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Eir-fhí, dara ó an t-úir seo, is maí
seo ba chóir é stiuradh:—

Any reply to this communication
should be addressed to:—

An Rúnaí
(The Secretary)

fe'n uimhir seo:—
and the following number quoted.

Telephone (01) 789711



ROINN DHÍ AGUS CIRT,
(Department of Justice),

72-76 FAICHE STIABHNA,
(72-76 St. Stephen's Green),

BAILE ATHA CLIATH, 2.
(Dublin 2)

26 February 1986

Dear Declan

I refer to previous correspondence regarding the re-opening of cross-border roads with particular reference to your Department's minute of 21 January concerning five bridges.

Your minute was referred to the Garda authorities for observations and I enclose a copy of their response which contains the views of the local Divisional Officers. The cases in question were not raised at any of the meetings of Border Chief Superintendents or Border Superintendents.

When you have examined the Garda response I would be glad if you could let me know if you still wish these cases to be assessed at one of the formal border liaison meetings.

Yours sincerely

J. Kirby

Mr Declan O'Donovan
Anglo/Irish Section
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2

CONFIDENTIAL

In Bowry
H. draft note for Hunter's information (with copy P.S. A-1 & Secretariat) on Garda views which are radically different from Hunter's expressed views.
A new element is proposed possible USA/VVF activity. In the cases it's just as well then cases were not discussed as yet in liaison meeting with P.S.

Dr

26/2

*cc to O'Connell
Flu Cilles*

AN GARDA SIOCHANA

24/81

Any reply to this communication should be addressed to:

Commissioner,
Garda Síochána,
Phoenix Park,
Dublin 8.



OIFIG AN CHOIMISINEARA,
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.

and the following number quoted:

D. 1495/80.

The Secretary,
Department of Justice.



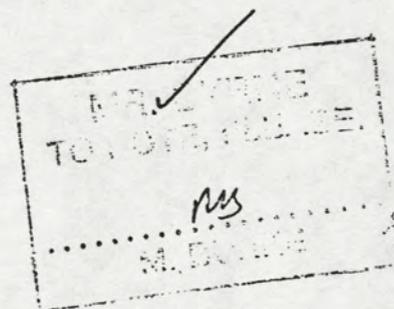
Re-opening of Cross Border Roads.

I attach for your information reports from both the District and Divisional Officers concerned in reply to yours of 23rd. January, 1986.

The report mentioned in final paragraph by Superintendent Curran, Monaghan was forwarded to you on 13/4/1984.

Subsequent reports on Lackey Bridge were forwarded to you on 5/9/1984, 4/4/1985 and 17/6/1985.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER.



D.495/80.

Dolan's Lane

SECRET & URGENT.

THE GARDAI
DUBLIN
6 FEB 1986
LETTER
DIVISION OF DONEGAL

Assistant Commissioner,
'D' Branch.

Re: Re-opening of Cross Border Roads.

Referring to your's of 27th. January, 1986, in above, I attach report from the District Officer at Ballyshannon. The only crossing point involved in places under review within Donegal Division is that at Dolan's Lane(L.74A.).

I agree with the District Officer's assessment of the situation. I do not favour any easement in the situation where all but larger type vehicles can negotiate the existing obstacles. At this particular point it is, in present circumstances, as beneficial to all on Donegal side of the Border to have access rendered difficult as it is to those on the Northern Ireland side. However, any change in this arrangement which would render travel more difficult would result in local complaint.



(A.J. Murtagh)
Chief Superintendent.

D.495/80.

GARDA SIOCHANA
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

- 3 FEB 1986

BALLYSHANNON
DIVISION OF DONEGAL

SECRET & URGENT.

Chief Superintendent,
Letterkenny.

Re: Re-opening of Cross Border Roads.

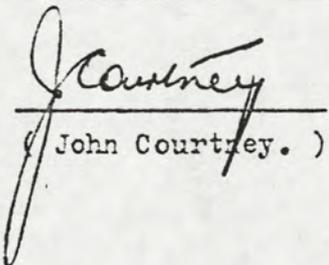
I refer to your of the 29th. January 1986 and I am to report that I viewed the Border Crossing at Dolans Lane (Ref: L. 74 (A) - 207 New Ref) on the 31st. January 1986.

