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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20008

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SUMMARYDEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION, JULY, 1972

After a tussle in which pro-McGovern delegates came out on top regarding the seating of rival delegations in California and Illinois, liberal Senator George McGovern's closest rival, 1968 candidate Senator Hubert Humphrey (Dem. Minn.) conceded and McGovern was selected. He chose as vice-presidential candidate, the 42 year old, relatively unknown Senator Thomas Eagleton (Dem. Miss.), a Catholic and like McGovern, a liberal. Thus the ticket is not balanced in the traditional sense, has no appeal to the right and little to the traditional centre. Its appeal is to the young, the under-privileged and reformers.

A liberal platform was adopted which included a reference to discrimination and deprivation in Northern Ireland. In calling out their vote on the vice-presidential nominees, the New York delegation got publicity for unification by introducing New York as the State which calls for a United Ireland with peace and justice. McGovern is since May 1972, a convert to the Kennedy-Ribicoff Senate Resolution 180 regarding Northern Ireland, introduced in October, 1971. Senator Edward Kennedy (Dem. Mass.) is a supporter of McGovern and gave a stimulating speech to the Convention which was well received.

The powerful AFL-CIO trade union group headed by George Meaney has refused to endorse McGovern. Mayor Richard J. Daley, whose delegation was unseated, has announced support for the Democratic ticket as a whole (Congressional, State and presidential); but enthusiasm for the presidential candidates cannot be counted on from Illinois and many other areas. The party will benefit from anti-Vietnam-war sentiment, from the support of idealistic and energetic youth and from able staff workers, but the concentrated rather than extensive appeal of the liberal (sometimes called radical) presidential-vice-presidential ticket and party platform will make a victory over the Republican incumbent President Nixon in November very difficult indeed. In mid-July Nixon's popularity rating stands at 56%.



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Democratic Convention 1972An Rúnaí,
Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha

Further to my cables 270 and 273 of 11th and 14th July, 1972 and unnumbered cables of 12th and 13th July, 1972 from Miami Beach regarding the Democratic National Convention from July 10th to 14th, 1972, I have the honour to report that I attended, as sanctioned by your cable 163, in company with representatives of most diplomatic missions in Washington and under arrangements of Protocol Section of the Department of State as regards transport, accommodation and briefing. Following the selection of Senator George McGovern (Dem. S. Dakota) and Senator Thomas Eagleton (Dem. Missouri) as presidential and vice-presidential candidates, there remains the exceedingly more difficult task of winning the elections in November against the incumbent Republican President Richard M. Nixon and his vice-presidential team-mate.

2. The President of the United States must be a natural-born citizen of the United States; 35 years old; and 14 years a resident within the United States. He must also get elected. Under the two-party system, each of the two-man political parties holds a National Convention to select its candidate to be submitted for election. The Republican Party, the party of the incumbent President Richard M. Nixon, who defeated Senator Humphrey (Dem. Minn.), will hold its convention in Miami in August. The Democratic Party held its convention in Miami from 10th to 14th July, 1972.

3. Pre-Convention Position : At the outset of the Convention, the liberal Senator George McGovern of South Dakota, who had risen meteorically in a few months, was the frontrunner, Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine, the favourite four months ago, had dropped far behind. A "Stop-McGovern" campaign was in progress, aimed for the most part at getting the pre-convention runner-up, Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota selected, but also prepared to turn to Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts or Senator Muskie in the event of a deadlock. A deadlock seemed possible though by July, not probable.

4. Seating of Delegations : McGovern's strength became clear in the tussle over seating delegations. After midnight on 10th-11th July, the Convention voted 1,618 to 1,238 to give all 271 Californian seats to McGovern. At 4.32 a.m. the Convention voted 1,372 to 1,486 to unseat Mayor Richard J. Daley's 59 and seat the pro-McGovern "Singer 59". In fact, as long-time Daley critic, journalist Mike Royko admitted in his column, the Daley 59

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(4 continued)

were more representative of Chicago Democrats, particularly of the White ethnics, such as Italian^s and the Poles, than the Singer alternative delegation, many members of which moreover had been rejected in primaries. The Mayor's alleged crime was that his delegation had not enough blacks and women. It was also relevant that he was associated in the minds of the radical young, with law and order and/or police brutality since the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, and even more relevant that his delegation was not likely to line up in support of a liberal McGovern. The details of the crucial Convention voting on seating are given in the enclosed blow by blow account by Richard L. Strout in THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR of 12 July, 1972, annexed to this report. Mike Royko's article as published in the MIAMI NEWS of 10 July, 1972, is also annexed.

5. After the California and Illinois seating results, Humphrey and Muskie conceded to McGovern, 11 July, 1972, and McGovern's selection as Democratic presidential candidate was assured.

