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ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2  
DUBLIN 2

Confidential

9 August 1978

*J. J. [unclear]*  
*ys*  
*9. 8. 78*

*Mr. Nally*

Dear Dan

I enclose a copy of a report from Mr. John Campbell at the Embassy in London about a recent conversation with the Apostolic Delegate there about conditions at Long Kesh.

Yours sincerely

*Seán Donlon*

Seán Donlon  
Assistant Secretary

*blew*  
*PA*  
*11/9*

Mr. D. O'Sullivan  
Secretary  
Department of the Taoiseach  
Government Buildings  
Dublin 2



CONFIDENTIAL

IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

17 Grosvenor Place

SW1X 7HR

8 August 1978

Dear Seán

When I called this week to sign the book of condolence at the Apostolic Delegation, the Delegate, Archbishop Bruno Heim, in the course of our subsequent conversation, brought up the subject of Archbishop Ó Fiaich's recent statement on conditions at Long Kesh.

He said that he had been very disturbed that the statement had not adequately emphasised that the conditions in which the prisoners were living were a direct result of their own actions. He found it difficult to understand why the Archbishop had outlined his views in the way that he had. As we knew, he had himself been consulted by the Vatican on this issue at an earlier stage. There had been great concern felt in the Vatican at the fact that prisoners were living naked and in such conditions. He had felt it necessary in his reporting to make very clear the prisoners' own responsibility as regards the conditions in which they found themselves. He had given his views to the Vatican only after careful soundings. He had discussed aspects of alleged mistreatment of detainees with Ambassador Keating and had also consulted on the treatment of prisoners with others including two Catholic Bishops in Ireland, one in the North and one in the South, whom he did not name.

There had been much adverse reaction here to the Archbishop's statement and he had received several letters and other comment in the past week expressing concern at the nature of the Archbishop's remarks. He had received a letter from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland setting out the latter's position on the matter.

Dr Heim asked me for my views on the Archbishop's remarks. I said that there had been no statement from the Government on the matter. It was clear that the

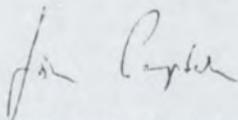
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Archbishop's statement was motivated by two primary considerations viz. his concern at the appalling conditions in which these prisoners were living in Long Kesh and, secondly, that the continuing problem gave the Provisionals a source of propaganda which they could try to use to effect at a time when they seemed otherwise to be under considerable pressure and without any significant support among the minority population.

We had a brief discussion on the general political situation in Northern Ireland. Dr Heim put particular stress on the security aspect taking the line that political advance would be extremely difficult so long as a situation of violence obtained. Lasting solutions were difficult to see except in the very long term and a key element, if hopes of progress were to be realised, must lie in assuaging the fears of the Protestant majority on their position. I described the Government's position and the general lines of the way in which we saw the way forward for political progress.

It was apparent from our discussion that Dr Heim is disturbed at what he sees to be a marked difference between his own advice to the Vatican on the prisoners issue and that emerging from Archbishop Ó Fiaich's statement. He feels the emphasis of the Archbishop's remarks to have been misguided and the Secretary of State's response inevitable in the circumstances.

Yours sincerely



John H F Campbell  
Minister Plenipotentiary

Mr Seán Donlon  
Assistant Secretary  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
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