

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



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## Friends of Ireland

The formation of this group, announced in March, 1981, arose out of the desire on the part of a number of leading Irish American politicians to have systematic liaison with the Irish Government, with all Parties in Ireland and with the S.D.L.P. The idea grew out of the activities of figures such as Speaker O'Neill, Senator Daniel Moynihan, Senator Edward Kennedy and Governor Hugh Carey - the so-called Four Horsemen - who have played a leading role in the creation of a more balanced and influential lobby in the United States which has countered the effect of the Provisional lobby among Senators and Congressmen. Until this year the activities of the politicians have consisted of issuing statements, including a St. Patrick's Day statement each year since 1977 and adopting positions on various aspects of the Northern Ireland question. Congressman Thomas Foley has been one of the leading organisers of the group. Other political figures who have supported their efforts include Congressmen James Shannon and James Howard.

The Friends of Ireland have stated that they will follow these general principles and work for the following goals:-

- give full support to a policy of the United States that seeks a peaceful settlement in Northern Ireland, that helps bring terrorism to an end, that demands respect for the human rights of all the people of Northern Ireland, that recognizes the legitimate aspirations of both the Protestant and Catholic communities, and that strengthens the ties between two of America's closest friends - Ireland and Great Britain.
- stimulate that encouragement from the United States which can provide a vital incentive for peace in Northern Ireland. We particularly believe that active congressional encouragement for a peaceful settlement can only be helpful and supportive to all those in Ireland, both in the North and in the South, who want to end the killing and proceed with meaningful discussions to a true and just settlement.
- an emphasis that the only settlement we favor is a peaceful one achieved by consent. We know that a settlement cannot be dictated or imposed - not from Belfast or Derry, not from London, not from Dublin, and not from Washington.



- a constant reaffirmation of the belief that the only way to secure a lasting peace is to end the division of the Irish people. We share a great goal of Irish unity. But we agree that the goal can be reached only with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, and with full safeguards for the rights of both sections of the community.
- firmly establish a program of parliamentary exchange with our colleagues in the Irish Parliament, building on their own initiative to establish an active and permanent relationship with us. Above all, we will emphasize our concern for both the Catholic and Protestant traditions in Ireland and continually seek other appropriate ways to serve the cause of peace and to facilitate greater understanding of the positive role America can play in resolving this tragic conflict.

The Government here issued a statement welcoming the formation of the group. The then Taoiseach in a statement issued at the time said:-

"The Government are confident that the links between the Irish and American peoples, which are of such long standing, will be even further strengthened by the setting up of this group. They will be glad to facilitate it in its endeavours to promote friendship and understanding between our two countries".

The intention to establish the group was also welcomed and supported by the leaders of the Fine Gael and Labour Parties.

Subsequently an all-party delegation led by Deputies Garret FitzGerald, Frank Cluskey and Martin O'Donoghue visited the U.S. and had discussions with leading figures among the Friends of Ireland. The delegation welcomed the proposed establishment of the Friends group and looked forward to its role in the further strengthening of relations between Ireland and the United States. The delegation noted with appreciation the efforts by those Americans concerned to encourage a peaceful political settlement in Northern Ireland based on reconciliation between the two traditions there. The delegation and the members of Congress involved looked forward to contacts of a similar nature in the future.

The Friends held their first formal meeting on 3 June 1981, a meeting to which members of both Houses of Congress were invited. The meeting was successful, a draft charter for the group being circulated and some forty Senators and Congressmen - from both the Democratic and Republican parties being registered as members of the Friends. The most recent list of members (attached) names 48 Congressmen and 18 Senators as members.



Several further meetings of the Friends have been held, including ones addressed by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, by Mr. John Hume and by Mr. Michael Alison, Minister of State at the NIO. The former Taoiseach wrote to Speaker O'Neill on

20 July 1981, in response to a message of congratulation on his election, that he was "hopeful that positive results will come from the setting up of the Friends of Ireland in Congress".

On 21 October, 1981, Speaker O'Neill wrote to the Ceann Comhairle inviting members of the Dáil "to establish an ongoing, informal relationship" between the Friends of Ireland and members of the Dáil. The letter added: "We anticipate that such a relationship would promote mutually beneficial exchanges of information and visits between the Congress and the Dáil." (Speaker O'Neill has since confirmed that the link envisaged would be between both Houses of Congress and both Houses of the Oireachtas).

