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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELNO 890 OF 16 MARCH 1982,

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ROUTINE CG'S IN THE USA.

NORTHERN IRELAND: ST PATRICK' DAY STATEMENT BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND.

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ST PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND.

BEGINS:-

THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND IN THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TODAY:

ST PATRICK'S DAY 1982 MARKS THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND -- A BIPARTISAN ENTERPRISE IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE IRISH PEOPLE AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. OUR SPECIAL GOAL HAS BEEN TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE CONGRESS FOR AN END TO THE VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT HAS SUFFERED SO MUCH FROM A DECADE OF KILLING AND DESTRUCTION.

FOR ALL OF US COMMITTED TO THE CAUSE OF PEACE IN IRELAND, 1981 WAS OFTEN A YEAR OF ANGUISH. THE EXTENDED HUNGER STRIKE, THE CONTINUING BOMBINGS AND RANDOM SECTARIAN MURDERS, THE ASSASSINATION OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, THE RELENTLESS APPEALS TO RELIGIOUS HATRED, THE RISE OF SECTARIAN DEMAGOGERY TO NEW LEVELS OF VIRULENCE -- THESE AND OTHER EVENTS BORE VIOLENT WITNESS TO THE WORSENING TRAGEDY IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN THE PAST YEAR.

OTHER EVENTS IN 1981 GAVE CAUSE FOR HOPE. IN PARTICULAR, WE WERE HEARTENED BY THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE LAST NOVEMBER BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTERS OF IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN, THEIR CREATION OF AN ANGLO-IRISH INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL, AND THEIR SIGNIFICANT AGREEMENT ON "THE NEED FOR EFFORTS TO DIMINISH THE DIVISIONS BETWEEN THE TWO SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND TO RECONCILE THE TWO MAJOR TRADITIONS THAT EXIST IN THE TWO PARTS OF IRELAND." AND WE NOTE WITH INTEREST THE GROWING DEBATE IN BOTH THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND ON THE ROLE OF NORTHERN PROTESTANTS IN IRELAND'S FUTURE. WE REGARD ALL OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS AS SIGNS OF THE GOOD WILL AND COMMITMENT TO COOPERATION BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS IN THE COMMON SEARCH FOR PEACE.

WE ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED BY THE SUPPORT EXPRESSED FOR THE FRIENDS

OF IRELAND BY BOTH THE IRISH AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENTS. WE HAVE MET IN THE PAST YEAR WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THOSE GOVERNMENTS AND WITH LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND. WE HAVE TRIED TO BE A FORUM IN THE CONGRESS TO INFORM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT THE CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT AND THE MOST HOPEFUL MEANS TO END IT.

IN THE COMING YEAR, WE INTEND TO PURSUE THE PATH OF PEACE IN EVERY WAY WE CAN. TOWARD THIS GOAL, THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND IS HONORED TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION FROM THE SPEAKER OF DAIL EIREANN FOR A DELEGATION FROM THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND TO VISIT THE IRISH PARLIAMENT AT A SUITABLE TIME THIS SPRING.

WE ALSO COMMEND PRESIDENT REAGAN FOR HIS COMMITMENT TO PEACE IN IRELAND, HIS CONCERN FOR AN END TO THE VIOLENCE, AND HIS SUPPORT FOR THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND. WE WELCOME THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER HAUGHEY TOMORROW AT THE WHITE HOUSE. AND WE URGE THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE THE OCCASION OF HIS FORTHCOMING TRIP TO EUROPE IN JUNE TO MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL VISIT TO IRELAND.

AS FRIENDS OF IRELAND, WE ARE ALSO UNITED IN OUR CONDEMNATION OF THE VIOLENCE ON BOTH SIDES IN NORTHERN IRELAND. MORE THAN 2,100 MEN AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE DIED SINCE THE CONFLICT BEGAN, AND MORE THAN 23,000 HAVE BEEN INJURED. WE THEREFORE RENEW OUR EARNEST APPEAL TO OUR FELLOW AMERICANS TO SUPPORT POSITIVE POLICIES FOR PEACE, TO REJECT THE PATH OF VIOLENCE, AND TO REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE BY WORD OR DEED OR DOLLAR IN ANY EFFORT THAT SUPPORTS OR CONDONES THE VIOLENCE. NO ACTION IN THE DAILY LIFE OF ANY AMERICAN SHOULD CONTRIBUTE IN ANY WAY TO THE DAILY TOLL OF DEATH IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

FINALLY, AS FRIENDS OF IRELAND, WE RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO THE GOAL OF IRISH UNITY AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO ACHIEVE A LASTING PEACE. THE UNITY WE FAVOR IS AN IRELAND UNITED ON THE BASIS OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE IRISH PROTESTANT TRADITION AND THE IRISH

CATHOLIC TRADITION. IT IS A UNITY TO BE ACHIEVED, NOT BY THE BOMB OR BY THE BULLET, NOR BY THE OFFICIAL COERCION OF ANY SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY, BUT BY THE CONSENT, FREELY GIVEN, OF A MAJORITY OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND.

ENDS.

HENDERSON

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