

14

CONFIDENTIAL

From: HMA Dublin

Date: 5 January 1994

To: Mr J Stevens, PS/SofS

cc: PS/SofS (L&B)
 PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)
 PS/PUS (L&B)
 PS/Mr Fell
 Mr Thomas
 Mr Bell
 Mr Deverell
 Mr Watkins
 Mr Williams
 Mr Brooker
 Mr Daniell
 Mr Maccabe
 Mr Rickard
 Mr Caine
 Mr Archer, RID.

*✓ cc M. West
M. Beaton*

*2 Refin to me
jed
7/1*

LETTER TO THE TANAISTE

1. Thank you for your minute of earlier today. I called on Sean OhUiginn this afternoon and handed over the text of the Secretary of State's letter to the Tanaiste (explaining that it had been finalised before the Irish had told us that they could not manage an IGC on 26 January). OhUiginn said he would submit it to the Tanaiste immediately. After reading it, he said that he took the point about the need not to appear to be allowing the Provisionals to paralyse the political process. But he thought it equally important to allow them time to respond to the Downing Street Declaration. The Provisional leadership were perplexed and playing for time, in the hope perhaps that a diabolus ex machina might appear. He thought personally that they would have little alternative in the longer term but to accept the Declaration or see their support dwindle, provided nothing happened in the meantime to let them off the hook.

2. I asked what reports the Irish had had of Provisional thinking. OhUiginn had little useful to offer, except that he understood the prisoners out on parole over Christmas had been surprised by the degree of pressure from the nationalist community to accept the Declaration.

CONFIDENTIAL

Taoiseach's Letter

3. I said I had no instructions on the Taoiseach's letter of 30 December to the Prime Minister, a reply to which was no doubt being considered. OhUiginn should know that the unfortunate remarks on the Caraher case had not been well received. OhUiginn said that the wording had no doubt been rather blunt. I said that "tactless" would have been a better word.

Extradition

4. I asked when the Irish hoped to publish their draft legislation: we had been told first that a bill would be introduced before Christmas, then that proposals would be made public during the recess. OhUiginn said he was unsighted but would check. The intention certainly was to publish during the recess. (I suspect the Irish may want to delay publication until nearer the resumption of the Dail on 26 January.)

Section 31

5. I said we hoped very much that the Irish would let us know of any shift over Section 31 before it was made public. OhUiginn said that he would try to ensure this. He expected the Government not to renew the Order, though this might not be announced until the eve of the renewal date (19 January). The main proponent for change was Michael D Higgins, for purely libertarian principles. But Ministers were also aware of the signal non-renewal would send to the Provisionals. OhUiginn expected that Section 16 would provide sufficient powers to prevent Sinn Fein abuse of the media, but if it did not, then the option of reintroducing a ban under Section 31 was available.

(Signed)
D E S Blatherwick,
H M AMBASSADOR