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**EXCLUSIVE**

# JOANNE HAYES: STATE TO 'BUY HER SILENCE'

By John Lee

POLITICAL EDITOR

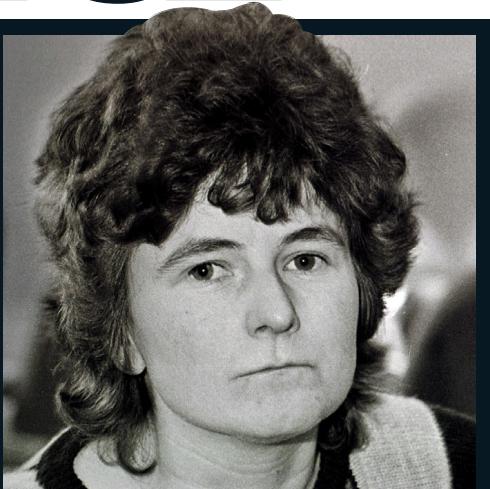
THE State has been accused of trying to 'buy the silence' of Joanne Hayes, who was wrongly accused of murdering a baby boy found stabbed to death on a beach in Kerry 35 years ago.

The Irish Mail on Sunday can reveal that Department of Justice documents, seen by this newspaper, show there is a proposal to offer Joanne Hayes, and members of her family, an undisclosed sum for the trauma and distress they have endured in the decades since the scandal.

However, the payment comes with a number of provisos including confidentiality, and surrendering the right to future legal action. The family would also have to accept the State is not liable and they could never seek a written apology.

Cervical cancer whistleblower Vicky Phelan, who fought a gagging order herself, has criticised the secret bid to buy the family's permanent silence and said it is further compounding

**Victim in the Kerry  
Babies scandal will  
be offered money in  
secret plan – but there  
will be no admission of  
liability and the payout  
will be confidential**





# It's not unlike what with CervicalCheck



**SUPPORT:** Joanne Hayes and her daughter Yvonne, two, in 1984 and, above, women protesting outside the Kerry Babies Tribunal in Tralee

body in that situation,' she said.

The MoS was in a position to brief Kildare TD Catherine Murphy of the contents of the agreement yesterday.

'Apologies have to be genuine, if it is a sincere apology. I don't know why this is an approach that would be taken,' said Ms Murphy, who is co-leader of the Social Democrats.

'I remember the treatment of Joanne Hayes. I remember it very well. She was vilified. The most extraordinary claims were made about her.'

'It was about fitting something

into a theory they had. The kind of pressure she was put under, and her good name and reputation were demolished.

'And the idea that there is a gagging order says to me that it is really about closure, but closure on the State's side as opposed to offering closure on Joanne Hayes's and her family's side,' said Ms Murphy.

'You would have to wonder what kind of mindset would be thinking that this is an appropriate way to go about something with a family that were so badly wronged.'

'The thing about it is that they

would need a lawyer to decode this for them, and it seems an extraordinarily over-legalistic way of dealing with this. She was destroyed. I remember her name all these years later and it required nothing for me to recall who she was, so bad was the vilification of this woman.'

'And you know we should, on her behalf, have an expectation that she would be treated humanely and any kind of closure should be offered.'

The legal documents show that regardless of the public apologies by Mr Varadkar and others, the State is determined to avoid legal liability.

One sentence states: 'No legal liability (and no admission of liability) arises on behalf of the State, its servants or agents.'

It says the State will reserve 'its rights in all respects' in not accepting responsibility and says that if Joanne Hayes and her family sign documents accepting an 'informal' ex-gratia payment, they will forfeit all rights to future legal actions.

Ex gratia means the State is paying the victims out of a moral obligation rather than due to legal requirement.

The document is entitled 'Scheme for the Consideration of Making Ex Gratia Payments to Eligible Persons'.

Justice Minister Charlie Flanagan was one of those who apologised to Ms Hayes in January 2018, saying

## 'Prolonged ordeal simply wrong on every level'

she 'was subject to a prolonged ordeal that was simply wrong on every level'.

The document issued in his name says the 'reconciliatory intent' comes following 'a public apology on behalf of An Garda Síochána and the State issued in January 2018'.

One sentence makes it clear that the Government believes it is buying the family's silence on their treatment by the State. It states: 'Subject to the obligations arising from the consideration of the payment of public moneys, the scheme will endeavour to remain confidential and private'.

The document again drives home its intent: 'The operation of this Scheme is informal and private.'

The document says the State does not have to make any payment to the victims.

The 'eligible persons', as the victims are referred to throughout, will have to make written applica-

tion under this ex-gratia scheme and then they will be assessed by an Assessment Board of three people which will be appointed by Minister Flanagan.

It says that the chair of the assessment board will have 'appropriate legal experience'.

And the 'losses' incurred by the family are referred to as 'alleged non-pecuniary losses' and 'alleged pecuniary losses'.

Alleged non-pecuniary losses are 'any alleged injury, mental distress, anxiety, deprivation of convenience or other harmful effects' incurred from the Garda arrest, charge detention and questioning.

Alleged pecuniary losses are primarily loss of earnings.

'In the event that an offer of an ex-gratia payment is accepted, an eligible person will indicate in writing, within a period of 14 days after receipt of the decision of Department/Minister, whether she/he accepts the said offer,' it says.

Ms Hayes and her family, in signing the document, will also be signing a waiver.

It goes into painstaking detail to explain how the State is divesting itself of any responsibility or liability for what happened in the 1980s.

It states there will be no legal liability – and no admission of liability – arising on behalf of the State, its servants or agents from:

(i) The initial Garda investigation

(ii) The findings of the aforesaid Tribunal of Inquiry

(iii) The establishment of the ex-gratia scheme referred to herein

(iv) The recommendation, payment and acceptance of any financial sums or payments under this scheme

(v) All correspondence and communications by and/or on behalf of the State, its servants or agents in relation to the aforesaid matters and all related matters

(vi) All correspondence and communications by and/or on behalf of eligible persons and/or in relation to the matters referred to herein.

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## INSIDE TODAY'S SUPERB VALUE IRISH MAIL ON SUNDAY



• PLUS FABULOUS FOUR-PAGE BRIDAL FASHION SPECIAL •



**Ger Colleran**  
Leo's diplomacy without subtlety

**Sam Smyth**  
Stand up to the British bullies

**Joe Duffy**  
United over the Border

**Mary Carr**  
Nurses' row part of broader malaise

**Micheál Clifford**  
The GAA battle for rural Ireland

**Fab at Fifty**  
But how are Jen, J-Lo, Renée and Cate able to keep their youthful looks despite the relentless march of time?

# Joanne Hayes may take State to court

By John Lee

POLITICAL EDITOR

THE family of Joanne Hayes and others affected by the Kerry Babies scandal have not yet accepted a secret Government payment and are now considering their legal options, the Irish Mail on Sunday can reveal.

There may be court submissions as early as this week dealing with a proposal to offer Joanne Hayes and members of her family an undisclosed sum for the trauma and distress they have endured in the decades since the scandal.

Taking legal action would mean

**'It that means going to court then so be it'**

the family has refused the State's offer – condemned as an effort to 'buy their silence' over the Kerry Babies scandal.

A source close to the Hayes family confirmed that they are considering taking legal action: 'Their representatives are intent on maximising the compensation. If that means going to court then so be it – but I don't think it will come to that. I don't think the department could be that stupid.'

The Irish Mail on Sunday revealed last week that the Department of Justice has drafted documents – seen by this newspaper – outlining the secret payment proposal.

Cervical cancer whistleblower

Family have yet to agree to secret deal over Kerry Babies case

Vicky Phelan, who herself fought a gagging order, has criticised the secret bid to buy the family's permanent silence and said it is further compounding their suffering.

Ms Hayes was wrongly accused of murdering a baby boy found stabbed to death on a beach in Kerry 35 years ago.

Last year, she finally received apologies from An Garda Síochána, the Taoiseach and the Justice Minister for her ordeal.

Despite those apologies, if the family wishes to receive financial redress, they must agree to: a con-

**JOANNE HAYES:  
STATE TO 'BUY  
HER SILENCE'**

LOOKING BACK: How Irish Mail on Sunday broke the story last week

fidentiality clause; no written apology; no liability accepted by the State and forfeit their rights to any and all future actions. The offer includes Joanne's siblings Kath-

**'They shouldn't ask her to sign gagging order'**

leen, Ned and Mike, and daughter Yvonne McGuckin, who was two years old at the time of the scandal.