While I was there I had photographs taken (attached) of a Fiat Regata motor car as it went through the crossing from South to North. As can be seen it barely got through the barriers. A sketch of the crossing scene with measurements is also attached for your information.

As the crossing exists at present a small motor car or van of the Hiace or Liteace type can negotiate the barriers and this is disturbing in view of the fact that the crossing is adjacent to Cliff Power Station and also to the E.S.B. Installation at Kathleen Falls, Ballyshannon.

To open up this crossing would in my view be a serious risk to take. As it is I am not happy that even cars or vans can make their way through it, as this route could be used in the event of an escalation of activities by the Loyalists or attacks on the Belleek area by the P.I.R.A.

Forwarded for your information, please.

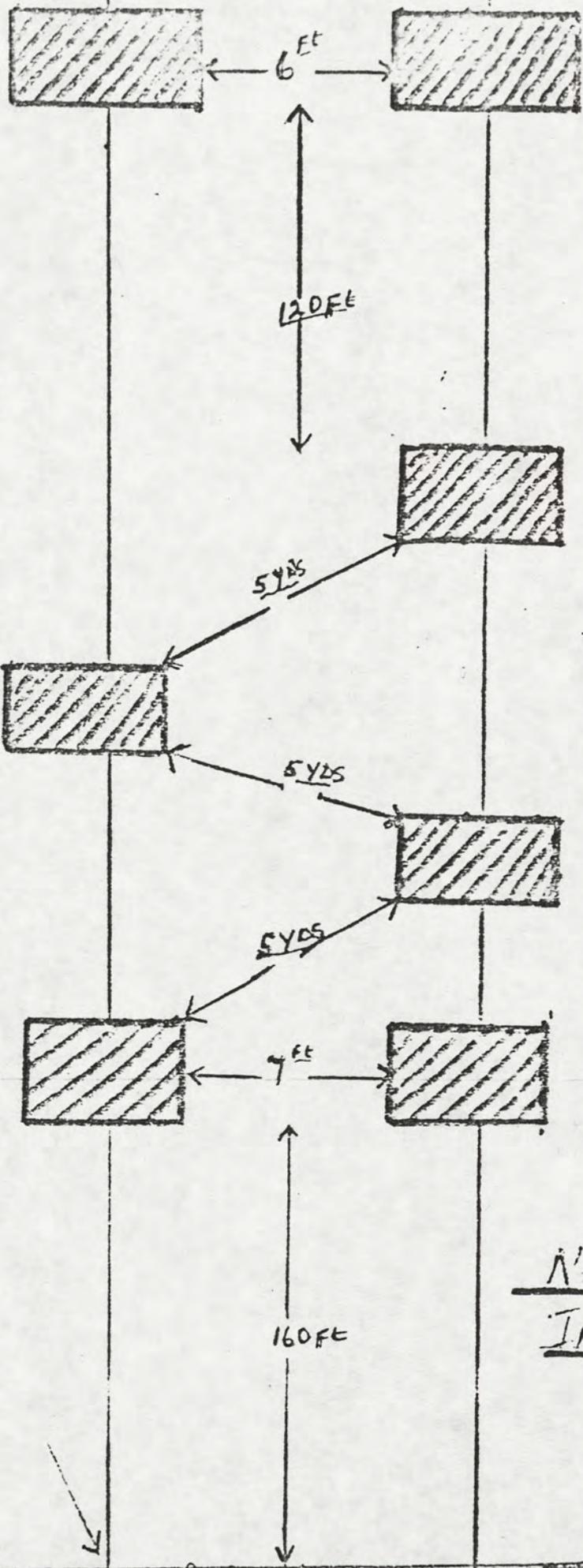


(John Courtney.)

Superintendent.

↑
TO BEEKEEN

HD No: L7LA
New No: 207
GUKANS LANE



The Council
Belmont
Belmont

NORTHERN
IRELAND

4. } DeWitt's Lane
New No
207 } No
6.

