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SEC  
18 DEC 1989  
CENT SEC

FROM: T WATSON  
DATE: 15 DECEMBER 1989

PS/Dr Mawhinney (B&L)

cc Mr Burns )  
Mr Miles ) With attachments  
Mr Wilson )  
Mr McConnell *18/12/89.*

NORTHERN IRELAND: BOSTON ROUNDUP

The Minister and copy recipients will be interested to read the attached letter from HM Consul General, Boston and in particular the comments in paragraph 6 referring to the early November visit of the Irish American Partnership.

*T. Watson*

T WATSON  
Political Affairs Division

RN/4440

*James Hutchinson*  
*Mr Hughes*  
All pass to  
Mr. Bean letter.  
- any comments?  
*RW*  
*18/12/89*

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BRITISH CONSULATE GENERAL  
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BY FAX  
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051/1 ANNEX

27 November 1989

Mr Sherard Cowper-Coles  
 British Embassy  
 Washington

*John*  
*Chris*  
*Sue*  
*Tom*

*Dear Sherard*

NORTHERN IRELAND: BOSTON ROUNDUP

1. Bishop Cahal Daly spent Thanksgiving 1989 with Cardinal Law. The following day, 24 November, he was the guest for lunch of Father James Hiles, Rector of the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour in Milton, Massachusetts (who organised that astonishing ecumenical symposium at Milton a year ago: my letter of 8 November 1988, not to all). I went to that lunch, which was also attended by a number of media personalities including Martin Nolan of the Boston Globe and Jeff Jacoby of the Boston Herald. The Bishop's remarks were off-the-record; but before that he gave an interview to the Globe (extract attached).
2. The Bishop's message to the lunch guests was positive, and focused strongly on the prime importance of jobs. The Bishop's response to a question from Jacoby about MacBride was delphic. But, when pressed, his bottom line was clear enough: "Why should a potential investor go to Northern Ireland if that simply brought him a load of additional problems?" Bishop Daly was warm in his praise for Bob Cooper. He said that Cooper's move to head the new Fair Employment Commission was in effect a vote of confidence in the Fair Employment Act. He also had good things to say about 'Making Belfast work'; but it was too little, and too dependant on voluntary commitment. In the Bishop's view, the Government should have a strategic plan and timetable. He hoped that this would happen, and that more official resources would be invested. It was essential to restore dignity and moral responsibility to the unemployed.



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3. The Bishop said he was particularly pleased to have the chance to speak about the situation in Northern Ireland as he perceived it. Travel across the Atlantic in both directions was important to ensure a flow of accurate information about the realities and complexities of the Province's situation. Accurate information was the basis of truth; and "truth sets free from myths and impressions and stereotypes". He was particularly incensed about stories circulating concerning the 'Friar Bush Trust'. These were a total distortion of the truth, "almost like James Bond fiction".

4. I had a word with Bishop Daly about the Northern Catholic Bishops' statement of 8 November about the education reform proposals (I am grateful to June Ingram for sending me this). He said that the Church was still deeply concerned about several aspects of the proposed Order; but he understood that its passage had now been deferred to allow a meeting between the Bishops and the Secretary of State to take place on 5 December. In answer to my question he said that he had discussed the Bishops' concerns with Cardinal Law that morning. I suspect therefore that, notwithstanding Dr. Mawhinney's assurances to the Cardinal, we might hear more from that quarter.

5. Turning now to another Boston-Irish event, I was pleased to be involved on 18 November in an evening of celebrations at the John F Kennedy Library to mark the foundation of a Fellowship for an Irish graduate student at Boston University, in memory of the late Bill Shannon (US Ambassador to Ireland under President Carter). This was a spectacular occasion, with over 300 people present, including Senator Ted Kennedy, Arthur Schlesinger, the Irish Ambassador, BU President John Silber, et al. Elizabeth Shannon, Bill's widow (and author of "I Am of Ireland", 1988), had ensured that the Fellowship would be endowed to cover students from the North as well as from the Republic. She asked me to acknowledge this 'gift' on behalf of the people I represent. She told me, before the event, that there had been raised eyebrows at, and resistance to, this idea. But there was a gracious response on the day itself; and Elizabeth's note to me (copy enclosed) may be of some interest.

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6. But the rose has a thorn. Elizabeth has told me that she was not alone in scoring black marks against us over the reception for a delegation from the Irish American Partnership that visited the North in the first days of November. The dinner hosted by Dr. Mawhinney on 3 November had been enjoyable. But, after the Minister had been obliged to take his leave but not before inviting his guests to stay on for coffee and liqueurs, the staff (?at Hillsborough Castle) began flicking lights on and off, and the party was over. This was not the best finish to the evening; and the the next day's presentations at Stormont were, according to Elizabeth, 'very one-sided' and 'not good'. There had been two noticeably insensitive remarks made. First, the person giving the briefing on security issues devoted his time exclusively to the IRA, closing with a single sentence about the Protestant paramilitaries in which he said that they were "only reactive" terrorists. Later, one of the presenters responded to a question about views expressed in the press by referring to "stupid journalists". This had greatly angered Bob Healey, outgoing Managing Editor of the Boston Globe and his wife Mary. These are unfortunate impressions to have left behind; on the other hand Joe Leary, Executive Director of the Irish American Partnership, told me that he had been very pleased with the way HMG had looked after their visitors.

*Yours Ever,  
Philip*

P A McLean

c.c. (By Bag) Mr Kevin Donnelly, SIL Div. NIO London  
" " ✓Mr John McConnell, Political Bureau, Stormont  
" " Ms Pat Thompson, DED Belfast  
(By Fax) Miss Janet McIver, BIS New York