6. Vice Presidency : Interest now focussed on the vice-presidential candidate. Senator Edward Kennedy was clearly McGovern's first choice from all the sounds emanating from McGovern's camp. Surprisingly, some people close to Humphrey expected Kennedy to be the McGovern choice and to agree to run. This seemed unlikely to happen. Some dozen names were mentioned in all, including an Irish Catholic, Mr. Kevin White, Mayor of ^Boston, as reported in my cable 270. While the latter was on the very short list, the Mass. delegation, adamantly opposed him, and possibly Senator Kennedy also objected. So after pro-forma requests to Senator Kennedy and Abe Ribicoff (Jewish, Connecticut), Missouri Senator Thomas Eagleton, 42 year old lawyer, Catholic and liberal, with a voting record since he became a senator in 1968 which was almost identical with McGovern's was selected. He is well liked by Missouri trade unionists. Press release giving his biography is annexed.

7. The significance of McGovern's choice of Eagleton is that he thereby chose to sharpen his existing liberal image rather than to woo middle-of-the-road opinion by a "balanced ticket". The previous day he had an hour-long confrontation in his hotel, the Doral, in Miami Beach, with sitters-in, picketers and hecklers, who accused him of going soft on the withdrawal from Vietnam and of modifying his liberal stand. He seems to have decided, first and foremost, to hold on to his liberal base of power. He may have thereby lost the election as the liberals are at present no more than a third of the electorate and no president has been elected without the substantial support of the centre. In this Nixon-McGovern contest as it is shaping up, Nixon seems to have been given a present of the centre, which he would have had to divide with Humphrey if the contest were a Nixon-Humphrey one.

8. At the Convention there were eight candidates in all for the vice-presidential nomination. Eagleton won easily.

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(8 continued)

In calling out its vote on the vice-presidential nominees, New York gave 163 votes, a substantial majority, to Eagleton and identified itself by interjecting with the words "New York, the State which calls for a United Ireland with peace and justice".

9. Senator Kennedy flew down to Miami and addressed the Convention. His speech was delivered confidently and clearly and his oratory was the best delivered in the Convention. He looked well. He said he turned down the Democratic Vice-Presidential nomination because of a clear responsibility to his family and the families of his two assassinated brothers. He supported McGovern strongly.

10. Party Platform and Northern Ireland : A liberal platform - reflecting Senator McGovern's views was approved after a debate from 7.30 on Tuesday night to 6.25 on Wednesday morning. It called for withdrawal from Vietnam, closing of tax loopholes, replacing the welfare system with income grants and recognition of busing as one means to achieve quality education. Almost the only change was the inclusion of a provision for the allocation of federal surplus lands to American Indians on a first priority basis. As reported in cable of 12 July, 1972, the draft platform as adopted included in the section on Foreign Policy regarding U.S. and the World/^{Comm}Unity (VIII - 8) an instruction that "the next Democratic Administration should make the voices of the United States heard in Northern Ireland against violence and terror and against the discrimination, repression and deprivation which brought about that awful civil strife". A stronger draft of ACUJ origin had been submitted to the Committee. There was no specific reference to Ireland in the debate at the Convention regarding the platform. The Committee rejected a series of reactionary or conservative Wallace-supported minority reports. Also rejected were some liberal proposed planks disapproved by McGovern as divisive and favouring liberal abortion policies, non-discrimination against homosexuals, a \$6,500 minimum guarantee for a family of four and a roll-back of rents. One copy of the printed platform booklet entitled "For the People" is enclosed.

11. As regards Northern Ireland, the National Association for Irish Freedom (NAIF), the support group in the United States for the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) sent a telegram to Miami Beach during the Convention denouncing Senator McGovern and stating that he and the Democratic Party were keeping up the tradition of American policy on Ireland "which is the support of the British atrocities against the Irish people and also the denial of their basic fundamental rights". The Nixon administration was criticised in another statement for collusion with the British (vide IRISH ECHO, 22 July, 1972)

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12. In fact McGovern's stand on Northern Ireland had changed over the months and for the better. In March, 1972, he had written to the American Committee for Ulster Justice (ACUJ) in traditional State Department language opposing "intervention in the affairs of another country. Northern Ireland is now a part of the United Kingdom" (THE ADVOCATE, 25 March, 1972). He announced however, in May, 1972, that he would co-sponsor the Kennedy-Ribicoff Senate Resolution 180 for a "just peace" and "eventual unification of Ireland" (IRISH ECHO, 6 May, 1972).

13. One may remember parenthetically that on the two principal questions of Irish Government policy in the United States - the unification of Ireland and the landing rights question - Senator Kennedy has, since at least 1967, been on the Irish side, and he may be expected to be a continuing good influence in these connections on Senator McGovern owing to the closeness of the relations of the two senators now.

