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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

2234 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N. W.

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20008

recd 9/4/91
26 March 1991

Mr Noel Dorr
Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs

Dear Secretary

Speaker Foley's St Patrick's Day Lunch
Monday, 18 March 1991

I am enclosing report by Mr Scannell on the Saint Patrick's Day lunch hosted by Speaker Foley on Monday, 18th March. As you know, the Minister of State, Mr Seán Calleary TD, represented the Government in the absence of the Minister,

At the top table were President Bush, Speaker Foley, Minister Calleary, Senator Leahy, Senator Simpson, Senator Moynihan, Rep Dan Rostenkowski, Rep Bill Lowery, Rep Barbara Kennelly and Rep Joe McDade and myself.

In conversation over lunch with the President, the Speaker and Minister Calleary discussed in particular the acquittal and release of the Birmingham Six and the agreement between the two Governments on a formula for talks on Northern Ireland.

We are fortunate that Speaker Foley continues to take a keen interest in Irish affairs. The presence of the President at this now traditional St Patrick's Day lunch sends a powerful message to members of Congress of the importance of Irish issues to the Speaker. It is noteworthy that the President rarely visits Congress except when addressing the Joint Houses of Congress. His attendance therefore at this lunch all the more reinforces the Speaker's interest and concern in Irish matters and adds to the prestige of the Friends of Ireland group in Congress.

Yours sincerely

Pádraic Mac Kenna

Ambassador

Ph. FitzGerald

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY LUNCH HOSTED BY SPEAKER THOMAS FOLEY
IN HONOUR OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND
CAPITOL HILL, MONDAY, 18 MARCH 1991

Over the last number of years, it has been the tradition that the Speaker hosts a lunch in honour of the Friends of Ireland. This lunch normally takes place in the week preceding Saint Patrick's Day. This year, to enable the President to attend, the Speaker fixed the date of the lunch for 18th March. The President was absent from Washington from 13-17 March for meetings with Prime Minister Mulroney, President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Major. The President had attended the lunch last year and the Speaker was keen to maintain that precedent.

Over 30 thirty members of Congress drawn from both the House and Senate were present. As Congress was not sitting, the attendance was particularly high and I understand from the Speaker's office that it would have been even larger except for the fact that Majority Leader Gephardt and Minority Leader Michel were in the Gulf leading a Congressional fact-finding mission. A full list of the members present is attached.

The President arrived 15 minutes before lunch commenced and had an informal chat with the Speaker and Minister Calleary at which Ambassador MacKernan was present. As in previous years, the format of the lunch was informal and relaxed.

The Speaker, in his remarks after lunch, mentioned the release of the Birmingham Six and credited the British Home Secretary and his predecessor for eventually moving on this injustice.

The Speaker said that the release must have given great satisfaction to the Irish Government and he also welcomed the setting up of the Royal Commission to look into miscarriages of justice. Speaker Foley also said that he was delighted to hear of the breakthrough on talks in Northern Ireland between both

Governments. U.S. policy was to support peace and reconciliation and oppose terrorism from any tradition in Northern Ireland. In a personal tribute to the Ambassador, Speaker Foley said Ambassador MacKernan has shown extraordinary skill and ability in carrying out his duties and that he was held in high respect and admiration by members of Congress.

President Bush, in brief remarks, said that he was delighted to be in attendance for the lunch. The relationship between Ireland and the United States had always been good. The striking characteristic of the Irish has been their love of life and the Irish in the United States were held in genuine affection. He asked that his respects be conveyed to President Robinson and jokingly remarked that he hoped that electing a woman President does not become contagious here. Finally, President Bush thanked the Ambassador and his Embassy staff for their excellent work in making many friends for Ireland.

The Minister of State, in reply, thanked the Speaker for hosting the lunch and recorded the Government's appreciation for U.S. support of the International Fund for Ireland and his constant support from the Friends of Ireland in Congress. The Minister reiterated the Government's congratulations on the success of the U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf. This drew a round of applause from those present. The Minister referred briefly to the breakthrough in talks with the British Government and also mentioned the Government's appreciation for the Immigration Act of 1990 and its benefits for Ireland.

Brendan Scannell
26 March 1991

ATTENDEES
SPEAKER'S ST. PATRICK'S DAY LUNCHEON

MONDAY, MARCH 18, 1991

1. THE PRESIDENT
2. THE SPEAKER
3. JOHN MURTHA
4. RICHARD NEAL
5. PATRICK COUGHLIN
6. EDWARD MADIGAN
7. MATTHEW McHUGH
8. JOSEPH McLADE
9. FRANK McLOSKEY
10. BILL LOWERY
11. BARBARA KENNELLY
12. HENRY HYDE
13. ~~WILLIAM HUGH~~
14. LEE HAMILTON
15. JOSEPH EARLY
16. BERNARD DWYER
17. WILLIAM COYNE
18. RONALD COLEMAN
19. JACK BROOKS
20. ANDY IRELAND
21. ROBERT DORNAN
22. SONNY CALLAHAN
23. SONNY MONTGOMERY
24. JIM SLATTERY
25. DAN ROSTENKOWSKI
26. RAYMOND McGRATH
27. CHAPLIN FORD
28. JIM MORAN
29. ALAN SIMPSON
30. DANIEL MOYNTAGAN
31. PATRICK LEAHY
32. GEORGE MITCHELL
33. DANTE FASCELL
34. JOHN REED
35. THAD COCHRAN
36. DENNIS HERTEL
37. JOHN SUNUNU
48. FRED McCLURE