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Reference Code:	2016/52/46
Creation Dates:	17 July 1986
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
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CONFIDENTIAL

17 July 1986

520574

Visit of Dail/Seanad delegation re Birmingham, Guildford and Maguire cases

Dear Deelan (in absence of A/Sec O Thelwell)
Dear Assistant Secretary

20574

I will in due course be letting you have a full report on this visit which I think, all in all, was handled fairly successfully. I should like however in a brief note to make one particular point.

At the dinner which we held here in the Embassy on Monday evening 14 July (where the guests included the visiting delegation, some MPs from the House of Commons, two of the solicitors - Gareth Pierce and Alistair Logan - and Chris Mullin, the author of the new book on the Birmingham Six), the two lawyers and Mullin argued very strongly that the Birmingham, Guildford and Maguire cases involved so much of the British legal and police establishment that the effort to free those who appeared to have been wrongly convicted could not be pursued in isolation or by half measures. It would be necessary to make, as it were, a full frontal assault on the British legal system in order to achieve major reform.

Some of the visiting Irish delegation who had stated a concerned but essentially moderate position to a group which included English MPs and Gerald Clark the Head of the Republic of Ireland Department at the PCO, demurred at this. They said that the fight to reform the British legal system was not one that they as parliamentarians from Ireland could properly take on - their concern had to be limited quite properly to these three particular cases.

At this point in the discussion I suggested that it was quite legitimate and normal for people cooperating on such an issue to come to it from different positions and with concerns additional to those which they held

in common. This comment helped to moderate disagreement which had emerged between the more radical lawyers (and Mullin) on the one hand and the more "realistic" approach taken by the visitors towards what they could achieve in another jurisdiction. I thought nevertheless that it would be worth drawing your attention to this clear difference of view because of recent public statement by Mullin in launching his book pressing the Irish Government to make it an Anglo-Irish issue. It does not take from Mullin's evident concern and hard work on the Birmingham case to say that he is on the Benn wing of the Labour Party somewhere near the "troops out" fringe and that he is an active prospective Labour candidate preparing to run for a seat in the House of Commons at the next election.

Yours sincerely



Noel Dorr
Ambassador

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