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E.R. 29/14

Mr Abbott

cc Mr ~~Chesterton~~
Mr ~~Carvill~~ - M
Mr Merifield - M
Mr Gilliland - M
Mr Reeve - M
Mr Coulson - M
Mr Cowling
Mr Bickham



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SECRETARY OF STATE'S POLITICAL SPEECHES IN THE USA

The Secretary of State is due to visit the USA later this month. He is expected to deliver two major political speeches. The first will be in New York on 27 March to a lunch-time meeting of the Council of Foreign Relations. He has been asked to speak for about 20 minutes and then answer questions for a further 30 minutes. The second speech is likely to be on 1 April to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council. He has been asked to speak for up to 30 minutes. There will also be many other occasions when the Secretary of State will be expected to speak about Government policy in Northern Ireland.

Mr Bickham and I discussed the preparation of the material for these speeches with the Secretary of State on 27 February. The Secretary of State agreed that his requirement was for one basic speech. It should be divided into sections. The Secretary of State would then wish to turn these into his own words, and to draw on them in his various engagements in the United States. He would want different sections of the speech to be highlighted in a press notice issued in New York for his speech on 27 March, and one in Los Angeles for 1 April.

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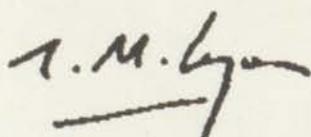
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I attach a draft speech which is intended to meet this requirement. I should welcome comments you or colleagues have on it, if possible by close of business on 5 March. I would hope then to be able to revise and complete material and have it ready for submission before the end of that week.

Subject to Mr Gilliland's views, I doubt if we can helpfully produce press notices until we have a text which the Secretary of State has approved. It might be helpful, however, if we highlighted the particular passages we would want to bring out in both New York and Los Angeles. For New York, I would suggest we draw on the section about Government policy, including political development in Northern Ireland, and Anglo-Irish relations. In Los Angeles, I suggest we draw out the sections on security, civil rights and, perhaps, the quality of life. I should welcome views on these suggestions.



J M LYON

1 March 1985

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SECRETARY OF STATE'S POLITICAL SPEECH IN THE USA

Introduction

Thank you for inviting me. Thank you too for the interest which your presence here shows you have in Northern Ireland.

It is strange that a population of one and a half million in an island of million has posed such an intractable problem over so many centuries.

It is all the more strange when, as I have done, you come to meet the people of Northern Ireland. I have found them unfailingly charming, warm, witty and articulate. They are also passionate in their views, tough in their out-look, and determined and enormously resilient.

I am not surprised that something like million Americans are proud to trace their family back to Ireland. Qualities that have made you here so successful are still present in that island.

I think in particular of some of the people I have met in the six months in which I have been Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Government Minister responsible. [Personal examples].

No-one who meets the people of Northern Ireland as I do, or who wants to understand their problems and aspirations, as I must, can ignore the history out of which the present situation arises. There are two long-established communities in Northern Ireland. The largest, numbering about a million people, is Protestant. Their fore-fathers came to Ireland, largely from Scotland, in the 17th century. In the last 300 years they have firmly established their identity, their

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outlook, their loyalties, and indeed their own culture. I needn't tell this audience that 300 years is a long time. They are firmly established in Northern Ireland, they have a right to be there, and to have their views and their identities fully respected.

But there is also another community in Northern Ireland. There are some half a million Catholics who also have their own identity, their own culture, their own aspirations and their own beliefs. They too have an absolute right to be in Northern Ireland, and to be fully respected and accommodated there.

There is nothing particularly unusual about accommodating two identities within a single state system. We have been doing it in Europe for generations. So have you in the United States. The difference in Northern Ireland is that the two communities have different and incompatible political aspirations. The majority community wish passionately to remain part of the United Kingdom. The minority wish equally passionately to be part of a united and separate Ireland.

The conflict came to a head in Ireland in 1921. It was resolved at the expense of a good deal of bloodshed. A treaty was drawn up and agreed in 1924 which allowed the six counties to the North of the Ireland, where the majority were unionist, to remain part of the United Kingdom. The remaining 26 counties became part of what is today the Republic of Ireland. That agreement was recognised in international law: and has shaped the politics of island in the 60 years which followed.

