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S.3/19

*Com to NORAI File
7 PA on No 23*

November 11, 1988

*M. H. McCarthy
18/11
21.11.88*

The Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs

Attention: Ms. Ann Anderson

Subject: NORAI/Sinn Fein

I gave a brief overview of NORAI's activities in my minute of June 8, 1988. The picture has not changed since and Noraid's activities in Boston have been low key and the Irish community by and large have little time or patience with Noraid's agenda. Indeed Noraid set back their organisation by backing behind the scenes an Irish festival which took place in Boston from 24 - 28 June. Because of unfavourable publicity the festival failed to realise its anticipated financial bonanza for the organisers. In apparent retaliation the main organiser of the festival, John Hurley, a prominent Noraid member, took out a full page advertisement in the Irish Voice and Irish People denouncing in intemperate language Mayor Flynn, Cardinal Law and myself for our alleged role in undermining the festival. This advertisement was very poorly received in the Irish community.

In a new insight into Noraid Niall O'Dowd, Editor and Publisher of the Irish Voice, has confided in me that Noraid is about to undergo a radical and major restructuring. O'Dowd's view is that the Sinn Fein leadership in Ireland has lost all confidence in Noraid. Noraid is perceived by Sinn Fein to be riddled with informers. Martin Flannery's support for Republican Sinn Fein is a real irritant to them whilst nobody seems to be able to work or get on with Martin Galvin.

According to O'Dowd, Sinn Fein intend to open an international branch office in New York and also in time to establish a number of radio programmes in prominent Irish centres. Evidently with the flow of funds from Noraid down to a trickle Sinn Fein strategy is to target successful recently arrived emigrants particularly from the North who are prepared to make direct donation drops to runners from Ireland rather than laundering the money through the outdated and inefficient Noraid organisation as it now exists. O'Dowd believes that Sinn Fein has already been successful in securing financial support from successful young Irish contractors, particularly in Philadelphia and because of this strategy now feel

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it is time to reappraise their approach to North America.

O'Dowd states that once the Irish Voice have fleshed out their story more (this could take up to a month), the Voice will go public on this story. In the meantime the Voice is trying to put its hands on a major document which should substantiate its inside track on this story.

Brendan Scannell

Brendan H. Scannell
Consul General

BHS/cad

cc Ambassador, Washington