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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

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27 January 1987

cc Secretary
A-I Section
A-I Secretariat
Box

Dear Assistant Secretary

Lunch with Michael Shea, Press Secretary to the Queen.

Shea (who is Scottish) is very well-disposed toward us and is very much in favour of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. He said that so too is "the Monarch" and that she is a "fan" of the Taoiseach.

He said that in his considered view the Irish are in a position of more pervading influence here, vis-a-vis "the millieu of power structure", than any other country, and that he and others like him considered the Agreement to be a diplomatic coup which they thought simply could not have been pulled off when they first heard that "the Irish were pushing on it".

I refrained from asking him directly about "the Monarch's" (as he called her) views on the situation at present, but he said that he believes she has no particular doubts about the way it is all going, that in her view it is all going in the right direction, and that concerns she may have about some of her subjects around the world do not arise in the context of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

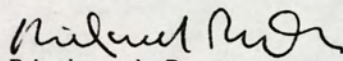
He reflected that, other than Louis Mountbatten, there have not been any visits to the Republic by members of the Royal family for many years. He mused a bit, and concluded that he supposed that such a thing is not foreseeable. On the other hand, he speculated on whether it might not be a good idea to consider a visit to Britain by our President. (I should say here that he very much gave the impression that this idea, or thought, was quite spontaneous and not a considered one.) He went on to say that in his view the

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millieu of the Anglo-Irish relationship is something that we should all (who are involved at the official level) should do what we can to "thicken" and that we would not exclude the top level on each side from this.

He drifted into more general conversation and it was felt better not to try to swing it back round again. All in all, Shea is a very well-disposed fellow in a high place. Taking his Foreign Office background and his general professionalism into account in the context of his present delicate position, it is perhaps better not to push him too hard for his own or "the Monarch's" views. However, he appears regularly on the Embassy guest list and will no doubt be a useful long term contact.

Yours sincerely


Richard Ryan
Counsellor