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From the Private Secretary

16 March, 1984

Thank you for your letter of 15 March enclosing an advance text of the address by the Taoiseach, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, T.D., to the Joint Session of Congress in Washington on 15 March.

A. J. COLES

Richard Ryan, Esq.

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cc BT (2)

Prime Minister.

See highlighted passages from page
5 onwards.

A.S.C. $\frac{15}{3}$

15 March 1984

Dear Private Secretary

Following upon our telephone conversation this morning, I
attach herewith an advance text of the address by the
Taoiseach, Dr Garret FitzGerald TD, to the Joint Session
of Congress in Washington which will be delivered today
at 4.00 pm (our time).

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Yours sincerely

Richard Ryan
Richard Ryan

Mr A J Coles
Private Secretary
to the Prime Minister
No. 10 Downing Street
London SW1

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Address by the Taoiseach, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, T.D.,
to Joint Meeting of Congress, 15th March, 1984

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, distinguished members of the Congress of the United States, with the Irish hospitality for which America is famous, you have been good enough to invite me to address you in the week of St. Patrick - Feile Phadraig in the language of the Gael. On behalf of the Irish people, close, as always, in feeling to their American cousins, I thank you for this honour.

This is the second time in eight years you have paid tribute in this way, by hearing from this dais the Head of an Irish Government, in celebration of the friendship and cousinship that binds our two peoples. The tradition is a long one, going back over a century to the year 1880, when you offered a platform to one of the first people from outside the United States ever permitted to address this Congress, the great Irish leader, Charles Stewart Parnell.

I have said that we are cousins; our countries are linked by a special relationship, not built on mutual calculations of interest, but on human links of kinship and friendship: a unique relationship founded primarily and profoundly on people. The family relationship between us extends to 44 million Irish Americans, but in this week of each year, the whole people of this great nation, our friends for 51 weeks in the year, become our cousins in spirit as we honour together Ireland's national Saint.

One of the great characteristics of the American people has always been your pride - your justified pride - in the achievements of the new nation that you have forged over several centuries in the land to which your forefathers came from the other continents of the world. That pride has sustained you in many troubles, many trials, many tragedies. It is founded on achievement and is sustained by an abiding faith in your capacity to face any challenge, and by a spirit of generous optimism.

We in Ireland also take pride in our country and in the achievements of our people. We are proud not only of the ancient origins of our race, of the survival of our people through so many struggles and hardships, of the cultural empire we have carved out in literature in the English language

complementing our own ancient Gaelic tradition: we are proud also of being a mother country, a people of 5 million in their own island, but with tens of millions of children scattered throughout the world, keeping fresh the memory of their homeland, most jubilantly on the occasion of this feast of St. Patrick.

An ancient nation, we are a modern State. Modern in the sense that the present Irish State took its place in the world community a bare sixty years ago; modern also in the sense that so much of our economic development and specifically our industrialisation, is new, created in recent decades, partly by our own native effort, but also in significant measure by investment from outside our shores. Pre-eminently, this external investment has come from the United States. Allied to the skills and dynamism of our youthful labour force, it has given us a place in the new technology of our European continent that is quite disproportionate to our size.

Our high technology industries - chemicals, electronics and, above all, computers, are the source of a dynamism which, even in the absence of export growth in other sectors, last year increased our total manufactured exports by 14% in the midst of world recession - the highest rate of export increase in Europe. Within twelve years during which two major oil crises

have stopped in its tracks world economic growth, we have doubled our share of the world market for manufactures.

An ancient nation, a modern State, and a youthful people: amongst all the developed countries of the world, Ireland has the youngest population, almost one third of the electorate being under 30. Within barely two decades the number of our young people in their twenties has virtually doubled.

There is, of course, another side to all this. Like so many other developed countries we face today a serious employment problem - the more acute because of our young population. The growth of our economy at home, as in so many other countries, has been halted by the recession of recent years - now perhaps coming to an end in response to the American recovery. For many of our people these problems have loomed large, seeming at times indeed to fill the horizon and to dim some of the hopes that the achievements of recent decades had aroused.

