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CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND

535 BOYLSTON STREET

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02116

P.1/14

26 November 1976

The Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Attention: Anglo-Irish Section
Subject: John Hume in Boston

Mr. Doyle
To see, please
1/12
- SAIP
- Boston
- file
cc. PSRA
PSS
Mr. O'Brien

John Hume, who has been an Associate Fellow at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University since September, returns to Ireland on December 1.

As the Department is aware, the arrangements for the Fellowship were set in train by the undersigned through contact with Professor Roger Fisher with whom I have had dealings since 1972. Hume's area of study at the Center was in conflict studies in which subject Professor Fisher is a specialist.

Fisher has since expressed to me his appreciation of the fact that this office was instrumental in initiating the present contact with Hume. (The subject of Harvard Fellowships in general is dealt with in my report dated 19 October 1976 on the visit of the Minister to the university.)

Apart from his programme at Harvard, John Hume was active elsewhere throughout his stay. From time to time, his activities in the Boston consular area have been mentioned, as appropriate, in reports to the Department. It may be useful to summarise some of his activities, not only for their inherent interest, but because they indicate the advantages towards official policy objectives in the information field of Hume's sojourn in the U.S.

From his base at Harvard, Hume has travelled widely not only in the New England area, but as far as Washington, Pittsburgh and New York. I understand he worked closely with the Embassy and the New York Consulate General when in their respective areas.

1. Personal contacts

John Hume has made personal contact with a wide spectrum of Americans, especially Americans of Irish origin, and including persons of influence and standing in the community. The resulting exposure to Hume's views brought home to such people, in a particularly effective way, that there is a constitutional opposition in Northern Ireland and that the Catholic population supports constitutional means of change through their support of SDLP.

Within a week of John Hume's arrival, he was a guest at a reception hosted by the Vice Consul and I at which about 100 people, including representatives of a broad spectrum of the Irish American community, were present. He made several contacts on this occasion which, I understand, were useful to him in various ways later. I subsequently entertained him in my home and suggested his name as a guest at functions to which I was invited. I have already

reported on the occasion at which Mr. Hume and I were both dinner guests of Governor Dukakis. On another occasion, when my husband and I hosted a dinner at our home to honour Mr. and Mrs. Hume and at which Professor Roger Fisher and his wife were also guests, an interesting "confrontation" (though naturally expressed in moderate and socially acceptable tones) developed between Hume on the one hand and former Mayor John Collins on the other. (Collins, who was successful and highly regarded as Mayor, is now on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is also Honorary Consul General for Monaco.) Mayor Collins for some reason which was not clear, took an adversary position to John Hume's ideas, especially his criticism of the Irish American role as expressed through the Irish National Caucus. John Hume was supported in the discussion by William Burke, the local Director of the Ireland Fund, and Mayor Collins by Philip McNiff, Director of the Boston Public Library. Controversy really came to a head when Hume described a visit to South Boston and equated the Graffiti there with those in Derry and Belfast, adding that he sensed a similar atmosphere in all three places. Mayor Collins seemed to view these remarks as unwarranted criticism of the Irish American community in relation to the school busing controversy. However, Collins later expressed to me his appreciation of Hume and offered to take us both to lunch at MIT. Hume was not enthusiastic, however, and anyway was by that time travelling in other parts of the country, so the proposed lunch did not come off.

2. Speaking engagements

John Hume requested our assistance in obtaining fee-paying speaking engagements. He made it a condition, however, that he did not wish to confront IRA supporters. I had already, before he came to the United States, suggested to the President of the Eire Society that he should be the speaker at a monthly meeting and it was so arranged for the seventh of November. Originally, Hume ~~intended~~ intended to show the film John Hume's Derry. However, a copy forwarded from Ireland could not be used for technical reasons, so he spoke from a prepared text. He started out by telling the audience that he would speak to them, not as others had about what they should not do, but what they should do. What they should do is to understand the situation in Northern Ireland, as it is today, revise old attitudes, question traditional patriotism and nationalism - the "wrap the green flag around me boys" mentality. He emphasised that the Protestants have a right to be in Northern Ireland and enlarged on the theme of richness in diversity. He put it to the audience that because of the high level of violence in Ireland, including deaths and injuries, Irish Americans have a Christian duty to be concerned about what's happening there. He then went on to outline the most recent S.D.L.P. position, vis-a-vis the British Government - the demand for a statement on the conditions under which Britain will continue to permit the majority in Northern Ireland to maintain their wish of staying within the United Kingdom. On the role of the Irish Government, Hume said that because the Unionists see the Republic as a threat, "saber rattling" by the Irish Government would be highly dangerous. It is absolutely essential that the Republic keeps a low profile.

