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TELEPHONE
(212) 319-2555

CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND
515 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022-5494

May 7, 1986

Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2.

For attention of Mr Richard O'Brien, Press Section

West Coast Press Visit, April 23 to May 2, 1986

In the course of a final visit to the West Coast of the United States from April 23 to May 2. I visited five States and had sixteen meetings with representatives of eighteen publications with a combined total circulation of approximately five million. These publications represent some of the most important opinion formers in the States of Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona and Missouri. The programme for my visit is appended.

Specific publications which I met on this occasion were:

SEATTLE TIMES (c.223,000), SEATTLE POST INTELLIGENCER (c. 192,000), PORTLAND OREGONIAN (c. 290,000), SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE (c. 536,000), SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER (c. 148,700), OAKLAND TRIBUNE (c. 148,000) SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS (c. 246,000), SACRAMENTO BEE (c. 221,500), LOS ANGELES TIMES (c. 1.1 m), LOS ANGELES HERALD EXAMINER (c. 233,000), SAN DIEGO TRIBUNE (c. 121,000), SAN DIEGO UNION (c. 222,000), ARIZONA REPUBLIC (c. 283,550), PHOENIX GAZETTE (c. 123,000), KANSAS CITY STAR (c. 234,000), KANSAS CITY TIMES (c.282,000).

Also while in San Francisco I took the opportunity to meet with the two Irish American newspapers in that city, and the only ones on the West Coast, namely, the IRISH HERALD (c. 5,000) and THE IRISHMAN (c. 9,624).

Without exception, all of the contacts which I met were unqualified in their support of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and have expressed this support in various editorials and commentaries. All welcomed an updating on the status of the Agreement and current prospects for Northern Ireland. Some were hesitant and, in some cases, negative (e.g. Sacramento Bee) on the subject of U.S. aid to Ireland. Objections focussed on U.S. budgetary concerns and the belief that the U.S. should not be supporting two otherwise comparatively prosperous countries. Overall, however, the mood was a good

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one and concerns about U.S. aid were not widespread.

The main topic outside the Anglo-Irish Agreement that arose was the subject of the US/UK revised Extradition Treaty, which was raised in almost every location. While some had reservations about it, it seemed absolutely clear that the British could be assured of wide-spread major media editorial support for their efforts to have the Treaty ratified by the U.S. Senate. Many questions were raised as to how the subject of extradition is dealt with in Ireland. All seemed to accept that the Anglo-American treaty was a bilateral matter between those two Governments and outside the immediate remit of the Irish Government. The Los Angeles Times, for example, remarked to me that our position of non-involvement in this bilateral matter was "absolutely the right course".

In brief, the specific contacts and meetings which I had are as follows:

1. SEATTLE TIMES

The Seattle Times is an evening newspaper and with a circulation of almost 223,000 is the largest newspaper in the State of Washington. Its Sunday newspaper, which has a circulation of almost a half million copies, is one of the largest in the country. The State of Washington has an Irish American community approaching almost one million people and ranks 17th among states with large Irish American communities, according to U.S. Census figures.

The Times is part of the Knight Ridder chain and its editorial board is headed by Mr Dwight Schear, a former European correspondent of an American newspaper. It is the more important of the two newspapers in the Seattle area. Schear himself appeared to have a good interest in and awareness of the Irish issue and raised with me several topical issues related to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the role of the Church in Ireland and social and economic matters. As part of the Knight Ridder chain, they have access to reporting from newspapers such as the Philadelphia Inquirer, which maintains a London Bureau and whose Bureau Chief there, Jane Eisner, features periodically in the Seattle Times.

Schear said that the Irish community in Seattle was well assimilated and did not seem to represent a major lobbying group viz a viz the newspaper. The Irish in the Seattle area seem to be confined by and large to a group called, The Irish Heritage Club, the activities of which are mainly focussed in and around the St. Patrick's Day period. Seattle maintains links with Ireland through a Sister City relationship with Galway.

Schear was very sympathetic, friendly and chatty and was

prepared to spend time with me in covering the issues that were of concern to him.

2. SEATTLE POST INTELLIGENCER

With a circulation of almost 192,000, the morning Intelligencer provides active competition for the evening Seattle Times. It is part of the Hearst Newspapers chain but unlike other Hearst newspapers in the U.S. which, in many instances, show signs of decline, the Intelligencer seems to be a vibrant publication. Like many other major newspaper cities in the U.S. where two newspapers are involved there tends to exist joint production facilities, and such is the case between the Intelligencer and the Seattle Times. Nonetheless they maintain separate buildings and completely separate editorial policies.

