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AMBASÁDIA NA IRELANDA, LONDRA



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

SECRET

3rd May 1984

*Copied to
2/Justice for
their file. Dr*

17 Grosvenor Place

SW1X 7HR

*Mr Ruck
in Dorecourt
Mr O'Donnell*

2/7/2/2

*Mr Ulli asked me
to circulate this
Doc.*

Holroyd Allegations

Dear Assistant Secretary

I gave a five minute live television interview to TV-AM this morning. I feel that their interest in me was probably sparked in large part by the allegations made by the former British Intelligence Officer, Captain Holroyd, in the New Statesman this week and also on a Channel 4 programme last night. Holroyd was interviewed just before me on the programme. However, I believe I managed to turn the questioning quickly enough to the Forum Report which was of course my intention in accepting the invitation to appear on the programme.

The point of my present minute however is not that but a 10 minute discussion which I had outside the studio afterwards with Holroyd himself. I feel that some of what he said is worth reporting to you privately to fill out the account given in the New Statesman article

Holroyd told me that he had been sent to Northern Ireland as an MIO (which I take to be a Military Intelligence Officer) to act as liaison between the RUC Special Branch and Brigade (which I take to be the army). He apparently liked his work.

At one stage he was taken on an expedition across the border by a sergeant whom he did not name but who he said was a friend. Together they met, across the border (probably, I would judge, in Co Monaghan) a member of the Gardai whom he would not name but whom they called "the badger". I had the impression that this was probably a middle level officer - perhaps a superintendent - though I must say this is speculation on my part.

I had the impression from Holroyd that his sergeant friend was involved in regular trips of this kind and that on this first occasion he himself had been brought along more or less "for the ride".

Holroyd said that when he got back from this particular trip to Northern Ireland he was contacted on behalf of MI6 (Craig Smellie) and told that "the badger" had taken a liking to him. He was then asked by Smellie if he would continue this kind of cross-border contact and act for MI6. He was not to tell his Colonel, who I gather was also an MIO in the liaison business.

I understood it that this was the beginning of a series of cross-border contacts with "the badger" which he undertook for MI6. How far there were other "operations" or activities involved I cannot say and in the circumstances, and particularly the circumstances of discussion in the corner of a television studio with staff waiting to take me to my car, it was not very easy to press on this point.

Holroyd said that his regular trips to the South were logged and reported on by regular army patrols. When this happened he was called in presumably by "Brigade" and told that this kind of thing was not allowed and that he was in danger of being court-martialled. He replied that they should check it out with Smellie (i.e. the man running MI6). Brigade said who? That is to say they did not know Smellie. They did however check it out and Smellie told Brigade Officer to - and here I use Holroyd's own words - "knot his neck".

Shortly thereafter, as I understood it, Holroyd was called in by his own nominal authorities (i.e. Brigade) and told that his wife had alleged that he had threatened to murder her. He was flabbergasted at this allegation. The army said they could not take the risk of letting him go to a regular hospital for a check up because he knew too much so he was taken to a military psychiatrist (in Belfast?). The allegation that he was somehow disturbed was laughable but when he wanted to leave he found his way barred by an armed soldier (a green jacket).

This was the start of the attempt to get him out and "smear him" by implying some kind of disturbance on his part. He attributed the whole thing to "Brigade's" anger at finding that he had been working surreptitiously for MI6 and not reporting to them. I should say again at this point that his account of this episode sounded quite plausible as he told it to me and certainly his manner and the way he talked about it did nothing to confirm for me any suggestion that he really had been disturbed at the time. This of course is only an opinion.

Holroyd did not go into the details of what followed and how he was got out. He mentioned however that he had served in the Rhodesian army and that the British army people had tried to arrange for him to get into the South African army. He also spoke of an occasion where he had been made various offers and had been told at one point that if he did not "rock the boat" he could be "laughing all the way to the bank".

Holroyd also mentioned to me his trip to Dublin where he had met Commissioner Garvey of the Gardai whom he described as a "super policeman". He said that he and Garvey had got on extremely well together and that Garvey had commented to him very strongly on their common interest in dealing with terrorists.

Apart from this personal account of his own experiences Holroyd said that it had been quite clear to him that there was either an SAS team in Castleblayney or else someone in the Gardai fingering people and passing information back to MI6. He also repeated allegations that he has already made publicly that an SAS "hit" team had been acting in collusion with what he called "prod terrorists" or at least that they were using weapons taken from such people - as for example those involved in the Miami Showband murders - which had never been reported to the regular police forensic people.

