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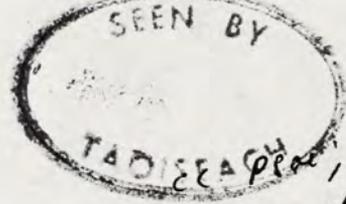


IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

6 December, 1988.

*Tasreeh
C. To see pl.
5/12
7/12*

17 Grosvenor Place,
London SW1X 7HR.



*Mr. Walsh; AG
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CONFIDENTIAL - BY COURIER SERVICE

Mr. Dermot Gallagher,
Assistant Secretary,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
Dublin.

*Mr. Keen
Mr. G. Cantor
8-12-88*

Dear Assistant Secretary,

Father Patrick Ryan : Further discussions
at Westminster

In continuing pre-arranged meetings at Westminster, an increasing number of M.P.s have been made fully aware of our position on all aspects of this case. The process of setting the record straight on certain aspects of it necessarily involved contradiction or rejection of stated British positions. Where this was necessary, however, care was taken to reduce as much as possible any tone of confrontation and to give the impression of trying to get beyond and get over the excessive British reactions. These contacts have included well-disposed M.P.s with a view to getting concrete support for our position, and also right wing Tories who are not well-disposed but who it is important to neutralise as much as possible.

There can be little doubt that, given the simplistic approach of many M.P.s, and their preparedness, or even eagerness, to take their steer from Mrs. Thatcher, there has been damage done at Westminster. However, no M.P. has refused to agree to meet, and many of them, having heard out an exposé and having probed our case and asked for various clarifications, have swung round; to a greater or lesser extent, to a supportive posture. Some have been prepared to take lists of speaking points; some have asked for substantial speaking material (Merlyn Rees, for example, spoke helpfully about the alternative route provided by the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act; Edward Leigh, a well known right winger, has been very helpful several times in reading out material provided). Conversations with a number of Government Whips have been useful as they have been anxiously testing the mood on the backbenches : those spoken to agreed that, following briefing about the reality of the situation as we see it, they were in a much better position to evaluate what they are picking up in response to various statements made which have affected the overall temperature in the short term at least. Those Whips spoken to were Stephen Dorrell, M.P., David Heathcoat-Amory M.P.,

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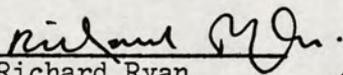
Hon. Tom Sackville, M.P. and Michael Fallon, M.P.

It was also useful to talk to a number of Parliamentary Private Secretaries of Ministers who are rather out of reach themselves. These include Alistair Burt (PPS to Kenneth Baker), Tony Baldry (PPS to John Wakeham), Nicholas Baker (PPS to Lord Young), Andrew MacKay (PPS to Tom King), John Butterfill (PPS to Cecil Parkinson), Jim Couchman (PPS to Kenneth Clarke) and Hon. Nicholas Soames (PPS to Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley). I asked these whether they could mention the main points made in our discussions to their Secretaries of State and they said they would.

The overall impressions from these exchanges are that:

- while every one of them heard out our arguments, and many were prepared to swing round, all of them continue to feel that something is needed to make extradition work better in the future; in particular, while they can in large part be persuaded by the technical argument about the interim warrant, they all argued that a mechanism is needed to detain the subject of a warrant until our Attorney General has completed the requirements of the 1987 law;
- most by far of my contacts were persuadable about the attractions of the alternative legal route - the 1976 Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act; first impressions are that this argument could be made stick at the wider Parliamentary level at least;
- virtually all the ground recovered with these contacts would be very largely lost if our Attorney General backs the warrants but if Patrick Ryan could not be found : they understand and many accept our argument about the legal position and the problems of practice in this area, but they are quick to point to what they see as infirmities in the law; I believe they would very strongly back Mrs. Thatcher if, as is speculated in the media, she makes a strong request to have aspects of the law changed (i.e. if there are further difficulties with the Ryan case to fuel her argument).

Yours sincerely,


Richard Ryan
Minister-Counsellor