At the Intelligencer I was met by Mr John de Yonge who, despite the name, is of Irish ancestry. He has been to Ireland and has met with several of the major political figures, including the Rev Ian Paisley. He expressed a desire to go to Ireland again and I welcomed his interest in this respect and asked him to contact us when his plans became firmer so that we can make whatever contacts were possible for him. He envisages as part of such a visit a series of columns in his newspaper on the Irish issue. He expressed particular interest in Church/State issues in Ireland. He remarked that while in the State of Washington there is a tremendously powerful Catholic Archdiocese, it is nonetheless one of the most liberal states in the country. For example, Washington was one of the first states in the U.S. to introduce legalised abortion.

As a newspaper, the Intelligencer is the more liberal of the two, although de Yonge says that with the current mood of conservatism in the country at the political level, it is having its effects on publications such as his own which are beginning to move further to the right as a reflection of the drift in that direction by American society.

de Yonge said that in the past he has received a fair amount of flack on the Irish issue although it has been less aggressive as of late. In particular, he mentioned an old IRA activist in the area named Peter Duffy, who was deeply involved in earlier years but whose activities seemed to have ceased recently.

3. PORTLAND OREGONIAN

With the demise of Portland's second newspaper in 1982, the Oregonian is now the only major newspaper in the State of Oregon with a daily circulation of 290,000 and a Sunday circulation of almost 400,000. It is an extremely important newspaper on the western seaboard and also has strong

influence in the States of Washington and Idaho. The State of Oregon has an Irish American community of more than half a million people and ranks 28th among states with large Irish American communities.

The Oregonian's editorial board is headed by Mr Robert Landauer, a dapper talkative type who has extremely strong views on the role of his newspaper and its position in Oregon society. He prefers not to use his newspaper to cheer events that have already taken place and would prefer to be in a position to comment in advance on anticipated breaking events. In this respect, his approach bears a striking similarity to the Wall Street Journal which prefers to be in a position to comment on events before they occur such as they did with the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The Oregonian is part of the very large Newhouse Newspaper chain and has an excellent focus on foreign affairs through regular usage of material from the New York Times, Boston Globe, Baltimore Sun and Philadelphia Inquirer, which it seems to use in preference to the more anonymous format of wire services such as Associated Press. There are at least three pages devoted daily to editorial and Op-ed sections and Landauer said that he would welcome any relevant pieces for the Op-Ed section that we might care to forward. There are clearly limitations in the Editorial Page itself given Landauer's particular style. He said that as a newspaper they have a primary focus on matters relating to Portland and that if there should be any local dimension that we wished to have commentary on, we should feel free to lobby him. Landauer's predecessor was an Irish American by the name of Herbert Lundy who apparently wrote frequently on Anglo-Irish affairs. Landauer himself has not done so, sensing what he called "ennui" among the community on the subject. He said that they had one of the largest letter pages of any newspaper in the region and received up to 30,000 letters annually; very few on the Irish issue.

4. SACRAMENTO BEE

The Sacramento Bee is part of the McClatchy chain of newspapers which has several other major newspapers in the California area. It has a daily circulation of 221,500 and a Sunday circulation of 255,700. The State of California has an Irish American population of 3.7 million and ranks number 1 among states with large Irish American communities.

With the Vice Consul at San Francisco, we visited the Bee and met with Robert Mott who is the editorial writer on Ireland. I had met Mott on previous visits to the West Coast. He is well-informed, having been to Northern Ireland, and is reasonable and accessible. Mott himself and the newspaper actively support the Anglo-Irish Agreement but do not support the giving of U.S. aid. He said that he felt, in the first

instance, that the budgetary situation of the U.S. made it obvious that such aid was inappropriate for two otherwise prosperous countries and, in the second instance, he felt that the U.S. should not give the lead on this issue and, if anything, should be following a lead already given by the European Community. He said that he had seen no evidence that specific European aid was likely to come on stream with any degree of immediacy, if at all. He said that he did not wish their views on the aid issue to be in any way confused with their enthusiasm for the Agreement as a whole. Mott also said that his newspaper was supportive of the Anglo-American Extradition Treaty and had editorialised as such.

Despite his strongly held views on the aid issue Mott, in general, is a good influence at the Bee and is obviously the preferred editorialist on Ireland. Another editorialist at the news-paper, Jim Brown, whom I had met previously, showed clear Noraid-type tendencies and now, fortunately, seems to have less of a role in the editorial affairs on Ireland.

