

FOIA MARKER

This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records
Subgroup/Office of Origin: Records Management - SUBJECT FILE
Series/Staff Member:
Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 21689
Scan ID: 038365
Document Number:

Folder Title:
CO081

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
S	83	5	6	3

ID# 038365

THE WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

60081

INCOMING

DATE RECEIVED: OCTOBER 01, 1993

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: THE HONORABLE MARTIN R. HOKE

SUBJECT: DISCUSSES CONCERN REGARDING NORTHER IRELAND

ROUTE TO: OFFICE/AGENCY	(STAFF NAME)	ACTION		DISPOSITION	
		ACT CODE	DATE YY/MM/DD	TYPE RESP	C COMPLETED D YY/MM/DD
HOWARD PASTER		ORG	93/10/01		C 93/10/01
ANTHONY LAKE		RSA	93/10/01		
	REFERRAL NOTE:				
	REFERRAL NOTE:				
	REFERRAL NOTE:				
	REFERRAL NOTE:				
	REFERRAL NOTE:				

COMMENTS: ENCLOSES A COPY OF BRIEF REPORT ENTITLED
"IMPRESSIONS OF IRELAND"

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: 1240
MAIL USER CODES: (A) R OH (B) (C)

- *****
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| *ACTION CODES: | *DISPOSITION | *OUTGOING | * |
| * | * | *CORRESPONDENCE: | * |
| *A-APPROPRIATE ACTION | *A-ANSWERED | *TYPE RESP=INITIALS | * |
| *C-COMMENT/RECOM | *B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL | * OF SIGNER | * |
| *D-DRAFT RESPONSE | *C-COMPLETED | * CODE = A | * |
| *F-FURNISH FACT SHEET | *S-SUSPENDED | *COMPLETED = DATE OF | * |
| *I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC* | | * OUTGOING | * |
| *R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY * | | | * |
| *S-FOR-SIGNATURE | | | * |
| *X-INTERIM REPLY | | | * |
- *****

REFER QUESTIONS AND ROUTING UPDATES TO CENTRAL REFERENCE
(ROOM 75, OE0B) EXT-2590
KEEP THIS WORKSHEET ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL INCOMING
LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO RECORDS
MANAGEMENT.

SCANNED

0 38 365

MARTIN R. HOKE
10TH DISTRICT, OHIO

212 CANNON BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5871

21270 LORAIN ROAD
FAIRVIEW PARK, OH 44126
(216) 356-2010

COMMITTEES:
BUDGET
SCIENCE, SPACE,
AND TECHNOLOGY
TASK FORCE ON HEALTH

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3510
93 SEP 27 1993

September 23, 1993

The Honorable William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Last fall, I met with a number of members of the Irish American community from the Cleveland area to become more familiar with their specific concerns regarding Northern Ireland. (The district I represent covers the west side of Cleveland and western Cuyahoga County. Over 152,000 people of Irish ancestry call Ohio's Tenth Congressional District home.)

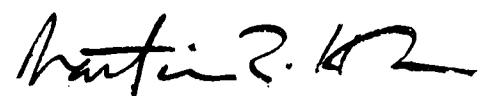
After listening intently, I told them it would be very difficult to internalize their concerns without the benefit of first-hand exposure to the situation. I committed to visiting Ireland and worked closely with local Irish leaders and the U.S. State Department to organize my trip to Belfast from July 6 through 10 of this year.

Traveling to Northern Ireland at my own expense, I participated in twenty-three meetings with forty-two individuals representing the entire spectrum of Irish politics from Gerry Adams of the Sinn Fein Party to the Ulster Democratic Party's Ian Paisley. I also met with a host of economic development, community activist and special interest groups in an effort to obtain a complete and thorough understanding of what is happening in Northern Ireland.

Few Americans have had such a rare opportunity to meet with party figures, public officials, church leaders and community activists of all points of view. Enclosed you will find a copy of the brief report I wrote in the interest of sharing my insights and impressions from this most informative trip. I hope you enjoy this report and will share with me your own responses and insights regarding this extremely challenging situation.

Kindest personal regards.

Very truly yours,



Martin R. Hoke
Member of Congress

MRH:mlc

Impressions of Ireland

by Representative Martin R. Hoke

During the recent July congressional recess, I fulfilled a campaign pledge made to West Side residents of Irish descent who are concerned about the state of affairs in Northern Ireland. With the assistance of the U.S. State Department and Cleveland City Councilman Pat O'Malley (D-16), I was privileged to gain an extraordinary exposure to Ireland's expansive landscape of political views and opinions during a visit to Belfast at my own expense from July 6-10.

I met with party leaders representing the entire spectrum of major political parties from Gerry Adams, leader of pro-unification Sinn Fein to Ian Paisley, the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) which represents the most extreme loyalist, pro-British element.

Unlike our American political parties, the political parties in Northern Ireland are not distinguished primarily by their commitment to economic or social principles. Whereas our political parties debate ideological differences over the legitimate and appropriate size of government, the role of regulation, how much we should tax ourselves, etc., the Irish parties are distinguished first and foremost by their various commitments to the future geo-political status of Northern Ireland.

