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VISIT OF FRIENDS OF IRELAND, LED BY CONGRESSMAN DONNELLY

STEERING NOTE

This visit involves a small group of members of the Friends of Ireland led by Congressman Brian Donnelly. The other two are Congressmen Ben Dwyer (New Jersey) and Pat Williams (Montana), both Democrats. Donnelly will also visit Northern Ireland on 20/21 January and will travel to Galway on 22 January. The group will be accompanied by Kevin Petersen who formerly worked for Speaker Tip O'Neill and now works for the present Speaker, Jim Wright.

Congressman Donnelly is Chairman of the Friends of Ireland in the US House of Representatives. He has been consistently responsive to Irish interests and in recent years has become very well known in Ireland because of his activities in seeking immigration reform. The two other visiting Congressmen are on the Executive Committee of the Friends of Ireland.

While this visit by Congressman Donnelly and his party is of course very welcome and useful, we would hope that a major visit by the Friends of Ireland, led by Speaker Wright, can be arranged in the reasonably near future. Donnelly shares our view that it is important to engage Speaker Wright's personal interest in Irish issues and that this can be done most effectively through a visit. (In addition to regular contacts and briefing of Speaker Wright, we have recently had his Irish ancestry traced and an elaborate genealogical chart and record-book has been prepared.) It will be useful for Donnelly to carry back the message to the Speaker that an early visit on his part would be particularly welcome.

The main areas on which Donnelly and his party are likely to focus are immigration, the International Fund, and MacBride Principles/fair employment.

Immigration

Donnelly is convinced that the US immigration laws must be changed so as to allow legal entry for more Irish people. In 1986, he was successful in having the "Donnelly visa" programme adopted. This programme provides 10,000 visas for European countries and Irish applicants managed to win approx. 3,000 of these. (However, the uptake of "Donnelly" visas has been disappointing with almost $\frac{1}{3}$ of the successful Irish applicants refusing them.) The Congressman will be visiting the US Embassy during this trip to see the Donnelly visa programme in operation.

The main focus of interest in the immigration area at present is the progress of the Donnelly/Kennedy Bills (almost identical) which were introduced in Congress on 30 July 1987. These Bills seek to establish a points system which would favour countries which were adversely affected by the 1965 immigration law (i.e., European countries). A new category of immigrants (50,000 per year) would be created and Irish people could expect to receive a significant share of this new allocation.

It was clear from the outset that the Kennedy/Donnelly Bills would not have an easy ride through Congress. After the difficult passage of the major 1986 Immigration Bill (which dealt with illegal immigration) there is a widespread feeling in Congress that immigration is a Pandora's Box which should not be re-opened. There is also, inevitably, resentment by Hispanic and other groups at what is perceived as a Bill directed to European interests. More specifically, the suggestion is made by some opponents of the Bill that Kennedy and Donnelly are seeking merely to advance Irish interests under cover of more general provisions. (Tactically, therefore, the proponents of the Bill have been anxious not to focus too much on the Irish interest in, and potential benefit from, the Bill.)

The current position is that the Bill has had two hearings in the relevant Senate sub-committee (the Immigration Sub-Committee of the Judiciary Committee) and is expected to come before the main Judiciary Committee at the end of January. If passed by that Committee it will then go before the full Senate. The Bill must make a similar journey through the House of Representatives. If identical Bills are not passed in both Houses (a real risk, as some-fairly minor-amendments have already been made to the Senate version and more can be anticipated), the two versions will have to be reconciled in a House-Senate Conference. This must all be done by the end of November 1988 when the next Congressional elections take place. If this deadline is not met, the Bills lapse and work must begin all over again in the new Congress.

It will be useful to have Congressman Donnelly's current assessment of the prospects for adoption of the Bill and to discuss with him how we can best assist in securing its passage.

International Fund

The Friends of Ireland in Congress were instrumental in securing the US contribution to the International Fund, and indeed had to overcome a distinct reluctance in at least parts of the Administration. However, they are unhappy at the failure of other possible donors, particularly the EEC, to contribute to the Fund. In December 1987, Congressman Donnelly, as Chairman of the Friends of Ireland, sent a letter to the Danish Foreign Minister (the then Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the EEC) requesting an EEC contribution to the Fund.

It is clear that given the US budgetary situation and the lack of other donors, it will be extremely difficult to secure further US contributions beyond the initial 3 year programme. It would be useful to indicate to the Congressmen our efforts to date to secure EEC funding, and our pressure on the British to change their attitude on this matter.

We have included in the programme for Congressman Donnelly and his party a visit to Dundalk in connection with the initiation of an IDA business incubator unit financed by the International Fund. We would hope that US Congressional commitment to the Fund can be reinforced by providing this kind of practical illustration of the Fund's work.

Fair Employment/MacBride Principles

The Congressmen are likely to raise this issue in view of its high profile in Irish American politics. Congressman Donnelly was one of the Friends of Ireland group who met Tom King during his American visit last Autumn. Donnelly told King of the serious concern in Irish America about the continuation of discrimination in the North and the need for new effective legislation. We understand that he was not particularly impressed by King's reassurances on the matter.

