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30th April, 1976.



Dear Father Brady,

I have been asked by the Taoiseach to reply to your further letter of 14th April, 1976, on the subject of Loyalist violence in Northern Ireland. As stated in my letter of 7th April, the Taoiseach has consistently condemned all violence irrespective of the affiliations of its perpetrators. [He has said on a number of occasions that Government policy on Northern Ireland "is dominated and will continue to be dominated by care for the safety and welfare of all the people there and, in particular, for the safety and welfare of the minority section of the community which is most at risk" (quoted extract from address to Fine Gael Ard-Fheis, 22nd March, 1975). Other members of the Government have also spoken on this general subject on numerous occasions in recent years and in this connection I am enclosing the text of a speech delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, T.D., at the Biltmore Hotel, New York, in October last.

In line with this concern, very many representations on killings and intimidation of Catholics have been made, both at diplomatic and Ministerial level, to the British Government who are responsible for law and order in Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach expressed his concern about the matter personally to the former British Prime Minister, Mr. Wilson, on a number of occasions. Repeated assurances have been received that the British authorities are doing their utmost to discharge their responsibility effectively. While the Government's concern about the continuing assassinations remains acute, there is evidence that the efforts of the security authorities in the North to prevent armed attacks and killings and to apprehend those responsible have been attended with a reasonable measure of success, in relation to offenders from the Loyalist section of the Community, over the past year.

Unfortunately, random killings and instances of intimidation - which have occurred on both sides - pose extremely difficult problems, both in prevention and detection, precisely because they are random. However, the Government will continue to impress on the British Government the need to spare no effort to prevent killings and attacks or threats of such acts and to bring those responsible to justice.]

In referring you, in my previous letter, to the Taoiseach's speech delivered before both Houses of the U.S. Congress, I did not say that it supported the assertion you quote in your most recent letter. I simply drew attention to it as the most recent statement by the Taoiseach, in condemnation of violence. [It is true that the speech concentrates on violence from Republican sources and that the sentence you quote in relation to the failure of men of violence to secure parliamentary representation referred to persons on the Republican side.

This is clear from the whole tenor of the address and, in particular from the paragraph following that from which you quote the sentence in question. In that succeeding paragraph, the Taoiseach said:

"The Irish Government, acting for the people of Ireland, repudiate violence as a means of achieving unity".

In this address to Congress and in other speeches and interviews in the United States, the Taoiseach sought to explain the current attitude to unity of those in Ireland who adhere to the traditional nationalist outlook. He sought to exercise the influence with the Irish-American community, conferred by his position as head of the Irish Government, to induce those among them wishing to help Ireland and the Irish people to ensure that their contributions were not directed to bodies or persons likely to finance the purchase of arms and explosives and thus to perpetuate the vicious circle of murder and destruction in Northern Ireland. Clearly, there would be little likelihood of appeals on his part to Loyalists to refrain from assisting para-military bodies having any impact. The Taoiseach directed his appeal to the community who could be expected to be receptive to the wishes of the Irish people and Government and concentrated on the aspect where he could achieve practical results beneficial to all in Northern Ireland.

I may add that
As stated in my previous letter the Irish Government have agreed with the British Government that in current circumstances an acceptable form of government in Northern Ireland can only be established through both sections of the Community agreeing on a system of government providing for partnership and participation. The Government consider that the prospects of agreement would be greatly enhanced by an end to violence and that, in turn, the establishment of an agreed form of government based on the principles referred to above would pave the way for enduring peace in Northern Ireland, to the benefit of all the people there in both sections of the Community.

The Taoiseach's speeches in the United States and the actions taken by the Government to combat violence by unlawful organisations, claiming to act in the name of the Irish people, should be seen in this context.

The Taoiseach has asked me to assure you that, as was done in the private discussions he had in the course of his visit to the United States, the public representatives from that country who will be visiting Ireland in the near future, will be given a detailed briefing on all aspects of the situation in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

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