

22/95

cc PS Baronen Dele  
Mr Gibson  
Mr Mc Carr  
Mr Hewitt  
Mr ~~Ron~~ TIDB  
Mr ~~Crumble~~

FROM: P N BELL, AUS(L)  
23 January 1995

Mr Margetts

cc PS/PUS (L&B)  
PS/Mr Fell  
Mr Loughran, DED  
Mr Thomas  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Williams  
Mr Bramley  
Mr Dodds  
Mr Howard (Personal)  
Mr Maxwell  
Mr Lamont, RID  
HMA, Dublin  
Mr Westmacott, Washington  
Ms Collins, Cabinet Office

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WASHINGTON INVESTMENT CONFERENCE - MINISTERIAL ATTENDANCE

During Friday's Advisory Committee meeting of the IFI I asked the Irish co-chairman, Mr O hUiginn, what plans there were for Irish Ministerial attendance. Rather to my surprise Mr O hUiginn began that it would be important to ensure that the political did not swamp the economic/investment elements of the conference. As he hoped that the Taoiseach would be very active in the US around St Patrick's Day, this meant that he did not see Mr Bruton as necessarily attending. However, he was quite clear that, if the Taoiseach did not attend the Tanaiste would. "It was one or the other". The representative of the Taoiseach's Office present seemed rather more inclined, however, to suggest that Mr Bruton would be there.

2. I was also interested to learn of Mr O hUiginn's general concept of operations. Once again, his declared objective was to prevent the political swamping the economic. His method is one of 'concentric circles'. Although Dublin's planning is not as advanced as ours, he volunteered the larger, 'inclusive' outer circle as embracing a major Trade Fair at which 'everyone' could turn up. He added that it was most important that there were no last minute

SMJ/AUSL/38851

hitches, or suggestions that people were being 'excluded' ... Within that broad ring, however, there might be a series of individual seminars/presentations with more restricted (ie invited) audiences some of which might be progressively less economic/investment oriented.

3. Where does that leave us? First, I understand you took away from Mr Maxwell's Working Group on Thursday the remit to reconsider the question of Prime Ministerial attendance in Washington. If so, you may want to factor in this latest intelligence. My own view - shared, I think, with Mr Williams - is that if President Clinton attends, which is certain, it seems to me inconceivable that Mr Bruton will, in the event, stay away. (Since when have Taosigh ever been too grand to promote inward investment into Ireland?) If he does come, the case for a Prime Minister - who avowedly puts Northern Ireland at the top of his political agenda - attending as well as Sir P Mayhew seems more than persuasive. We need urgent and balanced advice for the Secretary of State on these issues, including perhaps a draft letter to No. 10 (who, on Cabinet Office testimony to you and Mr Dodds yesterday, may be unenthusiastic). Unless anyone else volunteers, perhaps you could put the work in hand. In drafting, one should not overlook the downside (which I discussed with Mr Fell and Mr Howard in the margins of the Prime Minister's "Mayors' Tea Party"): the stealing of the Secretary of State's own thunder; and the exposure of the Prime Minister to a may or push on Macbride, to say nothing of Sinn Fein ... (I am not sure I share the argument that the Prime Minister's attendance would make it too much of a 'UK' 'Anglo-American' occasion - or, if it did, that is unhelpful.)

4. Second, our planning is still a small step ahead of the Irish, although they are getting into their stride and contacts are being made on the North/South economic department net. It is no less important that, as I reminded Mr O hUiginn, we remain similarly close on the political net. Mr Donoghue is, I gather, the DFA's man

SMJ/AUSL/38851



on all of this, and we need to keep abreast of his thinking. In the first instance, a word in the margins of the first available Anglo-Irish political meeting might be a fruitful course for me to follow. Others may have further ideas.

5. Another discussion at Mr Maxwell's next Working Group may help.

(Signed PNB)

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SMJ/AUSL/38851