

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



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TO HQ FROM LONDON
FOR A/SECRETARY NELIGAN FROM AMBASSADOR

MMMELXUB

HEREWITH IS THE TEXT OF A REPORT I HAVE RECEIVED FROM O'CEALLAIGH ON A MEETING OF IRISH TOURIST INTERESTS IN BRITAIN WHICH WAS HELD LATE YESTERDAY (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

BEGINS QUOTE:

AT THE REQUEST OF THE GENERAL MANAGER OF BORD FAILTE IN BRITAIN, MR CHRIS KANE, I ATTENDED A MEETING OF IRISH TOURIST INTERESTS THIS AFTERNOON TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS WHICH MAY ARISE AS A RESULT OF THE TRAGIC EVENTS LAST MONDAY. YOU WILL RECALL THAT WE DISCUSSED THE LINES I MIGHT PURSUE AT THE MEETING.

THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY MR KANE, BY SOME OF HIS LONDON BASED STAFF AND BY TWO SENIOR BORD FAILTE OFFICIALS FROM DUBLIN. PRESENT ALSO WERE REPRESENTATIVES OF AER LINGUS, B+I, SEALINK AND THE BORD FAILTE EMPLOYED PR FIRM. THE MANAGER OF CORAS TRACHTALA IN BRITAIN WAS ALSO PRESENT.

THE AER LINGUS REPRESENTATIVE, MR HARTNETT, WHO HAS BEEN IN BRITAIN FOR TEN YEARS, THOUGHT THAT THE PUBLIC REACTION TO THE KILLING OF LORD MOUNTBATTEN WAS "THE WORST REACTION" IN TEN YEARS AND ANTI-IRISH FEELING IN BRITAIN WAS GREATER THAN THAT WHICH EXISTED EVEN AFTER THE BIRMINGHAM BOMBINGS. THE SEALINK REPRESENTATIVE, WHO IS AN ENGLISHMAN, SAID THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT BE SEEN TO TOUGHEN UP ON SECURITY, GIVING AS EXAMPLES THE LACK OF EXTRADITION OF POLITICAL OFFENDERS AND THE EXISTANCE OF NUMEROUS SIGNS IN IRELAND SUCH AS "BRITS MUST GO".

THE GENERAL FEELING OF THOSE PRESENT WAS THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT A "LARGE GESTURE" BE MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT AND IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT A DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING IN IRELAND FOR THE KILLINGS WOULD BE WELL RECEIVED IN BRITAIN. IT WAS THOUGHT THAT SHOULD IT BE DECIDED TO HAVE A DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING THE BEST DAY WOULD BE NEXT WEDNESDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, WHEN THE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR LORD MOUNTBATTEN WILL BE HELD.

IT WAS SUGGESTED BY THE PR FIRMS THAT A STATEMENT BY A SENIOR POLITICIAN IN IRELAND ON THE LINES THAT IT IS HOPED THAT THE TRAGEDY WILL NOT AFFECT THE CLOSE PERSONAL LINKS WHICH HAVE GROWN UP OVER THE YEARS BETWEEN ENGLISH AND IRISH PEOPLE (AND WHICH ARE DUE IN SOME RESPECTS TO THE VISITS PAID TO IRELAND BY ENGLISH TOURISTS) COULD HAVE A BENEFICIAL AFFECT IN SO FAR AS TOURIST INTERESTS ARE CONCERNED.

I WOULD AGREE THAT THE SUGGESTION OF A DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING COULD HAVE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT AND IS LIKELY TO BE WELL RECEIVED HERE. IF IT WERE TO BE DECIDED TO DECLARE A DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL WOULD BE BETTER THAN SOME LATER DATE. I HAVE SOME DOUBTS HOWEVER ABOUT THE OTHER SUGGESTIONS, WHICH GIVEN THE PRESENT CLIMATE OF OPINION HERE, COULD WELL HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT TO THAT INTENDED, UNLESS IT WERE MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A GESTURE SUCH AS THE DECLARATION OF A DAY OF MOURNING.

THE TOURIST INTERESTS INVOLVED DECIDED TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS IN SO FAR AS PUBLICITY WAS CONCERNED AND IT WAS AGREED TO REVIEW THE SITUATION IN TWO WEEKS' TIME. A FURTHER MEETING WAS SCHEDULED FOR 11TH SEPTEMBER.

SOME CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO CLOSING OFFICES ON THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL AS A MARK OF RESPECT AND ALSO ON SECURITY GROUNDS. HOWEVER THE B + I REPRESENTATIVE THOUGHT THAT THIS MIGHT BE MISCONSTRUED IF IT WERE TO TAKE PLACE IN ISOLATION, E. G. IF ALL THE OTHER SHOPS ON THE STREET REMAINED OPEN. IF A DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING WERE DECLARED THEN IT WAS FELT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO CLOSE THE OFFICES. THIS WAS ALSO THE FEELING OF SOME OF THE OTHER IRISH INTERESTS REPRESENTED.

ENDS UNQUOTE

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*α* I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE DECLARATION OF A DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING IN IRELAND. THIS WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF UNDERLINING OUR CONCERN AT THE KILLING OF LORD MOUNTBATTEN WHOSE MURDER HAS EVOKED A TREMENDOUS WAVE OF REVULSION AND ANTI-IRISH FEELING HERE AND WOULD HAVE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT IF IT IS DECIDED TO DECLARE A DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING IT WOULD BE BEST TO DO SO AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND TO DECLARE IT FOR THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL.

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