

SECRET

Confidential Filing

Possible visit to the  
Irish Republic by President  
Reagan.

IRELAND

December 1983

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
<del>28-12-83</del>							
24-1-84							
PREM 19/1292							

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PS TO PM. NO 10. DOWNING STREET.

## CONFIDENTIAL

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FM WASHINGTON 242322Z JAN 84

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 270 OF 24 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY NIO LONDON, NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK.  
INFO SAVING, CGS NEW YORK, BOSTON, CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES, SAN FRANCISCO.

### VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES BY THE IRISH PRIME MINISTER

1. THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND IRISH EMBASSY HAVE TOLD US THAT DR FITZGERALD, PROBABLY ACCOMPANIED BY THE IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER, WILL VISIT WASHINGTON ON 16-18 MARCH. HE IS SCHEDULED TO MEET PRESIDENT REAGAN ON 16 MARCH, BUT IT HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED HOW, APART FROM THE ARRIVAL STATEMENT, THE PRESIDENT WILL MARK ST PATRICK'S DAY ITSELF.

2. DR FITZGERALD IS LIKELY TO ARRIVE IN THE UNITED STATES ON 11 MARCH AND TO VISIT NEW YORK AND BOSTON BEFORE TRAVELLING TO WASHINGTON. THE IRISH EMBASSY SAY THAT THE PROGRAMME HAS NOT YET BEEN FINALISED. POSSIBLE VISITS TO CHICAGO AND THE WEST COAST ARE ALSO UNDER CONSIDERATION, THOUGH AT PRESENT NEW YORK AND BOSTON HAVE PRIORITY. DR FITZGERALD PLANS TO RETURN TO DUBLIN VIA NEW YORK LATE ON 18 MARCH.

3. WE SHALL KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE ADMINISTRATION ABOUT DR FITZGERALD'S VISIT AND THE PRESIDENT'S ST. PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT. THE TIMING OF THE VISIT WILL PROVIDE THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WITH A FURTHER INCENTIVE TO TRY TO STICK TO THE TIMETABLE FOR PUBLICATION OF THE NEW IRELAND FORUM REPORT.

WRIGHT

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GRS 160

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FM WASHINGTON 232350Z JANUARY, 1984

TO ROUTINE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 254 OF 23 JANUARY

INFO NIO (L), NIO (B), CG NEW YORK AND BIS NEW YORK.

INFO SAVING CG'S IN USA.

RENWICK'S LETTER OF 4 JANUARY (NOT TO ALL): PROPOSED VISIT BY  
PRESIDENT REAGAN TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

1. THE WHITE HOUSE HAVE TOLD US THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS DECIDED  
TO GO AHEAD WITH HIS PROPOSED VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC IN JUNE.  
THE PRESENT PLAN IS TO ARRIVE ON THE EVENING OF SATURDAY 2 JUNE  
AND LEAVE AT AROUND 1600 HOURS ON MONDAY 4 JUNE FOR LONDON.  
THE WHITE HOUSE HAVE NOT YET GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO THE PROGRAMME,  
BUT EXPECT THAT ON SUNDAY 3 JUNE THE PRESIDENT MIGHT VISIT  
BALLYPOREEN, COUNTY TIPPERARY WHERE HIS FATHER'S FAMILY  
ORIGINATED, LEAVING THE MORNING AND LUNCH ON 4 JUNE FREE FOR  
MEETINGS WITH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT.

2. THE WHITE HOUSE AND NSC STAFF HAVE AGREED TO REMAIN IN CLOSE  
TOUCH WITH US ABOUT THE PREPARATIONS AND BRIEFING FOR THE VISIT.

WRIGHT

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NAD

NEWS-D.

SIR. J. BULLARD

MR. JENKINS

MR. D. THOMAS

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

28 December 1983

POSSIBLE VISIT TO THE IRISH REPUBLIC BY PRESIDENT REAGAN

Thank you for your letter of 22 December to John Coles. The Prime Minister has seen this and noted its contents. She agrees with Sir Oliver Wright that it would be a mistake to intervene in an attempt to discourage the President from taking up the invitation from the Irish Government.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Lyon (Northern Ireland Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

MR. D. BARCLAY

Roger Bone, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CT.





Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

PO/83/1

22 December 1983

ms

Prime Minister

John [unclear]

DMS  
22/12Possible Visit to the Irish Republic by President Reagan

We have been warned by HM Embassy, Washington, that President Reagan has in principle accepted an invitation to visit the Irish Republic. The Embassy are in close touch with the State Department and understand that no dates have been discussed. But the Embassy have pointed out that the only obvious opportunity for the President to make such a visit would be at the time of the London Economic Summit next June. It is therefore possible that he might visit the Republic on his way to the Summit, only a week or so before the European Parliament elections.

