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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

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Sec 5/4/11

CONFIDENTIAL - BY SPECIAL COURIER

14 February 1989

Dear Secretary

MURDER OF MR PATRICK FINUCANE

I saw Sir Robin Butler, Cabinet Secretary, at 5.15 yesterday afternoon, and Mr John Boyd, Deputy Under Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office at 6 p.m. Earlier in the afternoon, after our telephone conversation, I had advised both that the Taoiseach would issue a statement and that we wished to give them advance notice and to convey some further points orally.

I gave Butler a copy of the Taoiseach's statement, which he carefully read, and made the points contained in your telex No. 37. He had only two comments to make, as an immediate reaction, firstly, he thought that a clear distinction should be made between the words used by Mr Hogg on 17 January and any criticism of lawyers acting in their capacity as legal advisers; secondly, that if there were any truth in the information we had received suggesting that policemen prompted attacks on solicitors acting for Republican defendants, then this would be utterly deplorable. He assumed however that we were not suggesting any parallel between what is suggested in these rumours and Mr Hogg criticising solicitors in circumstances in which he thought it necessary to do so - and such circumstances could arise. Butler added one comment - "not for reporting" - he thought it would appear that we were suggesting that Hogg bore some responsibility for Mr Finucane's death and he regretted this.

/...

*Pl. circulate to
PS to Technical, PS to Tarrant
Att. Gen
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Matthews (for Mr. Justice also)
Mr. Gallagher
- Mr. O'Hara
h) 14/2/89*

I said that in the circumstances of Northern Ireland extreme care is necessary in any public statements. If an individual, who happens to be a milkman or a bus driver for example, is involved in improper matters, it would not be wise to say that a number of milkmen or bus drivers are unduly sympathetic to the cause of one side or the other. The result could very well be attacks on members of these occupations. In further conversation I emphasised particularly our wish to see an early statement correcting any impression that the British Government consider lawyers defending paramilitaries as acting on anything other than a professional basis.

Butler undertook to bring the text of the Taoiseach's statement and the points made by me to the Government's attention without delay.

My meeting with John Boyd followed similar lines. Additional points made by him were, firstly, that if we had any usable information about policemen prompting attacks on solicitors, we should pass it on and, secondly, that the role of the Courts is, of course, sacrosanct, that lawyers must be free to do their job and that there is nothing in Hogg's statement suggesting otherwise.

Yours sincerely



Andrew O'Rourke
Ambassador

Mr Noel Dorr
Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2