

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON  
FOR ASST SEC NELIGAN FROM AMBASSADOR

CORRESPONDENCE WITH CONGRESSMAN FISH - YOUR C382

THIS OFFICE HAS MAINTAINED REGULAR CONTACT WITH CONGRESSMAN FISH FOR MANY YEARS. AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, HE SERVED AS AN OFFICER IN THE U.S. EMBASSY IN DUBLIN IN THE EARLY FIFTIES AND HIS INTEREST IN IRELAND DATES FROM THEN. IN RECENT YEARS HE HAS BEEN GENERALLY IN SYMPATHY WITH AND SUPPORTIVE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MANY DISCUSSIONS I HAVE HAD WITH HIM HAVE BEEN (A) TO MAINTAIN HIS INTEREST IN IRELAND (B) TO PERSUADE HIM TO IDENTIFY WITH ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN IRELAND AND MOST RECENTLY (C) IN THE CONTEXT OF PRESSURE FOR CHANGE IN U.S. VISA POLICY TO CONVINCHE HIM THAT RUAIRI O BRADAIGH WAS NOT AN IRISH POLITICAL LEADER. IN THE LATTER CONNECTION, YOU WILL RECALL THAT FISH WAS CO-AUTHOR OF A CONGRESSIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT WHICH APPARENTLY SOUGHT TO CHANGE THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION TO REFUSE VISAS TO O BRADAIGH AND OTHERS.

2. IN A LENGTHY DISCUSSION WITH FISH IN OCTOBER, WE TALKED ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF CONTACT BETWEEN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES FROM BOTH PARTS OF IRELAND AND U.S. ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES. HE SAID HE HAD NO WISH TO IDENTIFY WITH ANYONE IN IRELAND OTHER THAN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AND CLAIMED TO BE UNAWARE OF ANY REASON WHY PEOPLE IN IRELAND SHOULD SOMETIMES CONNECT HIS INTEREST IN IRELAND WITH THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS OR INDEED ANY OTHER PERSON OR ORGANISATION. HIS INTEREST IN IRELAND WAS, HE SAID, A PERSONAL ONE ARISING OUT OF HIS LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE COUNTRY AND NO PERSON OR ORGANISATION HAD ANY GROUNDS FOR CLAIMING TO INFLUENCE HIS ACTIONS ON IRELAND OR ON ANY OTHER ISSUE.

3. IN VIEW OF THAT DISCUSSION, I THOUGHT IT USEFUL TO SEND HIM THE IRISH TIMES CLIPPINGS REFERRED TO IN THE LETTER OF 6 NOVEMBER. THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER WAS (A) OTHERS WERE CLAIMING CREDIT FOR HIS ACTIONS ON IRELAND AND (B) ONE OF THOSE WITH WHOM HE WAS PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED HAD RECENTLY BEEN CRITICISED BY NI POLITICIANS. IN NONE OF MY DISCUSSIONS WITH FISH HAS THE SUBJECT OF HIS INTEREST IN THE CASE OF THE BIRMINGHAM BOMBERS ARISEN IN ANY WAY. THE ONLY OTHER CORRESPONDENCE I HAVE HAD WITH HIM RELATED TO VISITS BY AN IRISH PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION AND BY THE TAOISEACH. ON BOTH OCCASIONS, HE WAS INVITED TO MEET THE VISITORS AND ON BOTH OCCASIONS HE ACCEPTED.

THE CAUCUS MISSES NO OPPORTUNITY IN RECENT MONTHS TO ATTACK ME PERSONALLY. SEE, FOR INSTANCE, THE MCMANUS COMMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE TAOISEACH'S RESIGNATION. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN DEROGATORY REFERENCES IN OTHER RECENT CAUCUS STATEMENTS AND BURNS-O'BRIEN HAS COMPLAINED TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT ABOUT MY ACTIVITIES WHICH HE CLAIMS CONSTITUTE A BREACH OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION. THE CAUCUS CONDUCTED SIMILAR CAMPAIGNS AGAINST LILLIS FROM TIME TO TIME. IN BOTH CASES, THEY SEEK, INTER ALIA, TO DISCREDIT THIS OFFICE IN THE EYES OF THE IRISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY WHICH AS WAS EVIDENT DURING THE RECENT VISIT OF THE TAOISEACH AND MINISTER IS INCREASINGLY BEGINNING TO EXPRESS RESERVATIONS ABOUT AND WITHDRAW SUPOPORT FROM THE CAUCUS.

5. I HAVE TODAY RECEIVED A LENGTHY LETTER D DATED 25 NOVEMBER SIGNED BY FR BRADY, FR FAUL AND FR MURRAY AND ENDING BY ASKING FOR QUOTE UNEQUIVOCAL ANSWERS TO TWO QUESTIONS (1) DID YOU MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO CONGRESSMAN FISH EITHER DIRECTLY REQUESTING HIM TO DROP HIS INTEREST IN THE BIRMINGHAM CASE OR IMPLYING THAT HE MIGHT BE WELL-ADVISED TO DO SO? (2) DID YOU AS PART OF SUCH REPRESENTATIONS CONVEY TO THE CONGRESSMAN CRITICISMS OF FATHER MURRAY MADE BY THIRD PARTIES WHICH COULD BE CONSTRUED AS LESSENING OR EVEN DESTROYING HIS CREDIBILITY? UNQUOTE YOUR VIEWS ON THE FORM OF REPLY IF ANY, WHICH MIGHT BE SENT WOULD BE APPRECIATED. THE FOLLOWING FORM OF REPLY MIGHT BE CONSIDERED QUOTE I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER OF 25 NOVEMBER AND IN REPLY WISH TO STATE THAT AT NO STAGE HAVE I MADE REPRESENTATIONS TO CONGRESSMAN FISH IN THE MATTER OF THE SIX IRISHMEN CONVICTED OF THE BIRMINGHAM BOMBINGS IN 1974 UNQUOTE

END OF MESSAGE

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