

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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Ms. Hennessy

Please see the attached reports from the Consulates in New York and San Francisco regarding the question of Government participation in this year's U.S. St. Patrick's Day parade. We have of course anticipated problems similar to those which arose last year arising from efforts by NORAID to exploit the parade for propaganda purposes. The following are the main developments to date:

(i) At a meeting "packed" by NORAID supporters on 1 December last the United Irish Societies of San Francisco decided to honour hunger striker Francis Hughes as Honorary Grand Marshall of the 1983 parade. While the Consul General anticipates that this decision may be reversed and is privately lobbying to this effect she will require instructions in the event that the decision stands.

(ii) The Consul General New York reports that it is now likely that Michael Flannery, the National Treasurer of NORAID, will be elected by the 8th February as Grand Marshall of the prestigious New York parade. Flannery is an admitted gunrunner who was one of the five men acquitted in a New York trial last November when they claimed CIA backing for their activities. The Consul General in New York has also asked for instructions and submitted a suggested approach in the event that Flannery is elected (please see below).

Since the mid-1970's NORAID, the Irish National Caucus and like-minded organisations have with some success infiltrated the organising committee of parades in a number of U.S. cities. They have continuously sought to make propaganda use of the parades by marching in large contingents with colour parties which last year included coffins to mark the death of the hunger strikers in 1981. At last year's parade too, NORAID elements succeeded in having Bobby Sands posthumously named as Honorary Grand Marshall of the New York and San Francisco events. In Washington J.H. McLaughlin a pro-NORAID activist, who heads the so called Irish-American Conference, sought to embarrass the Ambassador following his action in leaving the parade review stand on instructions, as NORAID type units passed. McLaughlin has already indicated that he will again seek to cause maximum

problems for the Embassy this year. He and his associates are likely to seek to prevent an invitation to the Ambassador or to make it conditional on his remaining on the stand for all contingents.

Since 1978 Government policy (the matter have been discussed by the Government on a number of occasions) has been that our representatives in the U.S. should convey the Governments opposition to the IRA support groups in the U.S. by leaving parade review stands when their contingents march past although many moderate Irish-Americans argue that this policy is divisive and only draws further attention to such groups. This approach has been regarded as the minimum necessary to clearly spell out the Government's attitude to support for violence by Americans. It is difficult to see how this policy could now be altered or modified without giving the impression that the Government's attitude to these bodies have changed. Indeed in the light of developments to date this year it may be necessary to consider adopting a more hardline attitude to participation in parades where NORAIID elements have a significant impact.

In considering the question of Government participation in these parades we will also need to take account of plans for Ministerial visits to the U.S. during the St. Patrick's Day parade. I understand at present that it is anticipated that the following Ministers will be there during that time:

Minister for Foreign Affairs	:	Washington
Minister for Industry and Energy	:	Sacramento
Minister for Fisheries and Forestry	:	St. Louis

In addition there is a standing invitation for a Ministerial presence at the Miami parade which has in the past been attended by Ministers. The Consul General New York, regarding the situation in his area, has recommended an approach on the lines that the St. Patrick's Day celebrations should be something which Irish people of every tradition can share. If, however, it is to be exploited by an unrepresentative element in favour of violence no Irish Government can join in such a celebration particularly as seems likely it will honour an avowed advocate of violence and leader of an organisation which is the declared agent of the PIRA. The Consul General has submitted the

following policy guide lines for approval:

- (a) If Flannery is elected and accepts the appointment as Grand Marshall we should dissociate totally from the parade and the Consulate should be empowered to instruct all state bodies in New York area to do likewise.
- (b) The Consul General should be authorised to explain our position in whatever form seems best designed to give a lead to moderate elements among the parade organisers even if this is likely to generate controversy.

Regarding the State sponsored bodies represented in the U.S. such as IDA, CTT, Aer Lingus and BFE they have argued in the past that there should not be an overaction on our part to NORAIID type participation in parades. Their main concern has been to protect their own commercial promotion on the day such as T.V. advertising etc. Should the Minister decide to harden our attitude to the NORAIID activities described above it will be necessary to give clear instructions to the State bodies in this matter through the Embassy and our Consulates and perhaps also in Dublin at HQ level.

This matter will be kept under review by our U.S. missions and the Department informed of further developments. However, the Minister may now wish to consider the approach to be adopted in cases where NORAIID and associates appear likely to effectively exploit the parades. There has already been some press interest in the New York case both here and in the U.S.. To date we have responded along the lines that we are awaiting the outcome of the nomination and election meetings for Grand Marshall which take place on 7 and 8 February. The Consul General New York will clearly require instructions before then.



C. O. Floinn

3 February 1983