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AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA  
Department of Foreign Affairs

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 2.  
Dublin 2.

SECRET

27 August 1987

Mr Michael Lillis  
Joint Secretary  
Anglo-Irish Secretariat  
Belfast

Dear Michael

Thank you for your further letter of 24 August about the leak of a Garda Requisition Order in respect of Ambassador Fenn's visit to Kerry.

The position remains that the channel for the provision of reassurances and/or of information on a matter concerning the protection of the British Ambassador is the Dublin/London channel, principally the British Embassy here. I do not suggest that you and your colleagues should not be in a position to speak of these matters to the other side. Indeed, our purpose in copying you with the information at our disposal is to enable you to keep your British colleagues informed. We think it is important, however, that we should avoid confusion; and in contacts within the Secretariat it should be made clear that this matter is being handled in the Dublin/London channel. If the Secretariat wishes to obtain information prior to a particular meeting, such as that with Sir Robert Andrew, it is open to you to contact us to establish our current state of knowledge.

I do not think anyone on our side at all underestimates the seriousness of the suggestions by RTE that the Requisition Order fell into the hands of the Provisional IRA. That point was taken up in the Government statement, the relevant part of which was drawn to the attention of the Secretariat by phone on the day. The present position is that developments are expected very shortly and, as you will have seen from internal notes copied to you, the indications are that the leak was a deliberate one by a low level Garda source acting without political (ie pro Sinn Féin/IRA) motivation.

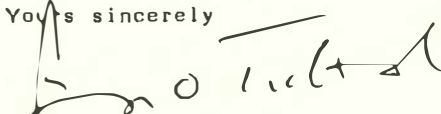
I note that you say "that the reporting of this matter has given rise to widespread suspicions on the part of those in authority and of sections of public opinion that there is within the Garda Siochana, in a responsible and sensitive security position, a person who has leaked information of a security nature to a subversive organisation, the Provisional IRA". We are aware of course of the suggestions made by Unionists, which are to be expected, but we are not aware of any such widespread suspicions on the part of those in authority in Northern Ireland. If such suspicions have been expressed to the Secretariat, it is important that we should know of them.

So far as the activities of the Ambassador are concerned, I still feel that it is for the Garda Siochana in the first instance to recommend whether a particular visit is advisable from a security point of view. I do not expect the Garda Siochana to assess the political or diplomatic aspects of actions by the Ambassador here and for this reason we have made it clear to the Embassy that we consider consultation desirable in both our interests in regard to actions which have political or diplomatic implications, although we do not need to know, and would prefer not to know precise details of itineraries and schedules. I think it is reasonable, subject to the views of the Department of Justice, that these details should be communicated directly to the Gardai.

The important point here is to keep the different responsibilities separate and clear. I am concerned that action by this Department along the lines of the Goodison precedent may lead the Garda Siochana to imagine that it is a matter for the Ministers for Justice and Foreign Affairs to decide when and where the Ambassador may make a visit outside Dublin (or for that matter outside his residence) and that it is the Garda job simply to do their best to protect him. There may be times when, even if the Gardai are one-hundred percent satisfied about security arrangements, we will prefer the Ambassador not to undertake a particular visit for political or diplomatic reasons. Equally, however, the Gardai should be under no illusion that it is their duty to warn of security risk or of high-profile security measures that will be necessary in respect of any particular visit. It is desirable, as you imply, that the Garda Siochana should ensure that the Department of Justice is informed about journeys which may have a particular security risk and that the Department of Justice, in turn, should keep this Department informed.

It seems to me that these matters require some discussion between this Department and the Department of Justice and I intend to draw these papers to the attention of the Secretary and my successor, Dermot Gallagher, with that purpose in mind.

Yours sincerely



Eamon O Tuathail