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Mr. O Tuathail,

I attach a copy of a draft reply from the Taoiseach to Mr. Sean MacBride. If it is cleared I will send it to the Taoiseach's Department.

We have tried several drafts and consulted with the Embassy in Washington before coming up with this one. The problem is that we do not want any letter which might issue from the Taoiseach to be used as a weapon by elements in the US (e.g. NORAID), who are not sympathetic to the Government, to exploit the genuine differences which exist between the British and ourselves on this issue. There would seem little to be gained from having an open clash with the British on the MacBride Principles in the United States. The British are very sensitive on the matter and were not altogether happy with the Tanaiste's interview in the Irish Times, particularly the reference to a future White Paper on proposed legislation on Fair Employment. At the same time they have been made fully aware that we have no objection to the MacBride Principles. Mr. King, for example, is in no doubt of this from his conversations with the Tanaiste.

It is in the light of the above that we have prepared the present draft. Earlier versions had referred to "endorsement" of the Principles but this was felt to give too many hostages to fortune. It is clear that such wording would be ruthlessly exploited by groups in the US hostile to the Government. With this in mind we have opted for the present wording which is the Government's public position on the matter.


Bernard Davenport
26 May 1987



MacBride file

47/33

Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

// May, 1987.

Mr. Bernard Davenport,
Department of Foreign Affairs.

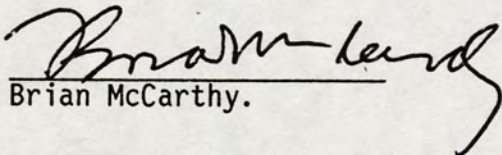
Dear Bernard,

You will have seen a copy of the letter of 29 April which Mr. Sean MacBride S.C. sent to the Taoiseach concerning the attitude of Irish diplomatic staff in the U.S. to the MacBride Principles.

The Taoiseach has now seen the letter and has commented that, subject to the Tánaiste's view, Mr. MacBride's request that our diplomatic staff should not get involved in opposing the MacBride Principles, is a reasonable policy.

I would be grateful if you would have the matter considered in the light of the Taoiseach's comments and let us have a suggested reply to the letter.

Yours sincerely,


Brian McCarthy.

Tel. telephone } (01) 780822

Telex 25300

Tagaírt }
Reference }



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 2.
Dublin 2.

5 June, 1987.

MacBride file

Mr. W. Kirwin,
Assistant Secretary,
Department of the Taoiseach,
Government Buildings,
Dublin 2.

Dear Wally,

Further to our conversation this morning I now attach a draft letter for signature by the Taoiseach in reply to Mr. Sean MacBride's letter of 29 April 1987 on the progress of the MacBride Principles in the United States and the role of our diplomatic and consular officers in this connection.

Yours sincerely,

Eamon O Tuathail
Assistant Secretary

DRAFT

Dr. Sean MacBride, S.C.,
Roebuck,
Clonskeagh,
Dublin 14.

Dear Sean,

I want to thank you for your letter of 29 April about your recent visit to the United States. I was interested to read your account of the present position of the MacBride Principles which was further illustrated in the enclosures to your letter.

You will be interested to know that the MacBride Principles were raised in the Dail on 7 May in a question put by Deputy Bell to the Tanaiste Brian Lenihan. The reply was as follows:

"As regards the MacBride Principles, we know that many Americans support these because of their concern to ensure an end to discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland and we find the Principles themselves unobjectionable. The Government's policy is to press for action by the British Government on measures in the short and medium term aimed at promoting equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland and eliminating discrimination. This means new and effective legislation and affirmative action on the ground. At the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 22 April both sides agreed on the need for progress both in legislation and practice. I intend to review carefully developments on this subject which will be discussed again at the next meeting of the Conference. At the same time we want to see overseas investment sustained and increased in Northern Ireland so that jobs can be created and allocated on an equality of opportunity basis".

I would like to assure you that the government are firmly committed to work for equality of opportunity in employment in Northern Ireland. We want to see an end to discrimination in both the public and the private sectors whether practiced by indigenous employers or foreign investors. We will continue to press for new and effective fair employment legislation in Northern Ireland on the basis of the philosophy underlying the MacBride Principles and for affirmative action on the ground. We want to see the introduction of sanctions applied to those employers who fail to meet their responsibilities to ensure equitable patterns of employment.

