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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 25, Number 2

February 2000

Whose Guns are in Irish Politics?

British, UUP, SDLP support arms producer's role in Ireland

By Sandy Carlson, Newsletter Editor

THE COUNTER-INSURGENCY tactic is as old as insurgency itself: get the people soft and fat, and they won't be climbing out of their overstuffed chairs to fight any revolutions. Turn the revolutionary—the real and the potential—into a couch potato. In practical terms: provide jobs that pay enough to distract people from the inequities and injustices that are part and parcel of government and they will learn to live within a compromised democracy.

This is the British government's strategy in the North, and it has the support of the SDLP and the UUP. For decades, both the lack of democracy and the anti-Catholic employment discrimination there have fuelled conflict. Now, however, it seems that the British, with the support of the North's largest nationalist and unionist parties, are answering Sinn Féin's decades-old call for job creation. With the Mitchell Agreement come equality and human rights bodies promising to address discrimination and other human rights abuses. With the Agreement comes new business and new jobs.

A close look at one new employer, Raytheon Systems Limited (RSL)—a subsidiary of Raytheon Company (by its own account one of the largest industrial corporations in the US)—, raises questions about the nature of the peace process and, indeed, the nature of prosperity.

Raytheon claims that two defense-related programs and its Derry software center could "create or sustain" up to 1,500 jobs. Industrial development. Employment. Sounds great—but what is Raytheon's business?

Raytheon claims to be one of the largest defense contractors in the world and a pioneer in the conversion of defense technologies for commercial markets. (Thank Raytheon for your microwave oven.) The company produces surveillance and reconnaissance systems, tactical systems, air combat and strike systems, missile systems, and air/missile defense systems. Satellite and tactical communications. Intelligence and surveillance systems.

With the recently-awarded Ministry of Defense's Airborne Standoff Radar

(ASTOR) program, RSL promises to grow its presence in the North. "One of [RSL's] key partners is Bombardier Aerospace, Shorts located in Belfast, which will create or sustain up to 830 jobs related to the ASTOR award," according to the company.

ASTOR is a "\$1.3 billion airborne radar surveillance program that provides day/night and all-weather imagery of the ground over a large area. The imagery can be analyzed on board the aircraft and passed in near-real time to ground stations and other military systems," Raytheon says.

Further, RSL and Shorts Missile Systems in Belfast have bid on the MoD's Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile requirement. The deal could "create or sustain" 400-500 jobs.

Last Aug., RSL, announced plans to establish a software company in Derry that would employ 150 people over three years. The Derry plant will "support a variety of Raytheon's electronics programs, including air traffic control systems," according to the company.

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Our View

Consider the Grammar of Selfishness

BRITAIN pronounced to the world in its (and the Republic's) 1994 Downing Street Declaration that it had "no selfish strategic or economic interest" in Ireland. Pundits the world over hung on the phrase--see: the British weren't in Ireland for they're own good. Sinn Fein had been wrong all those years.

The pundits got it wrong. The phrase did not say that the British had no interest but that the interest was not selfish. Had a comma followed "selfish," the phrase would have indicated that the British had no selfish interest, no strategic interest, no economic interest. Without the comma--how the phrase appeared in the official document--the British were saying their strategic and economic interests were not selfish.

If they're not selfish, then what are they? Selfless? Generous? For the benefit of Ireland? How deep down the rabbit hole do we wish to descend?

Obviously, the Mitchell Agreement has superseded the Downing Street Declaration, and perhaps we need not dwell on the older text. It is equally obvious, though, that Britain's role in the Mitchell accord was the descendant of the same line of thinking that produced the Downing Street Declaration--which, we recall, was born of Britain's attempt to draw support from a well-received political process Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams initiated with SDLP leader John Hume.

Clearly, the British are interested in Ireland. At the same time the Mitchell Agreement has produced increased levels of local democracy, it has produced closer links between Ireland and Britain. Consider the Dec. 21 entry in this issue's Peace Process Update, for example. Already, we see that the interest is political, strategic, and economic. Just look at this issue's stories on Raytheon and Logicon. What kind of peace have the Irish people purchased--and why is it okay to produce arms in Ireland if you are in with the government and own a dinner jacket?

