



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

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cc Attorney - General ✓  
Mr. Nally ✓  
PSS ✓  
Carroll ✓  
R. J. P. ✓

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30 May, 1988.

Dear Assistant Secretary,

Lunch with Michael Mates, M.P.

1. Mates had a message: the dismissal of the Agreement by the Taoiseach, together with the claim that it does not work, is having the effect of enormously damaging support for it at Westminster. If the Taoiseach wants to wreck the Agreement in Westminster's eyes, he is doing a very good job. This message, he said, will be familiar in Dublin as he has already given it on Irish television. I took Mates at some length through the Taoiseach's U.S. statements. Mates proved to be impressed by this argument - he said so - but, like others, he said that if it was all so clear why was London not warned. He said, however, that the argument had altered his perspective on the matter.
2. We had a row about Gibraltar. He did agree that it would have been tactically more useful if, like the



Brighton bombers, the three had been tried and put away for a very long time. I would say, however, that there was something in Mates the soldier that warmed to the idea of what actually happened: he seemed to rather relish it. On this issue, however, as on others, he came some distance in the argument.

3. We rehearsed the argument about whether Mates planted the questions to the Prime Minister on extradition and on the Taoiseach's New York speech. He claimed to be innocent and that the Prime Minister had no warning. He was, however, aware that there is a wide view in the House that the questions were planted. I made no personal accusations, resting the case generally on the last point.
4. He said that the Stalker/Sampson decision should have been given to us privately before Mayhew announced it. This gave me an opportunity to make a strong case for a more comprehensive and unified decision-making process in London, taking the major criterion "will this help or hinder the IRA?" I elaborated this at length, using recent decisions to illustrate the argument, because Mates is a very direct, blunt thinker with access to Ministers when he wants it. He was in fact very amenable to this approach and said it was one of the main things he took from the meeting.
5. I briefed him on developments in the inter-Parliamentary framework. He is very sensitive here as he resents the fact that he was not felt to be the obvious front runner at Westminster. He was very critical, in a childish way, at a personal level of Peter Temple-Morris and Andrew MacKay. He felt that no good came to the project in their hands. I let him huff and puff and commented



only that it was an IPU decision. This set him off in an attack on Michael Marshall!

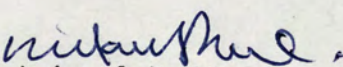
6. I brought him back to central issues. When Mayhew's name came up, he observed that

- Mayhew's anger over recent events is still warm;
- Mayhew now realises that he has crippled his chances of becoming Northern Ireland Secretary, the one Cabinet post that he really would like;
- accusations of being an Anglo-Irish Unionist have hurt him more than anything else. These impugn his personal integrity which he values very highly.

7. Mates asked whether the Ambassador and self would consider an invitation to come to speak to the Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group, the crossbench group of which he is chairman, along the lines of the main arguments made to him today. I agreed that this could be useful and he will take this further, he said.

8. He raised the question of Geoffrey Howe's state of mind following a meeting he had with Virginia Bottomley, Howe's PPS. I have reported on this separately.

Yours sincerely

  
Richard Ryan  
Minister-Counsellor