



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Wally
The final returns!

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~~Not for release before~~
13.00 hrs local time

Remarks by An Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D.,
at St. Patrick's Day Reception in the
Irish Embassy, Washington, D.C., on 17th March, 1987.

Mr. President, Friends of Ireland, Distinguished Guests.

It is my great pleasure to greet you all on St. Patrick's Day.
Tá fáilte is fiche romhainh go leir ar lá fheile Padraig.

It is a special honour for the people of Ireland and for all Irish-Americans that you, Mr. President, are with us on this day which unites all those of Irish birth and descent in commemorating our Irish heritage.

Mr. President, on St. Patrick's Day, five years ago I had the honour to be your guest at luncheon in the White House. On that wonderful and unforgettable occasion I presented to you, a sixteenth century Irish map on which was marked the name of the O'Reagans, the redoubtable Irish chieftains who had resisted all efforts to subdue or conquer them.

Since then you have done us the honour of visiting Ireland and experiencing personally the great affection and respect Irish men and women have for the President of this great Republic when you travelled throughout the country amid scenes of great rejoicing and welcome.

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Through many long years of oppression generation after generation of Irish people could always look to America with hope for a bright new future. As I said to you Mr. President five years ago, "though they made their own of this great new land, they rarely severed their ties with home".

You, Mr. President, represent for all Irish men and women in a very special personal way the unique ties that exist and will always exist between the greatest nation on earth and the small, but indomitable nation which though battered by misfortune could still transmit to the people of this country many of the qualities of mind and heart which have helped create the American dream.

It is a cause of anxiety for us at present that in many thousands of Irish homes there exists a deep concern over the status and situation of members of the family who have come to this country in recent years. These young men and women - in most cases highly qualified - can, if their position is made secure, contribute, as did previous generations of Irish, to the greatness and the diversity of your country and in due course return to Ireland enriched by their work experience in America and in a position to promote economic and social progress at home.

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We look forward to warmly welcoming many many thousands of American visitors to Ireland this year. Should any of them ever be in a position to enquire from you Mr. President, I know you will tell them about the sincere welcome they will receive, the hospitality, the great natural beauty of the countryside, the historic sites and antiquities that will intrigue and fascinate them; the sporting and recreational facilities there are to enjoy. We will be looking for as many as half a million American visitors to come to visit us this year and revel in the Cead Mile Failte that awaits them there.

We welcome American investment in Ireland and we welcome also American support for the Anglo-Irish Agreement and our efforts to solve the continuing and tragic problem of Northern Ireland.

Mr. President, there cannot be a St. Patrick's Day without shamrock, and we could not let this occasion pass without offering you the traditional gift. It is therefore with great pleasure that I present you, Mr. President, with an Irish crystal bowl filled with Irish shamrock, and wish you and all present a happy and rewarding St. Patrick's Day.

Beannacht dé agus Naomh Padraig oraibh go léir.