



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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NO 10

CONFIDENTIAL

Taoiseach
To see please
2015

Mr King
in by family
2015
2015/18
PORTLAOISE / EXTRADITION

SEEN BY
TAOISEACH

MEDIA KNOWLEDGE OF MCVEIGH CASE

Mr King, as well as Mrs Chalker, Minister at the FCO, and Sir Patrick Wright, PUS at the FCO, have said that they share the Taoiseach's concern about the presence of the ITN team outside Portlaoise yesterday and appreciate the difficulties it caused us.

Mr King has assured the Taoiseach that the British authorities were not responsible for the tip-off to ITN. In London, the Foreign Office have told the Ambassador that they are satisfied that no official source in the FCO, NIO or AGO alerted ITN to the McVeigh case. They believe from their own researches yesterday that ITN received their information from the McVeigh family and/or Sinn Fein. The British Joint Secretary in Belfast speculated personally that policemen might have been involved.

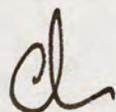
We think it likely that ITN were alerted to the story by British official or police sources. That fits with the pattern in previous cases and it fits with the knowledge obtained by the Irish Times in London last week and reported vaguely last Saturday that extradition warrants were being sent in a subversive case. It fits also with ITN's decision to send David Rose, a prominent member of ITN's lobby team who has covered Irish stories. And it fits with ITN's reference to British police having worked on the case for a year. It is possible that the initial information was obtained through a court official or police source at Bow Street where the warrants were sworn last Friday.

It is very possible, that ITN were tipped off by the family

and/or Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein were of course aware of the release date and time; they would have known of the possibility of McVeigh's arrest on extradition warrants, given especially the publicity given to the agreement reached between the two Attorneys last week; and they would have been conscious of the propaganda advantage to them of the presence of an ITN team, recalling the ITN coverage of the Glenholmes fracas in Dublin in March 1986.

We became aware on Tuesday morning through an SDLP contact that McVeigh's release and expected arrest on extradition warrants was known to a media source in the North. We established yesterday that the media source was Downtown Radio which is linked with ITN. The NIO takes a dim view of Downtown and we doubt if they would have given them the McVeigh tip-off. It is more likely that Sinn Fein alerted Downtown and used Downtown to arrange coverage by ITN. Given the advantage to ITN of this "exclusive" as they called it yesterday, it is not surprising that they kept their information to themselves. Journalists in the North were not generally aware of the case - a point confirmed to us by a journalist who attended a lunch given by Mawhinney on Tuesday. There was no mention of extradition, still less of McVeigh at that lunch.

The Downtown element does not of course exclude the possibility of a British tip-off in London, but, taken with the knowledge of the Bow Street proceedings, it does provide a reasonable explanation of how ITN came to be outside Portlaoise yesterday morning. Unless we obtain much harder evidence, we are not in a position to dispute the British assurances that there was no official leak on their side. Our press people will report anything they hear, or can discreetly find out, about the source of ITN's information.



Declan O'Donovan
19 May 1988

11111

1895

No 10

cc: PSM
PSS
Mr. Gallagher
Mr. Matthews

Mr Nally
Mr Kennell
Mr [unclear] 2015/88
2015

93720A ESTR EI
747282 AISECT G
0606C

*Taoiseach
To [unclear]
19/5*

19/5/88 0835
OMJ

TO HQ FROM BELFAST
18 MAY 1988

MOST IMMEDIATE

11111

FOR D. O'DONOVAN FROM P. COLLINS

SEEN BY
TAOISEACH

RE: EVENTS AT PORTLAOISE

THE BRITISH JOINT SECRETARY CAME BACK TO ME AT 7.30P.M. WITH A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE TAOISEACH. THE MESSAGE IS AS FOLLOWS:

1. THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDERSTANDS AND SHARES THE TAOISEACH'S CONCERN ABOUT THE SCENES OUTSIDE PORTLAOISE PRISON THIS MORNING. HE ACCEPTS THAT IT IS IN NO-ONE'S INTEREST THAT SUCH SCENES OF DISORDER SHOULD OCCUR.
2. THE SECRETARY OF STATE WANTS TO ASSURE THE TAOISEACH THAT THE UK AUTHORITIES WERE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE FILM CREW AND DID NOT PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA. HE IS KEEN TO TRY AND FIND OUT HOW THE ITN CREW GOT THERE. THEY FEEL THAT THE CREW COULD HAVE FOUND OUT FROM THE FAMILY (THEIR INFORMATION WAS THAT THE CREW WAS FROM BELFAST - THOUGH WE CONVEYED OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE REPORTER WAS LONDON BASED).
3. THE ITN REPORT AT MID-DAY TODAY WAS OF COURSE INCORRECT IN STATING THAT MCVEIGH WAS WANTED FOR QUESTIONING. HE WAS WANTED FOR PROSECUTION.
4. THE SECRETARY OF STATE THINKS IT IMPORTANT TO PREVENT SUCH EVENTS FROM OBSTRUCTING THE EXTRADITION PROCESS WHICH HAS BEEN WORKED ON SO HARD FOR SO MANY MONTHS NOW.

ENDS

cc: PSM

PSS

Mr. Gallagher

Mr. Matthews

Mr. Rosman

Mr. Nally

Mr. Kennell

0595C

18.5.88

TO HQ FROM BELFAST
MOST IMMEDIATE

/////

CODED MESSAGE	
IMMEDIATE	
18/5/88	1910
DATE	OR
INITIALS	

RE: EVENTS IN PORTLAOISE PRISON
FOR D. O'DONOVAN FROM P. COLLINS

I SAW THE BRITISH JOINT SECRETARY IMMEDIATELY ON RECEIPT OF YOUR MESSAGE ON THE ABOVE. I MADE CLEAR THAT I WAS SPEAKING ON CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS. I EMPHASISED THE TAOISEACH'S DIRECTION THAT HIS CONCERN ABOUT THIS WHOLE MATTER SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO MR KING'S ATTENTION URGENTLY. I MADE THE POINTS CONTAINED IN YOUR MESSAGE. I WAS TOLD THAT THESE WOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY.

SPEAKING ON A PERSONAL BASIS, THE BRITISH JOINT SECRETARY SAID THAT HE COULD TELL ME FROM HIS CONTACTS TODAY WITHIN THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION THAT:

- IT WAS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED BY THEM THAT MCVEIGH WAS BEING ARRESTED ON FOOT OF THE WARRANTS SENT BY THEM.

- THE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE T.V. COVERAGE COULD CREATE PROBLEMS FOR US. THEY COULD SEE THAT THE COVERAGE IN THE 1 P.M. ITN NEWS BULLETIN WAS LIKELY TO CREATE EMBARRASSMENT FOR US.

- WHILE NOT WISHING TO SAY ANYTHING AT THIS STAGE IN RELATION TO THE ISSUE OF WHERE THE INFORMATION EMANATED FROM, HE FELT THAT OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSCIOUS OF THE SENSITIVITY ON THIS ISSUE GENERALLY, AND IN RELATION TO THIS CASE IN PARTICULAR, BUT THAT IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO KEEP POLICEMEN FROM TALKING.

THE BRITISH JOINT SECRETARY UNDERTOOK TO GET BACK TO ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (PROBABLY FIRST THING IN THE MORNING BUT LATER TONIGHT IF

THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAD A REACTION BY THEN).

/////

1965

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cc: PS01
PSS
Mr Pallagher
Mr Matthews
Mr. Brosnan

Mr Nally
Mr Russell

*Teoradh
to Mr Flynn
19/5*

C132
18.5.88

18/5
PS 1730

TO EMBASSY LONDON FROM HQ
FOR AMBASSADOR FROM O'DONOVAN

FOLLOWING IS COPY TELEX SENT TO MR COLLINS, ACTING HEAD OF MISSION
IN BELFAST.

IN VIEW ESPECIALLY OF THE FACT THAT THE WARRANTS IN THIS CASE
CAME FROM BRITAIN (RATHER THAN NORTHERN IRELAND) AND OF THE
PRESENCE OUTSIDE PORTLAOISE OF A LONDON (RATHER THAN BELFAST)
ITN TEAM, WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD BRING THE TAOISEACHS
CONCERN TO ATTENTION IN LONDON.

