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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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*ht. Vindman
I have also given a copy to the Secretary to the President*

Mr. McCarthy

Presentation of Glor na nGael Awards
by the President, 12 May, 1985.

13/5

13. 5. 85

1. The Secretary to the President contacted me at home on the evening of Saturday the 11th May in relation to the above function which had been the subject of comment in the Irish Times that day (see attached press cutting). Mr. O hOdhraín told me that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was also scheduled to attend the function, has been in touch with the President about the matter referred to in the newspaper story i.e. the presentation of an award to the West Belfast committee of Glor na nGael which would be collected by its chairman Mr. Mairtin O Muilleoir a PSF candidate in the local elections in Belfast. The Minister had indicated to the President that while he would meet him on his arrival in Cork and attend the Mass associated with the awards ceremonies he (the Minister) did not intend to attend the presentation ceremony.

2. The President having considered his position in this matter formed the opinion that it would not be prudent for him to pull out of the ceremonies at this stage and that the "lesser of two evils" was to proceed with the arrangements as envisaged and try to ensure that the presentation ceremony was kept as low key as possible.

3. Mr. O hOdhraín asked me to contact the Minister for Foreign Affairs again in this regard which I did. The Minister reaffirmed his own intentions as already conveyed to the President. The Minister was anxious to avoid any adverse publicity in this connection and felt that if he were to attend the ceremonies a photo of the President presenting the West Belfast award to Mr. O Muilleoir with the Minister in the background would invariably appear in the media. Mr. O Muilleoir in this way would be able to manipulate the occasion to his own political advantage. I told the Minister of the President's intentions and he asked me to contact him again if there were any further developments.

4. Following further discussion with Mr. O hOdhraín and a telephone conversation with Mr. M. Lillis of the Department of Foreign Affairs I contacted the Tánaiste in Tralee late on Saturday night and briefed him on the position. I indicated that at official level the view was that Government should not request the President to withdraw from the function. The Tánaiste agreed with this course and suggested that in dealing

*Mr. Hargrave
Mr. M. Lillis*

13/5/85

*BY to
Mr. M. Lillis
13/5/85*

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with any media enquiries the fact that the award was going to the West Belfast committee of Glór na nGael and not its chairman in a personal capacity should be highlighted. The President's involvement might also be explained on the basis that the award was not being given to a political figure as such; that the award was in effect a community award; and also the fact that this was but one of a number of prizes being awarded by the President - over 30 in all - on this particular occasion.

5. I rang the Minister for Foreign Affairs again at 11.30 p.m. and told him of the foregoing. He said he would consider his own position again but as of that time his inclination was to proceed as he had already indicated. I told the Minister that I would contact Mr. Joe Jennings to brief him on the situation which I did on Sunday morning at 9.00 a.m.

FRANK MURRAY

F. Murray

13.5.85.