

US-IRELAND ALLIANCE

June 25, 1998

Ms. Bobbie Green
Office of the First Lady
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

President

Trina Y. Vargo

Honorary Board

Prime Minister

Bertie Ahern, T.D.
John Bruton, T.D.
Mary Harney, T.D.
John Hume, MEP, MP
Senator Edward M. Kennedy
Senator Connie Mack
Senator George J. Mitchell
Ruairi Quinn, T.D.

Advisory Board

Brian Barrington
Aidan Browne
Laurence Crowley
Clarke Keough
Senator Maurice Manning
Gerry McCrory
Niall O'Dowd
Paraic O'Toole
Bill Shipsey, S.C.
Dick Spring, T.D.

Corporate Sponsors

Citywest
Doyle Hotel Group
Elan Corporation, plc
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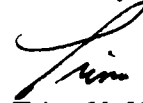
James F. Fitzpatrick
Richard L. Hubbard
Arnold & Porter

Dear Bobbie:

Just to let you know that I finally did it. I left Senator Kennedy's office almost two months ago to begin work full time on the US-Ireland Alliance.

I'm enclosing background on the organization for your files. If there is anything I can do to help you on the First Lady's trip to Northern Ireland, just let me know.

Sincerely,



Trina Y. Vargo

Hope all's well with you

THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST

IRELAND'S FINANCIAL, POLITICAL,
AND ECONOMIC NEWSPAPER

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Arts people join up for US-Ireland Alliance

By Frank Connolly

Director Jim Sheridan and U2 manager Paul McGuinness have joined the advisory board of the US-Ireland Alliance, established recently to promote relations between the two countries.

Formed by Trina Vargo, for many years the key foreign policy advisor to Senator Ted Kennedy, the alliance also numbers Bertie Ahern, John Bruton, Ruairi Quinn and Senator George Mitchell among its honorary board

members.

Mitchell has also agreed to lend his name to three new scholarships to be funded by the alliance, which will allow US students to spend a year at Trinity, UCD and possibly Queen's University Belfast.

"Both Dublin colleges have agreed to provide tuition and board for a year, and I am hoping that Queen's will join the scholarship scheme to make it an all-island programme," said Vargo, president of the alliance.

She is hoping to raise \$3 million for each scholarship, and make these the Irish equivalent of the Rhodes

Scholarship, which has helped to forge strong links between American political leaders and Britain.

Among the corporate sponsors lined up by Vargo are the Doyle Hotel Group, Elan Corporation, Jefferson Smurfit and Citywest, while leading Washington law firm Arnold & Porter is handling the alliance's legal affairs.

The non-partisan, non-profit alliance will emphasise educational links, but Vargo will also bring business, media and cultural organisations together to strengthen the ties between the largely unorganised 44 million Irish Amer-

icans and their ancestral home.

A weekly half-hour television show in the US is also being planned with RTE, the *Irish Times* and *Irish America* magazine.

"The successful lobbying done during the Clinton years has been largely the work of a small number of key personalities and politicians.

"We will not always enjoy the same influence in the White House, so it is important to consolidate what we have and build stronger networks for Ireland in Irish-america," Vargo said.

THE IRISH TIMES

DUBLIN, SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 1998

Mitchell scholarship

MOVES are currently underway to establish a George Mitchell scholarship at three Irish universities — UCD, Trinity and Queen's — to honour the former US senator and chairman of the Northern peace talks. Trina Vargo, who six weeks ago left the employ of Senator Ted Kennedy after 11 years to work for the US-Ireland Alliance, was here this week setting up the operation which, she says, will be similar to the Rhodes scholarship between the US and Britain. It is hoped the best and the brightest will benefit and increase the affinity between the two countries.

Ms Vargo is seeking one placement for one student per year in each university and UCD and Trinity have already agreed to cover the costs of tuition, room and board. But administration, flights and a stipend all have to be met and her job is to raise the endowment, some £3 million for each scholarship. She hopes businesses will contribute to thank Mitchell and to build links between the two countries.

Now it's Irish-Americans' turn to

THOMAS OLIPHANT

WASHINGTON

The page that has been turned in Ireland now needs to be turned in the United States.

May's astonishing "Yes" votes in the North and South, ratifying April's miraculous peace agreement and empowering a new majority that can relegate sectarian concepts of the republic and its still-British North to the past, needs to spark a complementary transformation in this country. It can't happen as dramatically, but America's 44 million citizens of Irish extraction need to organize a critical mass capable of sustaining a future-centered relationship between their country and the new Ireland.

Other Americans have done it well - Italians, Greeks, Jews and, increasingly, Asians, come to mind. Now it's the Irish-Americans' turn to transcend traditional charity, culture, religion, and knee-jerk republicanism, and mobilize a new generation ready to support a grown-up relationship with a rapidly changing country.

Across the Atlantic, the short-term danger is that the parties to the peace agreement will reconvene in a new Northern Ireland assembly in late summer and gridlock

over issues like prisoner release and the turning over of arms and explosives. The analogy would be with post-Dayton Agreement Bosnia.

