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Mr. Siew

We too should
be diligent in
spotting, clipping and
fish^{ing} where it will
be found material
of this kind!

Confidential

(7 February 1978

HS 17/2

Dear Michael

I enclose for your information a copy of a letter which Seán Donlon recently sent to Dermot Hally in connection with evidence linking the Caucus with the Provisional IRA. I also enclose, by way of contrast, my own draft for such a letter. The criterion used in ^{paring} peering down my draft was whether we had on our files material to sustain the allegations which we were making about the Caucus. You will see how much we had to jettison in this process because of lack of hard evidence. Of course, in recent years, Fr. McManus and other Caucus spokesmen have become increasingly careful in the expression of support for or sympathy with the Provisional IRA. However, we would be most grateful if you, and our officers elsewhere in the U.S. continue to be on the look-out for statements, documents and activities of the Caucus which can be used in evidence if this exercise has to be repeated.

In general, our experience of the various exercises we have engaged on in the last week or so has been to demonstrate the need to have on our files hard evidence and primary documentation in order to put our briefings on the soundest possible footing. We would therefore be most appreciative if this need could be borne in mind in the context of the continuing functions of our Offices in the U.S.

Yours sincerely

Hugh Swift

Mr. Michael Lillis
Embassy of Ireland
Washington

Draft

Confidential

February 1978

Dear Dermot

Irish National Caucus

1. As you know the Caucus was established at a meeting in New York in September 1974 called by the AOM National President "Jack" Keane. Keane, who is a well known supporter of the Provisional IRA, was elected Chairman of the Caucus. (Keane last year assaulted our Consul General in San Francisco on the occasion of a dinner at which he had given a speech in favour of Noraid fund-raising and attacked the imprisonment here of Dailhi O Conaill.) The Caucus is at present organised into a "National Office" and local chapters in different Congressional districts of the United States. Policy direction appears to come from an Executive Board, which includes, or has included, such personalities as Seán McManus, Fred Burns O'Brien, Seán Walsh, Brendan McCusker, all of whom are officers of the Caucus. Liam Murphy, David Burke, Bishop Drury and Paul O'Dwyer are members of the Caucus Board. All of the above, with the possible exception of McManus, are also members of the Irish Northern Aid Committee (Noraid), the Provisional IRA fund-raising body in the U.S. While McManus is not stated to be an officer of Noraid, he is clearly intimate with its organisers and participates in its functions.

2. In the early days of the Caucus, it would appear that little effort was made to disguise its support for the Provisional IRA. For example, McManus was interviewed on ITN on 8 May 1975 as the Caucus' National Co-ordinator, an office he still holds. He was asked "Do you support the Provisional IRA" and replied: "I do, yes, er I'm on record for quite a long time now for supporting the Provisional IRA, not because I like violence er, in fact, I think violence is one of the most ugly things in the world but I'm more concerned about the fundamental violence, the root causes of violence". In the same interview Brendan McCusker, who was Liaison Officer of the Caucus and National Chairman of the Irish Northern Aid Committee, agreed that Noraid money went to support the struggle of those fighting for Irish freedom. He also said "I support the Provisional IRA - I support their policy, the Provisional IRA policy ... I support

their use of violence to achieve that end, yes, because I do believe that er, that nothing has ever been gained by any war if there hasn't been violence used in it". Again in the same interview, Fred Burns O'Brien, who was being interviewed as the Caucus' Information Director, said "We support the aims of the of the Provisional movement over there because it is the only group seeking a united Ireland."

3. Earlier the same year, on 8 February 1975, the New York Herald publication "The Irish People" carried an article by Fred Burns O'Brien in which he reported that the Irish National Caucus had submitted to a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives a statement entitled "Brief for the Provisionals". (It is understood that this document was a statement of support for the campaign in Ireland of the Provisional IRA.)

