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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

To: Secretary to the Government.

*My views are at the end of
this note.*

From F. Murray.

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Visit by Friends of Ireland delegation
29 May - 2 June, 1982.

You mentioned yesterday evening that the format of this visit had been altered somewhat following consultation between the Taoiseach the Ceann Comhairle and the leaders of the Fine Gael and Labour Parties. It is understood that the Northern Ireland end of the trip is now to be regarded as a fact-finding exercise on the part of the Friends Group and as such outside the ambit of the visit proper insofar as we are concerned. It is also understood that the visit here now contains three dimensions:-

- (i) a parliamentary dimension which the Ceann Comhairle and the Cathaoirleach are responsible for,
- (ii) a Government dimension for which the Taoiseach is responsible, and
- (iii) a special section of the programme to be arranged by the other Party leaders (including a lunch).

Ms. Margaret Hennessy of the Department of Foreign Affairs informed me late yesterday evening that she had been advised by Mr. S. Phelan of the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas that following the meeting referred to the programme for the visit would now be as follows:

- (i) the Ceann Comhairle and Cathaoirleach to co-host a lunch for the Friends Group on Monday, 31st inst.,
- (ii) the Party leaders (other than the Taoiseach) would co-host a lunch for the visitors on Tuesday;
- (iii) the U.S. Ambassador would be asked to cancel the lunch arranged for Tuesday and would be asked to host a dinner instead on Tuesday night,
- (iv) the farewell dinner which the Minister for Foreign Affairs had agreed to host on Tuesday night would now be cancelled,

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- (v) the Taoiseach's dinner at Abbeville on Monday night the 31st inst. would stand as would the meeting between the Taoiseach and other members of the Government with the Friends Group on Monday morning.

Clarification in respect of most of the items referred to in the previous paragraph (other than the Taoiseach's commitments) is urgently required and this aspect is being pursued by the Department of Foreign Affairs this morning. As I mentioned to you yesterday it has not been found possible, despite our further "representations" on the subject to change the time of arrival of the visitors, which is now likely to be at 8.30 a.m. approximately on Saturday morning. The Friends Group will, however, touch down at Dublin Airport at that time and assuming their flight is on schedule will be at the Airport ^{at} approximately an hour before they depart for Belfast at 9.45 a.m. on an Avair flight to commence the Northern Ireland module of their trip. There is a possibility, but it is very slim, that the Friends might arrive here on Friday night. As indicated orally their time of arrival is dependent on two factors, the conclusion of budgetary business in the U.S. Congress where of course, Congressman Foley is Majority Whip and suitable flight connections. However, as things stand the visit will start and end in Dublin. The Northern Ireland module as indicated in paragraph 1 is now in a separate category.

In relation to the involvement of the Taoiseach and members of the Government in the visit we need decisions on the following items:

Arrival of Group at Dublin Airport

- (i) who will meet the Friends Group at Dublin Airport on Saturday morning at 8.30 a.m.? The Ceann Comhairle and officials from Foreign Affairs and Leinster House will be present but it is considered appropriate that a member of the Government or Minister of State should also be at hand to formally welcome

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the visitors on behalf of the Government. I would suggest the Minister of State at this Department, Mr. Bertie Aherne, T.D., subject to availability;

Meeting with the Taoiseach

Perhaps you would obtain the Taoiseach's agreement to have this meeting, which will take place at 10.30 a.m. on Monday next, in the Council Chamber as an exceptional gesture in view of the importance of the visitors.

Attendance at Taoiseach's meeting with Friends Group

Congressmen Foley, Shannon and Dougherty will be present together with their aides and Mr. Kirk O'Donnell the personal representative of Speaker O'Neill. The Taoiseach has already nominated the Minister for Foreign Affairs to attend this meeting. Would he wish to have any other Minister present? The question as to what official or officials might be present at the meeting has also to be settled.

Photo-call

- ✓ I presume the meeting here in Government Buildings would be an appropriate occasion for a photo-call. The Taoiseach will be meeting Senator Dodd on Tuesday at his office in Leinster House at 3.00 p.m. Would he wish to have a photo-call for that meeting?
- ✓

Brief

A brief for the meeting on Monday is in course of preparation and will be available to-morrow afternoon.

Conclusion

The proposal to cancel the lunch arranged by Ambassador Dailey and to ask him instead to host a

Recommended - the alternative of the conference room in Leinster House.

Perhaps Not.

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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He is on his way to the US.
now ~~that~~
~~contacted~~. All
invitations have
been issued
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dinner that night raises particular difficulties. Apart from the fact that the Ambassador may well feel aggrieved at the suggestion that his contribution to the programme should now be radically altered, we understand from the Department of Foreign Affairs that he is hosting a private dinner engagement on Tuesday night. For this apart from any other reason, the suggested change is, to say the least, somewhat awkward. While these proposed changes do not emanate from ourselves or the Department of Foreign Affairs, it might be advisable to suggest to those who are now re-arranging the programme not to pursue with the Ambassador the idea of his hosting a dinner on Tuesday night if this does not suit him.

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Taoiseach.

The idea of changes at

this late hour is, according to the American Embassy, causing "great distress" - and may not be possible.

I would suggest simply that

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the Party Leader host a lunch on Wednesday (instead of Tuesday which is already taken up for the American Embassy function, with invitations issued etc.) This would involve no other change in the programme - even if change were possible.

Whatever is finally agreed should be looked after by the Conn Comharc's Office, who are in charge of this operation. Others, including Foreign Affairs & ourselves, are there simply to advise and help.

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X. It would of course mean that the Party Leader would have to appoint nominees for the Luxembourg lunch on Wednesday. They will be going to do deal that night
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