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AMBASÁID NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN.



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

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Secretary
Department of External Affairs

Demarche to Lord Chalfont, Minister of State, Foreign
and Commonwealth Office re Northern Ireland: 13 August 1969

On Tuesday, 13th August, 1969 at 3.30 p.m. the Secretary of the Department telephoned me to convey the following instruction which he had just received from an emergency meeting of the Government which was still in progress in Dublin:

"The Ambassador at London is instructed to convey immediately to the British Government the request that they arrange for the immediate cessation of police attacks on the people of Derry."

The Secretary instructed me to proceed accordingly.

An appointment with the Foreign Secretary, Mr Stewart was requested immediately from the Foreign Office, but it transpired he was on leave "on the Continent". The request was amended to substitute the Minister of State in charge, in the absence of the Foreign Secretary.

The Foreign Office Private Secretary concerned spoke of Lord Shepherd being possibly available, but ~~xxx~~ a half an hour later stated that Lord Chalfont, Minister of State would receive me at 5 p.m.

I prepared an Aide Memoire re-producing exactly the text given to me by the Secretary (see above) except that I

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substituted

"The Irish Chargé d'Affaires is instructed by his Government" for

"The Ambassador at London is instructed".

Immediately before 5 p.m. while I was in the waiting room, Lord Chalfont's Private Secretary, Mr Fayle informed me that there was a telephone call from Dublin for me. I took the call in a messenger's box, and received from Mr Howard a message from the Secretary of the Department that the following words should be added to my demarche to Lord Chalfont

"..... also to request the British Government to apply immediately to the United Nations for the urgent dispatch of a peace-keeping force to the Six Counties of Northern Ireland and (to say that) the Government has instructed the Irish Permanent Representative to the United Nations to inform the Secretary General of the foregoing".

Immediately afterwards Mr Fayle and Mr C Lush (the First Secretary who deals with Irish affairs on the political side) escorted me into Lord Chalfont's room, Mr Fayle retiring immediately. Mr Lush took notes, and was the only other person present.

I thanked Lord Chalfont for receiving me at short notice, explained that I had brought an Aide Memoire, but had just received additional instructions by telephone, so that my demarche would be partly in writing, and partly verbal. I then read the Aide Memoire, and handed over

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copies to Lord Chalfont. Next I read at dictation speed the note I had just taken down from the telephone of the additional material added to my demarche. Mr Lush wrote this down as I read it.

Lord Chalfont started his reply by saying he had taken note of all I said. He continued by saying that the aspect of Government affairs which I had raised was the concern of the Home Office, so that he would be conveying to the Home Office for their attention what I had just told him.

He then said that, although he was speaking extemporaneously (not having had any forewarning of the matter about which I had wished to see him), he could not at all accept the situation that the police were attacking the people of Derry - (he said "Derry" rather than "Londonderry"). Indeed, he could not accept any such suggestion for a single moment.

As regards my reference to the United Nations, he said he must point out that, since the subject-matter of my demarche was an internal affair of the United Kingdom, it was not a matter which it would be appropriate to raise at the United Nations.

He concluded by saying that he had taken careful note of all I had said, and would ensure it was conveyed to the Home Office with the least possible delay.

That concluded the interview, but as Lord Chalfont was conducting me to the door, he expressed informally

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the sincere hope that the situation in Northern Ireland would start to improve immediately, because it looked very serious at the moment. I replied that I was sure we could all join in expressing that hope very fervently.

Mr Lush who had remained with Lord Chalfont, overtook me in the corridor and asked me to check with him once again the wording of the material which I had added to the demarche, as a result of the telephone call I had received. When I had re-checked the wording with him, he remarked that the Irish Government were not proposing to take the matter up at the U.N. themselves but, were, rather, asking the British Government to do so, so that the Irish Permanent Representative was merely being asked to inform the Secretary General of the request to the British Government that they should raise the matter. I confirmed that this was the correct interpretation of my message.

Mr Lush appeared to indicate approval as regards this point, and implied that Lord Chalfont had already picked it up, but wished to be quite certain about the point.

On my return to the Embassy about 5.30 p.m. I telephoned the Secretary, and conveyed the foregoing to him.

KR

Kevin Rush

14 August, 1969