Both the British and the Irish Governments recognise the reality of Northern Ireland. They recognise too the fundamental principle of

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self-determination. The British Government honours that principle by making clear that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland - that is that Northern Ireland shall remain part of the United Kingdom - shall not be changed unless the majority want it to be.

That is not the attitude of a colonial Government seeking to hang onto a territory against the wishes of the inhabitants. It is the action of a caring Government accepting the democratically expressed wishes of its people - the people of Northern Ireland.

But let us be clear. Our approach is not just a matter of principle or of arid constitutional theory. It is also a practical reality.

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in 1960s
There is just no possibility of imposing a constitutional change on a million people who will not accept it. That is not democracy: it is tyranny. None of the political parties in the Republic of Ireland want that. They are all committed to change by consent. At present - and the Irish Government recognise this - that consent is not forthcoming.

Northern Ireland Today

It is too easy to dwell on the problems of Northern Ireland. To conclude that there is no scope for peaceful democratic change. To succumb either to hopelessness or to the equally hopeless anarchy that of the terrorist. But/is not the Northern Ireland I know. Nor is it the true to/people - unionists and nationalists - who live there.

Let me tell you what I have found. First, there is an enormous yearning for reconciliation and normality. There ^{consensus} is a majority in Northern Ireland. It is the ^{consensus} majority which transcends even political division,

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The Province enjoys that rare combination of a well

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developed

infrastructure ~~with~~ and an unspoiled rural landscape.

It is the ^{vast} majority who want to live peaceful constructive lives in harmony with their neighbours. Many of you will have heard of the organisations which harness that wish. The Corrymeela community, founded in _____ is perhaps the best known. It organises conferences, work parties, camps, and discussion groups. Members of both communities and all social classes attend. But they are not alone. There are many other smaller social and community groups quietly working for reconciliation in Northern Ireland. They do not seek the plaudits of politicians. They do not want to bask in world attention. I merely say they are there, and their contribution is immense.

Somehow succeeds in the work of education it is so wonderful feeling, some bit of language is being taught. Given the headlines we all read, it may surprise you that Northern Ireland is a good place to live in, to be educated in and to bring up children in. Most people I meet in Northern Ireland would not want to live anyway else - and that includes some who are English and some American! Why? Because of the quality of life there. For most people the housing is good - and getting better. The countryside is remarkable. The leisure facilities - golf, riding, water sports - are excellent. Cultural life in Belfast has been transformed in the last few years. Restaurants and night life are thriving. Northern Ireland provides as good a level of education, and probably dare I say it better, than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. My English colleagues in Northern Ireland are delighted that their children are being educated there. As a result, we can offer an intelligent, skilled and highly motivated work force.

Human rights have been an issue in Northern Ireland. It is perhaps no surprise that the historical bitterness engendered in 1921 continued for some years after. The minority community felt they were second class citizens, discriminated against. That is a thing of the past.

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Our civil rights record in Northern Ireland bears comparison with anyone. The safeguards are impressive. Discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or political belief is against the law. The equal opportunities commission, the Fair Employment Agency, the Commissioners for administration, the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights, and Housing Executive - and in their different ways and in their different spheres exist to safeguard and secure civil rights for everyone in Northern Ireland.

There is, of course, a darker side to life in Northern Ireland. It is now sporadic and limited. But is nonetheless vicious for that. It is terrorism. The situation has improved greatly in recent years. In 1972 there were tragically deaths. In 1976 there were deaths. In 1980 there were deaths. Last year there were just deaths. All as a result of terrorist violence. The people who are involved know no borders. They know no mercy. They know no law. They represent nothing except their own vicious fanaticism. They spout pseudo Marxist ideals and shoot and bomb Irish people. The major threat now comes from Republican terrorists. They threaten people of Northern Ireland, the people of Great Britian, and the people of the Republic. The Irish Government, the British Government and the United States Government are all at one in condemning them.