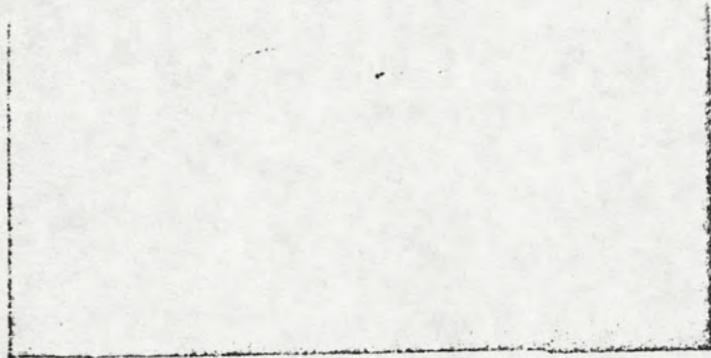
LMA } DeWitt's Lane
New No
207 } No
2

LMA } DeWitt's Lane
New No
207 } No
1

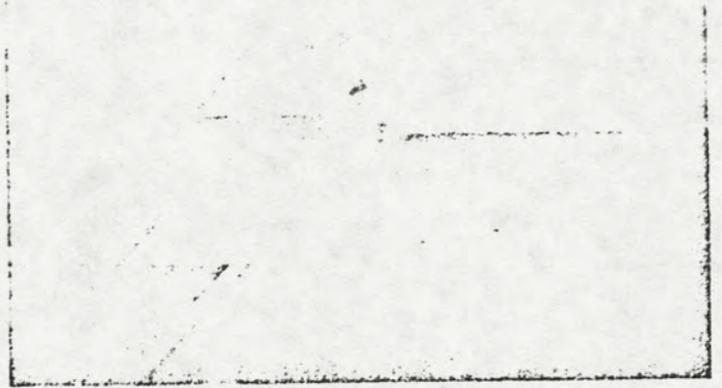
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5



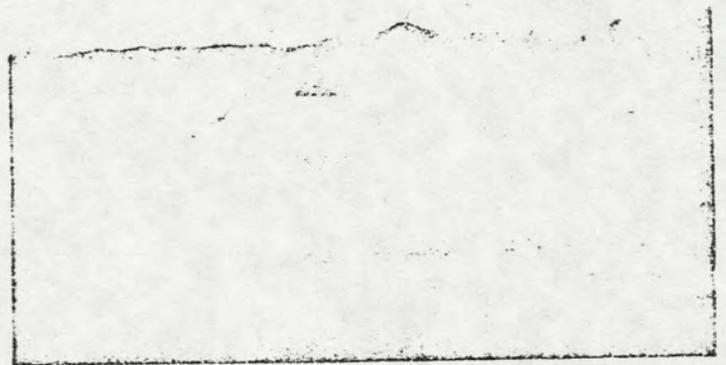
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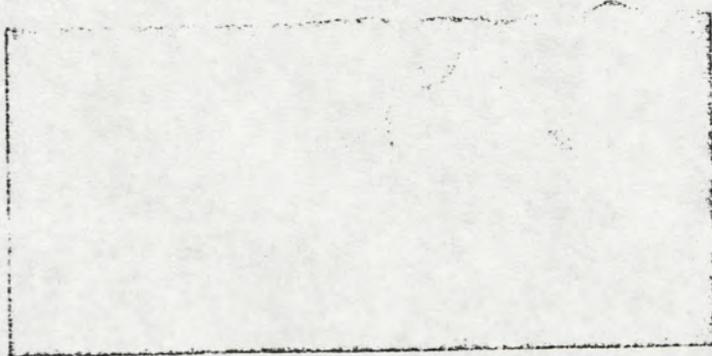
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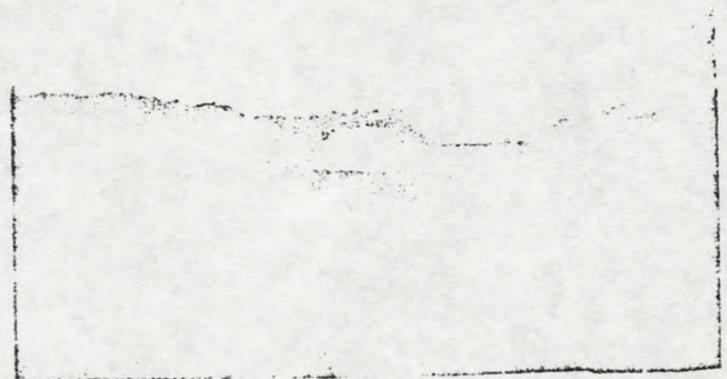
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Handwritten notes below the fourth frame, including the letters "NO" and a circled "3".