Peace Process Update

November 13

The Senate joins Congress in calling for the full implementation of the Patten Commission's recommendations for police reforms in the North.

November 29

Potential candidate for president **Bill Bradley** says he is "delighted" that the North's coalition government will begin work. Bradley adds that the success of the peace process in Ireland is a "critical task for an American President" and says that in 1994, he was among the senators who asked President Bill Clinton to grant Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams a visa to this country.

December 10

The UFF agrees to meet with the decommissioning body. The Assembly says that its bureaucracy will create 400 jobs.

December 13

Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and Northern First Minister David Trimble meet in Armagh to establish six new cross-border bodies.

December 16

The first meeting of the British-Irish Council--involving all the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands--and the British and Irish governments occurs. The body will provide a forum to discuss common issues of concern.

December 21

The SDLP and Sinn Féin welcome Britain's moves to allow members of the Irish parliament to sit at Westminster and Stormont. Britain plans to enact legislation that will allow British MPs to stand in the Irish parliament, too. Meanwhile, Sinn Fein pressures British Prime Minister Tony Blair for the party's right to office space at Westminster. The party was allowed offices before 1997, but now Blair insists all MPs must swear their allegiance to the Crown before the government will grant them office space.

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From the North

By Robert Heatley, *co-founder of the Campaign for Democracy, a predominantly Protestant organization, Belfast, Northern Ireland*

POLITICS here await Feb., when the Ulster Unionist Council, governing body of the UUP, reconvenes to see if the IRA has complied with its demand—namely, that it has begun to decommission its weaponry.

If the answer is not to the UUC's satisfaction, then the unionist body has said that it will require UUP leader David Trimble and other party members of the Stormont Executive to honor the pledges they made late last autumn. These are comprised of post-dated letters promising that they will quit the Executive.

There is no basis whatsoever in either the Mitchell accord or in former Sen. Mitchell's review of the UUP's non-implementation of it prior to Nov. 1999 for this unilaterally concocted demand, but this fact does not phase the unionists. Such demands are just another way they seek to reassure themselves that they are still in control of politics in the North.

Unionists expect people to jump to their command. This threat of an Executive boycott would, of course, reintroduce the stall and undo such progress as has been made. The Assembly would be prorogued (at least), as would the institutions dependent on it. Pro-agreement forces, including the British and the Irish governments supported by the White House, and most of the popular news-media, have made great efforts to avert this calamity, but it is possible.

Anti-Agreement Unionists and their supporters inside the UUP are putting great pressure on Trimble and his associates to adhere to their Nov. pledges, and they have made it clear that they are not bluffing. When it is put to them that their actions could

return Northern Ireland to the armed conflict of the past thirty years, they show utterly no concern. They believe that there is a Plan B—a return to the negotiating table. They want a revised Mitchell accord from which has been extracted everything they dislike in the present agreement. In the world of supremacist dreams in which they live, they have deluded themselves into thinking that this will build a basis for a long-lasting peace in which the croppies have lain down.

It is extremely unlikely that these unionists will get what they are demanding, however. Sources close to the IRA have played down unattributable reports in the media that the republican organization is ready to begin the proximate decommissioning of some of its weaponry. When decommissioning comes, it will come NOT at the time and in the way demanded by the unionists who have acted as if the Mitchell accord and review had no bearing on them.

Will February then spell a major setback for the peace process? Not necessarily. Much depends, as always, on what the British government does. Already Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams has had to rebuke the newly blown-in Secretary of State Peter Mandelson, for "...abdicating his responsibilities under the Good Friday agreement to begin demilitarization." Mandelson has stated that policy in that regard is being determined by the securocrats, the top brass of the British Army and its intelligence services as well as the RUC, and Adams has reminded him of his purportedly dominant role in the action as the democratically accountable *political* element. Isn't this what the English always boast of?

Other matters of great concern are almost certain to inhibit the IRA from making precipitate moves at this stage, not least the presence of dissidents waiting in the wings in the strong belief that perfidious Albion is about to swindle the nationalist community once again. Grounds for this belief lie in Mandelson's statement that the Patten Report will be implemented with a view to "unionist sensitivities." This could be only a part of the choreography, of course, but what exactly does it mean?