5. OAKLAND TRIBUNE

This was my first call to the Oakland Tribune which, although immediately adjacent to the San Francisco area, has on previous occasions not been prepared to entertain a visit. On this occasion, again accompanied by the Vice Consul at San Francisco, we succeeded in meeting with the Editorial Page Editor, Jonathan Marshall. The Tribune has a circulation of about 148,000 per day and is, to my knowledge, the only newspapers in the U.S. with a black publisher. It has been struggling desperately for survival in recent years and now appears to show signs of renewed life. As a newspaper it clearly has its main focus in Oakland but is also widely available and circulated in San Francisco and other adjacent areas. Marshall, who expressed himself on first introduction as rather confused by the Northern Ireland issue, allowed us considerable time to talk with him and to go through many of the issues of contemporary Ireland with a particular emphasis on Northern Ireland itself. While he had some background on the Anglo-Irish Agreement and has written generally on it, he clearly welcomed the opportunity for a firsthand briefing and seems likely to welcome future contact.

6. SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

At the San Francisco Examiner newspaper, which is the second of the two major newspapers in San Francisco, I was met by Jim Heavey and Roy Barron of the editorial pages. Heavey is a longstanding contact who lived in Washington, D.C. for several years and maintained active contact with our Embassy there. He remains very constructive and well-informed and is the person who writes most Irish editorials at the newspaper. Barron is the newspaper's resident Unionist sympathiser who

tends to come at the issue from that perspective. Most of the discussion focussed on the Anglo-Irish Agreement although again there was considerable discussion of the U.S./U.K. Extradition Treaty following Mrs Thatcher's remarks on the BBC on that subject which were widely covered in local newspapers. The Examiner also features Warren Hinckle who has over the last couple of months established himself as a major irritant to the Irish American community and who has been insulting to Ireland in general and to Cork in particular. From previous reporting by our Consulate in San Francisco, it is clear that those on the editorial side of the newspaper are deeply embarrassed by Hinckle's meanderings but there is little they can do about him. To reassure us they have often expressed the view, and did so again on this occasion, that no one is immune from his vituperative style, including the Mayor of San Francisco. As with discussions with other newspapers, there was considerable interest in demonstrable concrete achievements by the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

7. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

The San Francisco Chronicle is one of the largest newspapers in the U.S. ranking 11th or so in the country. It has a circulation of almost 536,000 copies per day. As a newspaper it ranks poorly in terms of quality and content. The content in particular is sparse and limited. Most serious journalists recognise the limitations of the newspaper but also are aware of its huge economic prosperity and that the Chronicle obviously gives to San Franciscans what they want in terms of coverage. Its Editorial Page Editor is Jerry Burns, whom I had met previously and who took over in that capacity from Templeton Peck with whom we had maintained contact for many years. Mr Burns is a former City Editor of the newspaper, is of Irish American extraction, is very interested in the subject of Ireland and has a friendly and open disposition towards us. The newspaper's regular writer on Ireland, Tom Benet, could not attend the meeting but remains interested in the subject and anxious to be kept informed. Burns, who was aware that this was my last visit to the West Coast, expressed his thanks for the help and timely contacts over the last several years and offered similar access to our efforts in the future. While the newspaper is considerably larger than the San Francisco Examiner, the latter's editorial coverage on Ireland is far more indepth and far more in tune with the issues. Nonetheless, the Chronicle is a major voice and its continuing support is obviously both useful and necessary.

8. SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

The San Jose Mercury News, with a circulation of 246,000 copies, is part of the Knight Ridder newspaper chain and is an important newspaper in the San Jose Bay area. Our

main contact there is Jim Goldsborough, who is a serious newspaper man. Goldsborough asked for the meeting to focus on the question of extradition which was the pattern of discussion with most of our contacts on this occasion. As with most other newspapers, Goldsborough seemed inclined to support the Agreement on a "we owe this one to the British" basis. Goldsborough is a former European correspondent for an American newspaper and other matters discussed included the question of the Agreement, the Libyan affair and Church/State issues in Ireland.

9. LOS ANGELES TIMES

The Los Angeles Times is one of the most important and influential newspapers in the U.S. Its daily circulation of over a million copies also ranks it among the top five U.S. newspapers.