The family would have to make a written application for assessment and be assessed by a board of three people appointed by the minister.

When 'Baby John' was discovered on a beach outside Cahersiveen in south Kerry on April 14, 1984, Ms Hayes was 24 and living with her family in Abbeydorney, north Kerry.

Ms Hayes – who had concealed the birth and death of her own baby that year – was arrested and subsequently, during Garda questioning, confessed to the murder.

Her brothers Ned and Mike, sis-

ter Kathleen and aunt Bridie Fuller were charged with endeavouring to conceal the birth of the child by secretly disposing of his body. The charges were dropped soon after.

The department's proposal states that 'eligible' members of the Hayes family will receive ex-gratia payments, which it carefully stresses is not 'compensation'.

CervicalCheck campaigner Ms Phelan told the MoS: 'They certainly shouldn't be asking her to sign a confidentiality agreement considering what she's already been through.'

Kildare TD Catherine Murphy said: 'The idea that there is a gagging order says to me that it is really about closure – but closure on the State's side as opposed to offering closure on Joanne Hayes's and her family's side.'

Minister Charlie Flanagan was one of those who apologised to Ms Hayes in January 2018, saying she 'was subject to a prolonged ordeal that was simply wrong on every level'.

In response to queries from the MoS, a department spokesperson said: 'The Government and An Garda Síochána have apologised to Ms Hayes. Ms Hayes asked for her privacy to be protected and we have sought to respect her wishes. We are endeavouring to reach a settlement with her and others in this complex case. "No liability" clauses are generally automatic features of ex-gratia payments.'

The spokesperson added that a live criminal investigation continues into the case of Baby John.

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### A woman's ultimatum

Give a man a year to propose or ditch him, says dating guru



### Ger Colleran

Paul Murphy and the Great Socialist Lie

**Sam Smyth**  
Bradley is both very naive... and ignorant

### Joe Duffy

Answer to housing crisis in your back garden

**Mary Carr**  
The ambitious moms lured into Jackson's trap

### On the couch

Frasier star Kelsey Grammer opens up on his four marriages, two family tragedies and how he beat the booze and drugs



# Offer to buy Joanne's silence 'is an insult'

By John Lee

POLITICAL EDITOR

THE offer made by the Department of Justice to those affected by the Kerry Babies scandal was offensive according to those close to the Hayes family, the Irish Mail on Sunday can reveal.

'It was insulting, to say the least,' a source explained.

Joanne Hayes was wrongly accused 35 years ago of killing a baby found on a beach in Kerry. This led to her family enduring persecution by the gardai and the events became indelibly associated with a conservative era.

**'We realised this is never going to go away'**

The MoS revealed the contents of a draft agreement offered to Ms Hayes and her family earlier this year. CervicalCheck campaigner Vicki Phelan condemned the offer, which included a confidentiality clause, as an attempt to 'buy their silence'. This paper also indicated that the family would go to court to seek a better offer.

The Hayes family filed High Court writs this week.

It has also been revealed that Justice Minister Charlie Flanagan spoke to Ms Hayes personally.

He is anxious that – despite the family's decision to sue the State – the matter can still be settled out of court, the MoS can reveal.

It is understood that the family

**Victim of Kerry Babies scandal will sue the State**

**Joanne Hayes may take State to court**

**EXCLUSIVE:** The Irish Mail on Sundays coverage of the State's offer to the Hayes family and, above, the family's plans to pursue legal action

had requested privacy around the circumstances of the agreement.

This is different from the 'confidentiality clause' inserted in the draft agreement, which prohibited the family from discussing the matter. One of the onerous requirements of the ex gratia payment was that the family also submit themselves to an assessment board. Asked who had requested the confidentiality clause, a department spokeswoman

issued the following statement: 'The department has engaged with the legal representative for Ms Hayes in order to reach a settlement with her and other members of her family, while also endeavouring at all times to respect her stated wish for privacy. It is the State's preference to settle the matter outside of court.'

Mr Flanagan said: 'I would like to see these issues resolved to the sat-

isfaction of Ms Hayes. I have asked my officials to ensure the engagement with her legal representative is sensitive and compassionate.'

When I spoke to Joanne myself, she asked for her privacy to be respected and I do not intend to comment further at this time.'

After the MoS exclusively revealed the contents of the department's offer and attached confidentiality clause, there was outrage

expressed at the continued maltreatment of the family.

A source close to the family said last night: 'When somebody gave the settlement offer to your paper, after getting over that shock, we spoke and realised this is never going to go away and... we might as well go to solicitor to maximise whatever we can get.'

'We would be hoping that it could be settled without some kind of a court hearing.'

The State offered an undisclosed sum for the trauma and distress the family have endured in the decades since the scandal.

However, the payment comes with a number of provisos including confidentiality, and surrendering the right to future legal action. The family would have to accept the State is not liable and they could never seek a written apology.

Cervical cancer whistleblower Mrs Phelan, who fought a gagging order herself, has said the secret bid to buy the family's silence further compounds their suffering.

The redress is for the considerable stress and pain caused to the Hayes family during what became known as the Kerry Babies case in 1984, and a subsequent tribunal.

Ms Hayes finally received apologies from An Garda Síochána, the Taoiseach and the minister last year for her ordeal.

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**COMMENT**  
Page 21

Top dietitian  
Paula Mee's  
Mediterranean  
diet plan

# FREE INSIDE

## Food to boost your mood

8-PAGE PULLOUT



WHAT TO EAT TO BEAT DEPRESSION AND LIVE A LONGER HEALTHIER LIFE SEE MAGAZINE

# TRUMP IS COMING TO CLARE IN WEEKS

Secret Service agents here within days to arrange security for the US president

## EXCLUSIVE

By John Lee

POLITICAL EDITOR

AMERICAN Secret Service agents will arrive in Co. Clare this week to arrange security for a visit by Donald Trump a month later, the Irish Mail on Sunday can exclusively reveal.

President Trump is expected to arrive at Shannon Airport on June 6 or 7 and stay at his hotel in Doonbeg, according to tentative arrangements revealed to the MoS last night. He will be in France for

the 75th anniversary of D-Day on June 6 and is expected here on a brief stopover, to stay at his hotel and play golf there.

Government ministers said they are holding back on making an official

announcement as they were embarrassed when the president cancelled arrangements for a trip to Ireland last year.

'With this most erratic of presidents we won't be announcing it until every detail is nailed down,' said a minister, 'but tentative talks have opened.'

Nevertheless, the MoS has learned that

2018 VIP STYLE AWARDS

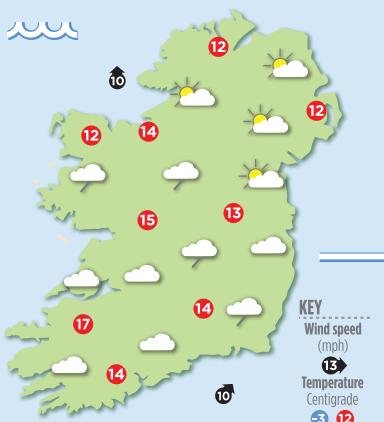
## Golly Miss Holly!

THE BEST (AND THE BIZARRE) DRESSES

VIP STYLE AWARD SPECIAL

PAGES 12-13

## Weather



### ► FORECAST

#### GENERAL FORECAST

A rather unsettled day for most as a band of light rain moves northeast throughout the day bringing wet and drizzly conditions to all. Persistent overcast conditions throughout the day will allow for little, if any, sunshine.

#### REGIONAL FORECASTS

**Leinster:** An unsettled day with overcast conditions and some light showers at various times throughout the day. Tonight, will be largely dry. Max temp 13C (55F). Min temp 8C (46F).

**Dublin:** A rather overcast day with light showers mostly during the morning and late afternoon, these will be brief. Tonight, will be largely dry. Max temp 12C (54F). Min temp 8C (46F).