Then there is the Department of Public Prosecutions' extraordinary decision to take no action against the RUC members accused of having threatened lawyer Rosemary Nelson prior to her assassination last March 15. The DPP appears to have thumbed its nose at the United Nations, a Committee of Congress, and numerous human rights bodies in this respect.

The big problem with the Mitchell accord is that it in actuality leaves the British authorities ultimately in control of how, and if, its democratizing elements will be implemented. In short, the whole situation is, at the moment, still volatile.

The UUC might be dissuaded from carrying out its threat in Feb., and already intimations have been made as to how it might be, without submission to an unjustifiable demand, mollified and presented with a get-out. This could lie in allowing decommissioning body chair General John de Chastelain to get on with dealing with the issue—it is, after all, his remit—and in suggestions for a modernized redefinition of the meaning of decommissioning. That is speculation. We shall have to wait and see.

Newsbits

THE SISTER of an IRA man killed by police in 1991 welcomed a commitment from the Human Rights Commission to carry out research into her brother's death. Colum Marks (29) was shot three times by an undercover police officer as he ran from St. Patrick's Avenue, Downpatrick, where an improvised mortar device had been abandoned....Although the investigation is still in the preliminary stages, his sister, Rosemary Rooney, believes the Human Rights Commission's decision to initiate further research is a significant step forward....The *Irish News* has been given access to the family's file of information on the 1991 shooting. A preliminary document submitted to the Human Rights Commission includes RUC statements from the inquest in 1994 as well as eyewitness reports and other information gathered over the years. In it, the family claims police had "accurate and prior knowledge" that the IRA was planning an operation in Downpatrick that night and had all escape routes blocked off. Eyewitness reports from the inquest allege flares and torchlights were seen prior to shots being fired—factors the family say should have allowed the RUC to see their target was unarmed. In addition, the document alleges Marks was handcuffed after being shot and was held in the area for 20 minutes although Downe Hospital was a minute's drive away....Rooney said, "...[W]e believe the RUC [had] the chance to arrest Colum. Then when he was fatally injured he was handcuffed and denied the right to immediate medical attention. We want to know why he was treated like this. We're not looking for prosecutions, but we do want people to know the truth about what happened." (*Irish News* 12/23/99)

The announcement yesterday of the terms of an official Irish government

investigation into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings has been welcomed by relatives of the victims. Thirty-three people were killed in the bombings...in May, 1974. There is strong evidence that the operation was a result of British intelligence/loyalist collusion. Taoiseach Bertie Ahern last night announced the appointment of retiring Chief Justice Liam Hamilton to conduct a thorough "fact-finding and assessment" examination of all aspects of the atrocities. Justice Hamilton will also be examining the bombing of a public house in Dundalk in Dec., 1975, which killed one man and injured 20. His report is then likely to be examined by the joint parliamentary committee on Justice, Equality, and Women's Rights....The Justice for the Forgotten group, which represents a number of survivors and victims of the bombings, is still insisting on a full public inquiry. In Sept., the group objected to an announcement of a private inquiry based on the recommendation of the 26-County Victims Commission....Ahern's announcement is likely to lead to the first public hearings into the circumstances of the bombings.Ahern said yesterday the Dublin government would ask the British authorities to cooperate. The investigation is to include an examination of the nature and adequacy of Garda investigations; the adequacy of cooperation from the RUC and British Army; the handling of scientific analyses of forensic evidence; the reasons why no prosecutions took place; and whether, and if so by whom and to what extent, the investigations were impeded....Welcoming the move, the Justice for the Forgotten group said last night this was a process of assessment, not a private inquiry, and on that basis it supported it. It also welcomed the fact that they would be fully represented at the committee's public hearings. Group secretary Margaret Urwin said it is happy with

Ahern's commitment to seek British government cooperation in helping to establish the full facts on "the biggest mass murder case of this state." (*RM Dist.* 12/20/99)

