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22 FEBRUARY 1999

TO HQ
FOR SECRETARY GALLAGHER

FROM WASHINGTON
FROM P HENNESSY

VICE PRESIDENT GORE

1. With impeachment out of the way, and the campaign for the 2000 elections begining to take more definite shape, there are indications that Vice-President Gore is keen to deepen his involvement in Irish issues, and intends to make particular use of the St Patrick's Day period for this purpose.

2. We understand that the Vice-President will participate in a breakfast event on the morning of 17 March at which he will be endorsed by the Irish American Democrat organization. While the group, which is DC-based, is not particularly significant in itself, signs are that the event will become an occasion for many in the Irish-American activist community to rally around the Gore candidature. The timing is obviously congenial from Gore's standoint, but the organizers also hope it will serve the purpose of strengthening links between the community and the VP's campaign team.

3. The decision to support Gore for the Democratic convention is relatively risk-free. At the moment Gore's position as the Democratic front-runner seems unassabile, with the only other declared Democratic candidate, former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley, making little impact. However, Gore's team will also be conscious of a series of polls which show the VP lagging behind the main Republican front-

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runners, George Bush Jnr and Elizabeth Dole, although they would point out that neither has been tested under the intense spotlight of a national campaign.

4. The outreach to Irish-America also extends to the provision by Gore of answers to a series of written questions which will appear in the St Patrick's Day issue of the Irish American Democrat magazine. The topics covered include the peace process, US investment in Ireland, including in support of the peace process, and immigration (copy attached).

5. Asked about peace in Ireland in a Gore foreign policy agenda, he said: **"We have an enormous interest as Americans in seeing that the gains of the Good Friday accord are preserved and enhanced... In the future, no matter what my position, I am committed to advancing the cause of peace** (our underlining).

6. On his readiness to maintain President Clinton's strong personal involvement in the peace process, the Vice-President says:

"I am proud to be associated with the skilled team he has brought together... I look forward to working with all parties in this process in the ways they deem most helpful."

7. He is also at pains to assure Irish-American leaders of continued White House access:

"Irish-Americans have played a crucial role in the peace process. At every step they have encouraged the leaders of Ireland, both North and South, to engage in fruitful talks and denounce violence. My door will always be open to those who promote peace, justice, and prosperity. In particular the leadership of Irish America which has been and continues to be so positive

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will always be welcome at my door."

8. The Vice-President commits himself to **"continue on the path to promoting a mutually beneficial relationship among the United States, Northern Irish and Irish business communities"**. He also includes a positive reference to the International Fund for Ireland, a helpful indication of continuing support from a Gore Administration.

9. Gore avails of a question on immigration to pay tribute to Paul O'Dwyer (his son Brian is an active Gore supporter), and acknowledges the important contribution made by Irish immigrants to the United States. His comment that **"In the future we need to be mindful of those contributions. . . when forging and administering an immigration policy"** is encouraging, if not surprisingly imprecise.

Visit to Ireland

10. We are aware from contacts with the VP's staff that the question of a visit to Ireland remains under consideration, although no decision has yet been taken. We are told the Vice-President remains keen to make a visit, and the only issues to be resolved are scheduling ones. A number of Irish-American activists have suggested that the 20-30 June period would be suitable.

ENDS

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1) By putting peace in Ireland at the top of his foreign policy agenda, President Clinton helped to secure the historic Good Friday peace agreement last year. Do you see peace in Ireland as an important goal and would you continue to place the issue as a top item in the foreign policy of a Gore administration?

We have an enormous interest as Americans in seeing that the gains of the Good Friday accord are preserved and enhanced. The future of Northern Ireland is contained in the provisions of that accord. It is important that we support those leaders whose courage and vision brought about this important step toward lasting peace. I stand ready to assist those who chose peace over violence. In the future, no matter what my position, I am committed to advancing the cause of peace in Northern Ireland.

2) At critical times in the peace negotiations, President Clinton was prepared to become personally involved in breaking the impasse and urging all sides to sign on to the accord. Would you be prepared to personally involve a Gore administration in nurturing the peace process as it continues to evolve?

I admire President Clinton's steadfast and personal commitment to helping the peace process in Northern Ireland--including his more than "all nighter" in helping conclude the Good Friday Accord. And I am proud to be associated with the skilled team he has brought together to work with the leaderships in Northern Ireland, Ireland and the UK.

As we have seen from many delicate moments in negotiations, it is often the personal understanding and trust that has developed between and among participants that can help bridge differences.

I look forward to working with all parties in this process in the ways they deem most helpful to their goal of preserving peace and stability in the region.

3) Do you agree that US. investment is crucial to sustaining peace in Ireland and would you ensure a Gore administration would actively promote American investment, given that the new Ireland is now Europe's fastest-growing economy and a major gateway for European business?

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Securing the "peace dividend", lowering unemployment, and making real changes in peoples lives are crucial to securing the peace in Northern Ireland. I believe that we should continue on the path of promoting a mutually beneficial relationship among the United States Northern Irish and Irish business communities. Ten percent of Ireland's workers are now employed in US subsidiaries. I am pleased that the International Fund for Ireland has had a major role in promoting job training, community growth, and reconciliation. These relationships should grow and flourish.

4) It is accepted that Irish immigrants throughout our history have made a major contribution to building this country, politically, culturally and socially. Would your administration work to ensure that the rights of Irish and all immigrant groups are protected and advanced.

In responding to this question, I am mindful of the legacy that the great Irish-America leader Paul O'Dwyer has left behind. His fight was for those in need, whatever their situation in life. His tireless efforts to champion the cause of civil rights and human rights in this country is an example to us all.

This country has been has been and continues to be enriched by immigration. I believe that the rights of all legal immigrants need to be protected. Those immigrant who have been welcomed to our shores need it be encouraged to become as quickly as possible part of America life. In particular. I support those programs that encourage immigrants to become citizens. Irish immigrants have made enormous contributions to America since the days of the Revolution. In the future we need to be mindful of those contributions, and the contributions of all immigrants, when forging and administering an immigration policy.

5) President Clifton is acclaimed as the best friend Ireland has ever had in the White House. Would you keep an open door at the White House for Irish American leaders working to promote peace, justice and prosperity in our ancestral homeland?

Irish-Americans have played a crucial role in the peace process. At every step they have encouraged the leaders of Ireland, both North and South, to engage in fruitful talks and denounce violence. My door will always be open to those who promote peace, justice, and prosperity. In particular the leadership of Irish America which has been and continues to be so positive will always be welcome at my door.

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