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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

2234 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N. W.

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20008

8 April 1991

Mr Dermot Gallagher  
Assistant Secretary  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
Dublin

Dear Assistant Secretary

Subj: NORAID's most recent Financial Returns

NORAID, to comply with statutory regulations governing "foreign principals", are required to file bi-annual returns with the US Department of Justice. The most recent return filed by NORAID (attached) covers the six-month period ending June '89 - January '90.

There is significant new information in this return. In particular, it purports to show a change in ownership or control of NORAID (Question 1(b)(2)). The NORAID filing names three new trustees (Q4) and in addition, lists the officials who have ceased to be members arising out of the split between NORAID and the Friends of Irish Freedom group.

Most significantly, NORAID state that their new board of officers has "no affiliation or relationship with the provisional wing of the IRA" and that NORAID is affiliated solely with An Cumann Cabhrach. NORAID also state that none of the current board members participated in any of the activities that supported the U.S. court order compelling NORAID by judicial decree to list the provisional wing of the IRA as a foreign principal (Q2). This line is reinforced in their reply to question (25B) of Exhibits and Attachments, where it is stated, "we no longer believe we are compelled to list the provisional wing of the IRA as a foreign principal".

The financial statement filed does not show any substantial shift in NORAID's level of fundraising or activities, though expenditure under certain headings varies from previous returns. In their last six-month return up to January '90, \$73,000 was shown to have been remitted to An Cumann Cabhrach while in the preceding six-month

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period, \$91,300 was remitted (US \$164,000 in calendar year 1989). The balance of cash remaining on hand rose to \$49,241 from \$10,147 in the preceding filing period. The general belief however is that NORAID collects, and remits, much more than its official records show.

The new information on control of NORAID raises various possibilities and is significant, not only in the light of what we already know about political schisms and personality disputes in NORAID's ranks, but also against the background of a marked adjustment in tactics, appeal and approach by NORAID.

As regards the factionalism within NORAID, the breakaway of the Friends of Irish Freedom group led by Michael Flannery has certainly disrupted NORAID activities. The FOIF annual dinner in Boston this year was better attended and led to sharp recriminations from NORAID (Consul General Boston report of 26 February refers). Attendance at NORAID's New York 1991 annual dinner in the Astoria Manor was substantially down on previous years. It is widely believed that NORAID incurred heavy financial losses in staging this dinner. In addition, Peter King, Comptroller of Nassau County, New York, a long-time NORAID supporter has added a further splinter by creating a new group - American Committee for a United Ireland. (It may be that King, an American Conservative and a member of the Republican Party, is uncomfortable with the anti-U.S. Government sentiments which sometimes surface in NORAID ranks).

That said, NORAID's adjustment in tactics is also partly the result of a decision by Sinn Fein in Belfast to revitalise the NORAID focus on political agitation and opinion-forming in the United States, as distinct from the traditional fund-raising for "prisoners' dependents" and the IRA. Sinn Fein operatives from Belfast have been working from the Irish People office for the last few years. In a sense, NORAID have moved "out of the ghetto" and have sought to appeal to mainstream American liberal and left-wing opinion. Examples of this kind of change include efforts to construct parallels between the IRA agenda and that of Nelson Mandela and the ANC. (Nelson Mandela is highly reputable with secular American left-wing opinion, but does not evoke the same sympathies in traditional Irish-America). Activism by NORAID on Section 31 appeals very directly to American sensitivities on First Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution, traditionally a liberal issue. Those NORAID activists who have tagged on to the MacBride Principles campaign have seen attractions in the parallels between the MacBride Principles and the Sullivan Principles which were conceived in regard to South Africa. Again, this is an impeccably liberal argument. Moreover, NORAID have skilfully

sought to equip their operation with up-to-date American marketing techniques, the most visible example being their free phone number (1-800-IRELAND), which allows individuals to pledge contributions and debit their credit cards over the phone.

The advent to the leadership of Paul Murray (attorney), Michael Cummings (senior public service employee), Gerry Coleman (community college professor), Richard Lawlor (attorney) and Martin Galvin (attorney), all of whom are Irish-Americans, has coincided with NORAID's focussing of their agenda much more on Human Rights issues and political lobbying. Cummings and Coleman in particular are skillful presenters of the NORAID view. A further important strategy of NORAID is that their members become active in other shell Irish organisations in order to push their NORAID agenda. The departure from its ranks of Michael Flannery, Jim Maunsell, both of whom had strong direct links with Ireland, has on the other hand lessened the appeal of NORAID to those Irish who arrived in the US post-World War II and who combined a conservative Catholic appeal with old-style Irish Republicanism of the physical force variety.

