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AMBASÁD NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN.



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

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PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

14th June 1982

Dear Assistant Secretary

Trooping the Colour

I promised to let you know what transpired at the Ceremony of Trooping the Colour and afterwards at the reception in No 10 Downing Street on Saturday last, 12th June, to which we had been invited by the Prime Minister and Mr Thatcher. In effect, not a great deal happened as the Prime Minister was absent for most of the time during her reception because of urgent business (probably, I would say, in relation to the Falklands and the Lebanon). As a result I did not have the opportunity of a long conversation with her, but I thought, nevertheless, that I should let you know of our brief encounter.

2. Since she came to power in May 1979 she and Mr Thatcher have consistently invited us each year to the Ceremony and the reception afterwards and we have always accepted. In a sense, the invitation is an obvious anomaly. It is essentially a Commonwealth celebration of the Queen's birthday and we are the only diplomats invited who are not in the Commonwealth. But it is part of the official attitude to us arising from Ireland's previous Commonwealth membership and our continuing unique relationship in which we are not regarded as foreign. (When a Head of State comes to London on an official visit and Heads of diplomatic missions here are officially invited to meet him at St James's, I am placed at the end of the line of Commonwealth High Commissioners and Chargés d'Affairs but before all the

other Ambassadors. It is a strange situation which I often have to explain to Commonwealth High Commissioners before me and indeed to the Ambassadors behind me).

3. The procedure at Trooping the Colour is to arrive in morning dress at No 10 before 10.30 a.m. where each Ambassador, his wife and children are greeted by the Prime Minister and Mr Thatcher in the corridor leading out to the Garden. We then proceed to the stands overlooking the courtyard where the Commonwealth and some Government members are ranged in terraced seats behind the Prime Minister and Mr Thatcher. We are placed here, however, as if we were full Commonwealth members, so that we are not seated at the back but according to my appropriate four years' seniority here. (Another anomaly). When the Trooping Ceremony is over, we walk back through the garden, and up to the second floor of No 10 for light refreshments.

4. We arrived in good time before 10.30 a.m. and were duly greeted by the Prime Minister and Mr Thatcher - I thought, however, without too much warmth. She did say, nevertheless: "You will always be welcome here", emphasising the first word.

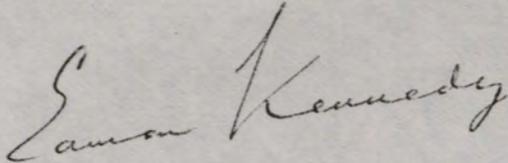
5. During her reception she disappeared, as I mentioned above, and we only saw her again towards the end. During that time I had an interesting conversation with Mr Thatcher, who is always cordial to us. I congratulated him on the success of the Pope's visit and inquired if he thought that the delay in moving forward on Port Stanley might have been caused by the Pope's current presence in Argentina. He didn't think so, mentioning instead the difficult terrain and the necessity to carry equipment on foot because vehicles could not easily get through. I still think they wanted to see the Pope out of Argentina before the big push.

6. When the Prime Minister finally emerged she came over to me and said she was going to have to organise a Cabinet meeting at once and I said that, of course, we fully understood and would leave. (Most of the Commonwealth Heads of Mission had left by this time, but I had remained on in conversation with Sonny Ramphal, the Commonwealth Secretary-General). I said to Mrs Thatcher that my wife, children and myself were delighted to see her again and she repeated that we would be always welcome. She then said that these were not the easiest times for Anglo-Irish relations and I recalled her remarkable phrase before entering No 10 in May 1979 when she said "where there is discord may we bring harmony" "Yes", she said, with some vehemence, "but it takes two to do it! I cannot do it on my own" and turned away to say farewell to other departing guests. I felt at this stage we ought to go too.

7. Perhaps I might say a word in conclusion about my conversation with the Commonwealth Secretary-General, whose full title is H.E. Mr Shridath Surendranath Ramphal Kt, CMG, QC. I know Sonny Ramphal for years at the UN when he was Guyana's Foreign Minister and he spoke with great praise of our courageous stand recently on the Falkland Islands issue in the Security Council and how it was supported by the Third World. He raised, however, as he always does when I meet him, the question of Ireland's relations with the Commonwealth. He said how glad he was to see us at the reception and that we could see for ourselves that the Commonwealth is largely now a Third World organisation in which Ireland would have a prominent role to play, just as we had in the past. He said that most of the African, Asian and Caribbean members owed their independent republican status within the Commonwealth to Ireland and that our presence within the Commonwealth would bring with it the support of our natural Third World friends and allies on the issue of our country's national unity. It was at this stage that Mrs Thatcher

joined us and I was unable to continue the conversation but Sonny Ramphal did say, as we left No 10, that he would greatly appreciate an opportunity to discuss these matters in Dublin some day. Needless to say, I gave him ^{no} reason to believe he would be welcomed on such a very sensitive issue.

Yours sincerely



Eamon Kennedy
Ambassador

Mr David Neligan
Assistant Secretary
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