

RESTRICTED

1. Mr ~~Reeve~~ *Joye* *Q*
 2. PS/Secretary of State (L&B)

cc: PS/Mr Needham (L&B)
 Mr Barry (DOE)
 Mr Hamilton (DOE) *14/10*
 Mr Carvill
 Mr Bell

MT OCT 1985

RESOLUTION OF LISBURN BOROUGH COUNCIL

3543

The Town Clerk of Lisburn Borough Council has written to the private secretary asking him to bring to the attention of the Secretary of State a resolution of the Council condemning recent remarks made by Cardinal O'Fiaich in the Catholic newspaper "The Universe".

Background

The July issue of "The Universe" contained an interview with Cardinal O'Fiaich which provoked considerable media interest and was roundly condemned by both Protestant church leaders and a number of unionist politicians. Briefly, the Cardinal sought to explain the electoral support achieved by Sinn Fein as being the result of Catholic alienation rather than any conscious support for the use of violence. He argued that the IRA campaign would only end when the problem of alienation was overcome. He said that British policy towards Northern Ireland was "no policy at all" and claimed that the "only ultimate solution" would involve British disengagement. Finally, in what was widely seen as an apologia for the men of violence, the Cardinal said that the IRA did not kill Protestants because of their religion: rather they killed members of the RUC, UDR and so on and the fact that they were Protestants was entirely coincidental.

Recommendation

3. The Cardinal's remarks were, of course, misguided and provocative. It is little wonder that unionists of all shades of opinion were incensed and that his views have been quoted as evidence of the intransigence of the Catholic Church and its adherents. However, there would be no advantage in the Secretary of State becoming involved in the controversy and I therefore attach a draft reply which merely confirms the fact that the council resolution has been brought to his attention.

S Hewitt.

S G HEWITT
 Political Affairs Division
 9 October 1985

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DRAFT LETTER FOR PS/SECRETARY OF STATE TO SEND TO:-

H A Duff Esq
Town Clerk
Lisburn Borough Council
The Square
Hillsborough
BT26 6AH

Thank you for your letter of 1 October containing details
of a resolution adopted by your Council on 25 June.

I have brought the resolution to the attention of the
Secretary of State.

hc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Mr Needham (L&B)
Mr Barry (DOE)
Mr Hamilton (DOE)
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