The MacBride Principles have to date been adopted in five US states and Bills have been tabled in a large number of other States. The Friends of Ireland in Congress have so far taken a cautious approach - largely reflecting John Hume's attitude. However, there is a growing feeling - which Donnelly may voice - that unless effective action is taken very soon to end employment discrimination in Northern Ireland, some legislative initiative should be undertaken by the Friends group in Congress.

Donnelly might be told of the importance we attach to the fair employment issue, the pressure we have exerted for the introduction of effective new legislation in Northern Ireland, and our sense that the MacBride campaign has been very influential in concentrating the minds of the relevant decision-makers in Northern Ireland, and indeed in Britain, on the need for change.

Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs
15 January 1988

0074B

CURRICULUM VITAE: BRIAN DONNELLY

He was born on 2 March 1942 in Dorchester, Boston where he still lives. He is a Catholic and is married (Virginia). He is a graduate of Boston University.

Career: Director of Youth Activities, Dorchester YMCA
1968-70;

High School and Trade School Teacher 1969-72;

Massachusetts House of Representatives 1973-78.

Congress He was elected to Congress from the Eleventh Congressional District of Massachusetts in 1978. Donnelly has a moderate attitude on cultural issues; on economic and foreign issues he is solidly liberal. He served during the first Reagan term on the Budget Committee and in 1985 he won a seat on the powerful Ways and Means Committee. He was greatly assisted in his attempt to get on both Committees by the former Speaker Tip O'Neill. Donnelly has generally supported Democratic Party positions in Congress.

Anglo-Irish Section

14 January 1988

3328M

Curriculum Vitae

Congressman Pat Williams (Montana) Democrat.

He was born 30 October 1937 in Helena. He attended the University of Montana and the University of Denver, graduating in 1961. He is a Catholic and is married (Carol).

Career

He is by profession a Public School teacher.

Member Montana House of Representatives 1967-1969

Member of Hubert Humphrey Presidential Campaign 1968

Executive Assistant to US Representative John Melcher 1969-1971

Montana State Co-ordination Family Education Programme 1971-1978

~~Elected US House of Representatives 1978 for the first district of Montana. Re-elected in each election since.~~

1986 General	Pat Williams (D)	98,501 (62%)
	Don Allen (R)	61,230 (38%)

Committees in Congress

He is a member of the Budget Committee and the Education and Labour Committees.

He is regarded as a liberal Democrat on economic, social and foreign policy matters.

Anglo-Irish Section,
14 January 1988.

0071B

Curriculum Vitae

Congressman Bernard J. Dwyer (D) (New Jersey).

He was born 24 January 1921 in Perth Amboy. His present home is in Edison, New Jersey. He is a Catholic and is married (Lilyan).

Career

Navy in World War II

Insurance Executive 1945-1980

Edison Township Council 1958-1974

Mayor Edison 1970-1974

New Jersey Senate 1974-1980

Elected to US House of Representatives 1980-1988

1986 General	Bernard Dwyer (D)	67,460 (69%)
	John Scalamonti (R)	28,286 (29%)

He is a member of the House Appropriation Committee, the House Standards of Official Conduct Committee and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

He is regarded as a liberal Democrat on economic, social and foreign policy matters.

Anglo-Irish Section,
14 January 1988.

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FRIENDS OF IRELAND

1. Present Position

The Friends of Ireland form the largest and most important Irish organisation in the U.S. Congress. They number about 160 Senators and Congressmen including some of the most influential figures in both Houses of Congress. The FOI have introduced a number of resolutions and initiated debates in Congress on Northern Ireland. Most notably, in December 1985, the House and Senate adopted a Concurrent Resolution submitted by leading members of the Friends commending the British and Irish Governments for signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement and declaring the willingness of Congress to work with the President to provide both economic and financial support for the Agreement. The Congressional Resolution together with the strong pressure exerted by former Speaker O'Neill was instrumental in encouraging the Administration to come forward with a proposal for a US contribution to the International Fund. The former Speaker tabled a much more favourable Bill which eventually formed the basis of the American contribution to the International Fund.

2. Irish Government Position

The Friends promote a moderate, non-violent approach to the Northern Irish question, and reflect to a large extent Irish Government views. Successive Irish Governments have cultivated strong links with the group since its foundation.

3. SDLP position

The SDLP have maintained close links with the Friends Group. This is particularly true in the case of John Hume who frequently travels to the United States to meet with leading members of the Friends of Ireland.

4. Future Action

Members of the Friends Group have been increasingly active on the issue of immigration reform in recent years. Following Congressman Brian Donnelly's 1986 legislation which provided an extra visa allocation for applicants from countries disadvantaged since the 1965 immigration legislation, a Bill was introduced in July 1987 by Senator Edward Kennedy in the Senate and Congressman Brian Donnelly in the House of Representatives which would be particularly beneficial to Irish applicants. The Bill is presently before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The Irish Government supports this Bill and has lobbied Congressional members to help secure its passage.

Anglo-Irish Section,
January 1988.

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