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CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND

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9 February 1970

Mr. Eamonn Gallagher,
Political Section,
Department of External Affairs,
Dublin.

Dear Eamonn,

I enclose a background press release which has just come to my attention (sent by a contact in NEWSWEEK). As you will see, it is issued by one Bob Johnson of "Oliver-Beckman" for Northern Ireland. This is an advertising agency which is located at 748 Lexington Avenue, New York.

I had heard before Christmas that the Belfast Government was employing a special public relations agency here and this is the first piece of their propaganda that I have so far seen. Earlier information suggested that this advertising agency handles accounts for other foreign governments, particularly of the Latin American variety but I have no confirmation of this.

You will see that this release which was for information only, not for publication, went out through a service here known as PR Newswire, which was utilized by our special press officers during the crisis period from August to November last. This service provides a very speedy saturation coverage of all North American news media.

As to the content of the release attached, it seems that the Belfast authorities were seriously concerned that a ~~serious~~ ^{widespread} out-break of violence would have occurred last weekend and they wished to place the blame firmly on the Peoples Democracy which they have labied "self-styled disciples of Lenin, Mao, Castro, and other idols of international extremism." You will see that

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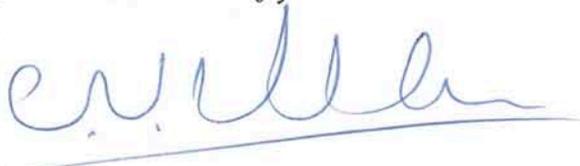
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there is no mention in the piece of the reason for the demonstration last weekend, namely, the coming into force of the new Public Order Act in the Six Counties.

It is interesting to note that the type of arguments used here is similar to that presented by the Messrs. Stratton-Mills and Baillie when they came to the United States in pursuit of Bernadette Devlin.

I should appreciate your observations on this propaganda line and whether it is in our interest to take any action in relation to it. It would definitely seem that a counter-propaganda offensive has begun and that it is being carried out professionally through experienced and effective news service channels. The only question is whether/^{it}will boomerang by drawing too much attention to the Civil Rights issue in the Six Counties. After-all, despite the concern in the release about expecting violence, very little in fact seems to have taken place last weekend.

Yours sincerely,



Charles V. Whelan
Consul General

CVW/ee

Encl.

cc: Embassy, Washington, D.C.
Permanent Mission, New York.
Consulates, Boston,
Chicago,
San Francisco.