



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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(ROHRBACHER)

MARCH 17, 1987

ST. PATRICK'S DAY RECEPTION AT
THE IRISH AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

THANK YOU. AMBASSADOR MACKERNAN,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
A SPECIAL THANKS TO PRIME MINISTER
FOR DOING THE HONORS WITH THE SHAMROCKS.

IT IS AN HONOR AND A PLEASURE FOR ME
TO BE HERE WITH YOU, SHARING THE SPIRIT AND
FESTIVITIES OF ST. PATRICK'S DAY. THE
BLESSED ST. PATRICK, WE ARE TOLD, DIED ON
THIS DAY IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 461.
AND LEAVE IT TO THE IRISH TO BE CARRYING ON
A WAKE FOR OVER 1,500 YEARS.

ST. PATRICK, AS WE KNOW, WAS THE
HISTORIC MAN OF GOD WHO, WITH PASSION AND
STRENGTH OF CONVICTION, CONVERTED THE PEOPLE
OF IRELAND TO CHRISTIANITY.

I HAVE A DEEP AND ABIDING RESPECT FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ST. PATRICK, AN INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS ABLE TO TURN THE HEAD OF THE ENTIRE IRISH RACE. HAVING DONE MY BEST THESE LAST 6 YEARS, EVEN ON THE MINOR ISSUES, TO CONVERT THE LIKES OF SENATOR KENNEDY AND SPEAKER O'NEILL, I CAN ONLY STAND IN AWE OF SUCH A MAN.

ST. PATRICK'S IMPRINT CAN BE FOUND, EVEN TODAY, ON THE CHARACTER OF THE IRISH PEOPLE AND ON ALL OF US WHO TRACE OUR ROOTS TO IRELAND. ONE OF THE MOST MOVING MOMENTS IN MY PRESIDENCY WAS MY RETURN TO BALLYPOREEN ABOUT 3 YEARS AGO. I'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK AGAIN THE IRISH PEOPLE FOR GIVING ME SUCH A WARM HOMECOMING.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO TAKE THIS MOMENT TO MAKE TWO SERIOUS POINTS. IT WAS ANOTHER SUCH VISIT PAID BY AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT OF IRISH DESCENT, JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY, THAT RESULTED IN THE FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN IRISH FOUNDATION.

FOR OVER TWO DECADES, THE AMERICAN IRISH FOUNDATION HAS BEEN DOING EXEMPLARY WORK ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC, UNDERSCORING THE BONDS OF AFFECTION AND BLOOD BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. SINCE 1976, ITS EFFORTS HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY THOSE OF THE IRELAND FUND, WHICH IS A NON-POLITICAL, NON-SECTARIAN ORGANIZATION THAT RAISES FUNDS TO PROMOTE PEACE, CULTURE, AND CHARITY IN IRELAND.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW ONCE WROTE,
"THE WORST SIN TOWARDS OUR FELLOW CREATURES
IS NOT TO HATE THEM, BUT TO BE INDIFFERENT
TO THEM: THAT'S THE ESSENCE OF INHUMANITY."
WELL, NO ONE INVOLVED IN EITHER OF THESE
TWO FINE ORGANIZATIONS COULD EVER BE LABELED
INDIFFERENT. TODAY, IT IS AN HONOR FOR ME
TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE AMERICAN IRISH
FOUNDATION AND THE IRELAND FUND ARE NOW
OFFICIALLY MERGED INTO ONE OPERATION.
THIS IS ITS FIRST DAY, AND IT IS CALLED
THE AMERICAN IRELAND FUND, WITH US TODAY
ARE WILLIAM VINCENT, DANIEL ROONEY, AND
JOHN BROGAN. GOOD LUCK TO YOU, AND GOD
BLESS THE FINE WORK YOU ARE DOING.

THIS TYPE OF COMMITMENT, THIS
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY, IS A PART OF
THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE, PERHAPS A PART
THAT CAN BE TRACED BACK TO IRELAND. I KNOW
IN MY OWN FAMILY, WE WERE FAR FROM AFFLUENT,
YET WE WERE TAUGHT TO HELP OTHERS.

ON THIS SPECIAL DAY, ONE CAN'T HELP BUT THINK OF THE SUFFERING THAT STILL PLAGUES ST. PATRICK'S ISLAND. FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES, THE NORTH HAS BEEN TORN BY SECTARIAN VIOLENCE THAT HAS TAKEN THE LIVES OF MORE THAN 2,500 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN. THIS BRUTAL AND SENSELESS VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY IS A POISON OF NO POSSIBLE BENEFIT, AN ELIXIR OF DEATH AND HEARTBREAK THAT -- FOR HUMANITY'S SAKE AND FOR ALL OF IRELAND'S SAKE -- MUST BE SET ASIDE.

OUT OF THIS TRAGIC SITUATION, THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND TOOK A COURAGEOUS AND FAR-SIGHTED STEP IN NOVEMBER OF 1985 WHEN THEY SIGNED THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT.

THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTS THIS ACCORD AS A REALISTIC FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH THE PROBLEMS OF NORTHERN IRELAND CAN BE ADDRESSED, AN AVENUE WHICH HOLDS THE BEST HOPE OF POLITICAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION.

THIS AGREEMENT WAS WARMLY WELCOMED HERE, YET WE CANNOT IGNORE THAT, SINCE ITS SIGNING, VIOLENCE HAS CONTINUED IN THE NORTH. I THINK THE TIME HAS LONG SINCE COME WHEN PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL -- NORTH AND SOUTH AND ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC -- SHOULD DRAW THE LINE AND LET THE PERPETRATORS AND SUPPORTERS OF THIS VIOLENCE AND MAYHEM KNOW THAT THEY WILL NO LONGER BE TOLERATED.

FOR OUR PART, THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO STAND READY TO HELP. LAST YEAR, CONGRESS AUTHORIZED AND I SIGNED INTO LAW A CONTRIBUTION OF \$120 MILLION TO THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND.

JUST THIS MORNING, I SIGNED THE NECESSARY CERTIFICATION THAT WILL ALLOW US TO BEGIN DISBURSEMENT. THIS EFFORT, ALONG WITH PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS, HAS ACCOMPLISHED MUCH, BUT THERE IS A LONG WAY TO GO. NOW IS THE TIME FOR PEOPLE IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT TO MOVE FORWARD AGGRESSIVELY. SOCIAL HARMONY AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN IRELAND WILL NOT COME EASY, BUT BETTER, MORE PEACEFUL TIMES WILL COME. TOGETHER, THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND AND THE UNITED STATES CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN.

IT WAS OVER 1,400 YEARS AGO WHEN LEGEND TELLS US THAT ST. BRENDAN SET FORTH IN HIS LEATHER BOAT AND HEADED WEST. HE CAME BACK WITH STORIES OF A NEW WORLD. TODAY, OUR TASK IS NOT SO EASY. IF WE ARE TO HAVE A NEW WORLD, WE MUST BUILD IT, AND WE MUST DO IT TOGETHER.

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SO ON THIS ST. PATRICK'S DAY, I EXPRESS
THE BEST WISHES OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED
STATES TO OUR COUSINS AND FRIENDS, THE
PEOPLE OF IRELAND.
THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU.

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