



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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J.A.

10 June, 1994

Confidential

Mr. Sean O hUiginn
Assistant Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs

Dear Assistant Secretary,

The Helicopter Crash

The Irish side of the Secretariat was represented by Mr. Cole yesterday at the funeral of A.C.C. Fitzsimons who was known to some of us here. The Secretary of the Department of Justice, the Garda Commissioner and other senior Garda officers travelled from Dublin to attend the funeral and had lunch here afterwards.

There was an initial aversion here even to tell us the names of those who had been killed on the civilian side, due to the nature of their intelligence activities. We were told simply that we would not have met them. Subsequently, the Secretary of State reversed that view and we were informed of the names shortly before a statement was released to the press. No further information has been provided officially, but there have been a few stray comments in ordinary conversation.

Some of the civilians' names were known to us. We were aware, for example, that John Deverell whom I had seen at Stormont receptions, was the Undersecretary in charge of the MI 5 people at Stormont House Annexe, reporting in some fashion or other to the NIO Deputy Secretary, Michael Legge (the Deputy Secretary's importance has probably declined in recent years due to the Government's elevation of MI 5 and to the grip Hugh Annesley gained on the army's intelligence role after Stalker/Sampson/Stevens). Deverell may not have been quite in the Oldfield class, but I understood he was a dominant figure. He was pointed out to me by Martin Williams' predecessor, Robert Alston, as someone of importance but whom he expected I would prefer not to meet (he was right). To my knowledge, in fact, we had met none of the civilians with the exception of Steve Rickard who was a member of the NIO and had previously served as Principal in the NIO's Security and International

Division in London (this branch of the NIO, rejoicing in the acronym SIL, shadows the Foreign Office and maintains some form of connection with the British intelligence services; the current Assistant Secretary is Jim Daniell whom you will know from the British side of the Liaison Group). Rickard put down roots in Northern Ireland and I believe was buried here today.

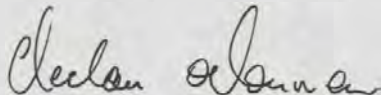
The other civilians are believed to have been members of MI 5 (possibly Rickard was too but on longterm secondment to the NIO rather than vice versa; no doubt there is double jobbing).

One interesting point is that there was no Northern Ireland person in the civilian group, nor, I understand, has there ever been. Gradually, under prompting from the Northern Ireland Civil Service and as officers originally transferred to the NIO have become more senior, local people have begun to take top jobs in the Office, a development of significance to us. The most notable of these is John Steele who is the first Northern Ireland officer to be Undersecretary on the Security (as distinct Intelligence) side at Stormont House Annexe.

One or two of the members of military intelligence who were on the helicopter did have Northern Ireland connections; we knew nothing of them.

In such tragic and severe circumstances, the letters we have sent and the gestures of condolence we have made have been greatly appreciated by the British and commented upon here. Granted the British habit of assuming more than they should, or that we would wish, in matters of security, we might wonder whether there are some on their side who will construe our reactions as support for all aspects of the activities in which the unfortunate helicopter party were engaged. Perhaps there are, but we have heard nothing to that effect; and it will be a sign of a better and more realistic relationship if it stays that way.

Yours sincerely,



Declan O'Donovan
Joint Secretary

cc: Ambassador London