Evidence has been uncovered supporting claims the British government was asked to protect the life of murdered solicitor Rosemary Nelson. The *Irish News* has learned that details of a "secret" meeting attended by Breandan Mac Cionnaith and a senior civil servant in 1998 will be central to the latest controversy. Among the most serious allegations is a claim the Northern Ireland Office was wary of the "financial liability" involved in offering Nelson access to its Key Persons Protection Scheme (KPPS)—despite repeated concerns over her safety. The details will be contained in a report to be unveiled in Belfast tomorrow by British-Irish Rights Watch, the London-based human rights group whose report sparked a fresh probe into the murder of solicitor Pat Finucane....The details surrounding the "failure" to offer Nelson protection will be only one part of a report cataloguing concerns over the case. As well as criticizing the current Rosemary Nelson murder inquiry, it will claim government repeatedly failed to respond to fears for Nelson's safety—fears expressed by a range of organizations including the United Nations. The NIO and British government have consistently insisted Nelson never "applied" for the scheme. But the report will explain how Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition spokesmen Breandan Mac Cionnaith and Joe Duffy were admitted to KPPS—without making a formal application. It will also refer to letters from Downing Street and the minutes of meetings urging protection for 10 other members of the residents' coalition, and specifically, its legal representative, Rosemary Nelson. (*Irish News* 12/9/99)

American Irish History: Seaman James Connolly Sails the World

By Kevin P. Murphy, Massachusetts

JAMES CONNOLLY, born in County Cavan, Ireland, in 1842, is an American Irishman who fled the Great Hunger to become the premier seaman of his time.

After suffering the horrors of the Great Hunger, the family immigrated to Massachusetts and settled in the town of East Dennis on Cape Cod. There, the family worked hard by doing various kinds of manual labor. Meanwhile, at an early age, James became a proficient sea captain, sailing ships from Boston to Balti-

more, Maryland. His wife and family accompanied him on several dangerous sea routes.

In the 1870s, James began sailing to other continents on longer, more dangerous routes. He sailed clippers to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He assumed command of the ship *Pilgrim* of Boston, which sailed to the West Indies. In 1884, he commanded the *Charger* and sailed to Japan. His next command was the *South American*, the sleekest and fastest ship of its day. Captain Connolly's sailing records to

Australia have never been broken. He became famous throughout the US as the premier sea captain of his era, able to endure hardships along the way. Once, Connolly was wrecked off the coast of Africa and survived for days on coastal rocks until rescuers came.

Upon his retirement from the sea, Connolly and his family moved to Coronado, California, where he became a leading builder in the early 20th century.

Source: *Library of Edward Kelley, Boston*

(continued from Page 1)

RSL has the support of the Industrial Development Board for Northern Ireland. Likewise, SDLP leader John Hume, UUP leader David Trimble, and NIO minister George Howarth support RSL's plans.

Hume said RSL "will be warmly welcomed by all of our citizens. It is an act of great economic confidence in our city and is another major step forward in our dream to make our Foyle Valley the Silicon Valley of Europe."

Raytheon Chairman and CEO Daniel P. Burnham expressed a debt of gratitude to Hume for his "unwavering encouragement" of the company's plans to set up shop in Derry.

RSL in its Aug. 24 press release said it chose Derry to take advantage of "talented software graduates and experienced software professionals in this region." Good help is hard to find, so the University of Ulster and Queen's University, Belfast, "will be unique contributors to this effort," according to RSL.

Raytheon has gotten to be big business by selling arms far and wide.

The company supplies both the Saudi Arabian and the Indonesian armed forces with weapons. Both are countries with atrocious human rights records. Last year, Human Rights Watch highlighted the humanitarian impact of antipersonnel mines and asked companies to stop producing them. Raytheon refused.

The company that brought the world the Patriot missile is also involved in the little-known Project HAARP, the Pentagon's high-frequency ionospheric heater and surveillance system. Raytheon owns E-Systems, which holds the patents related to the HAARP project. Though the US armed forces claim the project is intended for them "to observe the complex natural variations of Alaska's ionosphere," the \$30 million experiment will also help the Pentagon develop new forms of communications and surveillance technologies to enable the military to send signals to nuclear subs and to peer deep underground.

"New forms of communications" include the ability to confuse or interfere with airplanes' and missiles'

guidance systems, intercept and interfere with communications and facilitate missile or aircraft destruction, deflection, or confusion by manipulating regions of the atmosphere, according to HAARP foes.

Raytheon, which touts itself as a great job creator or sustainer, has been involved in **anti-trade union** activity and has been in US courts for its **union-busting activities**. Ironically, the company made substantial donations to British Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labor Party in the run-up to the last Westminster election.

