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Remarks by the Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr. Peter Barry at the Presentation of
Shamrock to President Reagan, Embassy of
Ireland, Washington DECSt. Patrick's Day
17 March 1983

Mr. President, Friends of Ireland, Distinguished Guests,

Céad Míle Fáilte

You are all most welcome to this house today.

The feast of Saint Patrick is a day which brings all the Irish and all the Friends of Ireland together to exchange greetings and extend the hand of friendship.

It is a particular privilege for me to welcome so many distinguished friends to our Embassy

- Those who carry the names of Irish forebears whether Reagan or O'Neill, whether Kennedy or Foley, whether Moynihan or Dodd, whether Carey or Shannon and many more.
- Those who cherish proudly their mother's heritage and whose love of Ireland is no less great.
- Those who have come to know the heritage of Ireland through their friends and neighbours and who join with us as friends today.

All who wish to know the generosity of America as a haven for successive generations of immigrants need look no further than this room today. All who seek out the achievements of the Irish in America need hardly search beyond this room today. All who wish to find Ireland's truest friends in the United States need go no further than this room today.

On this day we meet together under the unifying symbol of Saint Patrick which is a symbol of peace and friendship and reconciliation. In Ireland, friends exchange Shamrock on Saint Patrick's Day and the wearing of shamrock is for many of us an act of faith that the message of christian friendship and unity which Patrick brought to Ireland will prosper over violence, antagonism and division. On Saint Patrick's Day, all the Irish, whether their loyalty (orange or green), whether their home is in Belfast or Cork, in Derry or in Dublin, are proud to honour the memory of Ireland's great patron.

On this day, here in the United States, which has generously received so many of Ireland's sons and daughters, I wish to pay homage to the enduring friendship between the Irish and the American people. I am confident that in the future no less than in the past we can depend on the sympathy and support of our friends in the United States as we seek to establish peace in Northern Ireland, to end divisions and move towards a new Ireland.

Mr. President, it is my privilege to present to you today shamrock from Ireland as a mark of the enduring friendship between Ireland and the United States and as a symbol of our faith and our hopes for the future.