



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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TO HQ FROM BELFAST
14 DECEMBER 1989

IMMEDIATE

M. M. Lafferty
///// *hmk*
14.12.89

& psc
M. M. Lafferty: psc
He should have
Cancelled

CODED MESSAGE	
IMMEDIATE URGENT	
CONFIDENTIAL	
DATE <i>14/12/89</i>	TIME <i>1340</i>
INITIALS <i>SBaile</i>	

FOR ASST. SEC. GALLAGHER

FROM O HUIGINN

RE: DERRYARD ATTACK LAST NIGHT

1. IN COURSE OF A MEETING WITH BRITISH JOINT SECRETARY AND HIS DEPUTY THIS MORNING THEY TOLD ME, FROM A CONTACT THEY HAD WITH MR. TONY STEPHENS, THAT THE BRITISH BELIEVED THAT THE ATTACKERS HAD COME OVER THE BORDER TO MOUNT THE ATTACK AND HAD FLED BACK THERE AGAIN (ABANDONING THE LORRY SHORTLY BEFORE THE BORDER). THE BRITISH OFFICIALS WERE AT PAINS TO MAKE CLEAR THEIR SIDE WAS NOT JUMPING TO ANY PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT WHETHER THE ATTACKERS WERE FERMANAGH OR MONAGHAN BASED. IF THE ATTACK HAD ANY IMPLICATIONS FOR EXISTING CROSS-BORDER SECURITY COOPERATION (E.G. BECAUSE OF AN UNEXPECTED RESURGENCE OF IRA ACTIVITY IN THE MONAGHAN/FERMANAGH AREA) THESE WOULD BE BROUGHT UP IN DUE COURSE IN CONFERENCE OR POLICE CHANNELS. THEY WERE OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED HOWEVER THAT THE ATTACK COULD GIVE AN EMOTIONAL TONE TO EITHER PRIME MINISTERS QUESTIONS OR NIO QUESTIONS IN WESTMINSTER THIS AFTERNOON.

2. I SAID THAT WE VERY MUCH HOPED THAT NOTHING WOULD BE SAID, HOWEVER UNDERSTANDABLE THE REVULSION AT THE ATTACK, WHICH WAS DISMISSIVE OR BELITTLING OF THE EFFORT BEING DEPLOYED BY SECURITY FORCES ON OUR SIDE OF THE BORDER. SUCH STATEMENTS GENERATED ACIMONY WHICH DISTRACTED FROM THE COMMON EFFORT AGAINST TERRORISM AND WAS DAMAGING TO THE MORALE OF THE SECURITY FORCES WHOSE ROLE WAS SO VITAL. I RECALLED THE STRONG TERMS OF THE MINISTER'S CONDEMNATION AND HOPED THIS COULD BE INVOKED IF THERE WAS ANY ATTEMPT BY HOSTILE MPS TO ASSOCIATE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSONS WITH ATTACKS ON OUR JURISDICTION.

ENDS

No 20

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