It is by no means certain that President Reagan will take up the Irish invitation, not least because of the tightness of his schedule during an election year, but a visit to the Republic of Ireland by an American President would pose obvious risks in relation to Northern Ireland. The President would find it difficult not to refer publicly to the situation in Northern Ireland and would come under pressure from the Irish-American lobbies. At the same time the Irish Government might well seek some statement of support from him for whatever policy they adopt following the report of the New Ireland Forum. At the very least, a visit to Ireland by the President would stimulate American public interest in the Northern Ireland situation. We have therefore discussed with Sir Oliver Wright whether we should intervene in an attempt to discourage the President from taking up the Irish invitation.

*I agree*

Sir Oliver has advised that it would be a mistake to do so, on the grounds that this would seem unnecessarily defensive, that it would not be understood by the White House and that the fact of an intervention would get back to the Irish, with serious consequences for Anglo-Irish relations. At the same time, the Ambassador has said that a visit to Ireland by President Reagan might not necessarily be harmful or difficult for us. Sir Oliver has pointed out that the

/President





President has so far taken a helpful line on Northern Ireland - as reflected in his St Patrick's Day statements - and that he has refused to become involved in what he regards as a UK internal problem. We are inclined to accept the Ambassador's advice and think that if the visit goes ahead it need not necessarily turn out badly for us.

Nonetheless, we cannot afford to be complacent about the risks associated with a visit to the Republic by an American President and we should need to consider, if the visit were to take place, what steps we could take to ensure that the President did not deviate from his helpful line. It would, for example, be for consideration whether the Prime Minister should send a personal message to the President reminding him of the acute sensitivity surrounding the Northern Ireland problem. The exact line that it would be appropriate to take would depend on the circumstances prevailing at the time.

The Embassy are keeping a close eye on the matter and will inform us of any developments.

For your background information, two American Presidents have visited the Republic while in office, President Kennedy in June 1963 and President Nixon in October 1970. Neither visit appears to have given rise to any serious difficulties for us, although President Nixon's visit coincided with the beginning of the most recent phase of trouble in Northern Ireland.

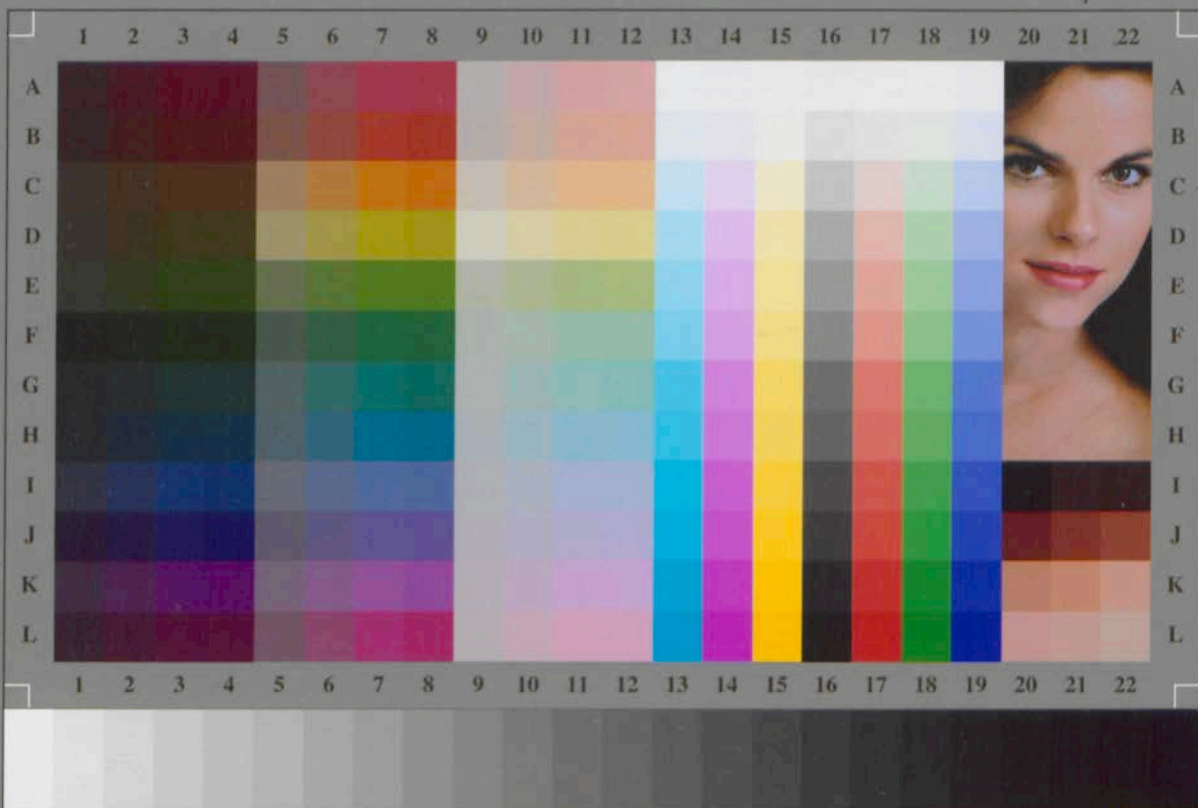
Copies of this letter go to John Lyon at the Northern Ireland Office and Richard Hatfield in Sir Robert Armstrong's office.

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

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