Handwritten notes below the fifth frame, including the letters "NO" and a circled "4".



Handwritten notes below the sixth frame, including the letters "NO" and a circled "5".

D. 495/80

Cashel Bridge

Commissioner 'D'
(Security)

G/
Chief
30 JAN 1986
DM

Re-opening of Cross Border Roads

The attached report dated the 29th instant from the District Officer at Manorhamilton, on above matter, is forwarded to you herewith in response to your minute of the 27th January, 1986.

The only Cross-Border road involved affecting this Division is the L.62. As can be seen the District Officer has outlined the position in regard to this Border Crossing and has given his views and observations, which I share in full.

I certainly would not favour the re-opening of the Border Crossing at L.62 under any circumstances.

T.P.S. MacLiam C/Supt
(T.P.S. MacLiam)

D. 495/60.

SECRET.

SUPERINTENDENT

29 JAN 1986

MANORHAMILTON

Division of Sligo District

Chief Superintendent,
Sligo.

RE- Opening of Cross Border Roads.

In reference to above and Commissioners minute of the 27th., inst., I wish to report as follows :-

L. 62 - Cashel Bridge, Kiltyclogher, Co. Leitrim is situated in this District. This Bridge was demolished by the British Army by explosives on the 13/ 9/ 1974. The road has been closed since that date. A footbridge (wooden) was erected adjacent to the original bridge which was used by pedestrians. This footbridge was replaced by a new footbridge (Steel) on the 7th., August, 1985. This new footbridge now spans the County River between Leitrim and Fermanagh where the original Bridge was, that is the bridge referred to above which was blown up in September, 1974. My report of the 9th., August, 1985 has reference.

I would be totally opposed to the re- opening of this Cross Border road in the present time. Before this road was closed it was used extensively by Subversives and Smugglers. A number of attacks were mounted on members of the Security Forces from Northern Ireland by using this road. The village of Kiltyclogher is within a few hundred yards of this Bridge and if the road was opened to vehicular traffic the possibility of an attack by members of the U.D.A. and U.F.F. could not be ruled out. Since the closing of these Border roads there have been very few incidents in the Kiltyclogher area. In the early seventies the then Vocational School at Kiltyclogher was destroyed by an explosion. It was suspected that Prodestant paramilitaries were responsible. There is no Cross Border roads open on this part of the Border except L.59 at Blacklion/ Belcoo where there is a permanent Army/ Garda checkpoint. The present strength of Kiltyclogher Garda Station is 1 Sgt. and 4 Gardai. When this road was open the strength was much bigger. There was a strength of Five Sgt's and 28 Gardai at various times in Kiltyclogher. If it was decided to re- open this road the strength of this station would have to be greatly increased. As well it would also be advisable to hav a permanent Check Point similar to that in operation in Blacklion at this Crossing as well.

I can appreciate that since the closing of these roads Kiltyclogher village has suffered greatly as far as busin^{ess} is concerned. On the other hand as already stated there b^e been no incidents in the area. The people of Kiltycloghe^r have now come to accept the situation.

J.F. Leehan Supt.
(J.F. Leehan)

GARDA SIOCHANA
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENTS
OFFICE
MONAGHAN
13 FEB 1986
DIVISION OF
CAVAN / MONAGHAN

D.495/80.

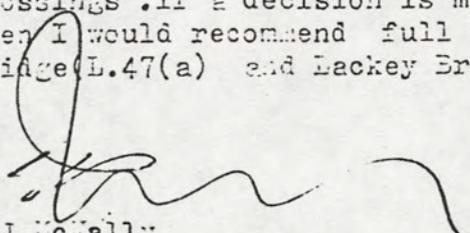
A/Commissioner,
(D) Branch.

Re: Opening of Cross Border Roads.

To see the attached report from Superintendent T Curran,
Border Superintendent on the above subject. The facts are as
stated by Superintendent Curran.

