



**An Chartlann Náisiúnta**  
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*cc'd the Gallagher  
the Allen*

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TO HQ FROM BELFAST  
25 APRIL 1989

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<b>CODED MESSAGE</b>	
<b>IMMEDIATE URGENT</b>	
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	
DATE.....25/4/89	TIME.....1630
INITIALS.....S.B. Bailey	

FOR D. O'DONOVAN FROM O HUGINN

TANAISTE'S STATEMENT ON LOYALIST/SOUTH AFRICAN AFFAIR

1. MR. RYAN BRIEFED YOU ON THE CHANGES THE BRITISH SIDE HAD SUGGESTED IN THE TANAISTE'S DRAFT DAIL STATEMENT AND THEIR CONCERN EXPRESSED BY MR. AUSTIN WILSON THAT SOME INFORMATION GIVEN TO US ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS WAS BEING USED IN THE STATEMENT. WE INFORMED THEM THAT IT WAS TOO LATE TO CHANGE THE TEXT WHICH HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED BUT THAT THE TANAISTE WOULD, IF POSSIBLE, BE INFORMED OF THEIR SENSITIVITIES ON THE ISSUE.

2. IN LATER CONTACTS WITH MR. MASEFIELD MR. RYAN AND I MADE A NUMBER OF POINTS:

(A) WE ALWAYS RESPECTED THE GROUND-RULES OF CONFIDENTIALITY WHEN ASKED TO DO SO, OR INDEED WHENEVER WE FELT OF OUR OWN ACCORD THAT MATTERS WERE SENSITIVE. WE COULD BE FORGIVEN FOR NOT REGARDING THE INFORMATION GIVEN TO US IN THIS LIGHT, SINCE IT WAS ALREADY IN THE NEWSPAPERS OR IN SIR GEOFFREY HOWE'S PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT. THE FACT OF A DEGREE OF OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION OF REPORTS ALREADY IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN DID NOT SEEM AS MOMENTOUS TO US AS IT APPARENTLY DID TO THEM. THAT BEING SAID, IT REMAINED OUR POSITION THAT RULES OF CONFIDENCE WOULD ALWAYS BE RESPECTED, AND WOULD HAVE BEEN ON THIS OCCASION, HAD THEY REQUESTED IT, BUT THEY HAD NOT.

(B) WE SAID THE ISSUE RAISED A DEEPER QUESTION FOR US, WHICH WE ASKED MR. MASEFIELD TO CONVEY TO HIS AUTHORITIES. THIS INCIDENT INVOLVED AN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO IMPORT WEAPONS WHICH WERE INTENDED FOR TERRORISM IN IRELAND. IT INVOLVED THEFT OF MISSILE PARTS WHICH GAVE RISE TO VERY REAL FEARS THAT THEY COULD BE USED AGAINST OUR JURISDICTION, AND IT POSED OBVIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT COLLUSION BETWEEN



LOYALIST EXTREMISTS AND MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INCIDENT FOR US WAS REFLECTED IN SIX PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS TO THE TANAISTE ON THE ISSUE. I SAID THAT WE HAD FRANKLY BEEN DISAPPOINTED AT THE BRITISH RESPONSE TO OUR CONCERNS TO DATE, INVOLVING A MEAGRE SUPPLY OF INFORMATION WHICH FELL FAR SHORT OF WHAT WAS IN THE MEDIA. WE HAD NOT ASKED FOR SENSITIVE SECURITY DETAILS, BUT RATHER FOR THE KIND OF BROAD BACKGROUND INFORMATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE TANAISTE TO GIVE A SENSE TO THE DAIL AND PUBLIC THAT THE AGREEMENT WAS WORKING WELL IN THIS AREA, AND THAT OUR CONCERNS WERE MEETING THE KIND OF IMMEDIATE AND FULL RESPONSE FROM THE BRITISH SIDE THE PUBLIC WOULD EXPECT IN A CASE AS SERIOUS AS THIS. I SAID I FELT THAT IF THE TANAISTE'S TEXT HAD TRIED TO MASK A LACK OF FULLER BRIEFING IN THIS AREA THE QUESTION WHICH WE FELT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED WAS WHY SUCH FULLER BRIEFING WAS NOT FORTHCOMING IN THE FIRST PLACE. I BRIEFED MR. MASEFIELD ON THE BROAD LINES OF THE DAIL DEBATE, EMPHASISING THAT THE IMPLICATION OF RECENT BRIEFING FROM THE BRITISH SIDE IN THE TANAISTE'S STATEMENT HAD BEEN AS POLITICALLY HELPFUL AS ITS ABSENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN DAMAGING. I STRESSED AGAIN OUR CONCERN TO HAVE A FULLER BRITISH RESPONSE TO OUR EARLIER REQUEST FOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE INCIDENT AND THEIR PROPOSED REACTION TO IT.

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