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This is not a letter

CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND

Boston

cc P.S. Tavis  
PSM  
M. Walker; PES  
3 Counselors AI  
P.S.

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Confidential

June 3, 1988

The Secretary  
Department of Foreign Affairs Attention: Mr. D. Gallagher

Governor Dukakis' meeting with John Hume

Mr. John Hume spent last week in Boston primarily for the launch of the Irish Trade Festival organised by Boston Ireland Ventures (see separate report). During the course of the week the Consulate was able to arrange calls for Mr. Hume with several prominent politicians in the Boston area, the most notable being Governor Dukakis.

Governor Dukakis, who spends most of his time out of State on the Presidential campaign trail, agreed despite his hectic schedule to meet Mr. Hume at very short notice. Mr. Dukakis takes a keen interest in Irish affairs and has always been at pains to stress his availability where possible to meet visiting Irish dignitaries on the three occasions I have met him since arriving in Boston last August. Mr. Dukakis is comfortable in dealing with Irish issues and he feels that the success of his political apprenticeship in Massachusetts owes much to his exposure to political figures of Irish descent, politicians who in effect have dominated the political scene in Massachusetts for almost a century.

While it had been some years since Mr. Dukakis and Mr. Hume had met the atmosphere was most cordial and relaxed. Mr. Dukakis inquired how the issue of fair employment was developing in Northern Ireland. Mr. Hume outlined the SDLP position while I explained the Irish Government stance and in particular the Government's reaction to the British White Paper on Fair Employment. Mr. Dukakis added that clearly the British did not understand the "concept of affirmative action" and that he had been getting feelers from British journalists that his interpretation of affirmative action was not being well received in London. Mr. Hume raised the Fair Employment Bill tabled by Brian Donnelly in Congress which provided for job creation as well as for penalties for discrimination in employment. Mr. Dukakis stated that given the strength of the U.S. economy particularly in the New England area, incentives such as tax breaks would be small sacrifices to pay to help the economic situation in Ireland.

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Mr. Hume updated Mr. Dukakis on the situation in Northern Ireland and particularly on his party's discussions with Sinn Fein. Mr. Hume sketched out the SDLP approach in their talks to Sinn Fein on the following lines: the futility of violence which affected the Nationalist community most, the dangers involved in a British withdrawal or commitment to withdrawal from Ireland, and the shift in the political process in Northern Ireland and Britain which has been achieved through the New Ireland Forum and the Anglo Irish Agreement

Mr. Hume said he was reasonably optimistic on two fronts, firstly the Unionist leadership was beginning to look towards Dublin rather than London for the first time and secondly Sinn Fein on the other hand was being offered the chance to involve themselves in the political process if they renounced violence and pursued the democratic process. Mr. Hume added that if the present efforts at dialogue between the different groups turned out successfully one of the first steps would be a conference convened by the Irish Government where all parties would sit down together.

Mr. Dukakis referred to his statement at the Irish American Presidential Forum in New York in April last and added that he felt it had been well received.

On his presidential campaign Mr. Dukakis stated he was taking one day at a time and likened his task to a marathon runner. The pace was hectic and he felt that brief interludes in his office from the campaign trail helped him to maintain a perspective on issues.

There is at present a noticeable buzz in the Dukakis camp in Massachusetts, not alone is it felt that the Democratic Presidential nomination is wrapped up but that the campaign strategy being followed will continue to strengthen and that Governor Dukakis will be well poised to beat George Bush on presidential voting day in November. Should Governor Dukakis make it to the White House it can be expected that many of his top administrators and political aides will follow him to Washington.



Brendan Scannell  
Consul General

BHS/cad