Over the past number of weeks, activity by subversives along the border
has increased especially in the areas of the particular crossings.

I am completely opposed to the re-opening of any of those border
crossings. If a decision is made by higher authorities to re-open,
then I would recommend full time permanent checkpoints, at Aghalane
Bridge (L.47(a)) and Lackey Bridge (L.39.)


J.J. McHally
Chief Superintendent.

D495/80

Aghalane, Liltum and Lacking Roads

SECRET

Garda Síochána
Security Office
11 FEB 1986
Monaghan
Division of Cavan/Monaghan

Chief Superintendent,
Monaghan.

Re: Opening of Cross Border Roads.

Reference to attached correspondence. The question of re-opening of the three roads in Cavan/Monaghan area referred to in attached correspondence has been initiated by local politicians at the request of interested parties in their respective areas and if my information is correct Sinn Fein members on the local Councils are playing a prominent part in this type of activity.

I will deal briefly with each of the roads referred to.

- (1) Aghalane Bridge L.47(a) is the main road from Belturbet to Enniskillen. Before and at the start of the Northern troubles in 1969 it was widely used by local people and tourists. In the early seventies a number of shootings and Bomb attacks in the Northern Ireland Security Forces took place near the Border and it was alleged that the road was used by subversives to make good their escape into the South. It's closure came in early 1973 after a car Bomb exploded in Belturbet killing two people. This Bomb was planted by the U.V.F. and it was well established afterwards that the culprits used this road to convey the Bomb from the North and the culprits returned to the North by the same route.

The closure of the Road had and still has a very bad effect on the economic life of Belturbet, it has completely cut off Co. Fermanagh from the town which geographically and traditionally was a major part of its hinterland.

The nearest Cross Border Road accessible to traffic is six miles distant on the eastern side of the town and eleven miles on the western side which makes the town almost out of bounds from a business point of view.

/over

To re-open the road at this point in time from a security point of view would not be a very good proposition. It would leave the town of Belturbet again vulnerable to a similar attack as it suffered in 1972. It would only be feasible if a permanent checkpoint was maintained on the road either North or South of the Border.

- (2) Leitrim Bridge, L.39 is a link road between the Clones/Newtownbutler Road and the Clones/Cavan Concession Road. It was first closed in the early seventies and was re-opened in the late seventies by the local people. It remained open and was used daily by local residents until mid 1985 when it was again closed by the Northern Ireland Authorities. The reason for its closure then is difficult to understand as there were no incidents in the area at that time which would have necessitated such action. The road is indeed of little significance, it is used only by the people who reside in close proximity to it and its closure does not adversely effect them in their every day work.

The area is thinly populated most of whom are small farmers. None of the farms straddle the Border therefore its closure is not of vital importance to their livelihood. The nearest Cross Border road which is accessible to traffic is 8 miles distant on the eastern side and ten miles on the western side.

The Road in its present state makes security that much easier as it is one crossing less to man in the event of a major incident North or South of the Border.

- (3) Lucky Bridge, Lima 17(c) is very familiar to everybody and it has been the subject of numerous correspondence in the past. There is no change in the position here since my report of the 2nd April 1984 and subsequent reports.

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is we
this*

[Handwritten signature]
26/2

[Handwritten signature]
Superintendent
(T.S. Curran)

Telefón }
Telephone } (01) 780822

Telex 25300

Tagairt }
Reference }



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 2.
Dublin 2.

CONFIDENTIAL

April 1986.

Mr. Michael Lillis,
Joint Secretary,
Anglo-Irish Secretariat,
Belfast.

NOT ISSUED

Reopening of Cross-Border Roads

Dear Michael,

You will recall raising the question of the reopening of cross-border roads last December and the British response in January this year which suggested that the matter could best be progressed by a comprehensive joint review by the Garda/RUC on the implications of reopening each particular road.