Over here, the danger is a loss of momentum. America's Irish voice, to pick an absurdly extreme example, must not be that of the ostriches in the organizations that flaunted their surly, quixotic republicanism in full-page newspaper ads urging rejection of the peace agreement.

My metaphor for the future can be found in donated space at a law firm here, where the US-Ireland Alliance is taking shape under the organizing leadership of an amazing bundle of energy and vision - Trina Vargo, until this month Senator Edward M. Kennedy's foreign policy staff person and one of the heroes in the back-breaking labors that went on in recent years to make a negotiated settlement possible.

What she is building is an American organization with support from both sides of the ocean that will promote the US side of a new relationship with the republic and the North.

This means vigorous public education, deep involvement in policy issues, and relentless promotion of new coalitions and joint ventures here and there. It will be tax-exempt for individual and corporate donors, but not afraid to use the 20 percent of its resources for lobbying

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Kennedy aide to set up Irish lobby in the US

From Joe Carroll,
in Washington

A SENIOR adviser to Senator Edward Kennedy is to set up a US-Ireland alliance to promote Irish interests in the US on a non-profit basis. The main emphasis will be on education.

Ms Trina Vargo, who has been the senator's senior foreign policy and Northern Ireland affairs adviser, will leave this post soon to build up the new organisation.

The idea came from Senator Kennedy himself several years ago when he noted the lack of a large, broad-based national organisation devoted to the US-Ireland relationship.

Jewish-Americans do an excellent job influencing US policy, as do those of Greek and Italian extraction, but "Irish-Americans do not have a voice in Washington proportionate to their numbers in the population," Ms Vargo said.

A priority will be to create a broad membership, funding and network base. "Of the more than 44 million Americans of Irish descent, relatively few are well informed about Irish issues," she said.

At present Irish issues have staunch defenders both in the White House and on Capitol Hill among certain senators and House members, but this situation could change in the years ahead as people retire. Hence the need for a more permanent structure to promote Irish interests.

"It cannot be assumed that the Irish-American agenda will, 15 years from now, automatically enjoy the priority on the foreign policy agenda that it does today," Ms Vargo said.

Senator Kennedy said she was the right person to make the US-Ireland Alliance happen.

There will be much emphasis on education to help US schools learn more about modern Ireland and its history and culture. A weekly half-hour televised magazine programme is planned. The alliance will also work with Irish diplomatic missions in the US.

As well as recruiting prominent Irish-Americans to fund the Alliance, Ms Vargo hopes "to create a strong network with people in Ireland, North and South". Initial funding has been provided by several large corporations including Dr Michael Smurfit, Elan and the Doyle Hotels group.

Powerful New Irish Group Established

By NIAL O'DOWD

THE US-Ireland Alliance, a new organization aimed at educating and informing the American public about Irish/U.S. issues, is to be set up in Washington. The organization is already being seen as a powerful new voice for Irish interests in the U.S.

The organization will be headed by Trina Vargo, the highly respected foreign affairs expert, who is currently on the staff of Senator Edward Kennedy. Vargo will be leaving her Kennedy job to head the US-Ireland Alliance in May.

There has already been a very encouraging response from leaders in America and Ireland, many of whom see such an influential network as a way to increase links with their business counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic.

Among the supporters so far are the Doyle Hotel group, Michael Smurfit, chairman of the Jefferson Smurfit Group, Don Keough, the former president of Coca Cola, the Elan corporation, Laurence Crowley of the UCD Smurfit Business School, and Citywest, a Dublin business park developed by Davy

Hickey properties.

In commenting on the new organization, Senator Kennedy said, "Trina is extremely knowledgeable about Irish issues, and her advice and assistance have been invaluable on all aspects of these issues. The US-Ireland Alliance is an excellent idea, and Trina is the right person at the right time to make it happen."

Vargo played a key behind the scene role in securing American involvement in the Irish peace process. She was credited with setting up lines of communication with both Senator Kennedy and the White House for many of the Northern Ireland parties and of playing a key trouble-shooting role with the White House in the often tense negotiations that followed.

Vargo, a Pennsylvania native, with Irish roots on her mother's side, sees her new job as an extension of that role. "Over the years when something needed to be done in terms of the US-Irish relationship, such as the peace process, immigration or U.S. business investment in Ireland, the Irish typically relied on Irish American politicians to deal with the issue," she says.

"But Congress is changing and

it cannot be assumed that in future years Irish American issues will automatically enjoy the high priority in foreign policy that they do today with the Clinton Administration and the current Congress. A solid base — a network — needs to be built with the next generation of leaders."

Vargo says that network will include building coalitions with existing Irish American organizations, business, labor, government, educational institutions and the entertainment and sports industries. She says they will also seek to work closely with the Irish government in the U.S. A primary focus of the new organization will be education.

Vargo stresses that the new organization is non-partisan. "There is no reason for division over party political lines," she says. "The US-Ireland Alliance will seek to develop close working relationships with all administrations both in the U.S. and Ireland, regardless of affiliations."

The law firm of Arnold and Porter in Washington will provide legal services and the US-Ireland Alliance is already set up as a tax exempt organization.

IRISH VOICE, Wed., Feb 25, - Tues., March 3, 1998