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AMBASAÍD NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



EMBASSY, LONDON

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Mr. Donlan 10/5
To see

2nd May 1977

HS
8/5

Dear Hugh

I am enclosing, for information purposes, copy of a brief "note for the record", which I dictated on the Minister's meeting with the Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group in the House on last Monday, 25th April.

Yours sincerely

Dermot Gallagher

Mr Hugh Swift
Anglo-Irish Section
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2

Note

The Minister addressed the Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group of MPs in the House of Commons on Monday, 25th April, 1977, at 4.30 p.m. The Chair was taken by John Farr MP (Cons.). About a dozen MPs, almost all Tories, were present. The disappointing attendance was probably due to Monday being a slack day in the House (in addition on last Monday there was no whip in operation, the debate being a non-division one on direct elections) and, secondly, some of the key members of the Group (e.g. Kevin McNamara) being absent at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

The Minister spoke for about twenty-five minutes, during which he gave an up-to-date assessment of the present political and security situation in the North, including the impact of his recent visits to the U.S. on the flow of funds from there to the Provos and the measures the Government ~~has~~ taken to resolve the extradition issue.

After the Minister had finished speaking, the Chairman threw the meeting open for questions. There were four, viz:

(a) Cyril Townsend (Cons.) said he was disturbed at the lack of cooperation on the border, South Armagh being clear proof that cooperation was not what it should be between two friendly countries. Why was there no co-operation between the two armies, including the use of the same frequencies and join patrols, and why there should be protests when helicopters crossed the border? There should be five miles of free-flying air space on each side.

(b) Lord Moyne argued that it would have an immensely symbolic effect if British and Irish troops operated side-by-side. In previous wars, allied troops operated on each others territory.

(c) John Farr stated that they all recognised that the Irish Government had been very courageous in putting down violence in recent years. He asked if there had been any concessions to the Portlaoise hunger-strikers.

(d) Carol Mather asked the Minister if he did not think that many people would see our pursuit of the human rights case as decidedly odd given the degree of cooperation between us and, on the other hand, the recent allegations against the Garda?

The questioners and the Group as a whole seemed to be happy with the Minister's detailed response to each question, and his guidance and briefing on the four issues raised.

→
D. Gallagher
29 April 1977

Other MPs present included Michael Mates (Cons),
Ian Low (Cons).
Michael O'Sullivan (Lab).