At one end of the political spectrum are the pure Republicans, the Catholic faction which demands that Northern Ireland become part of the Republic of Ireland to the south. This is the position held by the Sinn Fein party, which received about 12% of the popular vote in the last election. At the other end of the spectrum is the Protestant faction which believes Northern Ireland should always be a part of Britain. They are represented by the DUP which received about 17% of the vote in the last election. In the middle are three other parties which have the majority of popular support, although none has a majority by itself. The Social Democratic Labor Party (SDLP), led by John Hume of Derry, is the pro-nationalist, pro-unification party that gathered about 22% of the vote. The Ulster Unionist Party is a pro-union centrist party with 29% of the vote. Finally, there is the appropriately named Alliance Party, the only political party with substantial numbers of both Catholics and Protestants, which predictably is also the smallest party and received only about 8% of the vote.

In addition to meeting with political leaders, I met with representatives of the court system, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, and the Northern Ireland Office (the British government's representative). I also met with Jean Kennedy Smith, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland, as well as a host of community development, socio-economic, and business groups.



It's been said the first indication that one is beginning to understand the problems in Northern Ireland is a sense of complete confusion. By that standard, I'm fast becoming an expert. The fact of the matter is there are no simple solutions to these very complex problems. It is at once both axiomatic and profoundly unfortunate that if the problems of Northern Ireland were simple and lent themselves to simple solutions, they would have been resolved long ago.

Lending to the confusion is the practice by nearly every political leader I met in Ireland of using historical events to prove his or her point, reaching back as far as needed to illustrate it. To put this in perspective, bear in mind that Saint Patrick converted the Celts to Christianity in AD 432 and the British came to Northern Ireland nearly four hundred years before Columbus sailed for the Americas.

It is not unusual for Americans visiting Northern Ireland to be struck by the similarities between Ireland's current situation and our civil rights movement of the 1960's. The primary difference being that Ireland suffers not from a history of racial discrimination, rather from a history of religious discrimination, specifically discrimination against Catholics by Protestants. What is unfortunate is that the Irish have not yet benefited from the lessons of the politics of inclusion that we have here in the United States.

Instead of including all political groups with popular support in the political process, the British government has actually aggravated the natural political polarities by excluding those of dissenting views, specifically the Sinn Fein party. To the extent that all groups are brought within the process and thereby made responsible and accountable for outcomes, society succeeds in pulling dissenting elements into the social and political mainstream. Certainly the past 250 years of American history convincingly illustrate this point.

If I had to single out one flaw in British policy toward Northern Ireland over the past 20 years, it would be its ignorance of this political truth. By way of example, I had the privilege of touring the Conway Mills Project, an established community center that was founded by Father Des Wilson in 1982, a supporter of the re-unification of Ireland. It has applied and been turned down for grants from the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), a program for commercial development in Ireland that receives half of its funding from the United States and the other half from the European community.

Father Wilson is working in the poorest section of Catholic West Belfast on a number of initiatives designed to improve peoples' lives through economic development, education, and hunger relief. The Conway Mills Community Center includes classrooms and a small business incubator. Actively involved in special community projects, it also has a small theater, a day care center, and an inexpensive snackbar. Frankly, it reminded me of the community center in the Cleveland neighborhood of Tremont.

But the British government had indicated to the IFI that it did not want Conway Mills to be funded in any way because of the politics of Father Des Wilson. I personally spoke to the Director of the IFI and requested that the Conway Mills grant request be reconsidered. Bear in mind that 50% of the IFI's funding is appropriated by the U.S. Congress. I explained that I thought it was not only important to support Conway Mills because of the value of its programs, but equally important to draw it out of the underground and into the mainstream. This will profoundly impact not only how the individuals involved with Conway Mills are viewed by outsiders, but how those individuals view themselves and their own relation to the larger society in which they live.

Because of the polarized environment and rigid positions held by Ireland's parties, I'm relatively discouraged regarding the prospects for near-term reconciliation of these differences. That notwithstanding, I was tremendously impressed and inspired by one group with whom I

met, the Northern Ireland Commission for Integrated Education (NICIE). Led by Fiona Stephens, this is a parent-driven initiative which has established integrated schools with student bodies composed of about equal numbers of Protestants and Catholics. It is tragic that the vast majority of the people of Northern Ireland grow up never meeting or getting to know people of different religious faiths except in brief commercial transactions, feeding the development of deep-seated prejudice at a very young age. NICIE has only been around for a few years, yet it already has over 18 schools with 4000 students. While this represents only 2% of Ireland's student population, it was the most hopeful indication I saw that these differences will eventually be worked out.

The untenability of the British position is that they built a political and economic system which exploited the religious differences and rivalries between two communities in order to serve and maintain their own colonial purposes. Now in a vastly changed 1990's European Community, Northern Ireland finds itself saddled with the rotting remnants of an unjust foundation. No lasting and equitable solution will be possible without the full inclusion and participation of all political parties. The British and Dublin governments are clearly in the positions of leadership to initiate a new era of reconciliation and cooperation in which the politics of pride and paranoia are replaced by the politics of inclusion and reason.