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IRELAND



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The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Peter Barry, paid a visit to Washington for St. Patrick's Day 1983. He met President Ronald Reagan, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, National Security Advisor Judge William Clark and Congressional leaders, including the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tip Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill.

In his meeting with President Reagan, who is himself of Irish ancestry and who visited the Irish Embassy in Washington to mark the occasion, Mr. Barry briefed the President on the current situation in Northern Ireland. He ~~had earlier~~ presented the President ~~at the White House~~ with a bowl of shamrock in honour of the National Day. The President in a speech at the Embassy condemned violence in Northern Ireland and called on Americans not to contribute financially or otherwise to organisations which perpetuate violence. He said that the United States would continue its pursuit of those who illegally ship weapons to Ireland he pledged the continuing assistance of the US private sector in job investment. The President emphasised his support for a just and peaceful solution to the problems of Ireland. He said that he believed that a lasting solution to the problems of Ireland can be found only in a process of reconciliation.

The Minister renewed an invitation from the Taoiseach to the President to visit Ireland.

In separate meetings, Mr. Barry briefed the Secretary of State Mr. Shultz and the National Security Advisor Judge Clark. The Minister acquainted them with recent developments in Ireland with particular reference to the proposal for an all-party Forum for a new Ireland announced by the Government on March 11th. Mr. Barry visited Congress where he was a guest of Speaker O'Neill at a lunch in honour of the President on St. Patrick's Day. He met the Congressional Group, the Friends of Ireland, which is comprised of about 30 Senators and 60 Congressmen. The Minister expressed the gratitude of the Government of Ireland for the clear guidance which the Friends have given to the American people on Northern Ireland and for the direct action which they have taken to encourage momentum

towards a solution. Mr. Barry praised the Friends particularly for a resolution which they tabled in both Houses of Congress on St. Patrick's Day and which calls for both Governments to seek an early political settlement which promotes the reconciliation of Ireland's traditions and achieves the goal of Irish unity. Among the members of the Friends of Ireland whom the Minister met were Senator Edward Kennedy, Con. Dodd and Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York and Congressman Tom Foley, Majority Whip of the House of Representatives.

On St. Patrick's Night the Minister was a guest at the annual dinner of the Society of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, one of the oldest Irish organisations in the United States. The keynote address was given by Judge William Clark who said....

On 16th March, Mr. Barry addressed a lunch at the National Press Club in Washington. In his speech the Minister launched a strong attack on the IRA whom he accused of typifying "a form of nationalism that has been frozen or warped by the burden of post history." He appealed to Americans not to assist this vengeful form of nationalism and asked them to align themselves instead "with those who seek to build a new Ireland generous enough to accommodate all its people and diverse traditions (the full text of the speech is ... Before going to Washington Mr. Barry visited New York where he met the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who is to pay an official visit to Ireland from 6th to 8th April 1983 The discussions covered a wide range of topics including the non-aligned Summit, which the Secretary-General had recently attended, the Middle East, Southern Africa, Afghanistan, Central America and Northern Ireland.

Earlier in New York Mr. Barry met representatives of the Irish American community and the ethnic Irish media. In separate meetings in both New York and Washington he briefed representatives of the US media on Ireland. Mr. Barry also met representatives of the US Labour Movement.

On his return to Ireland Mr. Barry described the Friends of Ireland resolution as the most significant development since 1922 where US interest in the Irish question is concerned.

Summing up his visit to the United States the Minister said
"We can proceed with confidence in our efforts to achieve a new
Ireland in the knowledge that we have the support of the
American political leadership for our efforts to end the
violence in Northern Ireland and bring about the reconciliation
of the two Irish traditions."