

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2014/105/767
Creation Date(s):	[June] 1984
Extent and medium:	3 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Taoiseach's Meeting with President Reagan

1. Northern Ireland

- Situation in Northern Ireland very dangerous. Major deterioration threatening to both countries inevitable next year unless we make political progress. Mrs. Thatcher, with whom I have a relationship of trust and mutual confidence, agrees with me on this.
- We are talking secretly with the British about finding the basis for an initiative. The Forum report is one indication of Irish openness. On our side nothing is ruled out.
- Our hope would be to have agreement by the early Autumn and to launch an initiative together probably involving what is called Joint Authority, which means involving the two Governments together in the government of Northern Ireland. The two sides within Northern Ireland would also be involved.
- Your public statements encouraging the two Governments have been helpful to both Governments. We also appreciate your persistent opposition to support for violence by either set of fanatics in Northern Ireland from Americans.
- It would be helpful if you enquired of Mrs. Thatcher of her reaction to the Forum Report and said to her that you too hoped that it would be possible for her and for me together to take an early initiative. It would also be very encouraging if you would say to her that the U.S. would act to support any initiative taken by the two Governments, perhaps by financial assistance.

2. US Investment in Ireland

- Thanks for support. 350 U.S. corporations here employing 37,000. Return on investment 31%.
- Ireland not in COCOM but because of high US involvement especially in high technology, our practice is to apply the US list, the most rigid of all lists. Only problem that arose in recent years involved the sale of second-hand aircraft to Libya and once Bill Clarke raised the matter, the sales ceased.

3. Fr. O'Brien

- Thanks for your interest. Greatly appreciated by the Irish people who are proud of and have confidence in Irish missionaries all over the third world.
- It would help if you continued to show President Marcos that you are following the case of Fr. O'Brien and his co-defendants with interest.

4. Visas for Irish citizens

- Virtually no Irish citizens can now emigrate to the U.S. This means, inter alia, that the Irish-Americans are losing contact with developments in Ireland and problems have arisen e.g. in their giving support to the IRA to an extent not being given by the Irish in Ireland.
- We have young, highly educated population some of whom, if given the opportunity would benefit from the opportunity to live and work in the U.S. They would contribute to the U.S., to Ireland and perhaps most important to improving the understanding between the U.S. and Ireland.

5. Central America

- We recognise that there are elements in the situation which are worrying to the United States: the espousal of Marxist-Leninist doctrines by many of the revolutionaries, the fear that a victory for groups containing these people could lead to a situation which would make the maintenance of global strategic balance more difficult.
- We recognise, too, that the concern of the U.S. is all the greater because these events are occurring in the Western hemisphere.
- We are convinced that the way to draw support from the extremes is to try to strengthen the moderates and to get them to work together: we fully recognise the great difficulty in achieving this.
- Moderates in Central America include President-elect Duarte, and also some people at present allied to the Salvadorean guerrillas. There are also relatively moderate people in Nicaragua, inside and outside Government.
- We in Ireland have seen the U.S. up to now as giving undue priority to a military defeat of the guerrillas, and on feeling it had to subordinate its genuine wish for social justice and human rights to this military struggle.
- Our view is that the struggle for justice is primary: that this is the only way to ensure a victory in the long term for democracy, and that it is a political mistake to subordinate it to any other aim.
- The election of Duarte is a chance for change in El Salvador: we are glad to see that he has promised action against the abuse of power and against death squad activity. What is the President's estimate of his chances? How can the U.S. support him against the right wing?
- Duarte has refused to contemplate a sharing of power with the armed opposition. At a later stage, after his will to reform is seen to be effective, is there a hope that he can have a fruitful dialogue with moderates among the opposing forces and gradually create a consensus leading to peace and progress?

- The Irish Government has frequently called attention in public to the dangers of a drift towards Marxist totalitarianism in Nicaragua. We do not believe that a totalitarian regime has yet been consolidated there. The forthcoming elections will not end Sandinista rule, but we hope they will strengthen moderate forces.

- We know that the U.S. believes that the activities of the "Contras" against Nicaragua helps to keep a brake on undesirable activity by that country: is it not arguable that the "Contras" activity (and other pressures from outside) is strengthening rather than weakening the extremists?

- We, and the other members of the Ten. have frequently expressed our support for the Contadora initiative. How does the U.S. see the future of this initiative?