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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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MEETING BETWEEN THE TAOISEACH AND PRESIDENT REAGAN,
WHITE HOUSE, MARCH, 17th 1982.

1. The President was accompanied by Vice-President Bush, Secretary of State Haig, and Chairman of the National Security Council, Judge Clarke. / The Taoiseach was accompanied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador O'Sullivan, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, and the undersigned.

2. The meeting opened with some general conversation about the effects of the hurricane in the central States. The President went on to mention some of his ideas on the new federalism. He said that he was delighted at the progress being made by the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council and was concerned about the sort of problem with which it was dealing.

3. The Taoiseach said that his view was that the problem of Northern Ireland was for solution between the two sovereign Governments who had a duty to bring forward new policies and structures to reconcile the communities. The ultimate solution to the problem lay in Irish unity and the final withdrawal of the British from Ireland. In the meantime, it was his policy to work with them. The President asked if the people "on the scene in Northern Ireland" want British withdrawal. The Taoiseach said that the British had given the Unionists artificial sustenance. They had a guarantee of cast iron quality. So long as that guarantee subsisted the present stalemate would continue. It was the duty of the United Kingdom to encourage forward movement in Northern Ireland. The President said that the majority of the Irish people must yearn for peace but are terrified by the extremists on both sides. The Taoiseach said that the extremists were in a minority. They did have whatever little power they possessed simply because they were extremists.

4. The President, then sought some information on the persons who would be providing entertainment at the lunch. The Vice-President went on to question the Taoiseach as to whether his country was united on the views he had expressed. The Taoiseach said that there was, indeed, difference of emphasis on ways forward but little or no difference on the ultimate goal. He said that there might be differences of view on the functions of the two sovereign governments involved. So far as he was concerned, he believed that so long as the United Kingdom remained in Northern Ireland, they had a duty to act with the other sovereign government, to seek a just and lasting solution. His belief was that 90% of the people of his country were in full agreement as to the ultimate goal of any policy on Northern Ireland.

5. The Taoiseach then went on to say that part of the purpose of his visit was to encourage American investment in Ireland. The Secretary of State Haig said that from his

and Ambassador
Dailey.

MA Keenan
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Mr Murray
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Mr Callaghan

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contacts with Mostek he could say that investment in Ireland had been very successful for some American countries. The President mentioned the Bloomingdale opening, where he had been presented with Waterford Crystal. Secretary of State Haig said that it had always been a hospitable country for American investment but that the recent recession had affected many firms thinking of investing abroad. The Taoiseach mentioned the value of the IDA incentives in this direction. The Secretary of State went on to praise the high skill levels and intelligence of the workforce.

6. Judge Clarke mentioned the appointment of the new American Ambassador to Ireland - which had been ratified in the last day or two. The Secretary of State went on to enquire as to what had happened to investment in Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach said that De Lorean was a recent example of this. We had turned down the operation. The Vice President enquired as to the reason why investment had failed in Northern Ireland - was this due to political or economic reasons? The Taoiseach said that part of the reason for the decline was that so much of Northern industry was in traditional areas - like, for example, artificial fibres. We had gone in for electronics and pharmaceuticals, where there had been reasonable successes. Ambassador Dailey mentioned a number of oil firms who had been met by the previous Tánaiste during his visit to the United States in December. The Taoiseach said that there was considerable activity in oil exploration off our coast. On this he was "cautiously optimistic". We had already found gas and it had now emerged that the field was approximately one third bigger than had originally been estimated. Much of this work had been done by an American firm.

7. At this point the meeting adjourned and was continued, by the Taoiseach and President, bilaterally. Subsequently, it was ascertained that the Taoiseach had invited the President to Ireland. The President had indicated his interest in coming but said that, on present form, it would not be possible for him to make the visit when he would be in Europe, in June.



19th March, 1982.

Copy to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs.