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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

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17 Grosvenor Place
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25 March 1986

Dear Assistant Secretary

TADISEACH
Minister
Secretary
Mr. Nally
Mr. Lillis
Mr. O'Donovan

22685

Two glosses on the Glenholmes case

1. Andrew MacKay, Tom King's PPS, 'phoned this morning to say that knives are out within the Whitehall system for the officials responsible for the warrants mess. He said that the NIO at political level is en marge of events, and wishes to stay that way, but has no sympathy for whoever caused this problem which has frayed tempers so badly both in Dublin and London.

He said that there will be an official enquiry into the matter and that, in a press conference which Tom King will give in Belfast, perhaps tomorrow, to do with the new H. and W. contract and the P.M.'s letter to the Unionist leaders (delivered, he said, to them yesterday - Monday), this fact will probably be mentioned.

MacKay was anxious to convey their full acceptance that no blame attached to Dublin (courts or executive). He offered a personal view, however, in the form of a question, that the Irish judge could perhaps have suspended the court's proceedings while the warrent question was resolved.

2. I met Sir Michael Havers, the Attorney General, and he said he wanted us to know that the internal enquiry is now taking place, but also that they intend to draw blood. He said the official concerned is of senior rank and, it seems, did not bother to get personally involved.

He said they hope the check-list procedure, under preparation between his office and John Rogers', will solve the problem: rather like pilots, obedience not brains will be required.

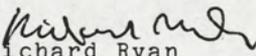
He said that John Biffen had got him off the hook of a statement today (expected after Prime Minister's question time) and he was grateful for that.

Comment: There has been much speculation and, on the part of his friends and supporters, worry that Havers' health would not sustain him should this matter become a serious issue in the Commons with him drawn in personally.

He recovered well from his heart bypass operation before Christmas, but allowed himself to be drawn back into hectic involvement in the Westland affair: he now looks quite unwell.

He expressed appreciation for a message of goodwill just received from our Attorney General's office.

Yours sincerely


Richard Ryan
Counsellor. /