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**Title:** Copy note from HJ McCann, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, reporting a meeting with Mr Thom, British Chargé d’Affaires *ad interim*, relating to cross-border Irish Republican Army activity.

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NOTE

Mr. Thom, the British Chargé d'Affaires a.i., came to see me this morning at his request and left with me the attached note containing a summary of border incidents involving violence initiated by IRA units from this side of the Border since 27 March. Mr. Thom added that there had been a further one yesterday which is not included in the list. Mr. Thom mentioned that this matter had been referred to by Mr. Heath in his meeting with the Taoiseach in Munich. I commented that I understood that the Taoiseach had already indicated on more than one occasion that the Government here are doing what they can in this matter. I pointed to the difficulties because of the length of the Border and remarked that the British themselves with their vastly superior security forces were also having difficulties in coping with those engaged in violence north of the Border.

Mr. Thom went on to stress the extent to which public opinion in Britain is concerned about this cross-Border IRA activity. I suggested that this was, to a certain extent, fanned by the repeated statements of Mr. Faulkner that the IRA was the only problem and also by the propaganda slant being put out by British spokesmen suggesting that we are not doing what we can in this matter.

I reminded Mr. Thom that the Minister had taken up this question with Mr. Whitelaw during the recent meeting. Mr. Whitelaw accepted the difficulties involved in the situation and, at the Minister's request, agreed to see that there would be no further official British propaganda against us on the subject. I went on to say that we were a little disappointed to see the slanting and the emphasis given to this question in the briefing given by British spokesmen following the meeting between the Taoiseach and Mr. Heath; so much so that the Minister had instructed our Ambassador in London to see Mr. Whitelaw yesterday and to remind him of the undertaking which Mr. Whitelaw had given the Minister. Mr. Thom commented that the reaction of the press here on the subject had not passed unnoticed by him. I suggested that for the British to continue this type of propaganda was a shortsighted policy.

In view of the fact that this subject was touched on during the meeting between the Taoiseach and Mr. Heath I enquired as to why it was considered necessary to raise the matter again so soon in the attached Note, particularly in view of our assertion that all that is possible is being done. I enquired as to whether there is anything which the British side are suggesting should be done which is not being done due regard being had to the legal position and available resources. On the first point Mr. Thom replied that the purpose of the Note gave us a list of the incidents to show us the extent of the problem and their concern. The British Government recognised that there has been increased cooperation in dealing with this problem with the exception of one or two areas. On the second point he said that it was a matter for the Irish Government to decide how to cope with the problem - they were only bringing the extent of it to our notice. Asked about the reference to particular areas, Mr. Thom said that it had been observed from reports that the following were regarded as less cooperative than the general run of the Garda Síochána

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I told Mr. Thom that I would bring his Note and his comments to the attention of the Minister and of the Department of Justice. Once again, however, I counselled against taking an exaggerated approach to the problem bearing in mind the background to the whole Northern situation and Britain's own experience with their much larger resources and I emphasised the necessity of desisting from any further unfair propaganda on the subject.

*HW*

8 Meán Fómhair 1972