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NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND MR PETER BARRY  
IN NIO LONDON ON 27 JULY 1983

The Secretary of State met Mr Peter Barry, the Irish Minister  
for Foreign Affairs, in London on 27 July. Those present were:

The Secretary of State  
Mr Brennan  
Mr Merifield  
Mr Lyon

Mr Barry  
Dr Kennedy  
Mr Lillis

The Secretary of State and Mr Barry agreed the terms of a press  
statement about Mr Barry's visit, including his earlier meeting with  
the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.  
It was agreed that the statement should be in the broadest terms,  
and should refer to the Secretary of State and the Minister  
discussing matters of mutual interest in the political, security  
and economic fields. The Ministers also agreed the terms of  
a statement about the establishment of the Encounter Organisation.  
The Secretary of State agreed with Mr Barry that Sir David Orr  
and Mr Whitaker should be described as joint chairmen and not  
chairmen representing their respective countries.

Mr Barry said that he welcomed the opportunity for a further  
meeting with the Secretary of State. He had a number of detailed  
points which he wished to raise.

#### GILLESPIE SISTERS

The Secretary of State said that he and the Foreign Secretary  
had made every effort to follow up Mr Barry's suggestion that  
the Gillespie sisters might be released a few days early. But this  
had not proved possible. It would have been necessary to seek the  
exercise of the Royal Prerogative, which would not have been  
appropriate and might anyway have attracted publicity. There was  
a possibility, however, that the sisters might anyway not wish to  
become re-involved with their former associates, and might go

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to stay with their brother in England.

Mr Barry said that he accepted that nothing more could be done. He was grateful to the Secretary of State and to the Foreign Secretary for their efforts.

#### PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT

Mr Barry said that each of the Irish groups he had met in England in the past few days had raised with him their fear of police harassment under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. As a result, responsible and decent Irish people would not attend meetings arranged by Irish groups for fear of being identified and followed up by the police. Figures they had been given showed that of 5,000 Irish people taken in for questioning under the Act, no more than 80 were charged. He asked what changes to procedure were likely to be made in the Act following the Jellicoe Report and whether an extension of the legislation to other terrorist groups might reduce the feeling the Irish had that they were being singled out for special treatment.

The Secretary of State said that officials would put these points to the Home Office and would let the Irish have a response in due course. It was undesirable for responsible Irish people to feel harassed; but it was also necessary for the police to keep a careful watch in areas where terrorists might infiltrate.

#### EX-PATRIOTS

Mr Barry said that he had found in his meetings with Irish groups that they were more critical of his government than of the UK Government. They objected to the increased price of air fares, Irish passports, and lack of Irish Government support for Irish centres. They clearly wanted a better channel of communication and complaint to the Irish Government than they had at present. They felt neglected.

Mr Barry said that he hoped the legislative provisions to extend the Irish franchise to UK citizens in the Republic would become law by Christmas. It was possible, however, that the supreme



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court might rule that the legislation was contrary to the constitution. In that event, the constitution would be changed, but this would take a further year.

#### MOVEMENT OF PRISONERS IN ENGLAND

Mr Barry said that some of the more radical groups he had met, including Irish social workers, complained that Irish prisoners were moved between English prisons more frequently and with less reason than other prisoners. A recent Guardian article supported this view. He did not question the right to move prisoners, but it contributed to the siege mentality of the Irish community, particularly when relatives were not informed sufficiently early for them to avoid an expensive and abortive visit.

The Secretary of State said there were occasions when it was necessary to move prisoners without notice; and some Irish prisoners were particularly difficult. Officials would, however, put the point to the Home Office.

#### BORDER CROSSINGS

Mr Barry said that he hoped it would be possible to re-open some of the border crossings. He was particularly concerned about the border roads between Kiltyclogher in County Leitrim and Enniskillen in County Fermanagh. People wishing to make the crossing had to go on a 20-mile detour.

The Secretary of State said that there were good reasons for continuing to block border roads, but officials would look into the particular point which Mr Barry had raised.

#### CROSSMAGLEN GAA PITCH

Mr Barry said that the security forces in Crossmaglen continued to exercise their right of way across the GAA Ground to the RUC Barracks. Helicopter landings had also disrupted matches. He hoped this could be prevented, possibly by building a new access to the barracks.

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The Secretary of State said officials would look into this.

#### PLASTIC BATON ROUNDS

Mr Barry said that there was continuing concern about plastic baton rounds. Their figures suggested they were more lethal than rubber rounds since between 1970 and 1975, 55,000 rubber bullets had been fired with three fatalities, and since then 25,000 plastic rounds had been fired with eleven fatalities. There were suggestions also that their use was not in accordance with the directions given to the security forces.

The Secretary of State said that he did not accept that plastic rounds were more dangerous than rubber ones. He recognised the sensitivities, but there were times when their use was essential. The rules had, however, been considerably tightened up, and taken with a general decline in rioting, the number used had fallen very markedly since 1981. He received a report whenever baton rounds had to be used. They were also looking carefully for alternatives. At present they were assessing a German-type water cannon, but it was not yet clear that it was any less dangerous and the situations in which it could be used were limited.