**Ulster:** After a dry start to the day light rain will move in after lunch bringing drizzly conditions.

**Connacht:** Tonight, some light showers. Max temp 13C (55F). Min temp 7C (45F).

**Connacht:** A wet and drizzly day with light showers throughout the day only clearing towards the late afternoon. Tonight, will be largely dry. Max temp 14C (57F). Min temp 8C (46F).

**Munster:** A wet, drizzly start to the day with the light rain clearing away after lunch leaving overcast conditions. Tonight, will be largely dry. Max temp 14C (57F). Min temp 10C (50F).

#### WEEK AHEAD

Monday will see the unsettled conditions continue with overcast conditions and widespread light showers bringing wet and drizzly conditions to all. Tuesday will see a front move in from across the Atlantic bringing a band of moderate to heavy rain across Ireland. Overcast conditions will also persist throughout the day allowing for little sun. These unsettled, wet and drizzly conditions will continue for the rest of the week with widespread light showers across the country.

### ► SIX-DAY FORECAST

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
DUBLIN	13	13	13	14	14	14
CORK	12	12	13	14	14	13
BELFAST	13	13	14	14	13	14
GALWAY	15	12	13	13	14	14
LIMERICK	15	13	14	15	15	15
DERRY	14	12	12	12	12	14
KILKENNY	14	13	14	14	14	14

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LOTTO NUMBERS	
10	12
21	BONUS
33	35
39	13

There was no winner of last night's €3.6million Lotto Jackpot

#### LOTTO PLUS DRAW

1	11	24	30	36	45	12
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#### LOTTO PLUS2 DRAW

6	7	14	24	26	42	19
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#### ► From Page One

the Secret Service has notified the gardai of their intention to inspect routes, accommodation and security in Co. Clare this Thursday and Friday.

A senior Garda source confirmed that the Department of Foreign Affairs has contacted the force to arrange a meeting with Secret Service agents at Shannon this week. A number of VIP transport companies have already been engaged by the US embassy to bring the agents around Clare and Limerick. They will be escorted by armed gardai.

The US Secret Service is the only foreign agency permitted to carry firearms in the State.

'They will reconnoitre routes from the airport to Doonbeg and around the area,' said a Garda source involved in the arrangements. 'They will also check the routes to the nearest hospital, which is in Limerick.'

'My previous experience with the Secret Service is that they will forensically examine what they want to be their primary routes, then back-up routes.'

'Of course, roads that will accommodate The Beast will have to be located. Clare has lots of tight boreens, particularly around Doonbeg.'

The Beast is the nickname for the armour-plated, bomb-proof Cadillac that the president uses to get around. The Secret Service will also be planning for a small army of personnel that comes with the president, and for the transportation of special

#### 'They will see if The Beast fits the boreens'

vehicles like The Beast.

While Foreign Affairs officials have spoken to gardai about meeting the Secret Service, the MoS has learned that in-depth planning has not begun. But Government, Garda and civilian sources say that, going by the initial Secret Service inspections, it appears president Trump will only visit Doonbeg in west Clare. He has no plans for a Dublin trip.

'At the moment he is only going to fly to Shannon in Air Force One and then stay for one night in Doonbeg,' said a Government source.

'We understand that the Taoiseach will travel to Co. Clare to meet the president. There is precedent for that.'

In 2004, then-Republican president George W Bush stayed at Dromoland Castle near Shannon Airport. He was attending a G20 Summit and he did not visit Dublin.

Contractors hired by the US embassy have only been engaged to transport Secret Service agents to Doonbeg.

'They have only asked to be taken around Shannon Airport environs and Doonbeg Golf Club. It is on for May 2 and 3,' said a source.

President Trump was due to visit Ireland last November but cancelled the trip without giving a firm explanation, less than two months beforehand.

He expressed regret about that at a press conference in the Oval Office with the Taoiseach in March and indicated he would be visiting this year. 'I will be coming at some



**LAST TIME:** Donald Trump with then finance minister Michael Noonan, on his last trip here in 2013 before he became president

# US agents will check roads in the west... but Dublin visit unlikely

## HOW VISIT CAME TO HAPPEN...

**MARCH 16, 2017** Enda Kenny visits the White House and extends invitation to president Trump to visit Ireland.

**MARCH 14, 2018** After his first meeting with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar says Mr Kenny's invite is still open.

**AUGUST 31, 2018** Trump announces plans to visit

Ireland in November.

**SEPTEMBER 11, 2018** Trump cancels plans to visit Ireland amid scheduling difficulties.

**MARCH 14, 2019** Trump tells Mr Varadkar he will visit Ireland this year.

**JUNE 3-5, 2019** Trump scheduled to visit UK. Possible Trump visit dates: June 2-3 / June 5-6.

point this year. I missed it last year, and I would have loved to have been there.

'It's a special place and I have a very warm spot for Doonbeg. I will tell you that. It is just a great place,' he said.

President Trump has only two scheduled visits to Europe this year. One in June and one in December. With winter gales and cold weather, Doonbeg is not conducive to the pleasant games of golf he favours.

The Taoiseach said, in Chicago in March, that the president could visit Ireland as early as June, as part of a trip to Europe for D-Day commemorations.

President Trump also spoke warmly about the Doonbeg links to the MoS, in the Oval Office this year. He likes to play one of the golf courses he owns when he is in Europe. Last year, on his visit to the UK, he played his golf course at Turnberry in Scotland.

Buckingham Palace has said he will make a state visit there on June 3 to 5, and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has said that he will boycott a banquet Queen Elizabeth will host.

President Trump will be only the third US president to have been accorded the honour of a state visit by Queen Elizabeth

as part of a D-Day landings.

President Trump will be with his wife Melania.

The Irish Government said it has not had any indication the president is considering a visit to Ireland in June. However, it said there is a long-standing invitation for him to come, and he has indicated that he hopes to do so at some stage this year.

The gardai said they will not comment on security arrangements for president Trump.

A spokesman said: 'For operational reasons we cannot discuss details of these arrangements ahead of any event.'

*john.lee@mailonsunday.ie*

#### Melania will be on trip to Europe with him

during her 67-year reign. But many Britons deeply dislike him and reject his policies on issues such as immigration.

Almost 1.9million UK citizens signed a petition in 2017 saying he should not be given a state visit. The visit will include a carriage trip through London and a banquet at Buckingham Palace. However, protests in

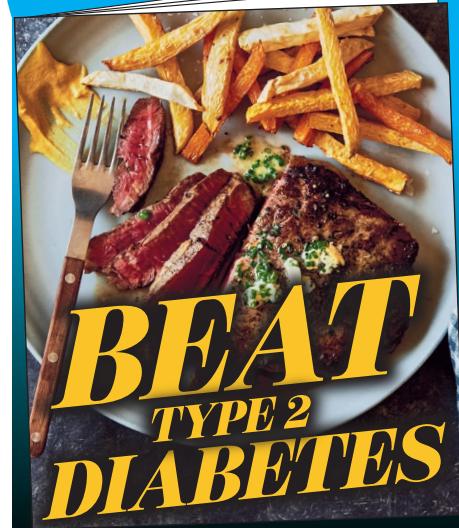
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INSIDE MAGAZINE

# TRUMP VISIT: RIFT RUMOUR IS BALONEY!

US president 'to avoid diplomatic row with Varadkar'

By John Lee  
POLITICAL EDITOR

PRESIDENT Donald Trump is willing to meet Leo Varadkar at a venue other than his Doonbeg Trump International golf resort if it avoids diplomatic wrangling, the Irish Mail on Sunday can reveal.

The MoS, which was first to break the news of the intended visit last month, understands the Taoiseach is happy to meet Mr Trump at Shannon Airport as a compromise. The Government does not see the proposed venue for a meeting between the two leaders as a 'deal-breaker'. An official in the US administration told



Primal Scream  
singer's slur  
on Madonna  
over Eurovision

PAGE 25



Turn to Page 6 >>

# 'Leo's a city boy!'

By Anne Sheridan

IF THE Taoiseach snubs Doonbeg during the expected visit of US President Donald Trump, it will be 'an insult' and 'a slap in the face' to the people of Clare and to the president himself, locals have said.

The residents of Doonbeg – population 262 – have been waiting to greet the 45th president of the US since he took the Oval Office.

Love him or loathe him, the west Clare inhabitants are careful not to bite the hand that feeds them.

