

May 4, 2011

President Barack Obama

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW

Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We welcome your expected trip to Ireland and trust it will be fruitful and informative. The Ancient Order of Hibernians is the oldest and largest Irish-American organization in the United States. We will be celebrating our 175 anniversary at the same time that you will be celebrating the genuine hospitality of the Irish people in Ireland.

We would like to take this opportunity to suggest for your consideration some issues which we have long labored to address and which we believe warrant your leadership. We have raised all these matters previously with the Irish government and, while our priorities may differ, we are united as never before in seeking justice for the many victims of the Anglo-Irish conflict.

Dublin Monaghan Bombings

It has taken slightly less than ten years to bring to justice Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind of the worst atrocity ever in the U.S. The perpetrators of the largest atrocity in the entire Irish conflict have escaped justice for nearly 40 years. This is due in part to the obstruction by the British government of a truly independent inquiry into the role of the British government in delivering bombs to the loyalist killers, two of whom were members of the British Army. Your encouragement and support of the Irish government in sparing nothing to pursue justice in this matter could well advance real progress.

Historical Inquiries Team

The Good Friday Agreement requires a further investigation of nearly 1000 unsolved murders of Catholics who also were Irish citizens. Britain now claims they have few resources to finish this task. It took 40 years for England to apologize for the slaughter of 14 innocent people on Bloody Sunday 1972. But that butchery was preceded in 1971 in Ballymurphy by the killing of 11 innocent people, all Irish citizens, including a Catholic priest, by the same British regiment. Similarly the British government has ignored or obstructed fulfillment of GFA provisions dealing with independent inquiries into the murder of solicitors Patrick Finucane and Rosemary Nelson. In fact the British government rushed through a law that would make sure there would be no more independent inquiries of the sort that published the truth about Bloody Sunday. As you know from the U. S. civil rights struggle, lawyers like Finucane and Nelson are indispensable to promoting change and holding tyranny in check. A reflection on this principle

would send a message to all that obstruction of the truth will never bring closure or healing to those loved ones left behind.

Other Issues

Ireland's economic distress is a concern to us all. It is hoped that even as the Irish government puts plans in place to restore economic health some recognition of this distress in immigration reform may enable Irish citizens to prove once again how important the Irish people have been to America's vitality, virtually from its inception. We fully understand that the U. S budget requires many sacrifices and foreign aid is not to be spared. However, instead of a cleaver could we suggest a scalpel in reducing the U. S. contribution to the International Fund for Ireland?

In 1986 we established the Dr. Sean MacBride Humanitarian Award to recognize the most honored Irishman ever; the recipient of the 1974 Nobel Peace Laureate, the American Justice Medal (awarded in Chicago) and the Lenin Peace Prize. We commend his resume to you but know this. In 2003 Dr MacBride was recognized as one of the 250 Most Influential leaders EVER by the Britannica Corporation!! It would be particularly appropriate for you to acknowledge the contribution of a man who once took up arms but recognized, with time and political progress, a better way. This would be particularly timely advice to those who have lost patience with or never supported the Good Friday Agreement.

We would welcome more dialogue with your staff on these issues and hope upon your return from Ireland this will be possible. Our best wishes to you for a successful journey to Europe and a wonderful and productive return to the land of your forbearers.

Sincerely,

Seamus Boyle National President

Ancient Order of Hibernians in America ®