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**Reference Code:** 2019/101/2226

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PERSONAL

May 1984

Senator James Dooge  
Room 615  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

Dear Senator Dooge,

I attach a copy of a note prepared by Bernard Davenport on a conversation he has had with David Tatham of the British Embassy about Captain Holroyd's allegations. The fact that the DPP can see no grounds at this stage to support a prosecution and that the British Government has no knowledge of the events alleged by Captain Holroyd should be kept confidential. The public position is that the RUC are conducting an investigation into the allegations and that the Northern Ireland DPP is considering whether there is evidence available which would warrant prosecutions.

I attach also for your information some recent newspaper articles on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Burke

Note

Mr. David Tatham of the British Embassy called on me this morning at his request. He had been asked by the Foreign Office to let us know that Channel 4 intends putting out a programme this evening (he did not have details but I think it must be "Diverse Reports" at 8.30 p.m.) in which allegations will be made by Captain Holroyd who served as a Military Intelligence Officer in Northern Ireland during 1974 and 1975. Captain Holroyd who resigned from the Army in 1976 will allege:

1. that Captain Nairac assassinated someone in the Republic;
2. that the British army arranged kidnapping in the Republic;
3. that the British army placed booby trapped arms and ammunition in Northern Ireland and the Republic.

According to Tatham's instructions the British Government have been aware for some time of these allegations. Holroyd had in fact talked to some representatives of the media in 1977 but nothing had happened at that time. The British also take the position that they have been aware that Holroyd suffered mental stress which affected his judgement and reliability (so their telex to Tatham said).

The recent repetition and amplification of Holroyd's allegations have led to an RUC enquiry into the alleged criminal activities by the British army on both sides of the border. That enquiry is now nearing completion. The DPP in Northern Ireland has seen most of the relevant RUC papers and Tatham has been instructed to say that we can be told in confidence that the DPP can see no grounds at this stage to support prosecution for an offence.

Tatham was also instructed to reassure us that the British Army's orders forbid operations South of the border and that the British Government has no knowledge that the events alleged by Holroyd did indeed take place.

c.c. Taoiseach  
Tánaiste  
PSM  
PSS  
Attorney General  
Minister for Justice  
Minister for Defence

B. Davenport  
2 May 1984 mid-day

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cc do file  
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NOTE

Jim Kirby spoke to me today, 12.50 p.m., to say that a skeleton had been found in a bog about 4 miles on our side of the border on the Dundalk/Carrickmacross road. The skeleton was in a standing or sitting position and had a hole in its skull which appeared to indicate that the person had been shot. There were traces of blue nylon in the area around the body. The State Pathologist is on his way to examine the skeleton and it is conceivable that it belongs to Captain Nairac.

BD  
Bernard Davenport  
16 May 1984

Note for the Minister's Information

1. The allegations are that the British army conducted undercover operations in the South in the mid - 1970's. In particular, it is alleged in the article and television programme referred to by the Deputies, that British army operations were responsible indirectly for the death of Columba McVeigh who was set-up in order to discover an escape route to the South used by the IRA; that they were responsible for the attempted kidnapping of IRA suspects in the South (Seamas Grew and others); that they were responsible for the death of Eugene McQuaid who died in an explosion after the army had boobytrapped weapons in an IRA arms cache which they found South of the border; and that they were responsible directly for the murder of John Francis Green, a member of the IRA, in a house two or three miles South of the border (exact location not given). Captain Robert Nairac who was killed by the IRA in 1977, is alleged to have been one of the army personnel who committed this murder.

2. These allegations were contained in the New Statesman of 4 May and in the Channel 4 programme Diverse Reports broadcast on 2 May. They drew considerable attention in the Irish media. Further material appeared in the Sunday Tribune of 6 May and in the New Statesman of 11 May alleging that Gardai were involved in the British army undercover operations in our jurisdiction and that one of these, called 'the Badger' was a British agent.

3. Copy of the New Statesman and Sunday Tribune articles are beneath together with copy of a brief exchange between a TV - AM interviewer and the Ambassador in London Mr Dorr) on the subject. The Ambassador appeared on TV - AM on 3 May to discuss the Forum report.

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4. The stories in the New Statesman and Sunday Tribune were written by Duncan Campbell, a well-known and well-regarded security specialist who writes regularly for the New Statesman. He was also responsible (with Christopher Hird) for the programme on Channel 4. Campbell's stories were inspired by the allegations of Captain Frederick Holroyd, a former British army officer who served in military intelligence in Northern Ireland in 1974-75. Holroyd appeared on the Channel 4 programme and on TV - AM on 3 May. (On the latter occasion, he met Ambassador Dorr in the studio and repeated his allegations to him, a point which appeared in Campbell's article in the Sunday Tribune on 6 May.)

5. Holroyd says that in the Spring of 1975, he made a secret visit to Garda Headquarters with a RUC companion by arrangement with (then) Assistant Commissioner Edmund Garvey.

6. Campbell believes that his own researches have substantiated Holroyd's accounts of undercover operations in the South.

7. Holroyd claims that he became the victim of rivalries between sections of the security apparatus and that he was removed from his post in 1975 as an alleged psychiatric casualty. He says that he successfully fought this label and sought unsuccessfully to have the undercover operations investigated. He later resigned his commission. Captain Holroyd approached the RUC in 1982. The latter submitted a report on the allegations to the Director of Public prosecutions in Northern Ireland who asked for further investigation. We have been informed by the British Embassy that this further investigation is not yet complete.

8. On the day of the Channel 4 programme (2 May) the British Embassy called to the Department and indicated the expected

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contents of the programme. The Embassy informed the Department that the British Government had no knowledge that the events alleged actually took place and assured the Department that the British army's orders forbid operations sought of the border. (Such assurances have been given in the past in respect of the operations of all Northern security forces. Assurances given to the Taoiseach by the British Ambassador in April were made public by the Taoiseach in a statement to the Dail on 10 April last.)

9. The Embassy referred to the still incomplete RUC investigation and said in confidence that the Northern Ireland DPP could see no grounds at this stage to support a prosecution. The Embassy referred also to previous suggestions that Captain Holroyd was mentally unstable. Copy of the note of the Embassy's call is beneath. Since the call, the Embassy has been asked for the results of the RUC investigation when complete.

10. When the recent allegations became known, the Department of Justice initiated an examination by the Garda authorities. We have been informed that the examination is not complete.

11. The unauthorised presence of Northern security forces in our jurisdiction is completely unacceptable and this has been made clear to the British authorities on numerous occasions. The presence of Northern security forces may be authorised for agreed purposes such as visits to our security personnel or for overflights. Such presence bears no resemblance to the undercover operations alleged by Captain Holroyd. Questions may be asked about border surveillance overflights by the British army for particular security reasons. These overflights are subject to strict, confidential conditions such as permitted height, depth, duration and number of

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passes. The overflights are occasional. The agreement in respect of these overflights was made in London in 1979 at a meeting attended by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Michael O'Kennedy TD) and the Minister for Justice (Mr Gerard Collins TD). No new arrangements have been agreed on overflights or any other activity involving the presence of Northern security forces in our jurisdiction since 1979. This point has been confirmed with the Department of Justice.



Declan O'Donovan  
Anglo Irish Section  
14 May 1984