



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2017/10/82
Creation Dates:	18 August 1987
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

CONFIDENTIAL

25.8.87

3/1/8
hys

Conversation with Cardinal O Fiaich

1. contacts ✓
2. prison cour
3. 16287

I had a brief meeting with Cardinal O Fiaich in Armagh on 18 August.

A memorial service for the late Archbishop Armstrong will be held in the Church of Ireland Cathedral in Armagh on Sunday, 13 September. The Cardinal suggested that the Department should be represented (perhaps it would be more appropriate to have a Government representative present?).

The Cardinal is due to leave on Thursday of this week for Rome for the ad limina visit of the Irish hierarchy. The visit will last ten days. He mentioned that the Pope would address a message to the Irish Bishops gathered in Rome sometime next week. I asked if the Pope was expected to make a major statement which might have political interest. The Cardinal replied no, he did not think this was envisaged.

The Cardinal noted that the political initiative of his "colleague across the hill" Archbishop Eames had run into heavy water. He was not surprised by - and was inclined to agree with - Paisley's reaction that he did not need the Archbishop to get himself and John Hume together to talk.

The local area has been quiet recently but "is as polarised as ever". I mentioned the worries we had at present about the possible negative change in prison release policy and suggested that the Cardinal might wish to mention his own concerns on the matter when a suitable opportunity arose with British Ministers. The Cardinal said he had already met Stanley very briefly but would bear this in mind for his next encounter. He mentioned that he hoped to visit Long Kesh in the near future. He had some reservations about a visit. He said it would take him about two days to see everyone in the prison and in a sense it had been easier for him to visit when all prisoners were

confined. When prisoners were allowed out in open spaces and could surround him, so to speak, there were opportunities for confrontational scenes with the Provos. He mentioned again that he had been relieved to have been away at the time of the Loughgall incident. If he had been in Armagh, he was sure that the Provos would have been "camping on his lawn" demanding statements.

d

Declan O'Donovan

20 August 1987

cc: PSM

PSS

Mr. O Tuathail

Counsellors

Ambassador London

Ambassador Washington

Mr. Nally

2593p