

22/95

FROM: P MCAULEY
CENT SEC
DATE: 26 JANUARY 1995

cc PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Williams - B
Mr Gibson, DED
Mr Robinson, IDB
Mr Dodds - B
Mr Westmacott, HME Washington
Mr Alexander NIB
Mr Gamble
Mr Haire, DED
Mr Ross
Mr Todd
Mrs Brown
Ms Jude - B
Mr Margetts - B
Mr McAleer

copied 27/1

*cc Mr MacCann,
re (ii). D. Alexander
to give me a copy
of an economic profile
for an E. European state,
as used for the Cleveland
conference document.*

Mr Maxwell

*Elaine
B/F end 4
the wh (Fr.)*

INVESTMENT CONFERENCE - WASHINGTON 18/19 MAY 1994

1. The following is a summary of the information on the American approach to the conference emerged during discussion with Mr Charles Meissner and Mr Cantwell Walsh during their visit to Belfast on 24 January.

1. Purpose of Meissner's trip (Ms Pope was unable to join him) was two fold - to prepare the way for Senator Mitchell's trip on 14 - 19 February (He (Mitchell) is expecting to meet the Prime Minister in London); and to (in the words of an Irish Times article of 24 January) put together a "strategic economic programme for Northern Ireland". Mr Meissner (his team) will be preparing a background paper for the conference which will encompass:

- (1) a "macro" level look at economic development plans north and south of the border, links with the European Community, role of local communities;

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- (ii) how the US initiatives "fit in" to these strategies; and
- (iii) a review of local economic development programmes (eg the Armagh initiative).

X Mr Gamble is to provide background material on economic issues to Mr Walsh.

- ii. Meissner wants to keep the focus of the conference economic although he accepts that there will inevitably be political input. The Americans would prefer if NI/ROI Ministers did not speak at the plenary sessions but recognise that this may not be possible. Meissner also wishes to focus on the "12 Northern counties" but recognises the potential difficulties. He does not envisage Prime Ministerial attendance.
- iii. The Conference will be 2 full days with an opening speech by either Secretary Brown or Senator Mitchell on the morning of the 18th. The President will address the conference on the 19th.
- iv. Venue is not yet organised. Ideally they would prefer a downtown Washington Hotel.
- v. Format/structure will be as at Cleveland, ie plenary sessions in the mornings with "workshops" or "breakout" sessions, usually concentrating on a particular sector in the afternoons. It was suggested fair employment issues could be dealt with in a breakout session on "labour issues".
- vi. Conference will cost \$650 plus travel and accommodation. US Government funds are not available to subsidise cost although conference fee may be reduced by 50% for small firms/participants. (Meissner also said he had discussed with the IFI the possibility of them aiding community groups.)

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- vii. It was expected that the CBI, IBEC and possibly Trade Unions (NIC/ICTU?) would also produce background papers.
 - viii. NI business invitations could stretch to 300 (with similar number from ROI) on the basis that all would not attend. These should comprise US companies interested in doing business in NI/ROI, NI companies interested in exporting to the US (and these groups would encompass "matchmaker" companies put forward by IDB and ITB) and non-business groups. "Political" and "official" invitations would be in addition to these. It would be important to get a good mix of invitees. (Meissner did not seem concerned at the prospect of 52 District Council representatives!).
 - ix. Conference should be followed up by trade shows/events in the US for NI firms and in NI/ROI for US firms.
 - x. On organisational issues, our main contact will be Cantwell Walsh.
2. It is important to recognise that this information is from Mr Meissner, and we have no indication as to whether Ms Pope shares all of these views.

(Signed: PMCA)

P McAULEY

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END