NORAID activities in the last year have mainly focussed on campaigns for the release of Joe Doherty, opposition to extradition and in particular a concerted campaign against the extradition of Dessie Ellis, the MacBride Principles, the Sean Mackin case and a campaign to discredit the work of the International Fund. Almost all of its propaganda is taken directly from An Phoblacht and disseminated through the Irish People newspaper. This paper does not however publish all of the left-wing and anti-American articles supportive of extremist elements in the Middle East or Latin America found regularly in its sister publication.

NORAID remain implacably opposed to the policies of the Government and through the Irish People regularly denounce in intemperate terms the Taoiseach, the Government and the Irish Embassy, along with Irish-American politicians supportive of the Irish Government's approach, notably Speaker Tom Foley. There is little doubt that the possibilities of progress in Northern Ireland indicated by the Anglo-Irish process and the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and the manner in which these have been promoted and canvassed by the Embassy and Consulates have reduced NORAID's ability to appeal to a broader section of opinion than the very narrow core of support which they enjoy.

The change in NORAID tactics does not however imply any change in their basic sympathies and objectives. The new leadership remain cheerleaders for the Provisional IRA. The basic difference being

that they are blander, more recognisably American and professional than the old leadership. They remain determined to infiltrate other Irish-American organisations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, whose leadership structure is ossified, inefficient and ripe for such infiltration. (NORAID have, however, suffered a setback in the AOH: following intensive working of the floor by the Embassy at last year's AOH Biennial Convention, NORAID members were removed from the AOH leadership). Other Irish-American organisations, such as American Protestants for Truth about Ireland, are basically shell organisations and puppets of NORAID. There is little doubt, however, that for tactical reasons, as the latest returns show, NORAID are trying to dilute and alter their image as an agent of the Provisional IRA. The Provisionals tend to be seen in the U.S. as part of the web of "international terrorism" which excites strongly negative U.S. reactions and which is seen, in its manifestation in the Middle East, as being profoundly anti-American. No doubt these concerns, and the consequent image problems which the Provisional IRA have, partly explain the NORAID adjustments in their public profile.

A source of frustration for NORAID has been their inability to make any real advances with the "New Irish". While their Boston chapter is headed by Kieran Staunton, a young Irish immigrant, that situation is much more the exception rather than the rule. Recently arrived immigrants have, by and large, kept away from NORAID. However, in areas where there is a relatively large, recently-arrived Irish community drawn from Northern Ireland and the border counties, such as Philadelphia, Sinn Fein links with the newly-arrived community are, we understand, maintained. On the passage of the recent Immigration Act of 1990, NORAID had little or no profile. Since the passage of the Act, NORAID have been critical that people born in Northern Ireland were not included in the special provision of 48,000 visas for the Republic over the first three-year period of the Act.

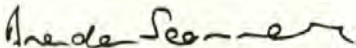
NORAID have revamped and tidied up their publicity organ, the Irish People using new information technology. It has used its call telephone number, 1-800-Ireland, imaginatively, and during the Ellis Extradition Court Hearings, the information being disseminated was extremely up-to-date and seldom less than a few hours old. Its sale of merchandise also is innovative. For example, NORAID have been selling a limited edition of Robert Ballagh's (Easter Sunday Commemorative Poster) posters for \$100 each. The circulation of the Irish People is about 3,000 per week though the paper claims a circulation of 8,000 approximately. We understand however that the circulation continues to decline and that the Irish People are having difficulty in paying their recent overheads.



While NORAID have exploited anti-British sentiment among Irish-Americans, Britain's major support of the US in the Gulf Coalition created conflicting priorities even among those Irish-Americans who have traditionally been critical of British policies in Northern Ireland. The Irish-American community is strongly patriotic and is disproportionately well-represented in the defence, security and intelligence services of the US.

The IRA attack on 10 Downing Street provoked widespread anger and revulsion here and groups traditionally supportive of the NORAID agenda avoided comment where previously they would have been lining up to justify such an attack on the core of the British "war machine".

The visit of the Queen of England in May when she will spend almost three weeks in the US will clearly be a challenge to NORAID. It will be interesting to see what type of protest campaign NORAID can mount and the reaction of the media to such a campaign.



Brendan Scannell  
Political Counsellor

Enclosure  
as stated.

BS/nc