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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

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*Mr. Curran,  
cc Ad. Division  
B. McCauley  
05/27/87*

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

*1/3/7*

18 May 1987

Secretary  
Department of Foreign Affairs

Attention: Mr Bernard Davenport  
Anglo-Irish Section

Dear Bernard

1. I met Dean Curran of the State Department for lunch last week. He holds a position as one of five special assistants to Undersecretary Armacost. Curran is a career foreign service officer who will shortly replace Tom Gewecke as Deputy Chief of Mission in Dublin. He has served in Paris and Brussels in the past.
2. Curran freely admitted that Gewecke has had a difficult time in working with Ambassador Heckler and said that the last year in particular had been extremely unpleasant resulting in Gewecke seeking a transfer. He is being moved to the DCM position at the US Embassy to Belgium.
3. Curran said that he was fully briefed on Irish foreign policy but was anxious to get my assessment of the various groups involved in Irish affairs on Capitol Hill. I briefed him in detail on the various groups and personalities involved. He spoke in favourable terms of our activities on the Hill and said that it had been helpful in steering US politicians in a constructive direction. He asked for my assessment of how the State Department had approached the issue in recent years. I pointed out that there had been a clear desire on the part of the State Department not to become involved in the issue or take sides between the policies pursued by the Irish and British Governments. The Anglo-Irish agreement had however provided a perfect vehicle for the State Department to support an enterprise involving both governments. I referred in particular to Ambassador Ridgway's contribution and the very positive line she has taken in congressional hearings involving the securing of a US contribution to the Fund. Mr Curran commented that the State Department has traditionally been "anglophile" in its approach and the strong and positive interest generated on the Hill, and also at Presidential level, had forced the State Department to shift from its totally anglophile approach to the issue. He went on to say that a number of

embassies here had successfully worked the Hill in order to influence congressional attitudes (Israel was mentioned, as well as Greece and Turkey). He personally saw this as a constructive development as the State Department was not a "powerful" force on the Hill and some Embassies were in a better position to influence Congress towards a constructive approach. The policy to emerge might not always be one that the State Department agreed with, but on balance it should not be a subject for complaint. I commented that our involvement on the Hill arose originally in the 1970's from a need to inform members of Congress of the situation as seen by successive Irish Governments and to counter some of the more radical elements here who were pushing their views with individual congressmen and senators in their home districts.

4. Mr Curran mentioned that he had several long conversations with Ambassador Heckler before it was agreed that he should go to Dublin (a post he has actively sought). He expressed the view that Ambassador Heckler, as a long-time politician, was prone to greater "intervention and activism" than perhaps a career diplomat would be, but he felt that she had become more aware in recent times of the sensitivity required of an Ambassador and had accordingly changed her attitude to some degree.

Yours sincerely



Martin Burke  
Political Counselor

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