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Government policy

The British Government's policy is directed to the reality of life in Northern Ireland. As the sovereign Government we accept our responsibilities for both communities in Northern Ireland. The present political situation there is not satisfactory. We seek practical, constructive and agreed ways forward. We do so through a twin-track policy. We want to see a return to political life and political responsibility in Northern Ireland. We want to recognise the position of the Irish Government and to work closely with them.

Political Development in Northern Ireland

At present, following the violence and political difficulties in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s, the British Government is directly responsible for the administration of Northern Ireland. We call it direct rule. The only local political responsibility is vested in the district councils, who have a very limited range of powers.

Direct rule is not satisfactory. Politicians in London cannot know best what are the needs and priorities of people in Northern Ireland. We administer Northern Ireland fairly. We are efficient. We are also humane. But we are not Northern Irish. It is highly unsatisfactory that some of the most sophisticated politicians in the world cannot exercise responsibility for administering their own area.

We want, therefore, to devolve responsibility back to the politicians and the people of Northern Ireland. But we cannot do so if that would

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lead not to a stable and mutual democratic society, but to dissatisfaction and unrest. So we are firmly committed to devolving powers only if there is widespread agreement throughout the community - that means both the majority and the minority communities.

That is a tall order. We are asking the political leaders of the two communities to come together and agree on how Northern Ireland should be administered. We are asking the majority unionist politicians to recognise that the minority community have an absolute and equal right to participation in the political processes of Northern Ireland. We are asking the minority community to recognise that the position of Northern Ireland cannot be changed against the wishes of the majority.

The British Government has done all it can to help. It has set in place a flexible framework within which agreement can be sought. It has established an elected Northern Ireland Assembly. It has made provision for powers to be devolved to the elected members of that Assembly in stages and subject to the widespread agreement of the whole community. The representatives of the minority nationalist community, in particular the social democratic and labour party, have yet to join that Assembly. But it remains as a practicable structure, which may have a role to play in political development in Northern Ireland. Meanwhile, it is effectively scrutinising direct rule.

The British Government has also done everything it can to get the political parties in Northern Ireland to talk to each other. That is harder than it sounds.

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We have district council elections in Northern Ireland in May. Election campaigns in Northern Ireland sometimes seem to last as long as that for the President. We are already entering a pre-election period. I understand the reluctance of some of the parties to enter into talks in this climate. But I am urging the parties not to get frozen into a sectarian mould. Last year saw the constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland issuing documents remarkable for their openness, and their readiness to consider ways of recognising each others identities. There was the SDLP's participation in the New Ireland Forum Report. A document by the official unionist party; and another one by Dr Paisley's democratic unionist party. Those documents represented a underlying wish to look at the issues again in a new and constructive way. None of them underestimated the difficulties. I am determined to give the Northern Ireland political parties every encouragement and every opportunity to develop from those first steps together.

Anglo-Irish Relations

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The development of close co-operation with the Irish Republic is not really separate from developing the political situation in Northern Ireland. The Irish Government have an interest in events in Northern Ireland. The minority nationalist community look to them, and would be reassured if the Irish Government's position were more fully recognised in the structures we devise for Northern Ireland. The Irish Government have views on what goes on in Northern Ireland. The British Government are ready to hear those views and respond to them. That is no substitute for developing a mature political democracy in Northern Ireland. But political structures must reflect the people they serve. And the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland want to know that the Irish Government is involved, is able to make a contribution, and will be heeded.

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The British and Irish Governments are undertaking continuing discussions on all these matters. There is a good deal of agreement between us on the general principles. They were set out at the November Summit between the British and Irish Prime Ministers. We agreed in particular that the identities of both communities in Northern Ireland should be recognised and respected, and reflected in the structures and processes of Northern Ireland in ways acceptable to both communities. We accepted that the rights of both communities must be safeguarded. We agreed that the talks should continue. That is what has been happening in recent months, in a calm and constructive atmosphere.

I would not want to minimise the difficulties. It is not going to be easy to develop the complementary aspects of our twin-track policy at the same time and at the right pace. But we must try. I am convinced that there is no other practicable and reasonable way forward.