Dr. FitzGerald wrote on 14 December to the Ceann Comhairle suggesting that he should ask the Irish Parliamentary Association for approval in principle to the establishment of informal relations between the Friends and the members of both Houses of the Oireachtas on the basis of the invitation extended by Speaker O'Neill, and in addition that the Association should favourably consider inviting a representative group of the Friends to come to Dublin at a mutually convenient date. The Irish Parliamentary Association "unanimously and enthusiastically" approved Speaker O'Neill's proposal at their A.G.M. on 17 December, 1981. The Ceann Comhairle has written to Speaker O'Neill informing him of this and inviting a delegation of the Friends to visit Ireland early in 1982 at a mutually convenient time. We understand that the group are now considering coming around Easter 1982 but this is subject to confirmation. A copy of the Ceann Comhairle's letter is attached.



HOUSE MEMBERS - FRIENDS OF IRELAND

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- \* 1) Thomas P O'Neill, Jr (D-Ma)
- \* 2) Thomas S Foley (D-Wa)
- \* 3) Edward P Boland (D-Ma)
- \* 4) Charles F Dougherty (R-Pa)
- \* 5) James J Howard (D-N.J.)
- \* 6) Paul N McCloskey, Jr (R-Ca)
- \* 7) Joseph M McDade (R-Pa)
- \* 8) James M Shannon (D-Ma)
- \* 9) Pat Williams (D-Mt)
- \* 10) Edward J Markey (D-Ma)
- \* 11) Bernard J Dwyer (D-NJ)
- \* 12) Millicent Fenwick (R-NJ)
- 13) Jonathan B Bingham (D-NY)
- 14) Matthew F McHugh (D-NY)
- 15) William J Coyne (D-Pa)
- 16) Sid Morrison (R-Wa)
- 17) James K Coyne (R-Pa)
- 18) Jim Dunn (R-MI)
- 19) William Lehman (D-Fl)
- 20) John F Seiberling (D-Oh)
- 21) Frank Annunzio (D-Il)
- \* 22) Don Edwards (D-Ca)
- 23) Roy Dyson (D-Md)
- 24) Barney Frank (D-Ma)
- 25) Austin J Murphy (D-Pa)
- 26) Edward R Madigan (R-Il)
- 27) Joseph G Minish (D-NJ)
- 28) Norm Dicks (D-Wa)
- 29) Patricia Schroeder (D-Co)
- 30) Henry Reuss (D-Wi)
- 31) Bob Traxler (D-Mi)
- 32) Silvio O Conte (R-Ma)
- 33) Peter W Rodino, Jr (D-NJ)
- 34) Don Bonker (D-Wa)
- 35) Baltasar Corrada (D-PR)
- 36) James H Scheuer (D-NY)
- 37) Al Swift (D-Wa)
- 38) Tom Lantos (D-Ca)
- 39) Henry A Waxman (D-Ca)
- 40) Clement J Zablocki (D-Wi)
- 41) Tom Harkin (D-Ia)
- 42) Norman Mineta (D-Ca)
- 43) Lynn Martin (R-Il)
- 44) Andy Ireland (D-Fl)
- 45) Berkely Bedell (D-Ia)
- 46) S William Green (R-NY)
- 47) Geraldine Ferraro (D-NY)
- 48) Robert McClarry (R-Il)

\* Original



SENATE MEMBERS - FRIENDS OF IRELAND

DEMOCRAT

Edward M Kennedy (Mass)

Daniel P Moynihan (New York)

Christopher J Dodd (Conn.)

Joseph R Biden, Jr (Del.)

Alan Cranston (Calif.)

Thomas F Eagleton (Calif.)

Daniel K Inouye (Hawaii)

Patrick J Leahy (Vermont)

George J Mitchell (Maine)

Clairborne Pell (R.I.)

William Proxmire (Wis.)

Harrison A Williams, Jr (N.J.)

Howard M Metzenbaum (Ohio)

Gary W Hart (Colorado)

REPUBLICAN

Paul Laxalt (Nevada)

John Heinz (Penna.)

Orrin G Hatch (Utah)

Arlen Specter (Penna.)