

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



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<b>Title:</b>	Typescript carbon copy letter of reply to Ellen Devenney, 8 Glenhill Park, Belfast, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, relating to the arrest of certain SAS personnel who crossed the border from Northern Ireland and the institution of proceedings by the Director of Public Prosecutions; also outlines broad principles underlying Government policy in relation to Northern Ireland
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18th May, 1976.



Dear Mrs. Devenney,

I have been asked by the Taoiseach, Mr. Liam Cosgrave, to thank you for your letter of the 16th May about the Northern Ireland situation.

In your letter you referred to the arrest of certain S.A.S. personnel who crossed the Border from Northern Ireland and were apprehended at a joint Army/Garda checkpoint at Omeath, Co. Louth, recently. The decision to institute proceedings in this case was taken by the Director of Public Prosecutions who, like his counterpart in Great Britain, is independent in the discharge of his functions. As the case will come before the courts here shortly it is not possible to offer any further comment on it at this stage.

The Taoiseach and every member of the Government here share the abhorrence of violence which is evident from your letter and have expressed this abhorrence on many occasions. They are fully committed to doing everything within their power to help to reduce and eventually eliminate politically motivated violence. In a speech on 21 June, 1974, the Taoiseach said

"We must do all we can to encourage and help the great majority of the population (of Northern Ireland) who have chosen political action in preference to violence, to persevere in that decision and work through the electoral process. We must do everything we can to ensure that those who seek to disrupt this basic choice - by violence and threat of war against the Irish people, North and South, or by killing and maiming Irish men and women of today in the name of Irish men and women of the past - will not prevail."

To enable you to appreciate more fully current Government policy in regard to Northern Ireland, the Taoiseach has asked me to send you the enclosed copy of his Address to the Joint Session of Congress on St. Patrick's Day and also a copy of the Joint Communiqué which issued following the meeting between President Ford and the Taoiseach in the White House that day.

Finally, as regards your references to Westminster Government, the Taoiseach has asked me to assure you that there is constant contact between the Irish and British Governments both at diplomatic and political level in regard to Northern Ireland. As you will be aware the Taoiseach had a meeting with the former British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Wilson in February last following which they reaffirmed their identity of interest with that of the people of Northern Ireland in ending violence and restoring peace and stability. They agreed that an

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May 16 1976

Dear Mr President Sir

acceptable form of Government there could be established only through both sections of the community agreeing on a system of Government providing for partnership and participation. Both the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister indicated that they would support in every possible way institutions of Government agreed on this basis. Pending such agreement a period of direct rule and constitutional stability was necessary.

The Taoiseach hopes that this letter will be of assistance to you in clarifying his Government's policy on the matters which you raised.

Yours sincerely,

E. MURRAY

Private Secretary

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Private Secretary  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Transmitted please.

C. C. NI CHUASAIN

Ellen M. Devenney