



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2021/44/140
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

POL 1/2  
cc Mr Anderson

MEETING BETWEEN THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND  
THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

[Mr Turner had written to the Taoiseach regarding cross-border security with particular reference to "cross-border access to, and escape from, criminal acts by their perpetrators". While in Dublin, he requested a meeting with the Taoiseach. Due to other commitments, the Taoiseach was unable to see him; he directed that the present meeting take place.]

The Chairman, Mr Edward Turner [OUP], met Mr Collins, Mr Dillon and Mr O'Connor of the Department on 26 January 1990. The meeting lasted some 45 minutes.

Mr Collins opened the meeting by explaining in general terms the basis on which cross-border co-operation occurs [eg the liaison between the Gardai and the RUC at regional level, the meetings between the chiefs of the two police forces and the meetings of the Conference]. He emphasised the Government's commitment to security co-operation which was costing the Irish tax-payer four times per capita the amount the British tax-payer was paying. Mr Collins also referred to Mr Brook's comments in the House of Commons on 14 December, following the IRA attack on the British Army checkpoint at Derryard in which a number of soldiers lost their lives, in which he stated his confidence in the Garda Commissioner and the Gardai to follow up this incident. With particular reference to recent incidents in the Strabane area, ie the bombing of Sion Mills and the killing at Castlederg, he illustrated the support the Gardai provide to the RUC in the follow up to such incidents. He added that the Sion Mills incident was organised from a house in the North, and the car used was stolen from that house and later was found burnt-out in the North. It was not possible to say where the perpetrators were now. It was also pointed out that security co-operation was not limited to cross-border activity and that the search for weapons and ammunition in this jurisdiction had yielded 7,000 lbs of Semtex over the past 3 years.

Mr Turner acknowledged that the Gardai's excellent work had

contributed to the saving of lives and he instanced in this connection the arms fund at Five Finger Strand in Co Donegal last year. He explained that his concerns were that notwithstanding the clear commitment to co-operation at the political level and at the senior levels of the two police forces, he had the impression that the lower ranks of both forces were not inspired with the same sense of commitment. Mr Collins thought that it would be most unusual if the commitment to co-operation of the upper ranks in face of the common enemy was not equally understood by the lower ranks.

Mr Turner wondered why, notwithstanding the manning of checkpoints, people such as those who carried out the bombing of Sion Mills were able to get through. In particular he mentioned the checkpoint at Kilclean [which is in our jurisdiction there being no checkpoint on the Northern side] through which he passes on occasion but is never stopped. He has seen others waved through also. Mr Collins and Mr O'Connor explained that the security forces know by and large whom they are looking for and that they obviously do not feel it necessary or practicable to stop and check every vehicle. In addition, knowing who an offender is does not mean that the necessary evidence to bring the person to justice exists.

Mr Turner was also concerned by the use of fertilisers as the basis for explosions, though he was aware that changes in the manufacture of fertilisers were being brought about so that they would no longer serve as such a basis.

Mr Dillon explained that in addition to co-operation in the security area, co-operation also took place on the legal area and in combatting cross-border smuggling some of the proceeds of which are used by paramilitary organisations. Mr Turner was given a brief expose of the state of play with regard to extradition and the extra-territorial procedure and assured that the Government was committed to using both procedures in the pursuit of the fugitive offender. Mr Turner's attention was also drawn to the recent seizures by the Revenue of a considerable number of petrol tankers believed to have been involved in

smuggling operations.

In conclusion, Mr Turner emphasised that he had not come to criticise but to express the concerns about security in his area and in particular Castlederg where some 20 murders have taken place over as many years and only a handful of persons had been brought to book.

Mr Turner said he would report on this meeting to the District Council. He was most appreciative that this meeting could take place and at short notice - which he contrasted with his efforts to meet the RUC. We for our part thanked him for his initiative; assured him that his concerns would be brought to the attention of the Taoiseach and the Minister for Justice; and told him to feel free to contact us whenever he felt the need. Mr O' Connor undertook to make contact with him when in the area. Mr Turner said he would welcome this.

Mr Turner also spoke briefly about the District Council saying that it was now in a position to get down to work. However, he was of the view that the Council still risked being ineffective because there is no limit in the Council's standing orders on the number of motions a member may introduce on any topic. The previous [Sinn Fein] chairman had brought the Council's work to a standstill.

In a parting comment, Mr Turner praised the Gardai who had been assigned to him for his protection while in Dublin.

Anglo-Irish Section

24 January 1990

cc: A/S Gallagher

Mr Collins

Mr O'Connor

Mr McCarthy [D/Taoiseach]

Mr Byrne [D/Justice]t