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1- Ms. Hennessey
2- Mr. Burke

Misc.
F. 2.

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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To:

From:

CONFIDENTIAL

Conference on Northern Ireland at Georgetown University
School of Foreign Service

1. I discussed this proposal on 18th January with the Taoiseach, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs. It was decided that it would be inappropriate that this conference should take place in Washington during the week of St. Patrick's Day. As agreed, I telephoned Mr. A.J.F. O'Reilly and told him that in view of political developments it was not deemed appropriate that the conference should take place at the proposed time and that a more productive conference could be envisaged later in the year. He accepted this.

2. Mr. O'Reilly informed me that Dr. Kissinger had already been approached by the President of Georgetown University with a view to his accepting the role of overall Chairman. Mr. O'Reilly understood that Dr. Kissinger's reaction was positive in principle. Also, a number of Unionists - Taylor, Burnside and another member of the party presently visiting the U.S. - had been approached and had agreed to participate. They will now be informed that the conference has been postponed.

3. I received in the mail today a copy of an internal Ireland Fund memorandum about the proposed conference (designated a "symposium") which is circulated herewith. Mr. O'Reilly told me that he had also sent to me a copy of a letter he wrote to President Healy setting out the Ireland Fund's conditions for a conference. This has not yet reached me but I shall circulate it on receipt.

4. At the request of Mr. O'Reilly, I undertook to inform the Secretary of the Irish Committee of the Ireland Fund of the postponement decision.


Michael Lillis
20th January, 1982.

c.c. Taoiseach, Mr. Nally, Mr. Kirwan, Mr. Hourican.
Department of Foreign Affairs: P.S./M., Secretary, Mr. Neligan.
Attorney General
Special Adviser.

copy to:

Tony O'Reilly
Chuck Daly
Dan Rooney
William Shea
Argine Dalton
Judy Hayes
Michael Lillis ✓
(Jan. 7, 82)

HAS NORTHERN IRELAND A POLITICAL FUTURE?

A Symposium - organised by the School of Foreign Service,
University of Georgetown and sponsored by the Ireland Fund

It is not the ambition of the organisers that the Symposium should produce a solution or even the seeds of a solution to the Northern Ireland tragedy. The organisers do not themselves favour or foresee any particular solution to a conflict of such complexity and intractability. In proposing the Symposium, there are some quite limited and modest objectives in view:

- to provide an opportunity for the principal political protagonists to the crisis to hear each other's viewpoints, however irreconcilable, in an informal and confidential forum removed from the frequently destructive pressures of their respective political constituencies;
- to provide an opportunity to a small group of distinguished American columnists, editors and journalists to hear on an "off the record" basis, the full range of the views of those who provide political leadership on this issue in Britain and in Ireland, North and South, who, regardless of their differences, abhor terrorism as a political weapon.

The Chairman has invited as participants, up to a total of 30 senior representatives of the government ^{in Northern Ireland} and opposition, as well as the principal political parties in Northern Ireland on both sides of the community divide. He has also invited a total number of 20 American journalists to attend as observers all sessions of the Symposium except the final session. Concerned American politicians will also be invited to attend all or part of the Symposium.

The Symposium will comprise five sessions spaced on one and a half days beginning on Tuesday, March 16th:

March 16th

Morning Statements of positions by main parties.
Each party limited to one statement of
15 minutes. Moderator - Robin McNeill.
(This could be followed by a question
and answer session with a number of graduate
students of the Georgetown School of Foreign
Service).

March 16th (continued)

- Luncheon Discussion - informal
- Afternoon Four one hour sessions. Participants will respond to questions from Moderator, Barry Cowan, other participants and other American journalists.
- Evening Dinner (dress informal). On the record statement by Dr Kissinger only - but leading politicians from the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States will be invited.

March 17th (Saint Patrick's Day)

- Morning Informal sessions involving British and Irish participants only.

(Note: All statements, except the formal statement of the Chairman at the dinner on March 16th will be "off the record". Participants are requested not to release their own or other participants remarks to the media.)

The organisers share the anguish of millions of Americans at the seemingly endless human tragedy of Northern Ireland. They are aware that many fear that the crisis, however heart-rending, is unintelligible and hopelessly insoluble. They feel, however, that the problem, however intractable, however complex, however deeply embedded in ancient history, is a contemporary conflict about real intelligible interests.

They believe, in short, that the protagonists should be given a suitable opportunity to hear each other out and so their views and their differences should be responsibly and without attribution conveyed to Americans of goodwill.