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AMBASÁID NA HÉIREANN, LONDAIN



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

NOS

17 Grosvenor Place

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24 August 1988

Dear Assistant Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL - BY COURIER SERVICE

*cc P. S. Taisne
PSM
M. Nelly
PSR
M. Kellaway/John
Counsell
TRK.*



Lunch with Lord Gowrie

Gowrie has seen the Prime Minister several times recently. In their last discussion she was, he said, in "a terrible state" about the killings of soldiers in Northern Ireland and on the continent. She was at several points "quite irrational".

He said that she referred several times in a vehement way to the SAS killings in Gibraltar. She was full of "praise" and "admiration" for that job and had not the slightest regret - "no remorse"- about the trouble it has caused. Do not be surprised, he said, if the new security re-think leads to more of that sort of thing: she was "steamed up" about how to get at the IRA - this was the single major thread in the conversation. He would expect, therefore, to see direct covert action against the IRA.

She was not full of praise for Tom King and did not seem to be very happy that the new measures being considered, other than a determination to take the fight more directly to the IRA, will make much difference. She did, however, dwell on the problem of terrorist suspects being able to resist interrogation. He concluded, therefore, that an end to the right to silence will probably feature among new measures. It was his guess that she would have very little patience with Tom King's reluctance to give full-blooded support to Gibraltar-type action against the IRA.

He said he got more strongly in this conversation than previously the overall feeling that she has no sense of the Agreement "as the rest of us see it"; "she is not interested"; she sees it as "foliage around the only thing that interests her - security"; for her it is nothing other than a mechanism to

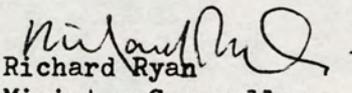
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bring in the South on security measures; her vision just does not go beyond defeating the IRA. The irrational side of her became worse he said, when she referred - several times - to "her young boys over there".

He thought that recent arms finds in the Republic, and the successful Russell and Harte extradition cases, have been very helpful.

He has been in Dublin several times recently and was very praising of the Government's economic policies which, he said, are having visible results on the streets in the form of a new sense of optimism and well-being. Although he is now out of politics and is not directly useful to us, he is happy to make a point on our behalf when requested and he continues to be very popular with the Prime Minister. He would be very pleased if, during one of his visits to Dublin, a brief exchange of views with the Taoiseach could be arranged.

Yours sincerely


Richard Ryan
Minister-Counsellor