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HEAD OF THE N.I.
CIVIL SERVICE
11 JUL 1983

My dear Secretary of State.

I have been asked by our Foreign Minister, Mr Peter Barry TD, to send you the following message today:

HEAD OF THE N.I.
CIVIL SERVICE
11 JUL 1983

The Rt Hon James Prior MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

Dear Jim

I know that you are aware of the view of the Irish Government on the Irish implications of the possible reintroduction of capital punishment soon to be debated in your House of Commons. I felt nevertheless that I should state our view very briefly in writing so as to ensure that you and all your Government colleagues would be in a position to state, if asked, that you have been made aware of our concern.

The execution of Irish people under British law for politically inspired offences would almost certainly create a situation worse than anything our two Governments have experienced during the past thirteen years and would adversely affect the climate of our relations. The IRA, the INLA and other terrorist organisations would take full advantage of their opportunity.

I feel that with your direct experience of the situation in Northern Ireland you are fully aware of the seriousness of the position and that you can see that our fears are not in any way exaggerated.

M. Russell

[Signature]

11/7

[Signature]

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In suggesting that you might consider mentioning to your Government colleagues the grave anxiety we feel in Dublin, I should stress that the Irish Government will scrupulously respect the fact that the vote on this motion is a matter of conscience to be decided upon by the individual Members of the House of Commons. You will have noted therefore that, despite our anxiety on this matter, we have carefully refrained from taking any action which might give the appearance of lobbying at Westminster.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Geoffrey Howe MP.

Yours sincerely

Peter Barry
Minister for Foreign Affairs

A letter signed by Mr Barry and containing this text is on its way and will be delivered to you on arrival.

I have also been asked to send a copy of the message to The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Yours very sincerely
Eamon Kennedy

Eamon Kennedy
Ambassador

The Rt Hon James Prior MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
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