

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



**Reference Code:** 2005/151/705

**Title:** Note by G Ó Broin, Counsellor, Anglo-Irish Section, Department of Foreign Affairs, circulated at meeting of Government on 1 August 1975, reporting on meeting between the United Kingdom Ambassador to Ireland, Sir Arthur Galsworthy, and the Parliamentary Secretary [John Kelly, TD, Parliamentary Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs] at which the death of members of the Miami Showband was discussed

**Creation Date(s):** 31 July 1975

**Level of description:** Item

**Extent and medium:** 2 pages

**Creator(s):** Department of the Taoiseach

**Access Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

NOTE

Ch. J. 8/8

Read at meeting of Govt today  
8/8

The Parliamentary Secretary met the British Ambassador for about 45 minutes this evening in connection with the murder of members of the Miami Showband earlier today.

The Parliamentary Secretary told the Ambassador that the Government were seriously concerned at the outrage. He had been asked by the Tánaiste to convey this to him and to request the fullest possible information. He referred to the reports that the attackers had been wearing British Army uniforms as particularly disturbing. In general incidents such as this which appear to have been carried out by Loyalist para-military organisations only serve to erase the public memory of outrages by illegal organisations on the other side and make the Government's job in defending anti-IRA measures infinitely more difficult.

The Ambassador stated that he wished to assure us most formally that the British authorities entirely shared our concern at dastardly murders by persons purporting to fight for some ideal. He had been speaking with the NIO after lunch and understood that the perpetrators appeared to have been connected with the UVF. The evidence for this was firstly that the letters "UVF" had been found tattooed on an arm found at the site. Secondly, a man who seems to have UVF affiliations is helping the police with their enquiries. He understood that the RUC were in touch with the Gardai and all information would be passed on to us either through the police or diplomatic channel according as it became available.

The Ambassador stated that he must reject most emphatically any suggestion that the perpetrators were members of the security forces. The Parliamentary Secretary accepted this assurance and explained that he had not meant to suggest that the Government had any evidence that the British Army was involved. The mere mention of uniforms was inflammable and likely to have an impact on the public regardless of its unlikelihood.

The Ambassador then proceeded to speak of the dilemma facing the British authorities in regard to security measures. The Secretary of State had said that they would respond to any improvement in the security situation. One way to respond would be to thin out the troops. This had not been done although they had been taken out of armoured cars (which had had an emotive impact) and they had thickened up foot patrols. Soldiers no longer carry their rifles at the ready or creep down the sides of buildings. Some humps in roads had been removed.

The Army presence is, however, still visible in Newry as elsewhere. There are frequent snap VCPs, particularly at interfaces, and many travelling gunmen had been stopped at such spot-checks. In each such case a murder has almost certainly been prevented.

The Ambassador expressed the opinion that VCPs in the area would have to be thickened up. However, this would be thoroughly distasteful since what rankled on people in the North is checks on their freedom of movement. This, he said, is a perennial headache for the General and the Chief Constable and the Secretary of State.

The Ambassador referred to the PQ on the matter which had been handled in the House of Commons this afternoon. He assured the Parliamentary Secretary that he would transmit his comments forthwith and repeated his assurances that all information would be provided as it became available.

Finally the Ambassador said that he would be spending the August Bank Holiday weekend bird-watching in Lough Erne in the company of Lord Donaldson with whom he would further discuss the matter.



G. O. Broin

31 July 1975