14. Demonstrations : There was little violence in the city during the Convention. The Playboy Plaza Hotel was the scene of a buffet supper for 1,400 guests, mostly members of the Democratic Sponsors Club who had subscribed \$1,000 each. The S.D.S. (Students for a Democratic Society) picketed, apparently against the Playboy's alleged racism and sexism (i.e. using woman as a sex object) and against extravagance. On getting out of their buses the Diplomatic Corps were physically blocked by a picket, there were shouts of "Diplomatic Scabs", the Portuguese Ambassador was kicked on the shin, several diplomats were pushed around, but they all got in after about a quarter of an hour. A stone was thrown through a hotel window. There were two mysterious fires - suspected arson - in the hotel. The incidents involving the Corps were not published in the local press. At a subsequent private function, the Mayor of Miami in a speech, complimented the Portuguese Ambassador for his steadiness and courage. There will presumably be more public dissent and picketing directed against President Nixon and his even more unpopular policies during the Republican Convention in August.

15. I recall that during the notorious Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968 which I attended and reported on in PR 33/68, the diplomats present were not subjected to any violence or inconvenience, had no physical contact with any dissidents and saw violence only on the Y.V.

16. Press Contacts : At the Convention in Miami Beach I made some press contacts. Mr. Richard Rose, American author of the book GOVERNING WITHOUT CONSENSUS : AN IRISH PERSPECTIVE (Beacon Press, Boston, \$12.50, 1971) and professor of politics in the University of Strathclyde in Scotland, came to brunch with me in my hotel on 13 July, and we had a talk about the current situation in the North. He seemed to think that the British might try and wash their hands of the situation by setting up an independent entity in the North, for which they would seek U.N. approval. I told him that, for one thing, the nationalists in the North would not co-operate in such a "solution", a further dose of Unionist domination, if it were attempted. I recapitulated

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Ireland's previous efforts to get the matter raised helpfully in the U.N. and the limitations on U.N. peace-keeping forces whether considered by the Security Council or the General Assembly.

17. I gave an interview to Miss Betsy Nolan of the CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, for Irving Wallace's column, referring particularly to the helpful references to Northern Ireland contained in the party platform as approved by the Convention. Less important remarks and replies to questions, but not the reference to Northern Ireland, survived more or less accurately within quotation marks in Irving Wallace's column as published (vide clipping of CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, 14 July, 1972, attached). Mr. John Rutherford of New York, a member of the Sponsor's Committee who accompanied the diplomatic group, interviewed several colleagues and myself on his tape recorder and again I took the opportunity to refer to the Northern Ireland plank. I was in touch several times on the phone with Mr. Liam Hourican of RTE and was able to draw his attention to the two specific items of Irish interest - the Northern Ireland "plank" and the New York State call for a United Ireland, both of which "broke" at an early hour a.m. and otherwise might have escaped his notice.

18. November Election Prospects : Following the end of the Convention, there is much speculation about how the real test, the elections in November, 1972, will go. The Gallup Poll published on July 16 showed President Nixon as having a current popularity rating of 56%. Over the last year he has shown popularity gains with all groups including those which traditionally vote Democratic such as Jews, Catholics, manual workers and blacks. The McGovern campaign people were immediately anxious to mend their fences with Mayor Daley. In fact, Mayor Daley issued a statement on 17 July, 1972, saying that as a loyal Democrat he would support the total Democratic ticket; and Senator McGovern thanked him. This Daley stand avoids the setting up of an autonomous and rival pro-McGovern Democratic organisation in Illinois. It remains to be seen, however, whether the former Humphrey supporters in Illinois will enter the fray pro-McGovern with any enthusiasm. Particular interest is lent to this contest as Cook County over the years has been one of the "weather-vane" counties in the sense that during the 20th century there is a distinct mathematical correlation between the results in Cook County (including Chicago city) and the United States as a whole, in a presidential election: "as Cook County votes, so does the Nation".

19. The trade unions are not going to supply moral or financial support for the Democratic candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency. The executive committee of the AFL-CIO voted 27 - 3 on July 19 to withhold its endorsement for all presidential candidates this year. This declaration of neutrality was a major victory for AFL-CIO president, George Meany. This is a set-back for McGovern.

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20. Many of the factors which have brought McGovern to his present success will be still on his side during the next four months. What got the soft-voiced farm-belt senator his success? Self-confidence, thorough organisation, competent staff, decisiveness as to his objective (nomination); this contrasts with Senator McCarthy in past four years. He had not merely Kathleen (Robert's daughter) and Kennedy family. He got former Kennedy staff - such as Gary Hart and Frank Mankiewicz. Nevertheless, the McGovern-Eagleton liberal twins and their programme lack appeal to the American centre and a dispassionate assessment suggests that if there is no national economic crisis to damage the incumbent Nixon's standing in the meantime, it will be exceedingly difficult indeed for McGovern and Eagleton to beat Nixon and his running mate in November.

Chargé d'Affaires a.i.