

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	98/6/495
Title:	Cancellation of visit of HMS Lofoten to Cork – includes Garda report on proposed IRA attack
Creation Date(s):	September 1965
Level of description:	Item
Extent and medium:	4 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

S.16571 H

Personal and Confidential

30th September, 1965.

Dear McCann,

With reference to our discussion this morning, when I showed you Berry's letter to me of today's date and the enclosure thereto about the proposed visit to Cork of H.M.S. Lofoten next month, I have now submitted the matter to the Taoiseach and have suggested to him that, if he agrees that it would be better that the visit should not take place, you might see the British Ambassador; tell him that our information is that, should the visit take place, it will almost certainly create a good deal of trouble; and that we feel that, in the interest of good relations between the two countries, it might be better if the British authorities could find some pretext for cancelling the visit - they might, of course, prefer, for presentational purposes, to refer to any such cancellation as a postponement of the visit.

The Taoiseach approves the adoption of the suggestion set out above - as the lesser of the two evils.

I am today sending a copy of this letter to Berry, for his information.

Yours sincerely,

N. S. ÓNualláin

H.J. McCann, Esq., (2)
Secretary,
Department of External Affairs.

Peter Berry, Esq.,
Secretary,
Department of Justice.

For your information in connexion with your letter of this morning and our subsequent telephone conversations.

N. S. ÓNualláin



éire

SECRET

ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT
(Department of Justice)
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
(Dublin)

Visit of British Warship to
Cork 12th to 17th October.

Dear Ó Nualláin,

With reference to our correspondence of 21st and 22nd September (S 16571 H), I enclose, for the Taoiseach's information, copy of a Garda report of 29th September on the same subject. I have had discussions with the appropriate Garda Officers, who assure me that their information is reliable.

Up to now, our information was that the warning notice and any action contemplated could be laid at the door of irresponsible elements in Cork but, now, the situation has developed and the I.R.A. Organisation itself is planning an armed attack. For that purpose, prominent members of I.R.A. H.Q. have visited Cork, surveying possible sites for firing on the Lofoten. The Gardai say that it would be almost impossible to fully provide against an attack, as the approaches to Cork Harbour, on both sides of the river, measure over 20 miles and there are innumerable points from which rifle fire could be directed at the vessel. The Gardai would probably effect arrests within a short time after firing commenced but, in that time, loss of life and injury to property might occur.

In these circumstances, and having regard to international tension generally, perhaps the question of having approaches made to have the visit postponed or cancelled might be reconsidered.

30th September 1965

Encl.

Taoiseach,

Please see above letter & the enclosure.

Re your decision of the 22nd inst. on Mr. McLann's letter of that date, I have ascertained from Mr. McLann that the Department of External Affairs dropped the gentle hint to the Counsellor of the British Embassy, who said that he personally shared the same view & had put it to the British Admiralty. The conversation on the matter was rather in the context of future visits after that of the Lofoten next month.

While, from the internal point of view, the cancellation of the visit of the Lofoten now would undoubtedly be regarded as a victory for the so-called I.R.A., Mr. McLann — to whom I have shown the documents — feels, on balance, that, from the point of view of relations between the two countries,

(P.T.O.)

TRIO 2024 10 2010P
STATE OF IRELAND
STATE OF IRELAND
STATE OF IRELAND

SECRET

it would be better if the visit were not to take place.

A
If you agree, Mr. McLann could speak to the British Ambassador, tell him that our information is that, if the visit does take place, it will almost certainly be running into a good deal of trouble, & that we feel that, in the interests of relations between the two countries, it might be better if they could find some pretext for cancelling the visit - they might, of course, for presentational purposes, prefer to refer to any such cancellation as a postponement of the visit.

[Signature]
30.9.65.

Search's
The course proposed by
you at A above is, I think,
the lesser of the two evils, and
is approved
G
20/9.

AN GARDA SIOCHANA

Any reply to this communication should be addressed to:-

COMMISSIONER,
GARDA SIOCHANA,
PHOENIX PARK,
DUBLIN 8.



OIFIG AN CHOIMISINEARA,

BAILE ATHA CLIATH.

and the following number quoted:

3C/15/65

SECRET

The Secretary,
Department of Justice.



Proposed Visit of British Warship,
HMS "Lofoten," to Cork from October
12 to 17, 1965.

Further to this office communication of September 22, 1965, I am directed by the Commissioner to inform you that confidential information has been received to the effect that the IRA Army Council has authorised an attack by its members on HMS "Lofoten" during its visit to Cork. Full agreement has been reached on the form of attack, which is to consist of three separate ambush parties manned by a total of twelve men. The arms to be used will be a Vickers machine-gun, a Bazooka, a Lewis machine-gun and a number of rifles. Fire is to be concentrated on the control room and bridge. The purpose of the fire is to cause casualties to the crew and damage the ship. It was agreed by the Council that the loss of IRA personnel by way of arrest or the loss of arms is immaterial provided the object is successful.

Arrangements have also been made for the distribution of leaflets prior to and during the ship's visit, and a protest campaign will be carried out before its arrival.

Chief Superintendent