In full season, the Trump International Golf Links & Hotel in Doonbeg employs more than 300 people, and in the quieter months more than 200 are still employed.

Mr Trump threw a lifeline to the ailing village along the west coast, which locals fear hasn't been on the Government's radar for some time.

Sitting at his kitchen table, in his seafront home at the far edge of the golf club, Liam Ryan, the PRO of the local coastal protection group, is incensed by reports that Mr Varadkar may meet President Trump in another hotel – rather than Doonbeg

**'It matters what they have to say to each other'**

– due to 'protocol issues', in what may be a private visit, rather than an official State visit.

He nearly rises off his seat, saying: 'In the name of God, is he crazy? Does it matter a damn where they meet? It really doesn't.'

'To me, it shouldn't be an issue, even if Leo is behind that, or his officials are. It matters what they have to say to each other.'

'It would be an insult for the Taoiseach to meet him in another hotel and not in his own.'

'He needs to show respect to the people of Clare and to the man who is employing people in Ireland, who also happens to hold the office of the president [of the US].'

There are further plans to invest tens of millions of euro in a ballroom and conference centre in the Doonbeg resort – which follows the €7m already pumped into the redesign of the golf course alone.

But the next tranche of some €40m is dependent on whether plans, currently before

## Why Bolton is trying to drag the US into a conflict that would make Iraq look like a tea party

If anyone still doubts just how dangerous war with Iran would be, they should listen to yesterday's warning from General David Petraeus, a former head of the American military's Central Command and a past CIA Director. Such a venture, he said, would be perilous – and he is right.

Iran, remember, bears little comparison with Iraq, which collapsed so readily in the face of British and American troops. Iran is four times bigger than its neighbour. It is a major nation with 80 million people, 450,000 battle-hardened troops and a huge stockpile of weapons, not to mention heavily armed regional proxies such as the Hezbollah militia on the Lebanese border with Israel. And with the oil-supply route from the Persian Gulf at obvious risk, the effects of conflict would be felt right around the world.

America has already declared economic war, reimposing sanctions designed to choke off crucial oil exports. Iran's oil exports have plummeted from 2.8 million to one million barrels a day. And now there is talk of a shooting war, with the Pentagon reliably said to be preparing for conflict. The US recently sent four B-52 strategic bombers to the region. An American aircraft carrier heading for the Gulf has been told to speed up its voyage.

As yet, the guns have remained



By MICHAEL BURLEIGH

AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN

silent, but with tension rising by the day, America and Iran are enveloped in the sort of fog that leads to open warfare should bluffs be called or mistakes made. There is no shortage of pretexts. Just last week, four empty oil tankers – three Saudi Arabian and one Norwegian – were sabotaged off the coast of the United Arab Emirates as they loaded up. A major Saudi oil pipeline designed to bypass the Strait of Hormuz was attacked by drones carrying explosives.

The House of Saud claims Iran was to blame, but without any evidence. It seems just as likely the attacks were conducted by forces actively seeking to engineer a showdown.

America has drawn up a colourful charge sheet against Iran, including claims that the ruling mullahs are close to developing nuclear weapons, that the regime sponsors world terrorism and that it actively threatens American troops in the region. Just a few days ago, Israel's Mossad intelligence agency alleged that Iran is planning strikes against US bases in neighbouring Iraq.

None of this bears scrutiny,

however. Take, for example, the claims about Iran's nuclear programme. The international community was aghast when the White House unilaterally pulled out of the 2015 deal, a major agreement which brought an end to international sanctions in return for Iranian guarantees it would not develop nuclear weapons. Trump described the treaty as a 'disaster'. Yet Iran had stuck to its side of the bargain, a point confirmed 13 times by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Then, when it comes to terrorism, America has ignored the fact that Iranian-directed Shia militias and Iran's militant ally Hezbollah have been bulwarks against the Islamic State, fighting in parallel with coalition troops in Iraq and Syria.

Iran's secret service has also played an important role in combating the Afghan Taliban.

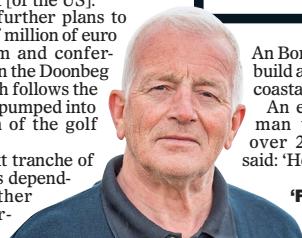
Even so, Trump has designated the entire 125,000 strong Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps – an arm of the Iranian state itself – as a terrorist organisation.

As for the Israeli claims that Iran is menacing American soldiers in Iraq, the US Congress has demanded to see proof. The Iraqis themselves dispute the Mossad claim, as does the British deputy commander of coalition forces in Iraq, Major-General Christopher Ghika. What, then – or who – is behind this reckless series of threats and actions?

While the American president is certainly complicit, the real blame lies elsewhere. Trump is against going to war, and especially in the Middle East. While it is true that he makes a great deal of noise when it comes to foreign affairs, much of it aggressive, he was elected by American voters who were sick of the blood and treasure squandered in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Instead, the driving force is an unlikely alliance of Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with the support of John Bolton, Trump's 70-year-old National Security Adviser.

The Saudis and Emiratis want to crush Iran, which they see as the major danger to regional stability. These autocratic Sunni monarchies feel menaced by a Shia Islamic republic, which not only promotes a rival brand of Islam, but whose tentacles now reach into Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, where Iranian-backed Houthi rebels are engaged in a long-running and bloody insurgency.



**'FAIR PLAY':** Liam Ryan hopes Mr Trump points out erosion

An Bord Pleanála, succeed to build a wall to protect against coastal sand dune erosion.

An engineering businessman who once employed over 200 people, Mr Ryan said: 'He's a businessman who

has a business who

is protecting his property. I want to see him [Trump] on the beach, pointing out the sand dunes to the Taoiseach, and for him to say, "Can you help us? We're not getting fair play."

'It doesn't matter whether a person has millions or billions or a pound, they should get fair play.'

Fr Joe Haugh, 85, told the MoS that he will welcome President

Trump with open arms, but he is nonplussed by Mr Varadkar.

When he last met Mr Trump – before he was elected – he reportedly asked Fr Haugh to 'get me to Heaven'.

And what about the Taoiseach? 'Leo's a city boy. He doesn't belong in west Clare; he doesn't know about our struggle,' he said.

Businesswoman Rita McInerney,

who runs the local shop and is running as a general election candidate for Fianna Fáil, said she does not agree with President Trump's policies, but she sets those aside when weighing up what he has done for the region.

On the prospect of a meeting in another five-star resort in Clare, Dromoland Castle – rather than Doonbeg – she said: 'There's a slap

## If they had decided to stop Trump's trip, we would know so

► From Page One

the MoS last night that claims that the visit could be torpedoed are 'baloney'.

'President Trump would defer to the host Government or the Taoiseach if they had a particular preference,' said the senior official who did not want to be named. He said plans for the president's trip to Ireland are 'progressed' and the visit is

not at risk of being cancelled.

'As far as I'm concerned it is all baloney,' he said. 'It is baloney that there is disagreement over this because it is a topic that has not even come up in discussions.'

'I doubt he'd have a problem – he would defer to the host. I would imagine that it will be worked out by the White House and US officials in the coming weeks.'

'It is still full steam ahead with

the planning of the trip. Clearly Mr Trump will meet with the Taoiseach when he is here. But that level of detail has not been gone into yet.'

Last night a spokeswoman for the Department of Foreign Affairs also downplayed the reports, telling the MoS: 'Contrary to what has been reported, there is no stand-off about the venue for a meeting between President Trump and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar. There have been some

preliminary discussions on venues.'

However, senior US figures cannot confirm the president's itinerary until a final preparatory advance team arrives here this week.

Given that detailed discussions about a venue for the meeting between Mr Trump and Mr Varadkar have yet to take place, Washington is mystified as to why there are rumours about the visit being in jeopardy.

'I can't figure out where that is coming from,' said a US official. 'I don't think it came from anyone senior or who is in the loop. Listen, I'll buy you a pint if I am wrong.'

If they had decided to stop the visit, we would have been informed by now but nobody has, so it is full steam ahead.'

