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Committee on Foreign Affairs

January 15, 1986

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(Partial List)

Honorable Dante B. Fascell
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 RHOB
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The issue of U. S. Foreign Aid to back the Anglo-Irish Accord will soon be coming before the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The Irish National Caucus believes that American Foreign Aid must not be used to subsidize anti-Catholic discrimination and oppression in Northern Ireland.

Therefore, we insist that American Foreign Aid must be tied to the Mac Bride Principles and also that it must not be used by the British Government for military or security reasons or for intelligence gathering.

We are urging you and all Members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to publicly support this position.

The Irish National Caucus is preparing a Direct Mailing on this issue to be sent to One Quarter of a Million Irish-American households. In this mailing, we are publishing the position of all Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

May we please have a response by Tuesday, February 4, 1986? Thank you.

Sincerely,

Fr. Sean McManus
Father Sean McManus
National Director

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 17, 1986

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CHAIRMAN, HUMAN SERVICES
CHAIRMAN, AD HOC
CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE
FOR IRISH AFFAIRS

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to request you to co-sign the following letter to Chairman Dante Fascell of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on the issue of possible future aid to Northern Ireland. There are strong indications that such legislation will get early attention in the Committee. In fact, the Chairman indicated this in a floor statement in December.

We will send this letter as supporters of future U.S. aid. However, it is designed to advance some assurances that the aid will serve to help both communities in Northern Ireland so as to better compliment a lasting political solution.

If you would like to sign on, or if you have any questions, please call Bob or Moya at x52464 NO LATER THAN NOON ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Mario Biaggi
MARIO BIAGGI, M.C.

PROPOSED LETTER

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We, the undersigned are writing to convey our interest in the prospect of future United States economic aid to Ireland. We especially support that aid which makes a strong contribution to the achievement of a lasting political solution in the troubled land of Northern Ireland.

On December 9, we voted for H. Con. Res. 239, which commended the Anglo-Irish agreement on Northern Ireland. In its second resolved clause, the resolution said,

"The Congress declares its willingness to work with the President in supporting the Anglo-Irish agreement through appropriate United States assistance, including economic and financial support, to promote the economic and social development of those areas of both parts of Ireland which have suffered most severely from the consequences of the violence of recent years."

During the debate on the resolution you said:

"I would like to assure all members of this body that the Committee will work closely with everyone who has an interest in Northern Ireland as we consider economic assistance sometime this spring."

We respectfully request that you consider the following issues as you develop any legislation to provide economic aid to Ireland. If United States aid is in fact provided, we would hope it could accomplish several goals related to Northern Ireland.

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Specifically, we hope that the aid would be provided in such fashion as to benefit both communities in Northern Ireland. This will best be accomplished if the United States retains control over the distribution of all aid. This will allow the U.S. to work with all parties to identify areas where our assistance is most needed. Equally as important, this will allow the United States to insist that all recipients of our aid adhere to strong principles of fair employment and non-discrimination such as those prescribed in the Mac Bride Principles.

We would expect United States aid controlled and distributed in this fashion can also contribute to the elimination of the cycle of violence, civilian and state, which exists in Northern Ireland today. We would also urge that United States aid not be used for any military or security purpose or for the gathering of intelligence.

We are especially anxious for there to be a definitive degree of accountability with respect to this aid. In this regard, we would expect the assistance would only be provided in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Foreign Assistance Act, especially concerning the recipient nation respecting and protecting human rights.

In addition, we would hope that this aid could provide some leverage in our efforts to see certain reforms made in this criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. The most urgent reform needed is the abolition of the "Diplock Courts" of Northern Ireland. They are the very symbols of the oppressive nature of the system. These courts feature trials without juries and the especially repugnant "supergrass" system. Under this process, persons are convicted solely on the basis of the uncorroborated testimony of paid informants. It has been used to convict scores of individuals in recent months and was the subject of a recent hunger strike by three such convicted individuals.

We fully recognize the urgent need for future economic aid in Northern Ireland. These six counties suffer from desperate economic conditions including having the highest unemployment rate in all of Western Europe. It would be consistent for the United States to initiate the process that will lead to the economic rehabilitation of Northern Ireland. Yet unless we insist on certain protections and guarantees, our aid will only be fueling the many problems in Northern Ireland instead of being the catalyst for their solution.

Sincerely,