



# Northern Ireland Office

## Press Notice

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THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A SPEECH MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT HON JAMES CALLAGHAN MP, DURING A LUNCH WITH A CROSS-SECTION OF PEOPLE WHO MAINTAIN ESSENTIAL SERVICES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AT STORMONT CASTLE TODAY:

On revisiting Northern Ireland I am particularly glad to meet a cross-section of the people who in the midst of the troubles work to keep the spirit of Ulster alive - and what spirit is very much alive. You are responsible for keeping the wheels of industry turning, and for manning the public services that enable a modern society to survive. I express my thanks for your courage, dedication and your determination.

Those whose knowledge of the Province is derived solely from the media, have an image of a country laid waste - ravaged by conflict - preoccupied with it to the exclusion of anything else. To come here is to know that this is not so.

Like you I condemn the continuation of the brutal and senseless killing and the violence which is perpetrated by relatively small numbers from both extremes of the community. But you, the people of Northern Ireland, have risen above that by refusing to allow the gunmen to dictate your normal lives. You work, you play, you lead a family life. You at the shadow of violence removed but you will not be intimidated by the bomb and the bullet. It is the courage and steadfastness of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland from all parts of the community of which you are representatives which above all ensures that the terrorists shall never succeed.

You do not stand alone. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and will not cease to be part of the United Kingdom unless it is the clear wish of the majority that the links should be severed. In the absence of agreement on a devolved Government, we are now in a state of direct rule. The Government are responsible for Northern Ireland as for all other parts of the United Kingdom. The Government will not shirk this responsibility.



The Government are determined to do everything possible to bring violence to an end. The Army will remain in strength so long as this is necessary to assist the police in maintaining law and order, and in bringing terrorists before the courts. There will be no premature withdrawal of Army units.

Northern Ireland like the rest of the United Kingdom is suffering an economic recession. As we conquer inflation we can see the economy beginning to recover. Northern Ireland, because of its geographical situation, and its lack of natural resources, is more vulnerable to economic pressures than other parts of the United Kingdom. Indeed this is why the rates of grant given to industry here are higher than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. The Government are determined to do everything they can to reduce unemployment in Northern Ireland. Even so recovery may be slower here than in other parts of the United Kingdom, but do not listen to foolish talk of economic withdrawal. It is totally untrue.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to meet you and to reassure you and your fellow citizens that the Government will play its full part in finding solutions for the problems of Northern Ireland.

You have our sympathy and with your help, no matter how long it may take, we shall finally overcome, and peace and understanding will be restored to your country.