Before pursuing the British suggestion we believed it would be desirable to have the views of the Garda authorities and we accordingly requested their observations on the five most pressing instances where the reopening of cross-border roads is being sought, i.e., Lackey Bridge, Cashel Bridge, Dolans Lane, Aghalane Bridge and Leitrim Bridge. Response from the local Garda officers at superintendent and chief superintendent level was extremely negative in all cases as you will have seen from the Department of Justice letter of 26 February (copy attached for convenience). It is notable that in one case, Lackey Bridge, the local superintendent was in favour of reopening but was overruled by his superior. We have considered with the Minister the security issues involved vis-a-vis the political importance of the reopening of at least some of these roads. The Minister is very strongly of the view that local security considerations should not override the political requirements as a matter of course, he has therefore instructed that we press the British authorities again on the matter. Before we

do this, we feel that it will be necessary to get at least the acquiescence of the Minister for Justice, and possibly also the Minister for Defence, in order to ensure that the Garda authorities take an overall view of the situation and do not simply 'play safe' on each road.

We have discussed the various issues informally with Department of Justice and with the Army and we understand the main security arguments to be as follows:

- The reopening of a route could lead to paramilitary activity along it and even to the resumption of paramilitary organisation and local influence in neighbouring centres. As an example, Army sources cited Kiltyclogher which after the road closures of the 1970s ceased to be a route of paramilitary activity and (more importantly) ceased also to be a centre for the provisionals. Kiltyclogher is now regarded as very 'quiet'.
- The continued closure of routes, makes it possible for the British security forces on the Northern side, and also for our forces on the Southern side, to organise their resources more effectively by concentrating them on those roads which remain open. As you know, many of the closed roads, are little more than muddy boreens and are scarcely suitable for high speed dashes across the border. They can be used however for transport of materiel in farm vehicles or, increasingly, in four wheel drive vehicles.
- The security people on either side have another reason for wishing to concentrate the flow of traffic which is that it is possible to build up a better intelligence bank by so doing, especially now that there is considerable use of computers on the Northern side and also on our own side at least in regard to vehicle licence plates.

From all of this, you will see that a joint Garda/RUC assessment of the implications of reopening each particular road will be very unlikely to get us anywhere, unless the Gardai themselves were persuaded to make an exception at least in one or two places.

The case we have decided to concentrate on is Lackey Bridge. This has one disadvantage, namely, that the area around Clones continues to be a focus of paramilitary activity (indeed, the recent McElwaine incident is an example) and no doubt it will be argued by the Northern side that reopening of the bridge would give renewed opportunities to terrorists. On the other hand, we expect that in the case of Kiltyclogher which is now 'quiet', the opposing argument would be that reopening would lead to a resumption of paramilitary activity! We feel our argument should be that the closure of Lackey Bridge has not brought paramilitary activity in the surrounding areas to a halt, and its reopening would not have such serious consequences as to ~~outweigh~~ the importance of the reopening to local people.

ontwejn

In the case of Lackey, however, we have had rather less negative noises from the British in the past and indeed, on our side, the local Garda superintendent at least is in favour of reopening. We therefore intend to press ahead on Lackey Bridge, arguing that the adverse economic consequences and the irritation factors ^{outweigh} the security considerations. In response to the likely British demand for the establishment of a permanent vehicle check-point on the Southern side (as well as their own on the Northern side) we are hoping either to get agreement on this jointly from Justice and Defence or, alternatively, to persuade our side as well as the British that increased mobile check-pointing can accomplish the same purpose more effectively.

In considering the matter, we have also of course considered the likely unionist reaction and the probability that the British will insist that any reopening of border roads would be put down to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and would greatly upset unionist opinion. Granted that we are sensitive to this point, we are nonetheless not prepared to accept that no movement at all can take place on these grounds. We believe that the reopening of even one border road would have a heartening effect on nationalists living along the border who have seen dramatically increased security cooperation with no quid pro quo in recent months. In this respect, the possible damage to local intelligence gathering by the Gardai and even to their safety is something sharply in our minds. This has not been helped by the trumpeting of security cooperation by British Ministers particularly when, as in the case of the lead story in the last issue of the Sunday Telegraph, it is suggested that the Gardai helped to set up McElwaine for an ambush by undercover SAS men.

This letter is primarily to keep you informed and to let you know our thinking at the present time. Of course, if you have any comments to make we will be glad to have them.

Yours sincerely,

Eamon O Tuathail.



OIFIG AN AIRE GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
DUBLIN 2

CONFIDENTIAL

NOT ISSUED

July 1986.

