



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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**Transcript of interview with the Taoiseach  
after his Congress Speech in Washington  
on the 11th September 1996**

**Chris Glennon:**

Taoiseach there have been varying reactions at home to your comments about a possible ceasefire, some of them fairly negative. Have you had a chance to assess them yet, or where stands the possible ceasefire?

**Taoiseach:**

Well my own view is that the logic of the situation is one that suggests that a ceasefire should be called. There have been statements by Martin McGuinness for example of Sinn Fein recently, where he said that true negotiations can only take place in an atmosphere of peace. Now one of the things we need for an atmosphere of peace, as stated by Martin McGuinness, to exist is that there should be an IRA ceasefire. And I would draw a reasonably favourable conclusion from the fact that Martin McGuinness said that himself. I also believe that the principle demand of the Republican Movement has been that all-party talks in which they could take part would be called. Those talks have been called, they have been in existence now since the 10th of June. So from a logical point of view it makes sense for an IRA ceasefire to take place. Now as I said when I met journalists yesterday, I have no reason whatever to be categorical about whether or not there would be an IRA ceasefire as this time. I also said that in matters of this kind there have been highs of optimism and lows of pessimism, neither of which have proven necessarily to be justified, from time to time over this issue. But I believe that fundamentally the ceasefire by the IRA is inevitable, because that is the only way that they can fulfil their objectives and political mandate, by taking part in all-party talks. They are not going to make progress any other way. And as I also explained in previous comments to journalists, I do understand that it takes time for the Republican Movement to make a decision of that nature and I am hopeful. I never used any word more strong than the word hope. I am hopeful that an IRA ceasefire will occur soon, that's all.

**Journalist:**

At the end of this trip, how do you think this trip itself, the statements you have made, the President and also supporters here in Congress have made, what impact will it have back home in Belfast?

**Taoiseach:**

I think it underlines that the US Administration and both sides in Congress, the majority in Congress as accepted by Ben Gilman of the Republican Party, that both sides in Congress and the Administration continued to be deeply interested in peace in Ireland, deeply interested in a fair agreement for both sides in Northern Ireland, so that we can build a prosperous future together. The approach is an even handed one, the approach is supportive. And that is also the case with the Irish Government. And I believe that that must give hope and confidence to the participants in the talks, who have the very difficult task of putting an agreement together on an issue which unfortunately hasn't been resolved in many, many centuries.

**ENDS.**