

The original documents are located in Box 28, folder “State Visits - Cosgrave” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCEMENT OF COSGRAVE VISIT

President Ford has invited Prime Minister Liam Cosgrave of Ireland to pay an official visit to the United States in connection with the United States Bicentennial. Prime Minister Cosgrave has accepted the President's invitation with pleasure and will meet with President for discussions on March 17, 1976 during the course of his visit. The two leaders look forward to marking the close ties of friendship between the American and Irish people and to reviewing a number of matters of current common interest.

* * * *

Q: Have Prime Minister Cosgrave and the President met?

A: No, they have not. This visit will provide them an opportunity to become acquainted.

Q: How long has Cosgrave been Prime Minister?

A: Since March, 1973.

Q: What is the purpose of this meeting?

A: The President attaches great importance to maintaining close and continuing consultations with all our friends in Western Europe. The Prime Minister's visit will be a part of that process. Also, as the announcement text indicates, the visit is in connection with our Bicentennial and will mark the contributions of Irish immigrants to the cultural heritage and growth of this country.

Q: Why is the Prime Minister visiting the United States at this time?

A: As the text of the announcement said, the visit is in connection with our Bicentennial year. March 17 -- St. Patrick's Day -- seemed an appropriate time and was convenient for both leaders.

Q: When was the last visit to the U.S. by an Irish Prime Minister?

A: In March 1971 when Prime Minister Lynch was here.

Q: Will the President and the Prime Minister be discussing specific problems?

A: I am sure that during their talks the Prime Minister and the President will discuss a broad range of issues of mutual interest.

Q: But there is no single issue which brings the two together?

A: No.

Q: Will they discuss Northern Ireland?

A: I really do not have an agenda for the meeting at this time.

Q: What is US policy on Northern Ireland?

A: Long-standing US Government policy is one of specifically avoiding direct involvement since we do not believe this would serve any useful or productive purpose. In our judgment, a solution to this centuries-old dispute can come about only through the efforts of the parties directly concerned.

Q: So, in other words, we are standing aside?

A: We are obviously very concerned about the tragic situation in Northern Ireland. As a people we have close ties of friendship and kinship with

all those involved -- Irish, British and the people of Ulster alike.

We therefore have offered and will continue to offer moral support and encouragement to all those of good will who are working to break the circle of violence and to build a peaceful, just society in that area.

Q: We hear about Americans contributing funds and guns to terrorists in Northern Ireland. What about that?

A: I don't think this is the time or forum to go into Northern Ireland, with all its complexities. Wherever there is evidence of illegal involvement in the affairs of Northern Ireland by persons in the United States, the US Government has enforced, and will continue to enforce, the laws against such involvement to the best of its ability.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Cosgrave will be in here
in DC from the 16th to the
22nd. He'll see the
Pres on the 17th only.
Our office doesn't have
info on what other
official appts. he may
have but the Embassy
may be able to provide
a detailed itinerary.