However, Mr Trump is an erratic president who has already cancelled one trip here with little explanation,

# Trump is tops say Doonbeg locals – but Taoiseach doesn't know our struggle



Israel, too, regards Iran's theocratic regime as a threat, and points to the hostile presence of

Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Above all else, the Israelis have

sought to prevent Iran developing nuclear weapons. Before the 2013 nuclear deal, they used cyber-

in the face to the people of west Clare. Leo needs to come and see what this project means to west Clare, and to see the coastal erosion, which is being protected against in Lahinch and elsewhere, at the taxpayer's expense. I just feel, at times, we are being victimised because the property is owned by Trump International,' she said.

John Flanagan, chairman of the

Doonbeg Community Development, also has his eye on the future.

'Trump is a businessman, not a politician, and look what Obama did for Moneygall. We'll have the world's media on Doonbeg and on his spectacular golf course.'

'We're the locals, and if we didn't like what he was doing, we wouldn't welcome him. His investment represents a lifetime of benefits to us,

and we should stop playing petty politics with An Bord Pleanála,' said Mr Flanagan.

This week, work was under way at Doonbeg. Windowsills, walls and little nooks and crannies were painted, green areas were watered and the Armed Support Unit whizzed in and out, as helicopters hovered overhead.

Yesterday morning the president's

attacks – notably the Stuxnet virus – to cripple Iranian nuclear plants, and they assassinated key Iranian engineers and scientists.

Now Israel, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have the whole of Iran's civilian (and entirely legitimate) nuclear infrastructure in their sights. They wish to destroy it altogether.

But for that they need the help of US air and sea power as Israel lacks the aerial refuelling tankers needed to conduct long-range raids against multiple targets.

**A**nd in American National Security Adviser John Bolton, they have a true friend. Bolton, a Vietnam draft-dodger like Trump, is an ultra-hawk on most foreign policy questions. He loathes international organisations and insultingly describes Europeans as 'Euroids'. Attacking Iran with sanctions is not enough for him: Bolton wishes to overthrow the regime, just as his fellow neo-conservatives were able to do in Iraq.

Will the Iranian regime fall as Saudi Arabia hopes and Bolton privately predicts? Will it come

monthly to the negotiating table?

Of course not. Trump's threats and sanctions have shown every sign of rallying ordinary Iranians to their flag. The response will be quite different.

Iran is now likely to abandon the nuclear restraint it agreed in 2015, making the world a more dangerous place as a result. It will no doubt attempt to draw Russia – an ally in the Syrian conflict – into this dangerous standoff. Russia's President Vladimir Putin has explained to Iran that he can't act as a fire-fighter in every single conflict, but it is worth noting that many of Iran's nuclear technicians are from Russia.

Will Putin install his impressive S400 missile defence system to protect Russian citizens there, not to mention his own regional influence? The Iranians will certainly hope so.

Then there is the question of Hezbollah. Time and again, Israel has shown itself capable of containing missile attacks launched across the border from Gaza by Hamas. But missiles fired from Lebanon by Hezbollah – a large, professional army with up to 150,000 missiles – would be a very different prospect. In the event of war between America and Hezbollah's Iranian paymasters, few doubt that such attacks would follow.

The stakes in this electrifying power struggle are high for all of us, not least the hard-pressed citizens of Iran. War would bring chaos to the Persian Gulf, the world's most important shipping route for oil, and send the price of crude shooting through the roof. It rose by more than a dollar a barrel after last week's sabotage on the UAE coast. Global recession would soon follow.

I have rarely seen such blatant example of foreign powers determining US policy as in these despicable attempts to push America into firing on Iran – or of aggression towards a state that has successfully dismantled a nuclear weapons programme.

We should recall the wisdom of former British prime minister Harold Wilson who correctly defied Lyndon B. Johnson and refused to get involved with the disastrous adventure in Vietnam. It is time for Trump to call a halt, to end this slide towards potentially catastrophic conflict and give warmongering Bolton the boot.

■ Michael Burleigh is Engelsberg Chair of History and International Affairs at LSE IDEAS.

## TRUMP IS COMING TO CLARE IN WEEKS

FIRST WITH THE NEWS: The MoS broke the story

months for the world's media – and has been doing so since before Mr Trump's last cancelled trip to Doonbeg.

Meanwhile, management at the hotel remain tight-lipped. 'You'll have to contact the White House press office,' was the only comment they could make – along with a somewhat guarded smile. anne.sheridan@mailonsunday.ie

## it is still full steam ahead... I'll buy you a pint if I am wrong

Irish Government sources have warned. The MoS broke news of the planned visit last month, when we revealed that the US Secret Service was travelling to Co. Clare to plan for the president's arrival.

A number of sources confirmed that Mr Trump will only visit Clare and will be accompanied by his wife Melania. The officials told the MoS: 'There will be no Dublin component – it will be all Clare. Next week they

will start to put a plan in place for what exactly the trip will look like.'

Mr Trump will travel to Ireland on his personal Boeing 747, code named Air Force One when the president boards it. The famous armour-plated Cadillac known as 'the Beast' will be brought in US transport aircraft, along with Secret Service vehicles.

Mr Trump is expected to stay in Doonbeg for three nights, June 5, 6

and 7. US sources confirmed that he will first travel to Britain for a State visit. Then, on June 5, he will travel to Shannon Airport on Air Force One. He will stay that night in his hotel at Doonbeg.

'He will shoot up to Normandy on the 6th of June, and then after the ceremony there he will come back and stay at Doonbeg,' said a US source. Mr Trump is expected to play golf at Doonbeg on the last day

of his visit. Some ministers have privately expressed concern about Mr Varadkar meeting the president at Doonbeg. However, US officials do not foresee a problem.

'I doubt that he'd have a problem – he would defer to the host,' one official said. 'I would imagine

that it will be worked out by the White House and US officials in the coming weeks.

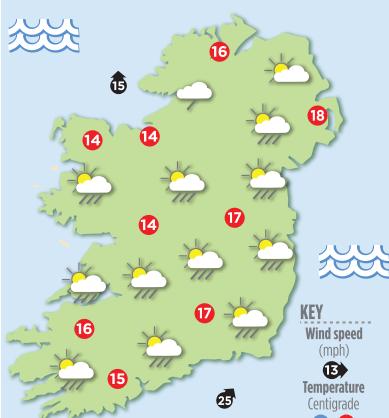
Yesterday Mr Trump's son Eric arrived in Doonbeg, where preparations were in evidence for the trip.

A Doonbeg spokesman confirmed that this visit was a private one – and that Mr Trump's second son was on a golf trip with a large group of US businessmen.

john.lee@mailonsunday.ie

COMMENT Page 20

## Weather



### ► FORECAST

#### GENERAL FORECAST

A generally cloudy start with scattered light showers. Later, there will be some spells of sunshine, before further rain arrives into Munster and Connacht. Elsewhere will stay dry with variable cloud. Becoming quite windy later.

#### REGIONAL FORECASTS

**Leinster:** A cloudy start with scattered showers. Later, largely dry with variable cloud cover and bright spells. Tonight, clear spells. Max temp 18°C (64°F). Min temp 9°C (48°F).

**Dublin:** After a cloudy start with a few light showers, the afternoon will see drier and brighter conditions. Tonight, clear spells. Max temp 18°C (64°F). Min temp 10°C (50°F).

**Ulster:** A cloudy and rather damp start to the day, though drier and brighter conditions will follow later. Tonight, cloudy with rain. Max temp 19°C (66°F). Min temp 9°C (48°F).

**Connacht:** After a cloudy start with patchy drizzle, the afternoon will see some showers, but some brightness too. Tonight, patchy drizzle. Max temp 15°C (59°F). Min temp 8°C (46°F).

**Munster:** Following a few spots of rain in the morning, the afternoon will be brighter, but with scattered showers. Tonight, dry and clear. Max temp 16°C (61°F). Min temp 8°C (46°F).

**WEEK AHEAD**  
There will be a fair deal of cloud around on Monday to start off the week, with the risk of showers for all regions, with the greatest risk in Ulster. However, a few bright spells are expected from time to time. Tuesday will see more in the way of brightness, though heavy, and possibly thundery showers are expected to develop come the afternoon. These conditions will continue into Wednesday with further thundery showers, though still with some brightness for many parts.

