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Reference Code: 2005/151/704

Title: Note by Sean Donlon, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, of meeting on 24 February 1975 between Dr Garret FitzGerald, TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the United Kingdom Ambassador to Ireland, Sir Arthur Galsworthy

Creation Date(s): 24 February 1975

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 4 pages

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

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1. Tax search 26/1/75
2. Secretary 26/1/75

In view of the statements
to my an IRA following class, we may
find it necessary to ask the British

With the Compliments ^(public)
to make a specific denial - despite
Mr Reissere's remarks as at x p 1.

The matter ^{of the} is being examined
in Foreign Affairs. cc

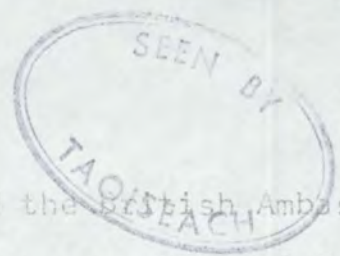
Secretary

26/1/75

Department of Foreign Affairs

25.2.75

CONFIDENTIAL



The Minister for Foreign Affairs received the British Ambassador at Iveagh House on 24.2.1975. Also present were Mr. P.J.G. Keating and Mr. Seán Donlon of the Department and Mr. M. Daly of the British Embassy. The Ambassador raised three matters.

1. IRA Ceasefire

At their meeting on 14 February, the Minister had asked the Ambassador for assurances on the role of the incident centres, the possibility of the emergence of IRA vigilante or policing groups and the position of known IRA members. The Ambassador said that the only incident centres over which they had control were those established by the British Government and there was no question of their being used for anything other than the monitoring of the ceasefire. Since they began operating on 15 February at 10.00 a.m., 126 messages had passed through the centres of which 101 were from Sinn Féin to the British authorities. Most of the Sinn Féin messages were trivial but in one or two cases they had served a useful purpose in avoiding misunderstanding, e.g. on a housing estate in Dungannon, the British Army had moved in to assist the local gas company deal with a potentially serious gas leak. The immediate reaction on the estate was that the Army was about to conduct a major search operation but the misunderstanding was quickly cleared through the incident centre. The British authorities had no control over the Sinn Féin incident centres and provided they did not break the law and operated, e.g. like the local clinic of a political party or a UDA community centre, no action was called for.

In regard to vigilante groups, there was no evidence that these were operating and though the public claims made by Seamus Loughran in regard to a policing role for Sinn Féin had been noted, the Secretary of State had thought it better not to make a public

X |

speech denying the claim but to make it clear through regular press briefings that Sinn Féin would under no circumstances be allowed to assume a policing function.

As regards known IRA men walking the streets, the position was that membership of the IRA was a criminal offence but in many cases it would be very difficult to obtain evidence of membership which could suitably be used in the courts. Until now, the Secretary of State would have used the detention procedures for dealing with such people but his present policy was not to use these procedures.

In reply to a query, the Ambassador said he understood that the detention procedures had been suspended altogether even though the cessation of violence at present appeared to involve only the Provisional IRA.

The Ambassador assured the Minister that there was no question of an amnesty or immunity from arrest being given to anyone.

In the course of the discussion, two specific matters relating to the current violence were drawn to the attention of the Ambassador. The first was the continuing problem of the Rathcoole estate where two more houses had been attacked the previous night and from which it seemed loyalist bombing missions and possible assassination attempts had been launched within the last week.

The Minister asked that security policy in relation to that area should be looked at again so that the threat to the minority would be minimised as much as possible. The second point mentioned was recent incidents involving the RUC in Tyrone. Over the last year there had been almost no complaints about RUC behaviour and this improvement was both welcome and politically very helpful. In the last few weeks, there had been reports about ill-treatment of individuals (three men at Cookstown RUC Station on 31 January 1975: one had subsequently to receive hospital treatment; an 11 year-old juvenile had also been held at the same station for some hours in

1.2. procedures for use against on side only!

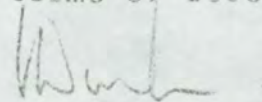
circumstances which gave rise to doubts about police behaviour) at Cookstown RUC Station and it would be helpful if these reports were either publicly denied or if the allegations made were immediately subjected to a full inquiry, the results of which would be made public.

2. Visit to Dublin by Mr. Bourne

The Ambassador recalled that the Secretary of State had, in a letter of 4 February '75, suggested that Mr. Bourne should come to Dublin to discuss certain security matters. He would now like to suggest a visit on 4th March. The Minister informed the Ambassador that having consulted the Department of Justice, he could now tell him that the meeting was in principle acceptable. Mr. Donlon would be in contact to arrange details.

3. Cross-Border Studies

The British Ambassador gave the Minister the text of a letter (attached) from the Secretary of State on this topic and there followed a lengthy discussion but little new ground was covered. The British claimed that, following the meeting between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister on 21 November 1974, they had formulated terms of reference for limited projects because they understood from a remark made at that meeting by Mr. Nally that we shared their reservations about a large-scale cross-border study. They had noted Mr. Nally as saying that "limited schemes of regional co-operation in the Derry area" would be most useful. The Minister pointed out that there was nothing in this to suggest that we agreed to a watering-down of what had been originally agreed, viz, that there should be a general study of the north-west. Mr. Donlon undertook to let the Ambassador have again a copy of our proposed terms of reference for such a study.



Seán Donlon

25 February 1975

i.e. they interpreted this as meaning Derry city.
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