Mr. Alan Dukes,
Minister for Justice,
72-76 St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2.

Dear Alan,

You are no doubt aware of the continuing problems which are experienced in border areas arising from the closure of cross-border roads and bridges by the British security forces in Northern Ireland. I have always opposed the principle of road closures and I have gone on record in the Dáil many times to spell out clearly my policy in this respect. I have over the past three and a half years raised the issue with British Ministers but without success. Security considerations are advanced as the reason why it is not possible to make any concessions.

Following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement I had the question of the reopening of cross-border roads raised in the context of the Anglo-Irish Conference last December. The British response in January this year suggested that the matter could best be progressed by a comprehensive joint review by the Garda/RUC on the implications of reopening each particular road.

Before pursuing the British suggestion we believed it would be desirable to have the views of the Garda authorities and we accordingly requested their observations on the five most pressing instances where the reopening of cross-border roads is being sought, i.e., Lackey Bridge, Cashel Bridge, Dolans Lane, Aghalane Bridge and Leitrim Bridge. Responses from the local Garda officers were negative in all cases with the partial exception of Lackey Bridge which the local superintendent was in favour of reopening but was overruled by his superior.

I have considered very carefully the security issues involved vis-a-vis the political necessity of the reopening of at least some of these roads. I am very strongly of the view that local security considerations should not override the political requirements as a matter of course, and I am anxious to press the British authorities again on the matter. Before I can do this, I feel that it will be necessary to get your support and also the Minister for Defence so that in a coordinated approach we ensure that this problem is not looked at purely as a security issue.

The Garda authorities have not given explicit reasons for their views. The three main security arguments advanced in the past are:

- The reopening of a route could lead to paramilitary activity (including possible loyalist activity) along it and even to the resumption of paramilitary organisation and local influence in neighbouring centres.
- The continued closure of routes, makes it possible for the British security forces on the Northern side, and also for our forces on the Southern side, to organise their resources more effectively by concentrating them on those roads which remain open.
- The security forces on either side of the border wish to concentrate the flow of traffic to build up a better intelligence bank by so doing, especially now that there is considerable use of computers on the Northern side and also on our own side at least in regard to vehicle licence plates.

For operational reasons I can appreciate the reluctance on the part of the Army or the Gardaí to recommend the reopening of any particular cross-border road. I am also conscious that were we to press the British side to agree to the reopening of a particular border crossing there might be a demand for the placing of a permanent vehicle checkpoint at the location with the consequential demand on manpower and other resources which might then arise. In that event I hope it would be possible to persuade the British that security measures on our side of the border, with or without a permanent vehicle checkpoint, can accomplish the same purpose more effectively. I have felt for some time that the political importance of demonstrating to the local community the effectiveness of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in achieving the reestablishment of some cross-border links far outweighs the immediate operational security considerations. Indeed, I would argue that such a demonstration would have a beneficial impact on medium and long term security because of the removal of a major local grievance which tends to cause people to accept the propaganda of subversives and to limit their willingness to relate to the local Gardaí.

In considering the matter, I have also taken account of the likely unionist reaction and the probability that any reopening of border roads would upset unionist opinion. Though I am sensitive to this point, I am nonetheless not prepared to accept that no movement at all can take place on these grounds. I believe that the reopening of even a few border roads would have a heartening effect on nationalists living along the border who have seen dramatically increased security cooperation with no obvious quid pro quo from the British side in recent months.

There are 260 border crossings, over a 100 of these are now subject to closure orders. On that scale, a few reopenings is not an excessive demand to the British authorities. I would add that far from re-opening roads, the British plan to make the first new closure for some time at Clady, Co. Tyrone which, as local Gardaí themselves have pointed out, will cause a severe negative reaction (part of the local community will be cut off from the local Catholic Church). I have asked the British side to re-consider and I would hope that the Garda authorities, who have indicated "no security objection", will emphasise the negative consequences in any contacts with the RUC.

I would ask you to reexamine the whole question in this light. It would be particularly helpful if you could point to even a few border crossings where you feel we could concentrate our efforts in persuading the British side for movement on this issue. I am writing on similar lines to the Minister for Defence and I would be grateful to have your response as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Barry,
Minister for Foreign Affairs.