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Murray
LWK

W. J. Brennan

I think we could open a folder on developments in the hunger strike since we present took office

McKinnon

Misc. P. 2.

15-7-81

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

the hunger strike since we present took office

Uimhir.....

15
7

To: Taoiseach

From:

Ambassador Donlon phoned at 7 a.m. and said the following:

1. He handed your message to Mike Deaver (Deaver, Baker and Meese are the triumvirate that run the White House) at 2.30 local time. Baker mentioned, without hostility, that there had been press queries particularly from the British press and that the White House were considering how to deal with them. Deaver said the issue was problematical because it involved prisoners' rights.
 2. The Ambassador, on arrival at the White House at 7 p.m., was taken aside for 40 minutes by Meese. Meese had, among other functions, been Governor Reagan's head of correctional facilities in California. This proved to be something of a disadvantage in the Ambassador's efforts to explain the political dimension of the problem to him. He had, he thought, more useful exchanges with Baker and Deaver but fears that, given the issue, the President may rely more on Meese.
 3. The Ambassador was seated close to the President at dinner in Decatur House following the reception. They had a private conversation for about 50 minutes about Northern Ireland generally. The President showed good will, concern but not a great deal of close understanding about the general problem. In the classical mould of Irish-Americans he wished to know what "we could do" to solve the situation. He seemed convinced that the problems would ease were Church leaders on both sides to cooperate more closely and were Eastern European influences to cease their machinations. The Ambassador informed him "bluntly" that unhelpful American influences had done more harm in this case than Eastern European infiltration. The President was concerned at this.
- On the prisons, the President said he had a difficulty in that he did not wish to aid prisoners detained for crimes of terrorism. He did not however rule out an intervention on his part.
- He confirmed that he had in previous days sent a message to Mrs. Thatcher conveying the concern of Speaker O'Neill and Senator Kennedy on the hunger strikes.
4. Press handling: The White House will confirm that the President received a message from you via the Ambassador and that it is under consideration.

/.....

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

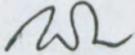
To:

From:

2.

5. The Ambassador said that otherwise the days' activities had been a success. The Reagan "clan" turned out in large numbers and there was a very happy family atmosphere. The Ambassador conveyed your greetings publicly to the President, his family and Mr. Davis.

6. The Embassy telex facilities have temporarily broken down. A copy of this note might be sent to Department of Foreign Affairs (Neligan).



M. Lillis

15.7.81.

cc Mr Nally
Mr Deane
Mr Neligan