### ► SIX-DAY FORECAST

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
DUBLIN	16	14	14	14	15	15
CORK	14	14	13	13	14	15
BELFAST	16	14	14	14	15	15
GALWAY	14	13	13	13	14	14
LIMERICK	15	15	14	14	15	15
DERRY	14	12	12	13	14	14
KILKENNY	15	14	14	14	15	15

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#### LOTTO NUMBERS

1	2	3	BONUS	28
10	30	45		

There was no winner of last night's Lotto jackpot of €3.2 million

#### LOTTO PLUS DRAW

5	13	23	33	41	47	43
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#### LOTTO PLUS2 DRAW

21	25	30	35	37	43	29
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# Miscarriage risk triples for women in 40s compared to women in their 20s

By Lynne Kelleher

women over the age of 40 were three times more likely to be hospitalised with early miscarriages than women under the age of 25.

The authors of the paper,

## 151 miscarriages per 1,000 births

headed by Indra San Lazaro Campillo of the Pregnancy Loss Research Group at UCC's Irish Centre for Fetal and Neonatal Translational Research, said the finding was

not surprising. 'Advanced maternal age is one of the most studied and well-known factors associated with an increased risk of miscarriage,' said the authors.

They said research showed that more women were delaying getting pregnant until they were older in high-income countries and this delay may increase the risk of miscarriage.

Fertility treatment may also be associated with an increased risk of pregnancy loss, they said.

It found women under the age of 25 had a rate of miscarriage of 58 per 1,000 births, while women between 25 and 29 had the lowest rate of 51 per 1,000 births, and

women between 30 and 34 had a rate of 52 per 1,000 births.

The rate increased significantly with age as women between 35 and 39 had a miscarriage rate of 74 per 1,000 births and that rate jumped to 151 miscarriages per 1,000 births in women over 40.

The research, published in Reproductive Health, found public patients had nearly twice the rate of early miscarriage of private patients.

The study also showed that 1.2% of public patients who suffered an early miscarriage then required a blood transfusion compared to 0.6% for those with private health insurance cover.

# Controversial security chief Bolton to join Trump next week on visit

## President to play golf with his 'own people'

Varadkar and his partner Matt Barrett to meet the first lady. As revealed by the Irish Mail on Sunday earlier this month, the Taoiseach is scheduled to meet Mr Trump at a suite in Shannon Airport this week.

Mr Trump will stay at his hotel in Doonbeg, and the principal reason for choosing this venue as his European base is so he can play on his beloved golf links there.

He lamented to the MoS during a conversation in the Oval Office in St Patrick's week that he had not been there since he became president.

The US Administration said that he plans to play with his 'own people' from the Doonbeg hotel.

The MoS can reveal these partners are the Doonbeg club professional Brian Shaw, general manager Joe Russell and Brendan Murphy, the property sales director.

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to. 'I generally play with the boss all right when he comes over,' said Mr Shaw. 'We're good old pals; we've had plenty of rounds together.'

'He's a very good golfer, it's his passion, he loves it. He's great company on the golf course, too, and we have a right giggle.'

'He is a great character. I'm mad about him. He has been great to us at the club.'

To be fair, there are over 300 people employed here in a rural part of Ireland,' said Mr Shaw.

'He came at a time nobody else wanted to. He took a punt on it.'

The run-off for the local area has been extraordinary too,' he said.

The four of them have been playing together for years, said a club source.

A source who is involved in

the trip arrangements said Mr Trump could also play with members from his Trump International golf course network.

There are many rich US-based members at Doonbeg. And membership carries a number of privileges.

Chief among these are reciprocal perks at all 15 of Mr Trump's golf courses around

## 'We're old pals, we've had plenty of rounds'

the world, including Trump Turnberry, which has hosted the British Open many times.

Membership also allows members to play at Trump National Golf Club in Jupiter, Florida, where Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy and many other top PGA golfers keep homes.

This week's round of golf is likely to be a more low-profile affair for Mr Trump.

To play a round with a US president is a privilege usually reserved for special VIPs. Mr Trump is the most proficient golfer to occupy the White

House since Dwight D Eisenhower, so he will play with only the best.

Professional players, including McIlroy and Woods, are favoured partners.

Mr Trump will be in Ireland this week at various stages between June 5 and 7.

Apart from Mr Trump's son Eric, who is very involved in his golf business, it is believed that the other Trump children will not accompany the president, though Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump will accompany the president to the UK on his state visit.

Mr Mulvaney has been a favoured figure in the Trump administration – he is one of President Trump's golf partners.

A source of much banter between Mr Trump and the prominent Irish-American is that the latter is a member of nearby Lahinch Golf Club, which is due to host the Irish Open in July.

Sources close to the Taoiseach have confirmed that he will definitely not be playing golf with the president – Leo Varadkar is not a golfer.

[john.lee@mailonsunday.ie](mailto:john.lee@mailonsunday.ie)



# ter side of bruiser



**SINGSONG:**  
Busker with  
Taoiseach Leo  
Varadkar and  
Europe candidate  
Sean Kelly

## Taoiseach will travel to Clare as Trump opts to stay in Doonbeg

By John Lee

THE Taoiseach will travel to Co. Clare to meet President Donald Trump during his visit to Ireland, senior Government sources have confirmed to the Irish Mail on Sunday.

It was revealed exclusively by this newspaper last week that the US Secret Service were to travel here ahead of the June visit.

Negotiations continue at the highest levels to finalise Mr Trump's trip. The White House has confirmed the itinerary for a three-day state visit to Britain and the president's attendance at a D-Day Commemoration in France.

The Secret Service flew into Shannon this week to finalise security arrangements.

A senior source at the Department of the Taoiseach said last night: 'It will be Clare. The Taoiseach will travel there, which is not a problem. It was done for the George Bush visit in 2004 also.'

Finalising details with the Trump White House is proving more challenging than dealing with the

## TRUMP IS COMING TO CLARE IN WEEKS

**EXCLUSIVE:** How we revealed details of the visit in last week's newspaper

Bush administration, however.

A diplomatic source said: 'It is difficult negotiating details with the Trump White House. As hard as this is to believe, over two years into the administration people still haven't been appointed to key positions. We don't have a US ambassador in the Phoenix Park yet.'

There are concerns in some parts of Government that Mr Trump may yet decide to travel to his golf course in Aberdeen, Scotland, instead. However,

during a conversation with the MoS in the Oval Office in March, he expressed a deep desire to travel to Ireland this year to play golf at his Doonbeg golf course.

There is an acceptance in the Government that Mr Trump is more concerned with playing golf than the political aspects of a visit.

'It's really just golf he's interested in,' said a senior source, 'but who knows?'

President Trump is expected to arrive at Shannon Airport on June 6 or 7 and stay at his hotel in Doonbeg, according to tentative arrangements revealed to the MoS last week.

He will be in France for the 75th anniversary of D-Day on June 6 and is expected here on a brief stopover.

Government ministers are reluctant to make an official announcement as they were embarrassed when the president cancelled arrangements for a trip to Ireland last year.

'With this most erratic of presidents we won't be announcing it until every detail is nailed down,' said a minister.

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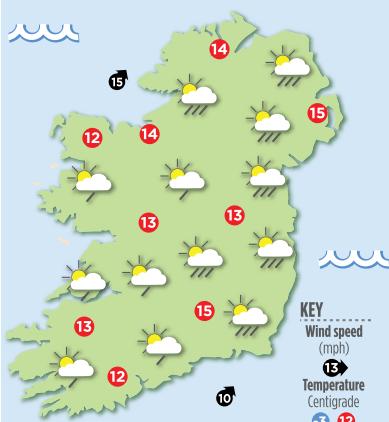
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## Weather



## ► FORECAST

## GENERAL FORECAST

After a largely dry start, light rain and drizzle will likely proceed and continue throughout the day for much of the country. There may be some heavier spells in parts of Leinster and Munster throughout the afternoon and evening.

## REGIONAL FORECASTS

**Leinster:** After a largely dry start, rain will approach from the west. Heaviest spells are likely in the afternoon. Tonight, Patchy rain. Max temp 15C (59F). Min temp 6C (43F).

**Dublin:** After a dry morning, rain will approach from the west. Staying mostly light, but heavier spells possible. Tonight, Largely fine and dry. Max temp 15C (59F). Min temp 6C (43F).

