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The Irish People 23.9.1978

NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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September 13, 1978

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

Having recently returned from a visit to Northern Ireland, we feel obligated to bring to your attention certain observations on U.S. policy towards this area which deeply concern us.

Our observations are based on in-depth interviews with and written materials supplied by citizens from both confessional sides, lawyers, clergymen, U.K. government officials, Catholic and Protestant paramilitary leaders, and political party leaders.

We came away convinced that the United States could assume a very significant role in resolving the problems that have plagued the six counties of Northern Ireland for centuries.

We believe that the events in the last ten years which have led to bloodshed, terrorism, and suppression of human rights make it necessary for the United States to act promptly to prevent the continuation of this unstable situation.

With very few exceptions, we were told that the United States is the only country which could take a neutral position as an "honest broker" or guarantor to bring all factions together, i.e. the Government of the United Kingdom, the Government of the Irish Republic, and the Protestant and Catholic factions within the area, to devise an equitable peaceful political solution.

We are of the opinion that a political solution cannot be achieved in the near future without the United States acting as a catalyst by extending its good offices to all parties.

We make this observation fully cognizant of your statement urging peace in Northern Ireland on August 31, 1977.

We also feel it our duty to bring to your attention reports of serious violations of human rights being experienced by the people of Northern Ireland.
The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provision) Act of 1973 and its various subsequent amendments enacted by the British Parliament have greatly eroded the basic common law principle of due process. The people of Northern Ireland are being subjected to warrantless searches and arrests, prolonged detention without charges, harsh interrogation methods, and non-jury trials in which a single judge sits alone imposing long-term sentences..

Frankly, Mr. President, we were appalled at these conditions and by the "armed camp" atmosphere we encountered.

We firmly believe the entire situation in Northern Ireland warrants the immediate attention of our government.

We would sincerely welcome the opportunity to elaborate on our findings to you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Hamilton Fish

HAMILTON FISH, JR.
Ranking Member

Joshua Eilberg

JOSHUA EILBERG
Chairman

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