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Minister,

The British Ambassador came to see me urgently at 12.40 today. He said that the Foreign Office is worried lest the Answers to today’s Dáil Questions might give rise to Paisley trouble.

The Ambassador asked me to say that it would be helpful in avoiding Paisley trouble if, in answer to the Questions or Supplementary thereon, nothing would be said which would imply that Captain Kelly's work related to subversive activities, but rather that it was just an intelligence operation in relation to a critical situation in the past. Nothing should be said which might give an implication that they are continuing. The Ambassador expressed the hope that if there should be a Supplementary Question as to whether this type of activity is continuing, that both the facts and the Answer would be no.

Finally, the Ambassador made the general comment that in this particular case he did not think that it would be adequate to give the usual reply that one does not discuss such activities.

26th May, 1970
QUESTION NO. 10 TO 15

Chun an Aire Gnothai Eachtracha: To the Minister for External Affairs

To ask the Minister for External Affairs whether he has been in contact with the Irish Ambassador in London following the Ambassador’s meeting with British Foreign Office officials; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Michael O’Leary.

To ask the Minister for External Affairs if the Irish Ambassador has been recently in touch with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office; if he will inform the House of the matters discussed; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Gerry L'Estrange.

To ask the Minister for External Affairs if he will make a statement concerning the meeting between the Irish Ambassador and the British Permanent Secretary in London on 20th May, 1970 on the presence of Irish Army Intelligence officers in Northern Ireland.

- Barry Desmond.

To ask the Minister for External Affairs if he will make a full statement on the discussions between the Irish Ambassador to Britain and a representative of the British Government regarding the presence of Irish Army intelligence officers in the North; at whose request the meeting was called; and whether the British Government made any specific requests to the Irish Government in relation to Irish Army intelligence officers being in the Six Counties.

- Brendan Corish.

To ask the Minister for External Affairs if any protest has been made by the Stormont or British Governments in relation to the Taoiseach’s statement in Dáil Éireann on 14th May, 1970 on the presence of Irish Army personnel in the North; and, if so, the nature of the protest and the reply thereto.

- Gerry L'Estrange.

To ask the Minister for External Affairs whether an undertaking was asked for that the Irish Army intelligence service would not in future involve themselves in the affairs of the Six Counties; and what reply was given to any such request.

- Noel C. Browne.

For reply on Tuesday, 26th May, 1970.
REPLY

With your permission, a Cheann Chomhairle, I propose to take questions numbers 10 to 15 together.

The Ambassador was invited to call on the Deputy under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at 11.30 a.m. on 20th May in connection with another matter. At the conclusion of the discussion on that matter, it was conveyed to him that the presence of an Army Officer in the North had caused some embarrassment to the authorities there. The Ambassador was asked to convey this to me. There was no question of a diplomatic protest being made.