**Ulster:** After a mostly dry start to the day, the afternoon and the evening will see plenty in the way of rain. Tonight, wet, then dry. Max temp 15C (59F). Min temp 5C (41F).

**Connacht:** Light rain likely to fall throughout the morning into the early afternoon, dry spells likely later on. Tonight, Largely dry and fine. Max temp 14C (57F). Min temp 7C (45F).

**Munster:** After a dry start, rain will proceed to fall throughout the day, heavy at times during the afternoon. Tonight, Rain will clear. Max temp 14C (57F). Min temp 7C (45F).

**WEEK AHEAD**  
The following week will likely see more in the way of fine and dry spells. Monday will be largely dry, but with some patches of rainfall in Leinster and Munster, elsewhere may see some sunny spells. Tuesday should remain largely fine and dry, with the possibility of some sunny spells in the west of the country while the east may be more prone to cloud and drizzle. By the end of the week, the forecast becomes more uncertain, but conditions look likely to be rather unsettled.

## ► SIX-DAY FORECAST

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
DUBLIN	15	15	14	14	15	16
CORK	15	16	15	15	15	15
BELFAST	15	16	15	15	16	17
GALWAY	15	15	15	14	15	16
LIMERICK	17	17	17	16	16	17
DERRY	14	14	14	14	15	16
KILKENNY	16	16	15	15	16	17

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# My good luck, a and my golf had

When the chat turned to Air Force One and their luggage, the surrealism of the day hit me

**EXCLUSIVE**

By JOHN LEE

POLITICAL EDITOR, IN DOONBEG

GOLF is a game that rewards persistence – and luck.

When the Mail on Sunday first broke the news of Trump's impending visit, I had no reason to believe that I would be able to wangle my way into an exclusive dinner with the upper echelons of American politics.

But I had no reason to believe I couldn't either.

I knew if I got on the golf course there might be a possibility to observe the Leader of the Free World relaxing on his property.

To my astonishment, through some hard neck, extraordinary luck and some significant help, I found myself enjoying dinner at the table of President Donald Trump in his clubhouse at Doonbeg golf links, on Thursday evening, the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

When Mr Trump's Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney invited me to sit at his section of an L-shaped table in an intimate corner of the clubhouse, I looked around and saw that I was about to have dinner with Donald and Melania Trump, Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Kellyanne Conway.

In the court of this much-criticised president there was only bonhomie and collegiality. On occasion it was like sitting

with any group of co-workers as the cheery bunch gleefully slagged off each other's clothes and drinking habits.

It was when conversations turned to Air Force One's impending departure and what

hand luggage they could bring on, that the surrealism of my position struck.

Donald had fish and chips for dinner, I had seafood pasta and tiramisu. Considerately, the Donald bought me dinner.

I had had the fish and chips for lunch earlier – as I'd been hanging around the clubhouse waiting for a glimpse of POTUS all day. So long that, luckily, I was hungry again.

My simple plan had worked.

**WHITE HOUSE SPECIAL**

Our reporter enjoys the clubhouse fare with the president and entourage

# Trump told Leo to silence

**From Page One**

was caught out online criticising Mr Trump for something he hadn't actually said.

The US President told Mr Varadkar – who at the time was unaware of the episode which triggered one of Mr Trump's trademark Twitter rants the previous evening – that he 'had to deal with her' through a Twitter put-down and suggested to Mr Varadkar this was an effective way of tackling criticism.

In the early hours of June 5, when Mr Trump was still in the UK, he called Ms Midler a

'washed up psycho' on Twitter. He did not repeat this phrase specifically at the Shannon Airport meeting.

Sources told the Irish Mail on Sunday that despite this unsolicited advice, the two leaders had a very positive private meeting.

Sources at the Department of the Taoiseach said that Mr Varadkar didn't fully understand the reference to Bette Midler at first, as the Twitter confrontation had only just occurred.

'Apparently,' she criticised him in a tweet or quote or something and then had to take it back,' said a source.

Sources said that Mr Varadkar was very pleased with the way the meeting went.

'It helped to maintain his general goodwill towards us,' said a senior source at the

**They seem to bounce off each other'**

department. 'The meeting also gave us a chance to say a few things to Mr Trump's team on the border, tax and visas,' the source added.

Mr Varadkar is understood

to have quipped to colleagues about what he felt was a highly successful meeting: 'I have had less productive afternoons.'

Sources in the Trump camp told the MoS that he is anxious to stress the function of his Twitter strategy to world leaders that he admires.

'It gets his point across without filter, in an unfettered way that his supporters love,' said a US source.

There is always a political point to everything he does. Mr Trump and Mr Varadkar are two of the only world leaders who personally manage their own Twitter accounts.'

# helping of brass neck me dining with Donald



## TEETIME FRIENDS

John, with Mick Mulvaney, centre, and John Deasy

With the assistance of his administration we've had a run of stories on the Irish visit of Donald Trump.

The germ of an idea came to me when researching a story last week on who he was going to play golf with. In a conversation with one of

Mr Trump's aides I repeated an assumption that Doonbeg International Golf Links would be vacated by all guests and golfers.

He said: 'No, all bookings will be honoured, if somebody has booked in at the hotel or has a tee time, the

boss wants that to go ahead.'

Being familiar with the protocols of golf clubs, I realised if I got a tee time I'd be in.

In an astounding piece of fortune, I soon discovered that Doonbeg's golf professional Brian Shaw was

an old friend of mine and used to drink at Gibney's Pub in Malahide where I worked as a barman over 20 years ago.

He remembered me and we had many mutual friends in my home town. On the way to Doonbeg I rang

I held back for the invite-only lunch. An aide neared but Trump nodded... I was allowed to stay



## FAMILIAR FLAVOUR

It wasn't the first Trump meal that our Political Editor, John Lee, managed to gain access to...

my renewed acquaintance and asked, with little hope, whether there was any chance of playing Doonbeg on Thursday.

To my shock Mr Shaw texted me on Wednesday evening giving me a tee time; '10.36 sorted... see u in the morning.'

When I enquired about the much publicised 'ring of steel' he responded insouciantly; 'Putting you on the list.'

Having covered four US presidents, I knew the security was no joke so I knew to leave my hotel in Ennistymon, West Clare very early. A detour took me to Doonbeg via a wide, circuitous loop through Kilkee, past hundreds of gardai and many checkpoints. A half-hour trip took an hour.

Eventually, at Doonbeg village, at the beginning of the 'designated route', a female garda asked my name and tee time. I panicked and erroneously said 10.34. Nevertheless I got through and eventually swept through the gates of Trump International where a wide low coastal plain rises to soaring dunes. Across the plain you could see hundreds of gardai tramping through the marram grass.

It was the first time I was searched by a Secret Service agent on the way to the first tee. I had to put my golf bag through a scanner too. Understandably, after that, my front nine wasn't extraordinary. We were searched by another Secret Service agent before hitting our drives down the glorious 18th hole, but by that time I was on a roll, invigorated by the increasing possibility of dining with the Leader of the Free World.

They're not excessively secretive, the Secret Service. The agent on 18 told us he lives in Miami, where he principally investigates financial crime.

The yellow-coated gardai were stationed on every hole even though the president was still in France – I saw one Garda searching for golf balls to pass the time.

Buoyant from finishing with four

Turn to Page 6 ►►

# critics by 'dealing with them' online

Sources in the US administration and in the Irish Government say that a strong bond has grown between the two men.

'President Trump really seems to like Leo,' said a US source. 'They seem to bounce off each other and there is a real rapport there.'

A source in the Irish Government said that Mr Varadkar is very comfortable in Mr Trump's company.

'At first, he was worried considering his tough reputation,' said the source, 'but he seems to get on very well and there is a great connection between

**Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump Following

Washed up psycho @BetteMidler was forced to apologize for a statement she attributed to me that turned out to be totally fabricated by her in order to make "your great president" look really bad. She got caught, just like the Fake News Media gets caught. A sick scammer!

130 AM - 5 Jun 2019

**PUT-DOWN:** Donald Trump called Bette Midler 'a sick scammer'

the two.' Irish Government and US Administration sources also reported that Water-

ford TD and US Envoy John Deasy has made great steps in advancing the campaign to

secure E3 visas for Irish immigrants.

Last summer in New York, Mr Varadkar told a private lunch gathering that he sympathised with Mr Trump's view of the media.

