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Mr. M. Ivor
to see & P.A.
MB. 17/3/86

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY.

REMARKS OF TAOISEACH, DR GARRET FITZGERALD, T.D., AT THE DINNER
TO HONOUR SPEAKER THOMAS P. O'NEILL, JR. AS HE CELEBRATES
FIFTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE
WASHINGTON D.C.
MONDAY, MARCH 17 1986

MR PRESIDENT, MR SPEAKER, REV. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IRISH AND, IF
THERE ARE ANY TODAY, NON-IRISH!

I AM HONOURED TO HAVE BEEN INVITED AS HEAD OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT TO JOIN
WITH YOU IN PAYING TRIBUTE TO SPEAKER O'NEILL. I AM VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE
FACT THAT THIS IS AN AMERICAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL OCCASION. INDEED EARLIER
TODAY ON THE HILL, I MET SOMEONE WHO ASKED "WHAT'S A FOREIGNER DOING SPEAKING
AT THAT DINNER TONIGHT FOR THE SPEAKER?". I WAS PUZZLED. THE PRESIDENT LOOKS
IRISH ENOUGH TO ME. THE SPEAKER IS IRISH. SENATOR KENNEDY IS IRISH. THEN IT
STRUCK ME. HE WAS REFERRING TO BOB HOPE - A YOUNG, UNKNOWN ENGLISH COMEDIAN
HIRED FOR THE EVENING. BUT I WAS ABLE TO ASSURE MY QUESTIONER THAT IT WAS OK.
IN THE SPIRIT OF THE RECENTLY SIGNED AGREEMENT BETWEEN DUBLIN AND LONDON, FOR
BOB HOPE TO SPEAK HERE TONIGHT.

BUT SERIOUSLY, THE FACT THAT I HAVE BEEN INVITED TO JOIN WITH YOUR PRESIDENT
AND ALL OF YOU IN HONOURING THE SPEAKER SAYS MUCH ABOUT THE EXTRAORDINARY

cc. A-I SECTION
Amb London (fax)
Mr. R. O'Brien } PRESS
Mr. M. McCloskey } SECTION
Mr. Lillis (fax)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND IRELAND. THE TIES THAT BIND US GO FAR BEYOND THOSE THAT NORMALLY BIND TWO FRIENDLY STATES. THERE ARE OVER FORTY MILLION LOYAL, PATRIOTIC AMERICANS, INCLUDING MANY OF YOU HERE TONIGHT, WHO IN ADDITION TO YOUR LOYALTY TO THE UNITED STATES HAVE A PARTICULAR ATTACHMENT TO AND FRIENDSHIP FOR THE COUNTRY OF YOUR FOREFATHERS, IRELAND. AND NOBODY HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT AFFECTION AND FRIENDSHIP FOR IRELAND MORE THAN TIP O'NEILL.

IN IRELAND, SPEAKER O'NEILL IS KNOWN AND ADMIRER IN A WAY IN WHICH NO OTHER PERSON OUTSIDE IRELAND IS KNOWN AND ADMIRER. YOU, MR SPEAKER, WERE THE FIRST POLITICAL LEADER OUTSIDE IRELAND TO JOIN ALMOST FIFTEEN YEARS AGO WITH IRISH LEADERS IN SHOWING THE PEACEFUL, CONSTRUCTIVE WAY AHEAD FOR IRELAND. YOU SENT OUT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND TO THE IRISH AMERICAN COMMUNITY THE STRONG, CLEAR, MESSAGE THAT TERRORIST BOMBS, BULLETS AND GUNS ACHIEVE NOTHING BUT MISERY, DESPAIR AND DESTRUCTION.

AND YOU GAVE TO US, POLITICAL LEADERS IN IRELAND, NORTH AND SOUTH, ENCOURAGEMENT AND HEART AS WE SOUGHT TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES THROUGH THE CONSTITUTIONAL, POLITICAL SYSTEM. NONE OF US IN IRELAND WHO HEARD YOU SPEAK IN DUBLIN CASTLE DURING YOUR VISIT TO IRELAND IN 1979 WILL EVER FORGET THE WORDS OF HOPE, AND OF DEEP AFFECTION, THAT YOU THERE ADDRESSED TO NATIONALISTS AND UNIONISTS ALIKE ON THAT OCCASION -- WORDS THAT INSPIRED SOME OF US TO APPROACH THE PROBLEM OF NORTHERN IRELAND WITH A NEW OPENNESS AND A FRESH DETERMINATION. YOU, MR SPEAKER, THUS SHARE FULLY IN THE RECENT HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT - THE SIGNING LAST NOVEMBER OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN BRITAIN AND IRELAND UNDER WHICH WE HAVE CREATED A FRAMEWORK, OR PROCESS, WITHIN WHICH THE

OBJECTIVES OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION MIGHT BE ACHIEVED. NO WORDS OF MINE WILL EVER BE SUFFICIENT TO EXPRESS TO YOU THE GRATITUDE OF THE IRISH PEOPLE -- OUR GRATITUDE TO A GOOD MAN AND A GREAT MAN.

AS A TOKEN OF OUR APPRECIATION I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE. MY COUNTRY, LIKE YOURS, IS A REPUBLIC AND DOES NOT GRANT TITLES. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ONE ACT OF PUBLIC RECOGNITION OPEN TO US. THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND MAY, ON THE ADVICE OF THE GOVERNMENT, AS A TOKEN OF HONOUR, GRANT IRISH CITIZENSHIP TO A PERSON OR PERSONS WHO IN THEIR OPINION HAS RENDERED DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO THE IRISH NATION. IN THE SIXTY-THREE YEARS SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE IRISH STATE, THIS HONOUR HAS BEEN GRANTED ONLY TO THREE PEOPLE. TONIGHT IT IS MY GREAT PRIVILEGE ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND TO GRANT IRISH CITIZENSHIP AS A TOKEN OF HONOUR TO TWO PEOPLE, THOMAS P O'NEILL, JNR. AND HIS WIFE, MILDRED O'NEILL. WITH YOUR PERMISSION, CHAIRMAN, I WOULD LIKE NOW TO ASK THEM TO ACCEPT CERTIFICATES OF THEIR IRISH CITIZENSHIP AND THEIR IRISH PASSPORTS.

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