Audience reaction to Hume's address was favourable, although some said to me afterwards that his ideas were too idealistic. Others liked him because he

was moderate, presumably meaning he did not denounce the IRA in so many words, although he did criticize their political theory re N.I. Although there was a good attendance, it was noticeable that many stalwarts of the Eire Society were absent, in fact only one or two of the Board members attended. Apparently, this was simply because of other commitments or lack of interest. Because of Hume's own embargo on publicity for the event (apparently because he was fearful IRA elements would thereby be attracted), the attendance was limited to members of the Eire Society. Although Father Sean McManus was aware that Hume was to speak and is a member of the Eire Society, he did not put in an appearance.

Other engagements which were arranged for Hume directly through this office were those at Northeastern University, Stonehill College and Providence College, Rhode Island. An engagement made at my request at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, had to be cancelled because of Hume's commitments elsewhere in the country. This was a pity since Mairin de Burca had already spoken there (my minute of November 5 refers). He also spoke at Brown University, Rhode Island and possibly at one or two other venues. It was helpful that he was on the speaking circuit at the same time as Mairin de Burca and Bernadette MacAliskey, as no doubt Hume's presentation was an antidote to that of the other two. Interestingly, Mrs. MacAliskey denounced Irish American racism in public (at Boston University), as Hume had in private, as described above.

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3. MEDIA COVERAGE

Although Hume, so far as I can tell, did not seek media coverage of his activities and, in fact, actively discouraged publicity relating to his Eire Society appearance, his visit did generate some useful press reports. The Mike Barnicle article already reported on was one such. Particularly valuable was the syndicated Mary McGrory article written after her meeting with him at the Ambassador's residence which appeared in the Boston Sunday Globe of November 21, under the title "The Irish Quagmire Partnership between two traditions only way out". This was one of the few occasions on which the INC/Carter affair was brought before local readership. Consistent with his policy of avoiding confrontation with the local IRA supporters, Hume did not seem anxious to cultivate the local ethnic radio and press. He would have welcomed, for financial reasons, among others, acceptance of articles by himself in the local press, especially after his hopes of writing for the Irish Independent were dashed by the NUJ embargo on non-union writers. At dinner at the home of Homer Jenks, Associate Editor of the Herald American, the new editorial page editor of the paper, Mr. Dwight Sargent, who was also a guest, offered to take an article by Hume. So far, it has not appeared in the paper.

I understand the "Harvard Magazine" (circulated to all alumnae, inter alia) will publish an article on Hume in the December issue. A copy will be forwarded after receipt.

Shortly after his arrival in Boston, John Hume and I were both guests at the Harvard University Function for International Students. The British Consul General, Granville Ramage and his wife were also present. John Hume commented to me at the time that Mr. Ramage did not show any interest in him (Hume). Apparently this was the British Consul General's attitude throughout although Mrs. Barbara Eachus, the British Information Officer, entertained Hume in her home I understand. The fact that Mrs. Eachus is a native of Belfast (married to an American) may explain the keener interest on her part. Possibly the attitude of Mr. Ramage who is by conviction and temperament rather rigidly conservative may indicate his feeling towards Northern Ireland.

It will be evident from the above that John Hume's sojourn in the States was extremely productive in terms of clarification of the Northern Ireland situation and in generating interest in a solution by non violent means.

CAROL HEANEY

Carol B. Heaney

Acting Consul General

cc: Ambassador, Washington
T. Smith, New York