PIRA, OIRA, RIRA, CIRA, INLA, IPLO, UFF, UVF, OVF, LVF and every other permutation of armed group in Ireland are wee buns compared to what Raytheon has planned for the future of world weapons—weapons it will produce, in part, in Northern Ireland.

Blair, Hume, and Trimble reduce the decommissioning issue to a minor absurdity in the volatile world of big guns when they endorse industrial development the purpose of which is to kill.

Was the Road to Peace Long, or was the Journey Slow?_____

By Charles P. Mullaney, *Professor of Legal Studies, Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, Connecticut*

CONFLICT resolution is as much about shutting up and putting up—with political enemies, delays, and guns that don't disappear with the stroke of a pen. So heard the attendees of a conference that Irish peace broker and former Maine Senator George Mitchell mediated at Queens College in New York City on Dec. 2, 1999.

Mitchell trotted out the peace talks "B" team for an all-day closed conference on conflict resolution on the same day devolution in the North took hold. The conference lineup was a trio of the North's minor party leaders, the Irish Ambassador to the US, and the British Consul General to the US.

Using peace talk anecdotes and post-agreement observations, participants performed like all-stars, provoking, enlightening, and entertaining a hundred or so academics and activists. This was a rare opportunity for them to discuss the peace process outside the shadows of UUP leader David Trimble, Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, and others whose names have come to sum up a generation

of political conflict.

"If Mitchell had been less successful, all the big names would [have been] here," Queens College President Allen Sessoms ironically noted when he introduced the former Maine senator. He was right. Conference panelists Gary McMichael, Monica McWilliams and David Ervine, notable in the North, are virtual unknowns to the public-at-large.

McMichael, whose father the IRA killed when the senior McMichael was leader of the UFF, heads the tiny Ulster Democratic Party, which participated in negotiations but now holds no seat in the Assembly. Significantly, when UDA and UFF prisoners withdrew their support from the peace process, almost collapsing it in Jan. 1998, McMichael persuaded then-Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam to take the unprecedented step of meeting with loyalist prisoners. The process continued.

McWilliams cochairs the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, a nonsectarian party devoted to women's issues. She took part in the Mitchell talks, and her party occupies two seats in the Assembly.

Ervine leads the Progressive



Prof. Charles P. Mullaney, left, and talks chair George Mitchell

Unionist Party, a small loyalist party with links to the LVF. The PUP also has two seats in the Assembly. Ervine, former head of the lethal loyalist paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force, did a lengthy stint at Long Kesh for possession of explosives.

Irish Ambassador Sean O'Huiginn and British Consul General P.J. Johnston flanked the three negotiators on the stage of the contemporary, sparsely decorated Lefrak Concert Hall.

The taciturn and stern McMichael brought a chuckle to the assembly when he remarked that the secret to negotiations was that Mitchell listened to "rantings and ravings for two years until we exhausted ourselves. That's when we got a deal."

Then, countering Trimble's argument that decommissioning constituted a mandate of the agreement, he said that decommissioning "was purposely left vague because we couldn't do it then."

McMichael also opined that the agreement "will become easier" for



Monica McWilliams, co-chair, NIWC

unenthusiastic unionists to absorb because they'll change with time.

Monica McWilliams strode to the podium and told a hushed audience that friends of "Gary and David" had murdered her neighbors. Then, pausing for effect, she said "and, some people in my community killed friends of

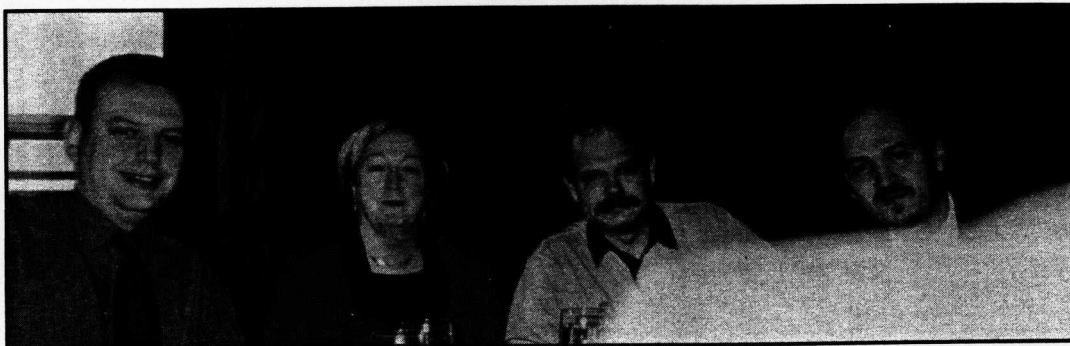
Gary and David." It was an intense moment. Calming the audience, she then suggested that, despite initial adversity to NIWC and personal insults, two years of talks among intransigent macho politicians and herself was "good therapy. We moved from blaming to framing."