1. RE: THE EVENTS AT PORTLAOISE PRISON THIS MORNING WHEN PATRICK
MCVEIGH WAS ARRESTED ON FOOT OF BRITISH EXTRADITION WARRANTS.
THE FACTS ARE:

MCVEIGH WAS CONVICTED BY THE SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT ON 20 JANUARY
1983 ON CHARGES OF UNLAWFULLY IMPORTING ARMS IN 1982 AND SENTENCED
TO 7 YEARS. HE WAS DUE FOR RELEASE AT 8AM THIS MORNING. PRIOR
TO HIS RELEASE, WARRANTS WERE RECEIVED FROM BRITAIN IN RESPECT
OF THE CHARGE OF HAVING EXPLOSIVES IN HIS POSSESSION BETWEEN
CERTAIN DATES AND HAVING CONSPIRED WITH GILBERT MCNAMEE, PAUL
KAVANAGH, THOMAS QUIGLEY AND OTHERS TO CAUSE AN EXPLOSION. MATERIAL
WAS TRANSMITTED BY THE BRITISH AG TO OUR AG WHICH PERMITTED
THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE WARRANTS AND ARRANGEMENTS WERE DULY MADE
FOR THE ARREST OF MCVEIGH THIS MORNING. WHEN MCVEIGH SAW GARDA
OFFICERS OUTSIDE THE PRISON HE MADE A RUN FOR IT. A MILITARY
SENTRY FIRED WARNING SHOTS AND MCVEIGH WAS ARRESTED AND TAKEN
TO COURT AT CARLOW. (NOTE: GARDA OFFICERS TOOK UP POSITIONS
AT AN OUTSIDE FENCE A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE PRISON GATE RATHER
THAN AT THE PRISON GATE ITSELF: THIS WAS BECAUSE A PERSON MUST
FIRST BE SET AT LIBERTY HOWEVER TEMPORARILY BEFORE HE IS ARRESTED).

AN-

ITN FILM CREW WAS PRESENT TOGETHER WITH ABOUT 30 RELATIVES/FRIENDS.

2. WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT ITN CREW ARRIVED FROM LONDON LAST
NIGHT AFTER A TIP OFF ABOUT MCVEIGH'S RELEASE. WE ARE AWARE
THAT AN IRISH TIMES JOURNALIST IN LONDON, CAROL COULTER, RECEIVED
INFORMATION LAST WEEK FROM BRITISH SOURCES THAT BRITAIN WAS
SEEKING THE EXTRADITION OF A SUBVERSIVE AS WELL AS A NON-SUBVERSIVE
FUGITIVE (A REPORT MISTAKENLY IDENTIFYING THIS PERSON - MCVEIGH
- AS A MAZE ESCAPER APPEAR IN THE IRISH TIMES LEAD STORY LAST
FRIDAY). WE ALSO BECAME AWARE YESTERDAY NEWS OF MCVEIGH'S RELEASE
WAS KNOWN TO A MEMBER OF THE MEDIA IN THE NORTH.

Saturday

3. THE TAOISEACH HAS DIRECTED THAT WE BRING HIS CONCERN ABOUT THIS WHOLE MATTER URGENTLY TO MR. KING'S ATTENTION.

4. IN DOING SO, WE WOULD WISH YOU TO SAY THAT THE TAOISEACH IS EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED - AND PARTICULARLY THE FACT THAT THE NEWS MEDIA, AND SPECIFICALLY ITN, HAVE OBTAINED INFORMATION, APPARENTLY FROM BRITISH SOURCES, ABOUT MCVEIGH'S IMMINENT RELEASE AND THE EXTRADITION WARRANT TO BE EXECUTED AS HE EMERGED FROM JAIL. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT GREAT POLITICAL SENSITIVITY NOW ATTACHES TO GETTING EXTRADITION ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES RIGHT: AND THERE IS A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT PAST HISTORY IN RELATION TO IT. FURTHERMORE, OUR POLICE, IN EXECUTING A WARRANT, MAY HAVE TO CARRY OUT AN ARREST IN CIRCUMSTANCES HERE THEY ARE CIRCUMSCRIBED BY THE NEED TO ALLOW LIBERTY, HOWEVER TEMPORARY, AFTER RELEASE FROM CUSTODY: AND WHERE THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE HINDERED BY RELATIVES AND SUPPORTERS OF PERSON TO BE ARRESTED AND, POSSIBLY, BY THE PRESENCE OF NEWS MEDIA AND OTHERS.