Holroyd in his TV interview just before mine had spoken of the late Captain Nairac as a friend for whom he had a very high regard. He said that Nairac had told him of his involvement in the killing of Green in Co Monaghan ~~and~~ (what he said on this is in line with the New Statesman article). He said that his concern was not at all to discredit Nairac, for whose wife he had great sympathy, or to show that he was not a hero, but to have the allegation, made to him by someone who is now dead, adequately investigated by the police.

In our discussion afterwards I tried to get some understanding of why Holroyd, who by his own account, had been involved at the time in the same kind of murky world as Nairac but not to the same extent, had since decided to go public with his allegations. As far as I understood his attitude it is that he was angry and rather embittered at the attempt to discredit him which he largely attributed to "Brigade's" (i.e. his regular army superiors) anger at being by-passed or excluded from knowledge of his work for MI6. He said that he had originally had no wish to go public with the allegations. He had made strenuous efforts to bring the matter to attention and investigation "within the system". In his TV interview he referred to his efforts to report it to the Yorkshire Police the Essex Police the RUC etc and said that each effort had been "choked off".

One might still wonder why he has gone public now on Nairac granted his own background and his regard for Nairac. He emphasises that he is only repeating what Nairac told him and that he simply wanted to have it investigated one way or the other. But I also think from my discussion that ^{while} we might be tempted to focus on the Nairac part of his allegations and on their cross-border aspect (which is also perhaps of greater news-value), he himself is angry and disturbed about the other aspects and in particular the deaths of people killed by the IRA on the word of Colum McKenna (see New Statesman article attached). I think he attributes this to bungling and stupidity on the part of some of those involved on the army side. This, combined with the attempt to discredit him when he tried to have it investigated internally, has encouraged him to go public now as he has done when he has got a sympathetic ear from Duncan Campbell of the New Statesman.

You may feel I am reporting to you in more detail than necessary on the above but I am doing so simply in case the matter should escalate over the next few days.

Holroyd, I would judge, is in his late 30's or early 40's. He looks what he was - a middle ranking officer, intelligent, fit and well trained - and in army terms I would say he could be described as a very good soldier. Holroyd told me that his mother was Irish (Eileen O'Donnell) and his father was from Yorkshire. His accent, which is not an upper class British accent, derives from the father rather than the mother. He said that he had been promoted from the ranks and he had loved the army.

In view of the story he has told and the fact that he was apparently sent to a psychiatrist at one stage I should say that his whole manner was rational and intelligent. He gave no sign whatever of any mental disturbance. Of course the reference to a psychiatrist goes back some seven years or so but I must say that having talked to him, I could now very easily believe his own account that this was simply an attempt by the authorities to "smear" him. In brief he appeared to me quite rational and normal and I would say impressive in what he had to say.

I offer you all of the foregoing for what it may be worth and leave it to you to judge how seriously to take it or whether perhaps you simply want to shred this minute!

Yours sincerely



Noel Dorr
Ambassador

Mr Michael Lillis
Assistant Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2

Ps

I am sure that - if at any stage you have occasion to talk with the British side about this - you will, for obvious reasons, wish not to mention my involvement



TV-AM 3-5-84

Interview with Ambassador N. Dorr

in Ford
cc: d in Burke
K. pa.
d

2/7/2/2

Q. Can I ask you for reaction to what you have just heard from Mr Holroyd?

A. "It is not easy for me to comment on the specific allegation by Mr Holroyd about what he was told was about 10 years ago and I note from the New Statesman article that that is only part of the rather detailed account of other things. However, I can make the general point that the Irish Government has made it very clear that it is simply not acceptable that there should be security forces of any other State operating within our jurisdiction. That has been made publicly clear and the British Government fully accepts this. I think what is happening is that we are all threatened by a spill-over of the violence in Northern Ireland and what we really need to do each within his own jurisdiction is act to deal with that, and both governments need to address the conflict in NI and try to resolve it there, try to build support for security forces, try to build a political settlement which everyone can support that I hope is what the NIF Report which came out yesterday is intended to address.

Q. You obviously believe that this sort of thing is going on?

A. I'm not really in a position to say, what I can say is there was a public controversy a month or so ago about certain allegations of activity across the Border and our own Government made it quite clear publicly then, and it was accepted by the British Government, that if it were the case that there were any operations across the Border it would not be acceptable. But as I said what is necessary is that both Governments cooperate on security matters each within their own jurisdiction and that both together try to address the source of the conflict in Northern Ireland by addressing it in political terms and that is really what I think yesterday's effort of the NIF Report was intended to do.