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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

17 Grosvenor Place,
London SW1X 7HR.

26. October, 1989.

Mr. Dermot Gallagher,
Assistant Secretary,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
Dublin.

Guildford Four : Conversation with Lord Havers

Dear Assistant Secretary,

Before a lunch yesterday (25 October) given by the Ambassador to introduce the undersigned to some Westminster contacts we met Michael Havers by chance.

Yesterday's "Independent" carried a piece by Peter Jenkins suggesting, inter alia, that Havers' role as the principal Prosecuting Counsel in the Guildford Four case would now have to be looked at. Havers was deeply upset by the implied allegation in Jenkins' article that he had been party to the suppression of evidence and its withholding from Defence Counsel. In conversation with our party he said that he expected to be asked to appear before Sir John May's enquiry and to be asked what he knew. He told us his reply will be "I knew only what was in the depositions." If there were a plot to suppress alibi evidence by the Prosecution then he and his three junior Counsel would have had to have acted in concert. Such suggestions he described as "absurd".

I asked him about the confessional evidence from the Balcombe Street investigation - also referred to in the Jenkins piece. He agreed that it was "unlikely" that investigating officers on their own authority could have withheld this. Some senior official in the Crown Prosecution service "must have known". He simply could not accept however any suggestion that the DPP himself could have been involved. Perhaps "some of his staff were at fault".

He referred to remarks by Metropolitan Police Commissioner Imbert reported widely in yesterday's press to the effect that he "had no regrets". Imbert's statement he characterised as "most unwise". It was "best to say nothing" and this was the line he intended to take in dealing with press enquiries.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Hayes
Counsellor