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IRELAND



Reference Code:	2007/116/743
Creation Date(s):	2 May 1977
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
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2 May, 1977.

Dear Mr. Nolan,

I have been asked by the Taoiseach, Mr. Liam Cosgrave, T.D., to acknowledge receipt of your letter, received on 28th April, 1977, concerning I.R.A. activities. He has noted all you say and has asked me to convey the following comments.

The Irish Government does not show weakness towards those who threaten the democratic institutions of State. Its firm policy, supported by the vast majority of the Irish people, is to prevent crimes of violence and where they are committed relentlessly to seek out the perpetrators and charge them before the courts. It also aims to ensure that the State is not used as a base for mounting attacks on Northern Ireland, as a source of arms or explosives for violent acts there or as a haven for fugitive offenders. Vigorous action has been taken to these ends with a very substantial measure of success. On a number of occasions spokesmen for the British Government and of the Conservatives Party have paid tribute to the Government's policy and the results achieved.

The Taoiseach wishes me to point out, however, that the criminal activity and violence about which you are concerned has occurred, to an overwhelming extent in Northern Ireland where, as you are aware, the British Government have responsibility for law and order. Moreover, by far the greatest proportion of the violence there is indigenous. This can be seen from the places of origins of those convicted in the courts in Northern Ireland. The connection with this part of Ireland seems to be tenuous. In fact, of all incidents of violence there, only 2% have any connection with the border. Speculative newspaper reports sometimes refer to "I.R.A. headquarters in Dublin" but since the I.R.A. is a secret society it is a matter of conjecture as to whence it is directed: it could as equally be London or, indeed, Belfast as Dublin. Terrorist-type offences have, of course, been committed in this part of Ireland, including a very small number of attacks on British persons or property in the Republic, such as the assassination of the late British Ambassador. The full weight of the security forces and of the law have been directed to bringing the perpetrators of all such crimes to justice and, indeed, following the murder of Mr. Ewart-Biggs, a state of National Emergency was declared and new emergency legislation enacted. I am enclosing a copy of the speech made by the Taoiseach in moving the motion on a national emergency in both Houses of the Oireachtas. In it, the Taoiseach described the action taken by the Government since the campaign of violence began. In the period since the end of July, 1976 up to the end of January, 1977 a further 51 persons have been convicted for offences connected with this campaign, including membership of an illegal organisation. I am also enclosing a copy of a recent speech by the Taoiseach at Finner Camp, Co. Donegal. I feel sure you will agree, when you have read these speeches that they indicate an unequivocal attitude on the part of the Irish Government to violence for which a political motivation is claimed.

The firm attitude of the Government has also been exemplified in its rejection of the demands made by the kidnappers of Dr. Tiede Herrema and other persons and of hunger-strikers. You may have noted the recent cessation of a hunger strike by twenty I.R.A. prisoners when they failed to secure any concession from the Government.

You are incorrect in saying that Seamas Twomey made inflammatory speeches in Dublin recently. He did not. This man is an escaped prisoner who is constantly

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being sought by the Gardaí who would immediately arrest him if identified in public. You may be thinking of an interview with Twomey published in the fortnightly periodical, 'Hibernia'. This was obtained by a London-based freelance journalist who is not amenable to the law here. It may well have taken place in Britain or Northern Ireland.

You claim that the Government could round up most of the enemies of the State in a week. The position is that there are no persons suspected of offences and whose whereabouts are known who have not been arrested. Over 850 persons have been convicted before the Special Criminal Court of offences connected with campaigns of violence and given sentences ranging up to life imprisonment. You said that "you could if you wished under the new law send back wanted murderers to Ulster". This is incorrect. The Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act, 1976 extended the criminal law of the State, so far as concerns certain serious offences, to things done in Northern Ireland and (for some of the offences) Great Britain. This means that persons caught within the State whom the Northern Ireland or British authorities suspect of having committed relevant offences in the North or Britain can be tried in our courts. However, since the Act came into operation on 1st June, 1976 no indication has been received from the Northern Ireland or British security authorities that there are people here wanted for crimes committed since the Act came into force. This is further evidence that the violence in Northern Ireland is overwhelmingly indigenous in origin.

The Taoiseach agrees that the way forward lies in peaceful development and that harmonious relations with Britain are important. I enclose a copy of a speech he made in Dun Laoghaire on 27th inst. which makes these very points.

I trust that the foregoing and enclosures will satisfy you on the Government's determination, in co-operation with the British Government, to eliminate violence and bring about peace in all parts of Ireland and in Britain with whose Government and people we wish to enjoy the most friendly relations.

Yours sincerely,

Private Secretary

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