I had lunch at the Times with Mr Alvin Shuster who is the Foreign Editor of the newspaper, Mr Tim Rutten, Assistant National Editor and Mr Louis Fleming, an editorial writer who has written on Ireland over the years. Following a general discussion on the Agreement, the subject of extradition arose again and Shuster in particular expressed his understanding of our position that this Agreement between the British and the Americans was a bilateral matter in which we are not and need not be involved. Shuster is a major influence at the Los Angeles Times having almost completely reorganised its foreign staff, since taking over the position of Foreign Editor about two years ago. He expressed himself happy with Tyler Marshall's performance in London and is clearly also directing the newspaper in a greater way than ever towards Central and South America. The editorship of the Los Angeles Times will arise in the next couple of years and it is generally felt that Shuster is one of several candidates in line for that job.

He has always been helpful, accessible and hospitable to Irish Government spokesmen as has Tim Rutten, who has Irish connections, including having spent some time in Trinity. Louis Fleming writes substantially on Irish affairs and in particular was responsible for several timely and pointed editorials over the last few years which supported the Irish Government's agenda prior to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Fleming will only be at the newspaper for two years more before retirement but should obviously be sought out in the meantime. While at the Times I also had an opportunity to meet the newly-appointed Assistant Foreign Editor, Mr Simon Li, who came to the Times via the Philadelphia Inquirer.

10. LOS ANGELES HERALD

The Los Angeles Herald, by comparison with the Los Angeles Times, is not a priority newspaper in the Los Angeles area.

It is part of the Hearst newspaper chain and would appear to be struggling for survival. It has a circulation of 233,000 per day and its editorials on Ireland now appear to be written by Jim Kinsella, whom I met and who was accompanied by Op-Ed Editor, Ed Fishbein. The former Editorial Page Editor of the newspaper was Mr Stanley Cloud who appears to have been relieved of his duties. Kinsella's influence at the newspaper is somewhat worrisome. On first contacting him to arrange an appointment, he suggested that perhaps the newspaper could have a joint meeting with myself and members of the Irish American community. On checking this out further, it transpires that those he had in mind were Noraid-type people and I declined, preferring instead to have a direct one-and-one contact. Kinsella says he is not a member of any Irish American group but is obviously in need of continuing contact and coaching. His editorial on St. Patrick's Day was, by the standards of American editorials, unique and had dimensions to it which would appear to suggest that Kinsella is deeply naive or deeply impressionable.

From a newspaper that never hardly touched the Irish issue, their editorial on St. Patrick's Day suggested that "True peace.....will only come with a just solution in which Wolfe Tone's vision of a sovereign and united Ireland is recognised". Kinsella himself is young and obviously interested. I said that I was surprised that he had given so much scope in a follow-up series of letters after St. Patrick's Day to hardliners in the Los Angeles area. He replied simply by saying that they were the only people to write and that they never heard from any other point of view. This tends to be a problem generally in the U.S. (and presumably elsewhere also) where those of moderate disposition tend not to be engaged in letter writing campaigns to the media. Kinsella and the Herald Examiner will need careful monitoring in the coming months and should continue to be included in any visits to the Los Angeles area.

11. SAN DIEGO TRIBUNE

At the San Diego Tribune I was met by Ralph Bennet who is the Editorial Page Editor, Jonathan Freedman, editorial writer and Joe Holly. Bennet is of Irish American extraction and I had met him previously on visits to San Diego. He has a good interest in the Irish issue, quotes Yeats liberally and writes substantively from time to time on the issue. He will, however, be leaving the newspaper in the near future on retirement grounds and his place will be taken by Holly, who said comparatively little on this occasion, but who generally seems well disposed. For our purposes, however, the constancy of interest at the newspaper seems to reside with Jonathan Freedman who is married to a Northern Irish woman. He himself has no Irish connections. At the meeting there was a well-structured discussion which was focussed also on

their awareness of local support in San Diego for Noraid and the Provisional IRA. They applauded the Anglo-Irish Agreement and were impressed by the manner in which it had come about.

12. SAN DIEGO UNION

The San Diego Union is the larger of the two newspapers in San Diego and has a circulation of 222,000 copies per day. Its editorial board is headed by Mr Ed Nicholls whom I met for the first time. In general, my contact with this newspaper in the past has been associated with difficulties in getting them seized with the issue and eliciting from them expressions of interest in Ireland and Anglo-Irish affairs. Their approach, and the contrasting Tribune's approach, compares somewhat similarly to that of the two San Francisco newspapers with the smaller of the two in both instances being in the vanguard of interest and substantive comment. I reviewed with Nicholls our general concerns relating to San Diego where it is generally felt that there are active cells of IRA/Noraid support and said that we would welcome whatever opportunities present themselves at his newspaper to comment appropriately on evolving Irish issues, particularly as they pertain to Northern Ireland. My contact with Nicholls mirrored a similar experience that I had in San Diego with other editorial page personnel and particularly with Mr Ed Fike who, while hospitable, was difficult to move constructively on serious Irish political issues. For the future, however, the newspaper remains an important one and should continue to be cultivated by whatever means present themselves.