#### SECURITY SITUATION

The Secretary of State said that he was concerned about the level of riots in Londonderry in the last few months. He doubted if they were associated with Mr Hume's success in the General Election and Sinn Fein's relatively poor showing in that constituency. But Mr Hume had told him that Mr Currie and other SDLP members had suffered from PIRA attacks since the election. The spate of murders in Londonderry last year had stopped, probably because of RUC successes in arresting terrorists, and the evidence of super-grasses. The shooting of the wife of a soldier visiting relatives in Londonderry had damaged the IRA, although the soldier should not have been there having received strict orders not to stay in his relative's house. It was perhaps preferable that riots had displaced murders in recent months in Londonderry, and almost all were dealt with by the RUC without army intervention. It was not clear whether the riots were terrorist



Inspired or spontaneous.

#### EXTRADITION

Mr Barry said that the Irish Magistrates Court had granted the RUC's application for the extradition of James Shannon for the murder of Sir Norman Stronge and his son. The decision would go to appeal but he was hopeful that it would be upheld. If further extraditions were to follow, however, it was essential that the RUC should not seek to interrogate Shannon on his return to Northern Ireland. This was contrary to the normal extradition procedure with those countries with whom the Irish had signed extradition treaties. If in the event it proved impossible to extradite Shannon, then he would be charged in the Republic under extra-territorial legislation.

The Secretary of State said that he was glad to hear of the Magistrates court decision. There was strong feeling in Northern Ireland about the murder of the Stronge's and it was important that Shannon should be extradited. He was grateful for the progress which had been made. It was not clear whether Shannon was liable to further questioning in Northern Ireland, but he would check on the position and ensure that the RUC were aware of Mr Barry's views.

#### CO-OPERATION NORTH

Mr Barry said that he was a little concerned about the disparity of treatment of Co-operation North between the two Governments. They had undertaken to give Co-operation North IRE50,000 for the following year, but had given no longer term undertakings. This was to encourage Co-operation North to keep on its toes. He understood, however, that the UK Government had promised Co-operation North a smaller sum (£25,000) but for each of the next five years.

The Secretary of State said that he had met representatives of Co-operation North. The Government had thought it right to



reduce the level of its financial commitment, but had accepted the organisation's arguments for greater security by promising them assistance over a period of years.

#### KINSALE GAS

The Secretary of State said that he was grateful for the considerable efforts which Mr Bruton had made in his discussions with Mr Butler to secure acceptable arrangements for the Kinsale Gas Project. He accepted that there was now little room for further manoeuvring on the price. But on strict economic grounds the proposal was not attractive. Any significant rate of return would not come until after the contract period had expired. He recognised that there were also intangible benefits to the Northern Ireland economy which would need to be taken into account. He would need to assess also the political issues.

Mr Barry said that he understood the proposal was not particularly advantageous to his Government either. He would nevertheless ask Mr Bruton to re-examine the offer to see whether it could be made more helpful to the UK. He set great political store on securing agreement. Gas consumers in Northern Ireland were hanging on in the hope that the deal would be concluded, and it would be damaging if they were disappointed. More importantly, while he did not think failure to agree would substantially damage relationships between the two Governments, others would represent it as a tangible failure by the two Governments to develop a new relationship in the very area where co-operation seemed most natural. This would be a set back. There were certainly those in the Republic who would criticise the Irish Government for making an unfavourable deal, but they were prepared to shoulder the political risks and to make the economic sacrifice. He hoped the UK Government would be prepared to do the same. Certainly, no unfavourable decision should be made until after the Prime Minister's summit.

The Secretary of State said that he would need to consult his Cabinet Colleagues on the offer. It would be difficult to secure



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agreement to go ahead given the economic considerations. Nor were the political arguments all one way. There were those in Northern Ireland who were opposed to the deal and would be very critical if they could show that it was made on unfavourable economic terms for other reasons. He would take careful account, however, of the arguments which Mr Barry had put. If, in the event, it was decided that the deal could not go ahead, it would be important to emphasise the economic arguments and to avoid recriminations and damaging the relationship between the two Governments.

## CROSS-BORDER SECURITY

The Secretary of State said that he had undertaken in response to a question from Mr Farr in the House of Commons to pass on Mr Farr's concern that arms might be being smuggled across the border. He had no evidence, however, that this was a particular problem.

Mr Barry said that he attached considerable importance to co-operation on security issues and would be very concerned if there was any evidence that arms were being smuggled across the border. Like the Secretary of State, he was not aware of any lack of co-operation on this between the security forces of the two countries.

Concluding the meeting, the Secretary of State said that he would take careful note of the particular points which Mr Barry had raised. He would ask his Officials to look into them and would arrange for a reply at Official level.

*J. M. Lyon*

J M LYON

Private Secretary

27<sup>th</sup> July 1983

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