

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2007/111/1891
Creation Date(s):	21 November 1977
Extent and medium:	8 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
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Mr. Swift. Mr. Donlon
10/23/77

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WASHINGTON, D. C. 20008

October 21, 1977

Confidential

25 OCT 1977

PSM

Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs

The Minister had talks with political leaders in Washington, D. C. on Monday 3 of October. He was accompanied by the Secretary, Assistant Secretary Donlon, Ambassador Molloy and Mr. Lillis, Counsellor of the Embassy.

Following is a report on the Minister's meetings in the order in which they occurred.

Senator McGovern

The Minister met privately with Senator McGovern for approximately ten minutes. The Irish officials and Mr. John Holum, an aide to the Senator, later joined the discussions.

The Minister complimented Senator McGovern on his report on his visit to Ireland which he described as being remarkably comprehensive. The Minister specifically endorsed the principle which the report suggested should guide the United States in its policy on Northern Ireland as set out on page 22 "...the role of the United States and of con-

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cerned Americans can only be constructive if it is limited, cautious, and based upon the fullest possible understanding of the nature of the struggle."

The Minister underlined recent political developments in Ireland and notably the strong mandate the Government received in the general elections. He said there had been a certain degree of misunderstanding of the Government's policy on Northern Ireland. The Government unambiguously supported the unification of Ireland by consent. Equally unambiguously the Government rejected violence as a means of obtaining their objective. In the short term, the Government were encouraged by the result of the British-Irish meeting of September 28. The Minister believed that the new emphasis on North/South economic cooperation would assist, in the process of implementation, in increasing contacts between North and South and reducing tensions.

Senator McGovern said that he had not included the possibility of an independent Northern Ireland as one of the options in his report but he would like to have the Minister's view as to the viability of this course.

The Minister said this policy was unrealistic to the extent that it had very limited support in either community in Northern Ireland and would be unacceptable to public

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opinion in the South. The meeting with Senator McGovern was interrupted by a division bell in the Senate which called the Senator away.

Lunch with Congressmen

The Minister was guest of honor at a luncheon hosted in the Chamber of the House Committee on Agriculture by Congressman Thomas Foley, Chairman of the Committee and Chairman also of the Democratic National Caucus. Among the guests at lunch were Deputy Under Secretary of State Ms. Lucy Benson, Congressman Thomas P. O'Neill, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Congressman John Brademas, Majority Whip in the House of Representatives, Congressman Robert Michel, Minority Whip in the House of Representatives, Congressman Clement Zablocki, Chairman of the House Committee on International Relations, and Congressmen James Burke, Charles Carney and William Broomfield. The Minister first outlined the current state of the Irish economy and described some of the key objectives of the Government's economic policy, the first priorities of which he said were to reduce unemployment and control inflation. The Minister then turned to the Government's policy on Northern Ireland and again, as with Senator McGovern, emphasized the strength of the mandate the Government had received from the electorate.

/electorate.

He also repeated what he had said to the Senator in relation to Irish unification and the Government's rejection of violence.

The Speaker and a number of the guests asked about the Government's view of possible hearings in the House of Representatives. The Minister referred to a press release issued by the office of Congressman Biaggi which outlined some concerns of a recently established "Ad Hoc Committee" (copy attached). He said that the Government would see the question of convening hearings on Northern Ireland as being one primarily for the Congress to decide. He added, however, that, so far as the Government were concerned, the only witnesses from the Irish side who would have authority or credibility would be those who had been democratically elected by the Irish people. From remarks made by Foley, Brademas and Zablocki, it was clear that they shared the Speaker's opposition to hearings as well as to the "Ad Hoc Committee".

The Minister went on to say that the "Ad Hoc Committee" was apparently concerned about the refusal of the United States authorities to issue visas to "leading political figures" from Ireland. If by "leading political figures" the "Ad Hoc Committee" meant persons such as Mr. Ruain O'Bradaigh, they were obviously seriously misled; Mr. O'Bradaigh could

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in no sense be described as an "important political leader" as he had no mandate whatever. The Minister stressed, however, that he saw the question of visas as being one primarily for the American authorities to decide.

Senator Kennedy

The Minister's meeting with Senator Kennedy was interrupted by a vote on the Senate Floor due to the fact that a major filibuster was taking place in the Senate that day involving several hundred amendments to a Bill on the deregulation of natural gas prices.

The Minister spoke privately to Senator Kennedy for approximately 10 minutes. The two principals were subsequently joined by the Irish officials and Mr. Carey Parker, the Senator's legislative aide. The Minister suggested that the Senator might consider running a resolution in the Senate in support of President Carter's statement on Northern Ireland. In subsequent discussions the feeling was expressed by the Senator's aide that to do so might only point up a confrontation with the Irish National Caucus.

Mr. Parker suggested that the influence of the Speaker with Congressmen who were supporting Biaggi, in many cases probably out of ignorance, should be mobilized.

The Minister outlined the Government's policy on Northern Ireland to the Senator and said that it was flexible as to timing and even as to content.

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Following the meeting, the Minister and Senator Kennedy spoke together to Irish newsmen for a few minutes. Senator Kennedy expressed his congratulations to the new Irish Government in their electoral victory, his support for their policy on Northern Ireland and his opposition to the use of violence as a means to political ends.

Speaker O'Neill

The Speaker was accompanied by his legal counsel Mr. Charles Ferris and his legislative aide Mr. Garry Hymell. The principal topic of the discussion was the current efforts of the Irish National Caucus to mobilize Congressional support for their propaganda objectives in the United States including the convening of hearings.

The Minister repeated the points he had made over lunch and stated that the victory of his party at the general elections had served to channel the republican feeling of a considerable section of the Irish people in a constructive and moderate direction.

Mr. Ferris stated that the Irish National Caucus were actively lobbying members of the Congress and attempting to convince them that the victory of Fianna Fail represented a change in Irish Government policy in line with that of the Irish National Caucus. The Minister rejected this.

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Mr. Ferris suggested that the Minister's address in New York of October 1 should be circulated to all Members of the Congress so that this ambiguity could be cleared up.

The Minister drew the Speaker's attention to Mr. Mason's forthcoming visit and said that it was of great importance that President Carter's initiative, insofar as it related to job-creation, should not become operative until political agreement had been secured as between the parties in Northern Ireland.

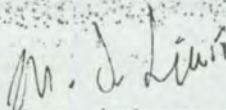
Speaker O'Neill undertook to speak to those members of the Congress whose names had been listed as members of the "Ad Hoc Committee".

The Speaker subsequently spoke to the visiting Irish correspondents as well as a correspondent of the Boston Herald American. Mr. O'Neill said that so far as he was concerned the INC had no validity and that today's Provisional IRA had nothing to do with the IRA he and his forebearers had admired and supported years before. He added that President Carter's initiative had come as a result of his own contact with the President and contact with Mr. Vance by Senator Moynihan, Senator Kennedy, Governor Carey and himself. He said it was important that the Carter

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initiative should become operative only if the pre-condition of political stability set out in the President's statement were achieved.

The Minister in conclusion invited the Speaker, on behalf of the Government, to visit Ireland as soon as possible. Speaker said he had frequently done so in the past and that he was glad to accept the Minister's invitation. He said he particularly looked forward to playing golf while in Ireland. The Minister mentioned that President Hillery was an enthusiastic golfer and that he himself also played.


for Ambassador

cc: Consulate General, N.Y.
Consulate General, Boston
Consulate General, Chicago
Consulate General, San Francisco