5. GRANTED ALL OF THIS, AN EPISODE OF THIS KIND, FILMED BY THE NEWS MEDIA WHO HAVE BEEN MADE AWARE IN ADVANCE, AND PRESENTED TO THE PUBLIC, AS IT WILL ALMOST INEVITABLY BE PRESENTED ON TV, AS ANOTHER UNSEEMLY FRACAS ABOUT EXTRADITION, CANNOT BUT AFFECT PUBLIC OPINION HERE ADVERSELY - TO A DEGREE WHERE PUBLIC OPINION COULD EVENTUALLY COME TO CALL SERIOUSLY INTO QUESTION THE WHOLE EFFORT TO GET EXTRADITION ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE TWO JURISDICTIONS WORKING PROPERLY.

6. (I MIGHT ADD THAT SINCE WE CONTACTED YOU ORALLY THIS MORNING OUR CONCERN HERE WAS FURTHER INCREASED BY THE ITN COVERAGE OF THE INCIDENT ON THE LUNCHTIME NEWS TODAY - SINCE THEY SPOKE OF THE BRITISH POLICE AS 'WISHING TO QUESTION' MCVEIGH ABOUT VARIOUS BOMB ATTACKS IN BRITAIN. AS YOU KNOW, EXTRADITION CAN TAKE PLACE ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROSECUTION AND NOT FOR 'QUESTIONING'.)

7. WE SHOULD BE GLAD TO BE INFORMED OF THE REACTION YOU RECEIVE TO THE FOREGOING. WE ARE ALSO ASKING AMBASSADOR O'ROURKE TO BRING THE TAOISEACH'S CONCERN TO ATTENTION IN LONDON AS THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE INFORMATION TO ITN MAY HAVE EMANATED DIRECTLY FROM THERE RATHER THAN IN BELFAST.

Done
by C132

NO 10

cc PSS
Mr Gallagher
Mr Mathews
Mr Brennan

Mr Nally
Mr Russell

F-A1 LDN

C103
IMMEDIATE
=====

19/5/88 1142

TO HQ FROM LONDON
FOR O'DONOVAN FROM AMBASSADOR

///// -
YOUR TELEX 0133 OF 18 MAY

I BROUGHT TAOISEACH'S CONCERN TO ATTENTION OF MRS. LYNDA CHALKER, M.P., MINISTER OF STATE, FOREIGN OFFICE, WHO WAS AT DINNER AT THE EMBASSY LAST EVENING. I WENT IN DETAIL THROUGH THE POINTS PROVIDED BY YOU. SHE LISTENED ATTENTIVELY AND HER IMMEDIATE COMMENT WAS THAT SHE WOULD BE VERY ANGRY IF A LEAK IN LONDON HAD LED TO THE PRESENCE OF THE ITN CREW. SHE SAID SHE FULLY APPRECIATES THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE PRESENCE OF TV CAN CAUSE IN A SECURITY SITUATION. SHE SAID SHE WOULD BE VERY SURPRISED, HOWEVER, IF ANY LEAK HAD COME FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES.

LATER, SHE CONSULTED T. GEORGE WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT. SHE THEN SAID TO ME THAT SHE WAS SATISFIED THAT THE LEAK HAD NOT COME FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES AND SUGGESTED THAT IT MOST LIKELY CAME FROM SINN FEIN. GEORGE SAID TO ME SUBSEQUENTLY THAT AFTER THE STORY BROKE DURING THE DAY HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH COLLEAGUES AND WAS SURE THERE HAD BEEN NO LEAK FROM THE FCO, NIO OR ATTORNEY GENERALS OFFICE. HE COULD NOT SAY IF A LEAK MIGHT HAVE ORIGINATED AT BOW ST. COURT, WHERE THE WARRANTS WERE SWORN.

I ALSO MADE CLEAR THE TAOISEACH'S CONCERN, AND THE REASONS FOR IT, TO SIR PATRICK WRIGHT, PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY, FCO. HE FULLY ACCEPTED THE GROUNDS FOR THIS CONCERN. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH GEORGE (BOYD IS AWAY) IN VIEW OF FORMAL REPLY THROUGH SECRETARIAT I WOULD NOT EXPECT ANY FURTHER RESPONSE HERE BUT TAOISEACH'S CONCERN IS FULLY APPRECIATED AT SENIOR LEVEL.

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Mr Mc Carthy
Mr Taoiseach
2015/88
To be placed
2015