And there is another problem, one which constantly overshadows us - and has often touched us directly: the sombre tragedy of Northern Ireland. There is hardly a family on either side of the divided community in the North that has not known

insecurity, suffering and all too often, bereavement. This is a fact that must be remembered by all those from outside Northern Ireland who claim to apportion blame or to offer simplistic solutions.

Locked into a corner of our small island, in a piece of territory a hundred miles long and sixty miles across, live one-and-a-half million people, drawn from two different Irish traditions: the ancient Gaelic, Catholic tradition stretching back through several millennia, and the Protestant tradition of those who settled from Britain in much of the north-eastern corner of our island at the same time as compatriots of theirs were settling on the eastern edge of this great continent. These two traditions in Northern Ireland have maintained their distinct identities through the centuries. Their loyalties face in two different directions - the 40% Catholic nationalist minority looking south towards their kinsmen in the Irish State, and the 60% majority looking instead towards Britain, whence their ancestors came four centuries ago.

In passing I cannot help reflecting that here in the United States people from these two separate Irish backgrounds have without difficulty given their allegiance to a common flag and a single Constitution, while on their home ground the clash of their identities has remained undiminished by time. Thus has been created in Northern Ireland one of the most complex

political problems, in the world today: complex in its intensity and in the apparent irreconcilability of the two traditions within this small piece of territory. But a problem which, nevertheless, is too often viewed from outside in exceedingly simplistic terms; seen by all too many as involving no more than the end of British rule in Northern Ireland.

Would that this were indeed the only problem! Then the British and ourselves could have solved it in agreement long ago. But the real problem at the human level lies in the North itself - in the inter-relationship between the two traditions within that divided community.

Britain, with the responsibility for governing Northern Ireland, has not hitherto addressed this problem with the combination of determination and even-handedness that it requires. Nor has it given to it the priority which, as a great human tragedy, it demands. Britain has, moreover, hitherto seemed often to be preoccupied with the security symptoms of the problem, at the expense of its fundamentally political character.

But can we, for our part, in our Irish State - although we have had neither direct responsibility nor opportunity to solve this

problem - truthfully say that we have done all in our power to understand and face the realities of this tragedy? Have we sufficiently tried to reach out with sympathy and understanding to both sides in Northern Ireland?

The answer can only be that not one of us, in Britain or in Ireland, is free of some measure of guilt for what has been happening in Northern Ireland. None of us has a right to seek to shift the whole of the blame on to others. Both the London and Dublin Governments have a duty now to break out of ancient moulds and attitudes and to make the necessary imaginative leap of understanding.

This moral obligation, to put Northern Ireland, its people, and their interests first, imposes itself also, I believe, upon those in other lands, such as this great United States of America, who are concerned, as I know so many of you are concerned, with this problem. It is an obligation that can be fulfilled only by the most resolute support for peace and reconciliation amongst the people of Northern Ireland. It can be fulfilled only by a corresponding rejection of - revulsion against - the very idea of aid by way of money, or by way of weapons, or by way of moral support, to any of those who are engaged in the acts of horrific violence that are corrupting

and destroying the life of a whole community. And when I call for rejection of such "moral support", I necessarily include the act of making common cause for any purpose, however speciously well-meaning, with people who advocate, or condone, the use of violence in Ireland for political ends.

Let me tell you, for a few brief moments how the democratically based political parties of our State have been attempting, in conjunction with the constitutional nationalists of the SDLP Party in the North, led by John Hume, to take our responsibilities in seeking a resolution of this tragic problem. These four parties viz. the two parties in our Government (my own Fine Gael Party and the Labour Party) together with the Opposition Fianna Fail Party, and the SDLP in Northern Ireland have between them been elected by the votes of 90% of the nationalist people of the island of Ireland and consequently represent 70% of all its inhabitants nationalist and unionist. For nine months past, our parties - the parties which aspire to Irish unity achieved by peaceful means - have been working together within the framework of a New Ireland Forum, in search of ways of bringing peace and stability to Northern Ireland and, indeed, to the whole island of Ireland.

