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| Reference Code: | 2018/28/2371 |
| Creation Dates: | 16 November 1988 |
| Extent and medium: | 3 pages |
| Creator(s): | Department of Foreign Affairs |
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CONFERENCE VISIT OF SENATORS KENNEDY AND DODD
AND MAYOR FLYNN

WORKING LUNCH, 17 NOVEMBER 1988

STEERING NOTE

1. Senators Kennedy and Dodd may have some interesting views on the conduct of the Presidential and Congressional campaigns and on the likely priorities of the U. S. Administration during the next four years. Balancing the disappointing Dukakis showing, the results of the elections to the Senate and House of Representatives were considerably better for the Democrats who increased their majorities in both. All the major figures in the Friends of Ireland group in Congress were re-elected with the exception of Congressman Boland, who retires this year. In Massachusetts, Senator Kennedy was comfortably re-elected to the Senate for another six year term (Senator Dodd is not due for re-election until 1992).
2. The major issues relating to Northern Ireland which are likely be raised by the visitors are ;
 - a) The review of the working of the Conference and the prospects for political progress in Northern Ireland
 - b) The MacBride Principles campaign, and the related question of fair employment legislation in Northern Ireland
 - c) The International Fund for Ireland

3. Conference Review

Senators Kennedy and Dodd will no doubt enquire how the Government would wish to see the review process develop and, in the light of continuing unionist opposition to the Agreement, what prospects exist for political dialogue between the principal parties. We might emphasise our commitment to, and our persuasion of the British to accept, a very thorough review which will examine the shortcomings as well as the achievements of the Agreement. We hope to emerge with a wide ranging agenda for future action, which will help to revitalise the process. The prospects of Unionist participation are uncertain. Realistically, we do not expect the Unionists to participate in the review process as such, but we have deliberately signalled our flexibility as to how views might be fed in during the review period.

4. MacBride Principles / Fair Employment

To date, the MacBride Principles have been adopted by ten U.S. State legislatures, including Massachusetts and Connecticut. Concern on this issue has been evident in Congress in the last session. The Donnelly Bill introduced into the House of Representatives earlier this year, offering both penalties and incentives to U.S. investors in Northern Ireland, attracted wide support among the Friends of Ireland group in Congress. Donnelly has not so far pushed his bill, and sees it more as a pressure point on the British than a text likely to be adopted. Congressman Joe Kennedy has been actively pursuing the question of discrimination in Shorts, inserting an amendment to a defence appropriations bill with the effect of preventing the award of contracts to firms which did not meet anti-discrimination criteria. Senator Kennedy was active in helping his nephew on the Shorts issue and the Taoiseach might note our appreciation of his role. The Taoiseach might emphasise that the Government has been

seeking the early adoption by the British Government of effective fair employment legislation in Northern Ireland. Proposals for such legislation have been outlined by Secretary of State King in recent months and the Government is encouraged that movement in the right direction is taking place. It remains to be seen however if the scope of the legislation which will be brought forward responds adequately to the dimensions of the problem.

5. International Fund

In view of the recent earmarking by Congress of a fourth annual contribution by the U. S. to the International Fund (a sum of between \$10m. and \$35m. was earmarked but indications from the State Department are that they will provide no more than \$10m.), the question of the future application of the Funds resources, and the prospects for wider international support may be raised. In relation to international support, in addition to the Canadian and New Zealand contributions, the Taoiseach might like to point to the recent decision by the European Community to allocate 15m. ecu (\$18m.) per annum over the next three years, thus securing a financial base for the Fund into the next decade. As regards the application of the Funds resources, the developing focus of the Fund on disadvantaged areas such as West

Belfast, through a special programme for this purpose, promises to concentrate the beneficial effects of the Fund in a way which is visible and relevant to the nationalist community in Northern Ireland.

Anglo-Irish Section
Department of Foreign Affairs
16 November 1988