

ST. PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT
BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, the Friends of Ireland is a bipartisan group of Senators and Representatives opposed to violence and terrorism in Northern Ireland and dedicated to maintaining a United States policy that promotes a just, lasting, and peaceful settlement of the conflict.

On behalf of Senator MOYNIHAN, Senator DODD and myself, we would like to welcome our colleague Senator MACK as a new Member of the Friends of Ireland Senate Executive Committee.

Each year, the Friends of Ireland issues an annual statement of the current situation in Northern Ireland. We believe our colleagues in Congress will find this year's statement of particular interest because of the events of the past year and potential for progress this year. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATEMENT BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND, ST. PATRICK'S DAY 1998

On this St. Patrick's Day the Friends of Ireland in the United States Congress join 44 million Irish-Americans, with ties to both traditions in Ireland, to celebrate our heritage and the unique bonds between our two lands. We send greetings to the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, and wish her well in her new position. We warmly welcome the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, on this his first St. Patrick's Day visit to Washington since he became Ireland's Prime Minister in June.

We share the hopes of the Irish people and their friends throughout the world that, in the course of this year, the Northern Ireland peace process will be successful and establish an agreement which fully respects the rights of nationalists and unionists, and can win the support of both.

We congratulate the Irish and British governments under the determined leadership of the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, and Prime Minister Tony Blair, for their courage and ability in seeking to advance the historic goal of ending this tragic conflict. We welcome all the positive contributions which have been made by political leaders in Northern Ireland to the talks. We pay tribute in particular to the contribution of our former colleague Senator George Mitchell in his role as Chairman of the talks, and to both the Minister of Foreign Affairs David Andrews, and the Northern Ireland Secretary of State Marjorie Mowlam, for their tireless commitment to the advancement of peace.

We condemn in the strongest terms the cruel sectarian killings and other acts of violence which have recently brought renewed suffering to Northern Ireland. The clear purpose of these sinister attacks is to destroy the peace process. These enemies of peace must never be allowed to succeed. No effort should be spared to bring those responsible to justice. We urge in the strongest possible terms that the cease-fires be maintained.

The most effective response to those who would seek to destroy this historic opportunity for peace in Northern Ireland is for political leaders involved in the talks to expand their dialogue and to redouble their efforts to reach agreement.

We agree with the Governments that the status quo in Northern Ireland is not an option. It is for the Governments and parties engaged in the talks to decide upon the pre-

cise terms of new arrangements which will be fair to both traditions. It is clear that "the new beginning in relationships" which has been set as the goal for the talks requires major change. We pledge our support to the Governments and the talks participants who together must make the difficult decisions needed to bring about that necessary transformation.

The critical test of the viability of any new agreement will be whether it provides for just and equal treatment for both communities and full respect for their respective traditions. It should end forever the possibility that any individual or group should fear that their rights are not protected or that they are treated as second class citizens. Equality of treatment must be the organizing principle of the new political institutions which need to be developed in all three Strands of the talks. We stress the particular importance of meaningful North/South institutions in this regard. Measures to promote equality, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms are essential underpinnings of any settlement, and should not be seen as concessions to one side or the other. The enactment of a Bill of Rights, the early repeal of the extensive body of emergency legislation, and a commitment to the development of a police force acceptable to all would constitute important steps in this direction.

We welcome Secretary of State Mowlam's recent announcement of a new commitment to remedy the job imbalance in Northern Ireland, under which Catholics are still twice as likely to be unemployed as Protestants. It is our hope that concrete steps to achieve genuine equality of opportunity in employment will be rapidly implemented.

We also wish to emphasize the need to avoid any repetition this year of the appalling disturbances during last year's marching season. We share the concern that the composition of the Parades Commission is unbalanced. The Commission's preliminary report will be issued soon, and we urge that all decisions on parades be taken in a manner that is clearly seen to be fair.

We welcome the decision by the British Government to appoint a tribunal of inquiry to consider new material, including that presented by the Irish Government, regarding the events of Bloody Sunday. We hope that this inquiry leads to the truth and healing for the people of Derry, and in particular for the families and relatives of the victims. We are also conscious of the grief of many others who have lost loved ones in the conflict, many whose remains are still missing. We urge those in a position to do so to assist in identifying remains so that they can be returned to their families.

The Friends of Ireland welcome the continuing bipartisan commitment of President Clinton and the Congress to the achievement of a just and lasting peace in Ireland and, in particular, the support for the important work of the International Fund for Ireland. To those ready to take risks for peace, we pledge ourselves to support any agreement reached by the parties. We believe that all involved now have an historic opportunity to replace the politics of discrimination with the politics of equality and mutual respect. We urge all concerned to summon the political courage to seize the moment.

FRIENDS OF IRELAND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Senate: Edward M. Kennedy, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Christopher J. Dodd, Connie Mack.

House of Representatives: Newt Gingrich, Richard A. Gephardt, James T. Walsh.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:49 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following resolution:

H. Res. 386. Resolved that the Honorable Richard K. Arme, a Representative from the State of Texas, be, and he is hereby, elected Speaker pro tempore on this day.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. STEVENS, from the Committee on Appropriations, without amendment:

S. 1768. An original bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for recovery from natural disasters, and for overseas peacekeeping efforts, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 105-168).

S. 1769. An original bill making supplemental appropriations for the International Monetary Fund for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 105-169).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. STEVENS:

S. 1768. An original bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for recovery from natural disasters, and for overseas peacekeeping efforts, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Appropriations; placed on the calendar.

S. 1769. An original bill making supplemental appropriations for the International Monetary Fund for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Appropriations; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. INOUE, and Mr. CONRAD):

S. 1770. A bill to elevate the position of Director of the Indian Health Service to Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, to provide for the organizational independence of the Indian Health Service within the Department of Health and Human Services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. CAMPBELL (for himself and Mr. ALLARD):

S. 1771. A bill to amend the Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act to provide for a final settlement of the claims of the Colorado Ute Indian Tribes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. JEFFORDS (for himself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 1772. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain pile fabrics of man-made fibers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 1773. A bill for the relief of Mrs. Ruth Hairston by the waiver of a filing deadline for appeal from a ruling relating to her application for a survivor annuity; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LOTT (for himself and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 1774. A bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to make