again permitted the annual marching season to get completely out of control, dangerously imperiling the Irish peace process," Rep. King said "Today, I have joined with Rep. Joe Kennedy to introduce a resolution urging the British to do the sensible thing and avert further violence by re-routing the remaining parades.

"With July 12th looming as the climax of the marching season, the threat of even more serious rioting is very real this weekend," King said. "Re-routing the marches will help to defuse this dangerous situation and restore some of the British government's badly damaged credibility. British policy during this year's marching season has reinforced the nationalist community's belief that the authorities will always take the side of the unionists.

"Re-routing the remaining parades is critical to salvaging the peace process," King concluded. "I urge Prime Minister Blair and Secretary Mowlam to do the right thing."

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NEWS RELEASE

ATTENTION: NEWS DIRECTOR
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Irish-Americans Support House Resolution on Forced Marches in Northern Ireland

Washington, D.C., July 9, 1997 -- The Irish National Caucus -- the Capitol Hill-based Irish lobby -- strongly supports the new House Resolution on forced marches in Northern Ireland.

"There is no greater threat to justice and peace in Northern Ireland than the British Government using brute force and violence to force offensive Orange marches through poor Catholic areas against the wishes of the residents," said Fr. Sean McManus, Caucus President and a native of County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland.

"These Orange marches are seen by Catholics as bullying, sectarian displays of triumphalism. They are inherently provocative. What would Americans think of White supremacists demanding the right to march through poor African-American areas in the U.S.? I congratulate Congressman Joe Kennedy and other Members of Congress responsible for the House Resolution. The House Resolution will help to defuse the dangerous situation in Northern Ireland. I appeal to everyone in Northern Ireland to step back from the brink and give the peace-process a chance to get back on track. The British Government has been appallingly irresponsible and must immediately undo the terrible damage it has done by forcing through the Orange marches. There is urgent need for non-violence, equality and mutual respect in Northern Ireland if peace is to have a chance," he concluded.

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irish american unity conference

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Fr. Dr[illegible]ant Wilson, Director
Springhill Community House

IAUC Support New House Resolution

The Irish American Unity Conference stands behind Representative Joseph Kennedy and other lawmakers who are unveiling the new House Resolution today. We support their efforts to make the British Government aware of our concern for local residents of the North of Ireland. The Irish American Unity Conference supports the democratic principle of consent with regards to contentious parades. We are very pleased that the lawmakers involved in proposing this resolution share our wishes for peace in Ireland.

IAUC
National Office

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CONGRESSMAN
JAMES P. McGOVERN
THIRD DISTRICT — MASSACHUSETTS

NEWS RELEASE

512 Cannon House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515 • (202) 225-6101

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 9, 1997

Contact: John Del Cecato
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REP. MCGOVERN CALLS ON BRITAIN TO PUT AN END TO VIOLENT MARCHES

(Washington, DC) -- U.S. Representative James P. McGovern (D-Worcester) joined with Reps. Joseph Kennedy (D-MA), Richard Neal (D-MA), Martin Meehan (D-MA), and Peter King (R-NY) at a press conference today to call for an end to violence in Northern Ireland. The House Members unveiled a Congressional resolution that urges the British Government to adopt a new policy of respecting local consent along disputed parade routes.

Last year, the British Government permitted members of the Orange Order to march through the Garvaghy Road section of Portadown, resulting in the worst rioting in Northern Ireland's history. On July 6, 1997, British authorities once again allowed marches by the Orange Order to travel through this nationalistic community, sparking a new wave of violence that has yet to be quelled. As the Orange Order makes plans for its annual commemoration of the July 12, 1690 Battle of the Boyne, fears of renewed violence are heightening. Said Congressman McGovern:

"Today, we will be introducing a Resolution that seeks an end to the violence in Northern Ireland. I am proud to be here with colleagues who have long demonstrated leadership on issues of U.S. policy toward Ireland and Northern Ireland. It is a privilege to be in their company this afternoon.

"We are brought together today by another round of parades, parades whose sole purpose appears to be provoking the peace and undermining negotiations for a permanent settlement of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

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"There are alternative parade routes for groups like the Orange Order, but those routes have been routinely rejected. This is not an issue of denying anyone basic rights to march and parade. It is, however, an issue of intransigence and the consistent rejection of parade routes that might prevent unnecessary violence and bloodshed.

"No one is denying the Orange Order the right to march. No one is denying the Orange Order the right to free assembly. And no one is denying the Orange Order the right to hold a commemorative religious service in the church of their choice.

"But one doesn't need to shout 'fire' in a crowded theater to make a political point. No one has the right to deliberately provoke the peace and to march through a community where widespread violence will be the likely outcome. Parades that express cultural pride are welcome, but the deliberate expression of power over a subordinate community has no place in a democratic and pluralistic society.

"The British Government and Northern Ireland Constabulary chose to pursue a military solution, rather than a political solution, which resulted in clear violations of human rights. After working so hard over these past several weeks to bring all parties back to the negotiating table, it is unclear why the British Government's new Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Mo Mowlam, failed to insist on a negotiated compromise to the parade issue. She had the authority to ban the march altogether, or to insist on compromise parade routes. But it appears, unfortunately, that politics has again trumped peace.

"The British government must cease immediately to give sanction and military protection to parades -- Catholic or Protestant -- when a community has not granted its consent. To do otherwise is to play into the hands of the most intransigent factions, and to continue the cycle of violence that has always accompanied these triumphal marches.

"Peace is difficult to achieve -- but it won't be achieved through military strong-arming. The British government has made the peace process even more difficult through its military support and protection of these provocative marches. We call upon that government, and the parties in Northern Ireland, to seek the consent of communities when planning these parades, and to return to the peace negotiating table as quickly as possible."

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