

GPS 450
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

FM CONSUL GENERAL NEW YORK 152200Z FEB 83
TO PRIORITY FCO
TEL NO 12 OF 15 FEBRUARY 1983
AND TO PRIORITY NIO BELFAST NIO LONDON
INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON
AND INFO SAVING TO DUBLIN CG ATLANTA CG BOSTON CG CHICAGO
CG CLEVELAND CG DALLAS CG DETROIT CG HOUSTON CG LOS ANGELES
CG SAN FRISCO CG SEATTLE

NORTHERN IRELAND: GUN RUNNING TRIALS

THE TRIAL OF MEGAHEY, DUGGAN AND THE MEEHAN BROTHERS ON CHARGES OF SHIPPING WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION TO IRELAND SCHEDULED TO START ON 14 FEBRUARY IS NOW EXPECTED TO OPEN IN NEW YORK TOMORROW OR THE NEXT DAY.

2. THE DEFENDANTS APPEAR TO HAVE FAILED IN VARIOUS ATTEMPTS TO PUT OFF THE TRIAL. THE JUDGE HAD ALREADY LAST MONTH REFUSED TO ALLOW A PLEA THAT THE COURT SHOULD INVESTIGATE A CLAIM THAT THE MEEHANS WERE NOT GUILTY BY REASON OF THEIR MENTAL CONDITION FOLLOWING ALLEGED TORTURE DURING INTERNMENT IN LONG KESH PRISON. THE DEFENCE EVIDENTLY EXPECTED THAT THE JUDGE WOULD GRANT AN INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT FOLLOWING THE SURRENDER AT THE WEEKEND OF MCPARLAND, A FIFTH ALLEGED CONSPIRATOR, WHO IS NOW IN NEW YORK. JUDGE SIFTON HAS RULED THAT MCPARLAND SHOULD BE TRIED SEPARATELY.

3. THERE IS ALREADY CONSIDERABLE MEDIA INTEREST IN THE TRIAL WHICH IS EXPECTED TO LAST AT LEAST A MONTH AND POSSIBLY AS LONG AS THREE MONTHS. THE DEFENDANTS ARE REGARDED AS BEING IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE JRA HIERARCHY AND THE TRIAL IS SEEN HERE AS A TEST CASE BOTH BY NORAIID AND THE FBI FOLLOWING THE SURPRISING ACQUITTAL OF THE DIRECTOR OF NORAIID, MICHAEL FLANNERY, AND HIS CO-DEFENDANTS LAST NOVEMBER. IN THIS PRESENT CASE THE DEFENCE IS LIKELY TO DEPLOY THE ARGUMENT WHICH PROVED SUCCESSFUL FOR FLANNERY THAT THE DEFENDANTS DID NO WRONG BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THEY HAD TACIT CIA ACQUIESCENCE IN THEIR ACTIVITIES.

4. THERE IS A LINK BETWEEN THE PRESENT TRIAL AND THE CONVICTION IN DUBLIN ON 27 JANUARY OF PATRICK MCVEIGH OF BELFAST AND JOHN MOLONEY OF NEW YORK AND LIMERICK TO SEVEN AND THREE YEARS IMPRISONMENT RESPECTIVELY FOR THEIR PART IN THE CONSPIRACY TO RECEIVE THE SAME ARMS SHIPMENT. MOLONEYS BROTHER, FATHER PATRICK MOLONEY, ARRESTED WITH THE OTHERS, WAS SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED WITHOUT CHARGE. HE HAS SINCE BEEN ACTIVE IN FUND-RAISING AND PICKETING OF THE BRITISH AND IRISH CONSULATES GENERAL IN NEW YORK UNDER NORAIID AUSPICES.

RESTRICTED

15. DUGGAN

RESTRICTED

5. DUGGAN, THE ONLY US CITIZEN ON TRIAL, IS A MEMBER OF OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 14, PART OF THE POWERFUL GROUP OF CONSTRUCTION UNIONS. HE IS A PERSONAL FRIEND OF SEAN CRONIN, THE WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT OF THE IRISH TIMES. HE HAS BEEN ELECTED DEPUTY GRAND MARSHALL OF THE NEW YORK ST PATRICKS DAY PARADE, A MOVE NO DOUBT DELIBERATELY INTENDED TO INCREASE POLITICAL DEBATE ABOUT BOTH THE TRIAL AND THE PARADE IN THE LIGHT OF PUBLICITY GIVEN TO FLANNERY'S ELECTION AS GRAND MARSHALL (WASHINGTON TELEGRAM NO 338).

C IN ADDRESS SHUD READ CG SAN FRANCISCO
C WA 4. THEIR

FCO PASS SAVING TO DUBLIN

OVERTON

REPEATED AS REQUESTED

NORTHERN IRELAND
LIMITED

RID
HAD
INFO D
WED
MAED
NEWS D
SEC D
FUSD
PS
PS/MR HURD

PS/MR RIFKIND
PS/MR ONSLOW
PS/FUS
SIR J BULLARD
MR WRIGHT
LOED N GORDON LENNOX
MR GIFFARD
MR ADAMS
MR GOODISON
MR URE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
NORTHERN IRELAND

2

RESTRICTED