I have noted your reference to our Diplomatic and Consular staff in the United States. I can assure you that it is not our policy that official representatives of this country should get involved in opposing the Principles, nor do they. I have noted the article in the Irish Times which you were kind enough to send to me. I feel that the remarks of the officer in question were taken out of context.

Yours sincerely,

C.J. Haughey, T.D.,
Taoiseach.

*Papers I promised to give
5/5/87
MPS
Hans*

FROM: SEÁN MACBRIDE, S.C.

*A/S O Tuathail
The Taoiseach asked
me to pass these papers
to you.
o.d.H 07.05.87*

ROEBUCK HOUSE,
CLONSKEA,
DUBLIN 14,
IRELAND.

His Excellency
Mr Charles J. Haughey T.D.
An Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Upper Merrion Street
Dublin 2

29 April 1987

COPY

FA, Fair Employment in IR

Dear Taoiseach

I have just returned from a very short visit to the United States. There is a general feeling among our leading supporters that our Diplomatic and Consular staff in the US are using their influence to oppose the adoption of the "MacBride Principles" concerning fair employment in regard to the investment of public funds in US Corporations that operate in Ireland.

This is confirmed by a report in the Irish Times of Monday 27 April (copy enclosed) which refers to an interview given by the press officer at our Embassy in Washington to Mr Robert England for use in "Insight". No doubt, this officer from our Embassy in Washington was fulfilling instructions from her superiors which may have been acceptable to the last Government. However, I think that the time has come when a specific direction should be given to our Diplomatic and Consular representatives in North America making it very clear that they should not get involved in opposing the MacBride Principles.

The MacBride Principles are consonant with similar guidelines that are used in different parts of the world and indeed I would have thought that our Diplomatic and Consular staff should encourage their adoption. By campaigning against their adoption they risk becoming detached from and alienated from the Irish American organisations.

The Irish American organisations such as the Irish American Unity Conference, the AOH, the Irish National Caucus in Washington, the Brehon Law Society and the American Irish Labour Coalition have taken up the question of the MacBride Principles very energetically and have mapped out a whole plan of campaign in regard to it.

Enclosed is a map produced which shows the extent of the progress already made.

.../...

I am writing to you directly about the matter because I know of your own interest in it. I am sending a copy to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for his information. I respectfully submit that specific instructions to the Department of Foreign Affairs and to our Diplomatic and Consular Representatives in North America should be sent as soon as possible.

With warm best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Seán MacBride

Sean MacBride, S.C.

Secretary,

I attach a draft reply which the Taoiseach might send to Mr. Sean MacBride in reply to his letter to the Taoiseach of 29 April (attached).

We have tried several drafts and consulted with the Embassy in Washington before coming to the one attached. We have to walk a narrow path between on the one hand not going along with the British in opposing the Principles or parts of them and on the other hand not appearing to be in open conflict with the British and so giving ammunition to the more extreme U.S. groups such as NORAIID.

The British have told us that they were not quite happy with parts of the Tanaiste's Irish Times interview particularly the reference to a future White Paper on Fair Employment legislation, not because of any disagreement on the principle but because it would make the White Paper more difficult to sell to unionists if it is seen to come from the Conference and Dublin pressure. At the same time the British side accept fully that we have no objection to the MacBride Principles.

In the light of the above the attached draft reply has been prepared. We tried versions using the 'endorsement' of the principles but this would give too many hostages to fortune in the US. We have used, however, the phrase 'fair employment legislation in Northern Ireland on the basis of the philosophy underlining the MacBride Principles' as the British accept this as our line and that is about as far as we should go, I feel, for an Irish American audience.

If you agree with the line, either you or I can discuss with Tanaiste, as you wish.

EOT

Eamon O Tuathail

29/5/87

DRAFT

Dr. Sean MacBride, S.C.,
Roebuck,
Clonskeagh,
Dublin 14.

Dear Sean,

I want to thank you for your letter of 29 April about your recent visit to the United States. I was interested to read your account of the present position of the MacBride Principles which was further illustrated in the enclosures to your letter.

You will be interested to know that the MacBride Principles were raised in the Dail on 7 May in a question put by Deputy Bell to the Tanaiste Brian Lenihan. The reply was as follows:

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I have noted your reference to our Diplomatic and Consular staff in the United States. I can assure you that it is not our policy that official representatives of this country should get involved in opposing the Principles, nor do they. I have noted the article in the Irish Times which you were kind enough to send to me. I feel that the remarks of the officer in question were taken out of context.

Yours sincerely,

C.J. Haughey.