13. ARIZONA REPUBLIC/PHOENIX GAZETTE

The Arizona Republic and Phoenix Gazette operate out of the same establishment in Phoenix and between them represent the major media influence in the State of Arizona. They have respective circulations of 283,550 and 123,000. They have as their publisher an Irish American named Pat Murphy. Arizona, according to the 1980 Census, contains an Irish American population of nearly half a million people.

This was the first visit by a Press Officer to Arizona in many years. I was met by Mr Jay Brashear, who is editor of the Editorial Page of the Phoenix Gazette and Mr Phil Sunkel, who holds a similar position at the Arizona Republic. The Republic would constitute the newspaper of record in Arizona and is a serious and well put together publication. The Gazette is also of quite considerable quality but is second-rank to the Republic. Both Sunkel and Brashear extended a good opportunity to discuss, at quite some length, Anglo-Irish issues, the issue of extradition and Irish American affairs generally. Neither Brashear nor Sunkel, while themselves having a good awareness of the Irish issue, felt

under any local constituency pressures on the issue. Both nonetheless have editorialised favourably, particularly on the Agreement, and welcomed the opportunity for a face-to-face contact with a Government spokesman. Brashear and Sunkel are two serious journalists and should continue to be kept informed and visited as frequently as circumstances and budget allow.

14. KANSAS CITY STAR/KANSAS CITY TIMES

On my way home from the West Coast I stopped at Kansas City, Missouri and made contact with the Kansas City Star and the Kansas City Times. I had an opportunity to meet briefly with the Editorial Page Editor of the Kansas City Times but more particularly with Mr Al Bohling who writes editorials on Ireland and international affairs generally for the Times and the Star. We were joined for part of our discussion by Mr Sean Hillen, a young journalist working in the newspaper who comes from Northern Ireland and who worked previously with the Belfast Telegraph and the Irish Independent. There was a lengthy discussion on a wide range of Irish issues and Hillen in particular was well disposed and moderate in his views and supportive of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Bohling himself has been with the newspaper for many years, has travelled extensively through Europe, although never to Ireland. He expressed an interest in going there at some stage in the future and I welcomed this interest. Both the Kansas City Star and Times are the major voice in Missouri having respective circulations of 234,000 and 282,000 per day. They are owned by Capital Cities/ABC and, in a State which ranks about 11th in terms of an Irish population of approximately 1.1 million, clearly have an important part to play in communications with that community. While visits to Kansas City newspapers have been comparatively rare, it certainly seems worthwhile to maintain face-to-face contact as often as circumstances permit.

IRISH HERALD

Veteran John Whooley, whom I make a point of meeting on all my visits to San Francisco, continues to preside over his production of the Irish Herald, although its future must surely be in considerable doubt. Whooley is a veteran IRA volunteer who runs a travel agency in San Francisco, and was more part of the Irish American community in former years than he is today. He has always appreciated the fact that we take time out with him and while these contacts have always generated a large amount of good will and support, he still continues to reflect the Caucus line in his newspaper. On this occasion, however, he made some noteworthy disparaging comments on the Rev. Sean McManus of the Irish National Caucus relating to McManus's position on the Agreement which may auger a better disposition towards taking a more critical view of McManus's activities in the future.

THE IRISHMAN

This newspaper is now run and edited by Mr Tom McDonagh, who is Irishborn and has been living in the San Francisco area for many years. Following Niall O'Dowd's departure from the Irishman to establish "Irish America Magazine" in New York, McDonagh appears to have taken on a journalistic role with the Irishman for which he has no obvious talent. While the newspaper still appears to attract a reasonable amount of advertising for which they charge considerable fees, the paper shows signs of a great dearth of imagination and may not survive unless there is an injection of good talent to its ranks. On the whole, McDonagh seems anxious to maintain good relations with official Ireland and to overcome any disagreement or uneasiness which he feels may have existed during O'Dowd's period at the newspaper.



Michael Collins
Press & Information Officer

c.c. Ambassador, Washington
M. Burke, Washington
Consul General, SF
Consul General, Chicago
J. Harman, London