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ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Taoiseach $\frac{13}{8/69}$

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

Secret.

13th August, 1969.

Dear Ó'Nualláin,

The Political Division of the Department had prepared a tentative draft speech for possible use by the Taoiseach in the event of the situation in Derry getting out of hand on the 12th August. I enclose this draft, marked draft 'A'. There are two aspects of this draft which might render it inappropriate for use at this point of time. Firstly, it puts the British Government on the spot publicly for not having taken appropriate action to prevent last night's events in Derry and, secondly, it commits the Taoiseach to seeking a meeting with Mr. Wilson now. While it might be necessary for the Taoiseach to see Mr. Wilson if events get sufficiently out of hand, a meeting with him now is open to the possible objection that Mr. Wilson might manoeuvre the Taoiseach into appearing to have asked for, or approved of, the use of British troops in the North. This could lead to an adverse reaction from extremist elements North and South.

I have prepared an alternative statement which, I think, at the present stage of developments the Taoiseach might consider making. This draft is marked 'B'. For maximum effect, the Taoiseach might consider delivering a statement along these lines himself on radio and television.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. N. Ó'Nualláin,
Secretary,
Department of the Taoiseach.

Encls.

DRAFT A

Irishmen in every part of this island have made known their deep concern at the bitter fighting which took place yesterday in Derry and to a lesser extent in some other northern towns. Their concern is heightened by the realisation that the new spirit of reform and inter-communal cooperation, introduced so hopefully under the Government of Captain O'Neill is slowly but steadily being eroded and unhappily seems to be giving way to the forces of sectarianism and prejudice. ~~and~~ Many are now afraid that reform when it comes may come too late. All men of good will must feel sorrow and disappointment at this seemingly backward turn of events and must be apprehensive as regards the future.

The Government share fully these feelings and wish to repeat that they deplore sectarianism and intolerance wherever they occur north or south in this island and no matter who is responsible. On 1st August the Minister for External Affairs went to London specifically to express to the British Government our grave concern at the possibility of widespread disorder and bloodshed in Derry on 13th August and the danger that the situation might get out of control. We urged strongly that the Parade should be banned, ~~or~~ failing that that the British Government should take all possible action in advance to ensure that violence would not occur. In addition we pressed the need for the acceleration of the existing programme of civil rights reform and the widening of the scope of that programme to include further reforms. We pointed to the evidence that inter-group relationships had already seriously deteriorated as was shown by the growing tension and division on sectarian lines which was already taking place in the major northern towns and cities.

The Government have no wish to do anything which might heighten the tensions and the divisions which exist in the north. Our policy has been to continue to cooperate in a spirit of friendliness and good neighbourliness with the Stormont Government without any deviation from our political principles: this will remain the policy of the Government. However, we must point out that if matters continue to worsen and the forces of reaction progressively gain ground in the future, this Government will not be able to sit idly by while Irish people suffer. We have said in the past and we repeat that there can be no question that the concern voiced by Irishmen in every part of Ireland at this time is the concern of the whole people of Ireland, and that as a democratically elected Government we have the right to speak on behalf of those people.

In view of the gravity of the current situation, the Government have decided to request further discussions at the earliest date with the British Government at the highest level.

DRAFT B.

It is with deep sadness that I, in common with all Irishmen of goodwill, have learned of the tragic events which took place yesterday in Derry and elsewhere in the North in recent days. Our sorrow is heightened by the realisation that the new spirit of reform and inter-community co-operation introduced so hopefully is slowly but steadily being eroded and unhappily seems to be giving away to the forces of sectarianism and prejudice. All must share the sorrow and disappointment at this seemingly backward turn of events and must be apprehensive as regards the future. We deplore sectarianism and intolerance wherever they occur and, most of all, in this island, North or South, no matter who may be responsible. ^{N.P.} [The continuing strife and unrest in the North clearly reflects the need for the acceleration of the existing programme of civil rights reform and the widening of the scope of that programme to include remedies for all outstanding widely felt grievances. In a situation with such a tragic history as the North, where the rights of the minority have been so frequently disregarded by the majority, promises of reform are in themselves not enough. In order that these may receive credibility from the minority they must be as comprehensive as possible and implemented without any avoidable delay. Meanwhile, the authorities in their day-to-day actions, whether at the central, local or police level, must not alone act fairly and without discrimination but also be seen to so act. Lest reform, when it comes, may come too late, I would earnestly urge the authorities in the North to re-examine

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their programme of reform to see in what respects they can widen its scope and expedite its implementation.

In the present very tense situation I do not want to do or say anything which might exacerbate the position. I shall not, therefore, say more at this time on this point. The British Government are already aware of our views as, at my request, the Minister for External Affairs went to London at the beginning of this month specifically to make known to the British Government our concern about the whole situation. We have said in the past, and we repeat, that there can be no question but that this situation is the concern of the people in all parts of Ireland and that, as a democratically elected Government we have the right - indeed the duty - to speak.

As you are aware, we as a Government and people, have been doing what we can to promote the cause of peace in the world and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms everywhere. We have been active at the United Nations. Our troops have served in this cause in Africa, Asia and in the Middle East. We are justly proud of the contribution they have made. It is my ardent hope that all Irishmen, North or South, will be inspired by the same desire for peace in our own island and I make this plea to them this evening. I earnestly appeal for restraint on all sides even in the face of provocation. Let no one do anything to aggravate the situation. Let us all work for peace - not just peace - but peace with justice for the whole of Ireland.