Security

Our objective, agreed by the British and the Irish Governments, is to bring peace and prosperity to Northern Ireland. We cannot achieve that without greater political stability. But we cannot have greater political stability without overcoming terrorism. The terrorist campaign is extremely sophisticated. It is borne in a false hope

It is sustained by fear and intimidation. It is sadly helped all too often by people who react to its emotional appeal, without feeling the misery their money has bought.

The Government's security policy is clear. It is to eradicate terrorism in Northern Ireland. I have seen enough of the horrific effects of terrorist violence not to be ashamed or apologetic for that.

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I recognise that there are many aspects of our security operations which cause disquiet. I too find it distasteful that we cannot bring all serious offences to be tried before a jury. But neither of course can the Irish Republic. I too find the strip-searching of prisoners distasteful, and would prefer it if the security forces did not have to use plastic baton rounds, or, on occasion, live bullets.

But these measures are essential if we are to protect the whole community in Northern Ireland from the worst effects of terrorism. Each of them is carefully reviewed and as carefully controlled. It is right that they should be kept under public scrutiny. But that scrutiny needs to be measured and responsible. Otherwise it plays into the hands of the terrorist propaganda campaigns.

It is part of that propaganda campaign to designate the security forces in Northern Ireland. They are no army of occupation. They are the legitimately constituted arm of the democratically elected government in Northern Ireland. They are bound by the rule of law. They are accountable for their actions to the courts. Members of the army and of the Royal Ulster Constabulary have been brought before the courts on criminal charges for the actions they took while on duty. Only a few months ago a serving soldier was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment for an incident which occurred while he was on duty in the streets of Northern Ireland. The security force commanders are accountable to me as the Secretary of State for the way they carried out the security policy. I am answerable to Parliament.

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The Economy

A secure and stable society requires not just appropriate political structures and freedom from the threat of lawlessness and violence; it requires a measure of prosperity and economic stability. Like many other parts of the world, Northern Ireland has been facing difficult times. It is in the throws of transferring from reliance on a small number of heavy industries to a more flexible and more responsive industrial base. It is acutely effected by high levels of unemployment - at present 21% among men, but much higher in certain areas. ^{But} /it has a good deal going for it. It has a skilled and willing workforce. Industrial disputes in the private sector are extremely rare. It has excellent industrial sites. And very good transport and other infrastructure. The Industrial Development Board are able to offer extremely attractive investment packages. They also do much to encourage and build existing industries in Northern Ireland.

The economic outlook is by no means gloomy. But it could be transformed by greater investment from abroad. That would be investment in the skills and expertise that exists in Northern Ireland. It would open up the enormous market in the European Community. It would offer an extremely attractive investment option. But most of all it would offer for the whole community in Northern Ireland new prospects, a sense of optimism which is essential if we are to secure political stability; a significant set back to the terrorists who prey on the unemployed and whose political propagandists abroad lose no opportunity to prevent investment in the Province. Further investment in Northern Ireland and greater economic prosperity will give everyone in Northern Ireland the equal opportunities for employment which they need and the chance they want to prove their worth.

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What the US can do

for people in this country

It is not easy to know how to respond to the complex and sensitive situation in Northern Ireland. We welcome those who are able to visit Northern Ireland and see for themselves. We ask those who have money to invest seriously to consider Northern Ireland and to discuss the possibilities with the Industrial Development Board. We feel we have a right to ask other Governments and other nations to join us in resisting the scourge of international terrorism. The IRA is part of that anarchic movement. Those who want to help financially the people of Ireland can give to organisations like the Ireland fund: they do not help Irish people by contributing to their deaths through contributions to organisations like Noraid.

Most of all, we ask for your understanding. Understanding of the enormous complexities. Understanding of the problems of reconciling two conflicting identities within the same small area. Understanding of the involvement and the sincerity of both the British and the Irish Governments. And finally an understanding and commitment to those nationalist and unionist, Irish and British, who are committed to finding a peaceful solution within a democratic framework. The situation in Northern Ireland is a challenge to our Western democratic system for resolving conflicts peacefully. I believe that with patience and hard work that challenge will be met.