

182/10 PB 30-4-93
32/7JR 4/5/93

MM/76/4

FROM: M T H MAXWELL
AS CENT SEC
DATE: 30 APRIL 1993

4/5
Mr Barrett

5/5
R. [unclear]

*In regard
don't have we any part
info relevant to cross-border
check's effect on tourism?*

MR LEACH, SPOB
MR SPENCE, DED

M 30/4

LETTER FROM MR DOUG ARCHARD RE CHECKPOINT AT CLOGHOGUE

1. I attach a copy of a letter which Mr Fell has received from Mr Archard, US Consul General, in which he complains about delays at the Army checkpoint at Cloghogue.
2. I should be grateful for advice and contributions for inclusion in a draft letter which I have been asked to prepare for Mr Fell's signature.

4/5

MTH Maxwell

M T H MAXWELL
CENTRAL SECRETARIAT

RC/10130

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belfast BT1 6EQ, Northern Ireland

April 26, 1993

Mr. David Fell
Head of N.I. Civil Service
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST

Mr. Wastman
To probe, 2nd advice
on reply pl

Dear David,

Fell
28/4

I wish to call to your attention an incident involving the security forces that I believe was directly antithetical to the government sponsored activity being held nearby. The incident involved an inordinate delay in traffic at the checkpoint at Cloughoge on the B113 just outside Newry. I was held up in a line of traffic on April 16 at that checkpoint from 1:55 to 2:25 p.m.. There seemed to be no good reason for the delay which was at the newly installed and apparently highly automated checkpoint on that road, just beyond the Golf Inn and the Cloughoge Primary School.

I was returning from the opening of the Slieve Gullion Courtyard project, an activity which is sponsored by the International Fund for Ireland, the European Community and the Department of Agriculture. The project, like so many other projects in South Armagh, is a tourism enhancement project. It is one which I have known about for some time and have helped encourage. But, given the wonderful spirit and commitment to getting results demonstrated by that most commendable organization, the Regeneration of South Armagh (ROSA), my encouragement is not really all that necessary.

If tourism enhancement is what the project is about, long holdups in traffic on such a back road as the B119 would appear to be most unfortunate. On the 16th, there was very light traffic on the road. It was only when I got within a few hundred yards of the checkpoint, that I was slowed in any way. The problem is that each car took an inordinately long time to clear.

On a number of occasions, I have accompanied then UDR patrols on vehicle checkpoints. I know that only a few seconds is required to clear any vehicle's licence plate. But, at Cloughoge, the average time to clear was half a minute or more. A person less charitable to the security forces than I am would ascribe the difference to harrassment of the population by the security forces. I will not take that line. To be charitable, perhaps a set of unskilled operators were on duty.

Cont/...

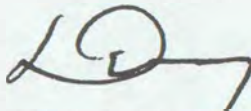
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In the half hour I spent in that line, I counted well over fifty vehicles, many with more than two occupants. At an absolute minimum, one hundred people were involved. Guessing an average wait of one half hour, that is fifty man hours, or more than a man week, wasted simply during the time I was there. I have no idea of whether that happens all the time, but from what I hear from my acquaintances in South Armagh, that kind of waste is all too common. To come back to the subject of tourism, one wonders how often one would return, even to such a beautiful place as Slieve Gullion, if a visit means wasting so much time waiting to have a licence plate read.

This is one of a series of letters that I have written to you and your colleagues regarding ways that I believe some of the security forces' activities serve as disincentives to tourism and other aspects of economic development. Please take this to be in the best spirit of my wishing to contribute positively to the interests of this lovely province.

Best regards,

Sincerely yours,



Douglas B. Archard
Consul General