

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2007/116/742
Creation Date(s):	3-9 February 1977
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
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Private Secretary
Minister for Foreign Affairs;
Minister for Justice.

9th February, 1977.

Transmitted for information.

Dear Dr. Armstrong,

I have been asked by the Taoiseach, (Prime Minister of Ireland), Mr. Liam Cosgrave, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd February about Northern Ireland.

The Taoiseach, who has noted all you have said, has asked me to send you in reply a copy of an address which he gave to both Houses of Congress during the course of an official visit to the United States in March of last year. In his speech on that occasion, he outlined at some length Government policy on Northern Ireland and also as regards the I. R. A.

Some particulars of the security legislation introduced by the Government and passed into law by the Irish Parliament over the past four years is attached for your information. There is no question of the Government fudging the death penalty as might be inferred from your letter. In fact, legislation here provides for the death penalty on conviction of capital murder. The case to which you referred comes before the Courts again in the not too distant future.

Speaking in the Dáil (Irish Parliament) on the 27th January last on the subject of the continuing strife in Northern Ireland, the Taoiseach emphasized that in the struggle against the small minority who use violence, we have built up security forces here in numbers and in equipment to a level never before attained in peace-time. He said that these increases were necessary to combat those repudiated by the vast majority of the people in this island, but who none the less continued with their violence. He stressed that the Government would continue their build-up of the security forces to whatever extent and for as long as is necessary to end this evil.

Finally, the Taoiseach wishes me to point out that by far the greatest proportion of the violence in Northern Ireland is indigenous. In fact, of all incidents of violence there, only 2% have any connection with the border. May I add that it is notable that in Northern Ireland where the security forces are more numerous than in the Republic and are patrolling an area one-third its size it has been found difficult to contain the violence occurring there. This is not said in any spirit of triumphalism. Violence is widely regarded here as the enemy of all the people of these islands: it is said only to illustrate just how difficult is the problem of eradicating it.

Yours sincerely,

E. MURRAY

Private Secretary

Dr. D. L. Armstrong,
Maycroft,
Burstead Close,
Cobham,
Surrey,
England.

Maycroft
Burstead Close
Cobham
Surrey

3 February 1977

Mr L Cosgrove
Prime Minister
The Dail
Dublin
Republic of Ireland

Dear Mr Cosgrove

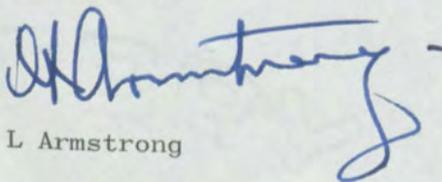
The Provisional IRA grow in strength and impudence every day. They send out from their cosy HQ in Dublin more press statements than the Irish Government.

Whatever happened to the legislation which was supposed to result in terrorists being put away in the Republic? Why did you funk using the death penalty for the pair who murdered a policeman in Dublin?

The murder of Mr Agate in Londonderry is a clear warning. The IRA is stronger than ever thanks to the idiotic policies of the British Government. You, however, are Irish. You know the nature of the IRA. You know they will destroy Ireland, North and South. Screw your courage to the sticking point and at least destroy the border lairs from which the gunmen spring.

To date the middle classes of Northern Ireland have acted obediently in accordance with the wishes of the British Government. I can assure you that phase is rapidly coming to an end and the UDA will get the leadership which it needs.

Yours sincerely



Dr D L Armstrong