4. In more recent years the officers of the Caucus have been more guarded in the public expression of their support for the IRA, presumably because they realised that explicit support would result in their being denied access to and influence on front-line American politicians. As a result, people like Sean McManus tend nowadays even to deny the quotations mentioned above from the ITN interview, or to say they were misquoted. McManus has himself gone further and said publicly that the Caucus opposes IRA violence. However, this statement of the Caucus position is heavily qualified. For example, in McManus' letter which appeared in the Irish Times of 7 April 1977 and in other newspapers about the same time, he states: "We are totally opposed to the use of violence to achieve political objectives that is why we are in the first place opposed to British policy in Ireland. We are opposed to the violence also of the 26 counties state, the UDA, the UVF, the IRA, the RUC and all forms of state and civilian violence." The same line of equating state violence with IRA violence was taken by Fred Burns O'Brien in an open letter to Senator Moynihan on 24 March 1977 "We in the Irish-American community seek an expansion of your joint statement to condemn the government violence of British and Irish Governments as well as civilian organisations."

5. As mentioned above, many of the personalities that have been involved in the Executive Board of the Caucus are also active in the Irish Northern Aid Committee. Seán Walsh, who was styled for a period "National Director" of the Caucus is also registered with the U.S. Justice Department as the representative in the United States of Provisional Sinn Féin. (Walsh's present status is not clear: there were a number of allegations against himself last year, ranging from his being a CIA agent to his having absconded with the Caucus funds, and he subsequently dropped from sight. However, there are recent unconfirmed reports that he appeared recently at a meeting of the Caucus-inspired Congressional Ad Hoc Committee on Ireland.) There are also clearly close personal links between prominent Caucus members and the Provisional hierarchy here. When McManus and Burns O'Brien visit Dublin, they are reported in the newspapers as having meetings with Ruairí O Brádaigh and other Provisional leaders. One of the major elements in their campaigns in the United States is publicity about the visa question designed to persuade the U.S. authorities to grant visas to "leading Irish politicians" such as Mr. O Brádaigh.

6. In addition to the evidence quoted above, there is a clear coincidence of position between the Caucus and the Provisional movement. The publicity organized by the Caucus in the United States tends to echo the policy lines of the Provisionals. Of course, some of these policies are unexceptionable and coincide also with the policies of successive Governments here e.g. the desirability in the long run of Irish unification. On other aspects, we would not necessarily find ourselves out of sympathy with the substance of the Caucus case, whatever about its presentation, e.g. discrimination and ill-treatment in the North. However, the Caucus goes much further than this and follows the Provo line also on questions such as the administration of justice here, violence by the Irish state, and even the existence of the Irish state. McManus, in his letter of April 1977 quoted above, also said "The Caucus believes that there can never be full human rights in the British experimental two-state Ireland".

7. The Caucus has had a certain success among Congressmen in Washington principally with representatives such as Mario Biaggi, Lester Wolff, Joshua Silberg and Benjamin S. Rosenthal. (The

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Caucus-inspired "ad hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs" has at present some 90 odd members, but many of these can be taken to be non-active and, indeed, non-serious members of the Committee.) The Congressmen most active on behalf of the Caucus, none of whom appears to be of Irish descent, also participate extensively in Noraid fund-raising functions, and on their visits to Ireland are in contact with Provisional spokesmen.

8. You will see from this that we have not got any evidence since 1975 which proves conclusively the Caucus-Provisional links as did the statements by McManus and others at that time, in particular in the course of the ITN interview. It is our belief that Caucus members continue to support the Provisionals but that they have become much more guarded in their expression of such support. Their activities in the U.S. continue to benefit the Provisional cause and, in particular, to render respectable Noraid's fund-raising activities. We believe that the hostility of the Caucus to the Irish state and its insistence on equating Provisional violence with so-called state violence not only in the North but within the state also, and its use of language sympathetic to the Provisionals of the "peace with justice" variety are evidence that the position of the Caucus and its officers has not changed since 1975 but that they have simply taken the tactical decision to be more careful in the public expression of their views.

Yours sincerely

Seán Donlon
Assistant Secretary

Mr. Dermot Hally
Assistant Secretary
Department of the Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Upper Merrion Street
Dublin 2