



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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**PRESS RELEASE: PLEASE WATCH EMBARGO**

4 P.M.

Speech by the Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D.,  
at the Annual Wolfe Tone Commemoration  
at Bodenstown, Sunday 11th October, 1987.

The sovereign, independent republic we have in Ireland today and the Ireland we strive to achieve for tomorrow will always owe a great debt to the ideas and inspiration of Wolfe Tone and his contemporaries. I believe there is much of which they could be proud in this independent State and in what our people have so far managed to achieve. However formidable the problems we face, we have travelled an immense distance in sixty five years. We have succeeded in building a national life of our own. Since the 1920s the people of this State have enjoyed peace and stability. Economic and social progress has been enormous. The modern Irish state has played an honest and enlightened role in international affairs in keeping with the contribution that Irish people have made over many centuries to the progress of civilisation, to the spread of democracy and the rights of self-determination and to the cultural heritage of mankind. Nor do such achievements belong only to the past. As a respected member of the community of nations we are in a position to play an enlightened role in international affairs today.

After a long period of doubt and low morale Ireland is beginning to recover her poise and her confidence. A new mood is growing among the people in which progress is possible again. We are putting our house in order, and already there are encouraging signs appearing. We are going through a very difficult phase but people see now that we are getting to grips with the situation and winning. History shows that a nation that is able to make sacrifices for the common good, that pulls together in times of adversity, will always prevail and win through. The Government are determined to create the right conditions for economic recovery, and a return to a situation that will ensure that our young people gain at home a livelihood that matches their talents and expectations. And we are succeeding.

There is a new spirit of discipline and realism. There is much we still have to achieve, but with leadership and determination, with a positive and constructive attitude, we can over time make many important material improvements in the life of our people. What we are now doing is an essential prelude to that objective.

Upon Fianna Fail has fallen the principal responsibility for implementing a programme of national recovery. All our policies and actions are directed towards that goal. The strength, the unity of purpose and the discipline of our great national organisation is the best guarantee of our

success in dealing with the nation's problems. Fianna Fail has a clear political philosophy, which is Republican in the broadest sense of the word, a caring philosophy that is dedicated at all times to the best interests of all our people. Throughout its existence Fianna Fail has always responded consistently, courageously and with sound judgement to the particular challenge facing the nation at any time. This often involved in the past radical departures. This tradition inspires us today to do whatever needs to be done to secure economic survival.

But pre-occupied though we may be with the pressing challenges of the moment we do not however forget the purposes for which we were founded.

This year we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our Constitution. We salute that historic achievement of Eamon de Valera, the founder of our movement in formulating that Constitution and having it enacted by the people. The Constitution has stood the test of time. It has provided us with sound and durable institutions of a democratic State and is an important symbol of national life and ideals. The people of Ireland have a right to be proud of their Constitution. It is the foundation of our sovereign political independence and the guarantee of our fundamental rights and liberties.

That guarantee embraces all the people of Ireland and places a special responsibility on the Irish Government.

We have a moral obligation to do whatever we can, using the instruments now at hand, to secure material improvements in the situation of all the people of the North, bearing in mind the position of the Nationalist population but also bearing in mind that any improvement in their position will make things better for everybody else.

It is more widely recognised than ever that violence and counter-violence are futile, and that they bring nothing but misery, bitterness, bereavement and the postponement of the ultimate achievement of peace and unity. No Irish Government has ever condoned or ever will condone the use of force for political purposes. We have provided very considerable resources and are determined to take all possible measures available to us, to defeat and bring the scourge of violence to an end.

In the Anglo-Irish context progress is taking place and the old order is changing. Progress has been difficult and disappointingly limited. But in some areas there has been definite improvement. The tensions of the marching season have been significantly reduced; the supergrass system has been abandoned. But there is much more that needs to be done; many issues that must be addressed.

