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FM WASHINGTON

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 1721

OF 192027Z AUGUST 96

AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO LONDON, NIO BELFAST, CABINET OFFICE  
INFO PRIORITY DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK, ACTOR

SUBJECT: US/NORTHERN IRELAND: MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES

SUMMARY

1. Pressure on Clinton from Irish-Americans to establish new MacBride/IFI linkage. We continue to work for harmless, hortatory language.

DETAIL

2. The Administration's decision to extradite the Maze escapee Jimmy Smyth at the weekend (my telno 1711) did not go down well with the Irish-American lobby or with Clinton's re-election team. More than two dozen Congressmen had lobbied the President on Smyth's behalf, and Democratic Party managers had at least hoped that the decision would be put off until after next week's Convention in Chicago (which has a large Irish-Catholic constituency). So the lobby is now re-doubling its efforts to get the White House to adopt a more forward position on the MacBride (fair employment) Principles before the Convention opens on 26 August.

3. The MacBride supporters had hoped to advance their agenda in Congress: they had pinned particular hopes on the Foreign Operations Authorisation Act, into which they had introduced MacBride language, which the President vetoed (for other reasons) on 12 April. There is MacBride language in the Platform documents of both the Republican and Democratic parties. The Administration had hoped that this would be enough. But the domestic policy advisers in the White House, under pressure from (in particular) Senator Chris Dodd, who heads Clinton's re-election campaign, and former Congressman Morrison, have decided that more is required.

- 4. Dodd and others have argued for an Executive Order, signed



by the President, requiring all disbursements by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) of the annual \$20 million US contribution to be compatible with the MacBride Principles. We have reminded our White House contacts that, in addition to being wholly irrelevant to the needs of Northern Ireland, this would create political problems with the Unionists and practical difficulties for the IFI Board. Soderberg (NSC) claims to agree that MacBride is the wrong issue to make a fuss about. She believes she has seen off Dodd's idea of an Executive Order, and is now working on an anodyne letter to the US observer on the IFI Board, Jim Lyons, asking him simply to "bear in the mind" the President's support for the MacBride Principles. State Department, and USAID, fear that the White House may acquiesce in tougher, more damaging, language if pressed. They are therefore assembling legal and procedural arguments against any instruction to the IFI which would oblige the Board to alter its operating procedures, and are insisting that any MacBride language applies equally to the Republic and to Northern Ireland (a change for which we lobbied when the Foreign Operations Bill was being drafted).

5. We will remain in touch with US officials to try and limit the damage of this initiative. The NIO and DED (Belfast) are aware of the background.

LOGAN

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I have said that we will weigh DISTRIBUTION 15/4  
in from here if that would help. Washington's advice for the moment is against this.

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.NORTHERN IRELAND

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2 NEWS D//HD

2 PS/PM

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