Week after week, the Forum has been in session. We four party leaders have already met either in Committee together, or in conjunction with our fellow-members in the Forum, no less than

sixty-nine times - setting aside our other differences and giving to this work our highest priority.

The Forum has been studying, and hearing personal evidence on, submissions made to us by a wide range of people and groups. These have included many that have been representative of aspects of the Protestant and Unionist tradition of Northern Ireland.

Finally, we have been seeking to find together ways by which political structures could be created in the future that would accommodate not only our own nationalist tradition which aspires to Irish unity achieved peacefully and by agreement, but also that of the unionist community in Northern Ireland.

It is our hope that we will find common ground amongst our four parties. We hope that this common ground might provide a basis upon which the Governments of Britain and Ireland, in conjunction with representatives of both sides of the community in Northern Ireland, could eventually construct a political solution. Such a solution would have to be one that would reconcile the conflicting rights and identities of unionists and nationalists: one that would render totally irrelevant those who are seeking to impose their tyranny of violence on the people of our island.

What we of the constitutional Irish nationalist tradition are attempting together is unique. It is our hope that it will find a response in Britain. There are indications already that responsible opinion in that neighbouring island has taken note of our initiative and is awaiting its outcome with growing interest. When our task is completed it will in turn be Britain's duty to do as we are doing; to review and revise its approach to the problem.

In thus telling you something of what the constitutional parties of nationalist Ireland are currently engaged upon, and of our hopes of an equally generous response from the British Government and political parties, I am frankly seeking to engage your interest in, and your commitment to, this process, which, we believe, offers a constructive alternative - the only constructive alternative - to the violence and terrorism in Northern Ireland.

I believe that you will be glad to hear a message of hope in respect of a problem which many of you must have been tempted to write off as insoluble. We know that in this Congress there are very many people whose affection for Ireland and concern for the welfare of our island and its people are deep and strong. I know that in speaking here today I am speaking to

friends of Ireland. We need the help and encouragement of our friends.

America's voice in the world is a strong one. It is a voice that is listened to. We call it in aid of our efforts, not in support of any narrow sectional interest but in support of a generous attempt to resolve once and for all the conflict of traditional identities in Ireland on a basis that will secure the interests and concerns of both sections of the Community in the North - in recognition of the equal validity of the two Irish traditions. And we ask our friends in the United States that, in the context of any agreement that might emerge from our present efforts, to secure peace and stability in Ireland, they would support in a practical way its implementation.

I have not come to the United States to speak only of this problem, although you will readily understand that it looms foremost in my mind, as it must in the mind of any Irishman who has political responsibilities. We have other common interests to pursue with you, the political leaders of the United States. When I meet your President tomorrow I shall be speaking to him not alone of Northern Ireland but also of other issues, including matters concerning the relationship between the United States and the European Community, the Presidency of

which Ireland will be assuming for the third time on 1st July next.

When, in January 1975, Ireland first undertook that Presidential responsibility in the Community, your Administration invited me as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland to come to Washington to discuss together the common concerns at that time of the United States and the Community. This was, I think, the first full-scale consultation between the European Community and the United States in a new process that had been decided upon during the previous year. I was happy on that occasion to be able to play a part in bringing Europe and the United States closer together.

On this visit I shall be engaged once again upon a similar task - recognising that the common concerns of Europe and the United States are matched also by divergent interests in certain areas of commerce and finance - as also by somewhat different perceptions of the political situation in various parts of the world. It is well that together Europe and America should seek to reconcile these divergent interests and different perceptions, so far as we may be able to do so without doing violence to the legitimate interests, and the principles, of each of the partners in this relationship.

Let me revert for a moment to a festive note appropriate to the joint celebration of St. Patrick's Day by our two peoples. I know that we are two days ahead of time and such earliness is perhaps more an American than a European characteristic, exemplified perhaps by your addiction to breakfast television, and, as I have found to my cost, working breakfasts!. But I feel that no one in the United States would object if I propose that the celebration of St. Patrick's Day this year be a three-day affair, starting today, and culminating on Saturday - with Sunday as a very necessary day of rest before we all return to our humdrum daily activities next week!

5 MAR 1984