The confidence of the individual citizen in the administration of the system of justice under which he or she lives is an essential attribute of a free democratic society. Anyone in public life will meet from time to

time with a person who has been the victim of a miscarriage of justice or, equally important, who believes they have. Most of us have seen the destructive impact on the individual that a loss of confidence in the impartiality of the administration of justice can have. For a whole community not to have this confidence has very deep and far reaching consequences. It affects their perception of the validity of the political entity itself. It has for some time now been widely accepted in the context of Anglo-Irish relations that the establishment of confidence by the nationalist section of the community in the North of Ireland in the courts and the administration of justice is a prerequisite for peace and normality. It is clear that at the time of the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement there was a definite view that fundamental reform was needed if this were to be achieved.

The first duty of a sovereign democratic state is to protect the life, liberty and the fundamental rights of its citizens. To hand a citizen over to another jurisdiction is something that should only be undertaken with great care and scrupulous regard for all the circumstances. It is clear that at present many Irish people are questioning whether Dail Eireann should agree to submit Irish citizens to a system of justice in which a large section of the community in the North has not as yet been persuaded to place its confidence.

The Irish Government share the deep and anxious concern

that widely exists about a number of cases in Britain more than ten years ago, in which there is evidence to suggest that there may have been a miscarriage of justice.

Judicial mistakes can take place anywhere, but a test of a country's judicial institutions is that they have the inherent capacity to remedy injustices that may have occurred and to seek to allay concern where it justifiably exists.

We also attach great importance to the issue of fair employment in the North of Ireland. It has been clearly demonstrated that ten years after reforms were put in place, a serious imbalance still exists in a number of places of employment, both in the public and private sectors. I would like to salute the work of all those who have done so much in recent times to highlight the problem and to press for real reform and an end to discrimination, which is the root cause of so much alienation. The Government here will be seeking through the Anglo-Irish conference substantial reforms that will bring about speedily effective and visible change in the situation, and it welcomes public support for this objective.

We believe the tradition from which the United Irishmen in Belfast were mainly drawn has an indispensable role to play in the future political development of this island. We look forward to a day when the representatives of that tradition will enter again into dialogue with us. They should understand that we fully respect their tradition as

a valid and integral part of Irish life. In a world where the leaders of a divided Germany meet together to discuss their different priorities, in which the Superpowers despite deep ideological conflict are able to conclude far-reaching agreements for the benefit of mankind, it is surely time that the two traditions in this country entered into direct dialogue with each other on the possibility of creating structures within this island and between these islands which would move us nearer to the establishment of peace with justice for all.

In the summer of 1795 Wolfe Tone sailed from Ireland to America. In doing so he participated in a tradition that is and has been an integral part of Irish life. For better or worse in every generation Irish people have gone abroad to seek a new life in foreign lands. Because they have done so, there now exists around the world major communities of Irish people. These are of great importance and significance in the life of their countries of adoption. Many of them are leaders of opinion in those countries and respected figures in politics, the arts, business and the professions. They give generous service and loyalty to their own countries. But it is characteristic of people of Irish descent that they do not forget their mother country but continue to take an active interest in her development, her prosperity and in the welfare of her people.

We must foster and promote our links with these communities

and keep them fully informed of our political aspirations, our cultural life and our economic and social progress. We must also keep them informed of the views of the Irish Government on the great issues of the day: human rights, freedom, world hunger, the role of the U.N., the nuclear menace, disarmament. By an enlightened and courageous stand on these issue we can offer them moral leadership so that the Irish around the world can exert a powerful, world-wide influence for the good in international affairs. We are fortunate in the loyalty and affection the Irish abroad always retain for the land of their ancestors. That loyalty and that affection are among our most precious assets. We must make it clear that we value their interest in our affairs and encourage and when necessary facilitate them in their search for their roots and their identity.

Next year Australia celebrates her Bicentenary providing us with a unique opportunity to cement our relations with the people of that great country and the Irish there who by origin or descent make up a third of the population. The visit of the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Bob Hawke, who is arriving in Ireland next Sunday for a four day visit will represent a very important occasion for our two countries to draw closer together and for us to send a special message to the Irish down under.

We have today as a sovereign State the means to take initiatives and create structures for the political resolution of our problems. We must not hesitate to do so

whenever the opportunity arises. The spirit of patriotism, the belief in tolerance and the hope for the future which inspired Wolfe Tone in his day can provide us with the inspiration to achieve today's objectives.

ENDS.