Mr Varadkar later admitted in the Dáil that he had made the comments and had told the event that Irish journalists were under pressure as there were more media outlets than previously.

Mr Varadkar argued that journalism and the media 'should not be above' reproach or criticism.

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# Healy-Raes' €1m



By Anne Sheridan  
IN DOONBEG

THE Secret Service has visited the village of Doonbeg many times before, quietly slipping through the radar, but this week there was no hiding them.

They swept through The Long Village in west Clare like a team of Kevin Costners, all swish suits, crisp white shirts and earpieces. Their presence drew curious stares from men and admiring glances from women, as The Bodyguard met Doonbeg in an Irish-American cocktail that hasn't fully settled.

Crowds grew as US President Donald Trump

## 'Trump agrees with me on climate change'

touched down, and one agent looked on and shook his head in near desperation. To a garda, he said: 'That wouldn't work in the States. Move all these people away from the cars. These are Secret Service vehicles.'

The garda made an attempt to move the crowds back, as if shooing a herd of cattle away from their feed, but they shuffled forward again. He looked to the observing Irish Mail on Sunday, then the Heavens, and said: 'He'd want a pint, wouldn't he?'

While Trump was the name on everyone's lips this week, hot after that was Healy-Rae. And Danny Healy-Rae confirmed to the MoS that he and newly elected son Johnny have two local water contracts in Doonbeg, worth over €1m.

'I thought he'd come to meet me,' said Danny, with a laugh, of President Trump. 'He agrees with me on climate change.'

The father-and-son duo are currently involved in two water contracts in Doonbeg, between them stretching to 7km, with one complete, while another, close to the hotel, is at the design stage.

The Healy-Rae Plant Hire company has been employing 15 people in the area, about half of whom are locals, since this February. Johnny told the Mail on Sunday,

'It's wonderful publicity for Ire-

land and for Clare and for the West,' added Danny.

'Trump means a lot to those people and I don't begrudge them for taking care of someone who's putting food in their mouth. They're respecting that and it's good they're respecting their employer.'

The west of Ireland is totally neglected by this Government, and by the last. They have never hurt rural Ireland as much as they have during this term. It's fine to be talk-

ing about being so correct about everything, but they have the place decimated.'

Brother Michael Healy-Rae said he always recalls the book his mother gave him on Christmas Day in the late 1980s – *The Art of the Deal*, by Donald Trump.

Johnnysaidoneofthecontracts is

with Irish Water and Transport Infrastructure Ireland for a new watermain and road works along a 2km stretch of road, from Beala to Doonbeg, worth €500,000.

Another contract for a 5km stretch of road from Doonbeg towards Milltown Malbay, which runs past the Trump hotel and golf course, is expected to be worth well in excess of €500,000 and is currently at the design stage.

And the Healy-Raes aren't the only ones to be seemingly in awe of the controversial president and his wife Melania, left. Limerickman Con Cremin was not only on a mission to

meet Mr Trump – he was ready to take a bullet for him if needed.

Wearing a golf shirt emblazoned with 'Trump International' and a red cap with 'Make America Great Again', he was as ready as he could ever be: 'I bought this shirt for €65 down in the hotel. I wanted to give him my business. I think it's great value; others were €95,' he says.

'Doesn't it look good? If anything, I think it makes me more handsome,' he joked. As Trump's press secretary Sarah Sanders took to the high stool in Comerfords Bar on Thursday night, Mr Cremin was one of the first to spot her.



KILRUSH barber James Coughlan would love to get his hands – and scissors – on Donald Trump's hair.

The Ennistymon native is friends with Bruce Springsteen and has cut his hair many times, as well as the fair locks of Eric Trump during his visits to Doonbeg.

'He's a pure gentleman, a very nice guy. What you see is what you get, as people saw here this week. He's fun and chatty,' he told the Irish Mail on Sunday.

'But he is still waiting to meet the US president. I don't know what I'd do with it [his hair], I'd just love to cut it.'



He emerged in a navy suit and bright blue tie, Melania was wearing a black coat and large black sunglasses.

He waved and punched the air and after greeting his staff disappeared into the hotel. I didn't really think they'd be out again.

Then I encountered another stroke of fortune. Into the bar walked Fine Gael TD and Irish US Envoy John Deasy, who I knew was to play with White House Chief of Staff – and eight handicapper – Mick Mulvaney the following morning.

Mr Deasy and I forged a friendship many years ago as two of Leinster House's few single-figure-handicap golfers.

He was due to have dinner with Mr Mulvaney at 7pm. I knew there was to be a dinner, but Mr Deasy revealed to me the dinner was to

be in the clubhouse, where I had been camped out all day. At this stage, I reckoned I'd stand around and watch before I was chucked out.

Unless, of course, I wasn't.

Mr Deasy and I had a drink and next thing a group of very recognisable people who were all very familiar with the US envoy gathered around us at the bar.

I was introduced to Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who was dressed in a striped summer dress and a navy jacket. She drank white wine. We met Kellyanne Conway, Mr Trump's election mastermind.

Then a jolt of electricity went through the clubhouse bar. Donald Trump, relaxed and smiling, but still in suit and tie, entered to the right of the bar accompanied by Melania, who kept her dark sunglasses on. She was smiling and

friendly. They sat at a long table with their backs to the churning Atlantic Ocean.

Fittingly, this president who loves military pomp was provided with a backdrop of the Irish naval vessel LE Niamh anchored in the bay, protecting his shore.

Mr Trump solicitously guided his wife to the seat facing the room and a waitress immediately poured him a Diet Coke and popped a large, striped straw into the glass. Mrs Trump was provided with a glass of white wine.

There was an invisible cordon, which, if people crossed, the Secret Service would step calmly forward to block their way.

Besides White House staff there were only about 12 members in the clubhouse. And me.

Bizarrely they started taking photos of the president and his

wife as they sat smiling.

A White House staffer said the president didn't mind photographs, 'but he hates video'.

The only Trump golf course where photographs are banned is Mar-a-Lago in Florida.

Then came a third kind bounce of the ball. It was to prove fateful.

Mr Deasy kindly said he would introduce me to Mick Mulvaney, the White House chief of staff.

Mr Trump's party were sitting at an L-shaped table that took over the Western corner of the clubhouse. Ms Huckabee Sanders sat to Mr Trump's right. Mrs Trump sat to his left.

At the end of the long part sat Ms Conway. Then, at the shorter part of the L shape sat Mr Mulvaney and his charming wife Pamela.

Sitting alongside Mr Mulvaney were Fianna Fáil senator Mark

## From Page 5

straight pars, my golfing partner and I had lunch. After that, I did what a good reporter does – I hung around hoping nobody would challenge me and waited to see what happened. There were Secret Service everywhere – but they were friendly, aware I had been screened.

In the early evening, having not given anybody any reason to question my presence, the distinctive roar of multiple helicopters announced POTUS's return from the D-Day commemorations.

From the East came three massive choppers – two looked identical. They were civilised versions of the mythical Blackhawk, with familiar green and white livery. The third was a fully armed Blackhawk. The decoy landed on the grass near the practice green and Marine One, which carried President Trump and the first lady, swept around the back of the clubhouse.

## There was a jolt of electricity

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# TRUMP'S ADVICE: USE TWITTER TO FIGHT BACK, LEO

**EXCLUSIVE** US President tells the Taoiseach to adopt his social media tactics against detractors

By John Lee POLITICAL EDITOR

US President Donald Trump advised Taoiseach Leo Varadkar that he should 'deal' with any media critics in the same way that Mr Trump dealt with the actress and singer Bette Midler earlier this week, the Irish Mail on Sunday can reveal.

In their private meeting at Shannon Airport on Wednesday, Mr Trump asked Mr Varadkar how he was being treated by the press in Ireland.

## MY DINNER WITH DONALD

PAGE 4

Mr Varadkar replied, with a laugh, that the media had treated him a lot better at the start of his leadership but added he was treated fairly.

Mr Trump cited an incident from the previous night in which Ms Midler, a harsh critic of his,

## Harry gives new mum Meghan a 'push' ring

PAGE 3



STYLISH: Meghan shows off her ring at the Trooping the Colour with Prince Harry yesterday

Turn to Page 4 >