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Title: Note by HJ McCann, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, of a conversation with John Peck, Ambassador of Great Britain to Ireland, regarding cross-border Irish Republican Army activity.

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NOTE

The British Ambassador came to see me this afternoon at his request and left with me the attached three documents dated 6th November and enclosed map.

I told the Ambassador that he should, by now, be aware that the Government here are doing what they can in this matter. The continued harping on the theme, both through the media and in diplomatic communications, that the Government are not doing enough in respect of the IRA on the Border is becoming an irritation and distracts attention from the root of the problem which lies elsewhere. The British authorities, with their vastly superior forces, were themselves unable to deal adequately with the Border situation and what was going on in Belfast was much more serious in terms of casualties etc.

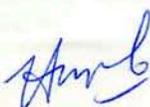
I expressed the view that it was counterproductive to be presenting a picture through the media implying that the whole problem would be solved if only we dealt adequately with the IRA on the Border. In this context I referred to the rather abrasive reply given by Mr. Anthony Royle to Mr. Kilfedder in answer to a Parliamentary Question on 26th October in which Mr. Royle appeared to equate the acts alleged against servants of the British Government with acts of the members of an illegal organisation. We could very well ask the British Government what they were doing about the cross-Border activities of the UDA.

I suggested that it would be better if both Governments could concentrate their efforts on working together towards shaping the future on the lines envisaged in the Green Paper and the Taoiseach's response thereto. It would be a mistake to concentrate attention on the marginal symptoms of the disease at the expense of seeking a cure of the root causes.

The Ambassador seemed to agree with me in the foregoing but said that delivering the attached documents was something he had to do. He hinted that if we had an adequate response to them it might be useful if we were to give such a response. I undertook to bring the matter to the notice of the authorities concerned.

I had a general discussion with the Ambassador about the Green Paper and the Taoiseach's response thereto. The Ambassador was optimistic on both counts and expressed the hope that London should make a further favourable response to the Taoiseach's reaction.

We then had a brief discussion about the proposed plebiscite. I reiterated our views on this subject. While the Ambassador agreed that it might have been better that a plebiscite should never have been promised he said that the fact is that the British must go ahead with it. He thought the best way of reducing any harm it might cause would be to amend the questions or to add a third question. He said that he did not know what the intentions of Mr. Rees of the Labour Party were in this matter but he thought that their attitude might lead to a change in the questions on the plebiscite.



6 Samhain 1972