



STORMONT CASTLE,  
BELFAST, 4.

9th December, 1965.

S E C R E T

My Dear Frank,

As you already know from correspondence and from my recent meeting with you, we have been advised by the R.U.C. that preparations are on foot for an early resumption of I.R.A. activities in Northern Ireland. I hope you will agree with me that it would be desirable at this juncture for Her Majesty's Government to express to the Government of the Irish Republic the deep concern which is felt about these preparations, and to seek the assistance of that Government in effectively suppressing clandestine illegal activities conducted within its jurisdiction and in taking strong action against those who seek refuge in the Republic following any attacks which may be made on Northern Ireland. The presence of Mr. Lemass in London next week might perhaps offer the opportunity of acquainting him with the United Kingdom Government's views on the situation.

The I.R.A. is, of course, an organisation whose principal leaders are citizens of the Irish Republic, and in recent months such leaders (including Cathal Goulding, Chief of Staff, and Sean Garland, Director of Training and Recruiting) have paid several visits to Northern Ireland for the purpose of organising local units here. The R.U.C. also have information that arms, including automatic weapons, have been brought into Northern Ireland from the Republic.

Recent incidents in the Republic have shown a most hostile attitude towards visiting Crown forces, and the police assessment here is that some kind of direct action against Northern Ireland cannot be long delayed, because of the pressure exerted within the organisation by young men who have recently been trained and who are impatient for action. In many aspects the present situation is on a par with that which prevailed immediately before the last I.R.A. campaign was mounted in 1956.

The police here have already taken steps to protect Ministers, to strengthen police stations in Border areas and to resume

*Copied on N.A. Ireland (Nov. 65)*  
*Security Precedence*

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resume security patrols in those areas. Other steps are being considered. Within Northern Ireland itself two recent incidents have illustrated the rising tide of militancy. On 21st October, 1965, an Army film show at St. Gabriel's School, Belfast, was broken up by a body of men. The I.R.A. subsequently announced its responsibility for this operation. On 17th November, 1965, five young men in semi-military uniform were found loitering in suspicious circumstances, and in possession of bayonets and handcuffs, within a mile of the house of the G.O.C.-in-C., Northern Ireland Command. These men were sentenced to a year's imprisonment on 3rd December for being in possession of offensive weapons and records of police movements, and for being members of an illegal organisation, i.e., the I.R.A.

Perhaps the most serious aspect of the present situation is that all year the I.R.A. have been holding regular training sessions and camps at a considerable number of locations in the Republic. Some of these have been conducted fairly openly, and the sound of firing has been audible over a wide area. Instruction at these sessions has included live firing practice, lectures on the use of explosives and the making of booby traps, and advice on the mounting of attacks on Government buildings.

The R.U.C. are aware of thirty-four such sessions or camps this year (seventeen of them since 1st August), but there may, of course, have been many more. They have been held -

- in County Carlow;
- in County Clare;
- in County Cork (near DRIMOLEAGUE);
- in County Donegal (near GLENCOLUMBKILLE);
- in County Kerry (near WATERVILLE);
- in County Leitrim (near BALLINAMORE and GLENFARNE);
- in County Louth (near CARLINGFORD);
- in County Meath (near NAVAN, OLDCASTLE and RATHBAN);
- in County Monaghan (near EMYVALE and INNISKEEN);
- in County Sligo (near SLIGO);
- in County Waterford;
- in County Wicklow.

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It will be seen how widespread this activity has been, particularly in areas close to the Border. It is difficult indeed to appreciate how such preparations could possibly be made without the knowledge of the police and other authorities in the Republic. The efforts which the present Government of Northern Ireland have made to cement a more friendly relationship with the Government of the Republic are, of course, a matter of record. Needless to say, a resumption of terrorist activities mounted from the territory of the Republic would be a serious setback to such efforts.

Finally, I might say that amongst the information coming to the R.U.C. have been references to the perpetration of I.R.A. outrages in England as well as in Northern Ireland.

*Yours v. sincerely*  
*Terence O'Neill*

The Rt. Hon. Sir Frank Soskice, Q.C., M.P.,  
Secretary of State for the Home Department,  
Home Office,  
Whitehall,  
LONDON, S.W.1.