She praised Mowlam, Trimble, and the "oft-forgotten" civil servants—the real writers of the Mitchell Agreement.

If Ervine resided in the US, surely he'd be a mayor, or maybe even a governor. A gifted speaker, he blended bits of colorful outrageousness with compassion and sincerity. He was the unmistakable crowd favorite, generating several bursts of applause during his morning remarks, particularly as he dispassionately spoke of his prison conversion from terrorist to peace-maker. "The healing has begun for

my society," he said.

Inevitably, the audience raised the decommissioning issue, prompting Senator Mitchell to a



Left to right: Gary McMichael (UDP), Monica McWilliams (NIWC), David Ervine (PUP), and P.J. Johnston (British Consul General to US)

rare display of anger. Pointing his finger at an inquisitive member of the audience, Mitchell stated firmly that the "relentless focus of the press on decommissioning to the exclusion of other issues" must stop. The Mitchell Agreement is an integral whole," he said, and decommissioning is but one of many important provisions.

Loyalist McMichael chimed in, reminding spectators that decommissioning "is voluntary." Likewise, Ervine resurrected his often-quoted comment of a year ago: "let 'em (the weapons) rust," adding matter-of-factly that the peace process

won't break down over decommissioning.

The panelists continued in this way—style over substance—

sometimes sounding like speakers at a revival meeting, praising tolerance, reconciliation, co-determina-

tion, commonality, and legitimacy in a divided society.

Nevertheless, journeymen players whose very obscurity gives them a unique perspective treated an American audience to a rare, unscripted, and uplifting view of the North.

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Action Requests

Please make the telephone calls or write the letters below. Mention that you are a PEC member.

Contact: Rep. James Walsh, 2351 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515; Web address: <http://www.house.gov/walsh>

Message: I am troubled that the defense contractor Logicon is playing a key role in the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program. Though the company says its role in the Walsh Visas is administrative, I fear that such a role will give the defense company a foothold in Ireland that could undermine the integrity of the peace process in the long term by making employment dependent on arms production. Considering Logicon's role in Ireland in the context of Raytheon's growing role in the North, I am concerned that the peace process is less about peace than developing technological defense plants in Ireland. Please assure me that you will investigate this matter and find legislative ways to ensure that new employers in Ireland, North and South, reflect a variety of industries. Surely, economic development must not be allowed to make a mockery of peace—and decommissioning.

Defense Contractor Logicon to Administer First Walsh Visas

DEFENSE contractor and weapons systems expert Logicon, Inc., is the prime contractor for the first six months of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program (*See Action Request, This Page*). The program will bring Irish people to the US to develop "job skills and conflict resolution abilities in a diverse, peaceful and prosperous environment" and then "return home better able to contribute toward economic regeneration and the Irish peace process," according to the legislation.

Rep. James Walsh of New York sponsored the program, also known as the Walsh Visas, which will train up to 4,000 young people between the ages of 21 and 35 in hospitality and tourism; customer service; information and communications technologies; pharmaceuticals; engineering; sales, marketing and promotion; agriculture and horticulture diversification; food processing; and furniture. The program will assist participants in finding jobs in Ireland.

Logicon will coordinate identification, recruitment, placement, processing, certification, orientation, reception and employment of the first groups of participants. The company will also define, develop, test, field, and enhance the program's information systems and technologies.

Logicon Inc., based in Herndon, VA, is a subsidiary of Northrop Grumman Corporation. A leader in advanced information technologies, systems and services, its areas of expertise include command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR); weapon systems; information systems; training and simulation; science and technology; base and range support; and system support services.

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