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30 NOV 1989

FROM: I M BURNS, DUS(L)  
29 November 1989

HEAD OF THE N.I.  
29 NOV 1989

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MUFAX ROOM  
STORMONT HOUSE ANNEY

cc PS/Sir K Bloomfield-MUFAX  
Mr Miles-MUFAX  
Mr Thomas  
Mr A Wilson-MUFAX  
Mr Kirk  
Mr J McConnell-MUFAX

2 Mr. Spence

Deputy Under Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

Sir Nicholas Fenn KCMG

HM Ambassador

MR BLACKWELL

DUBLIN

DUSL/MR/13165

29 November 1989

I enclose a copy of a self-explanatory letter I have received from Sir Nicholas Fenn in Dublin about a recent meeting with the Papal Nuncio there. You will see from paragraph 4 of the note of that meeting that Archbishop Gerada wondered whether the Catholic church could do more to help. Despite the unhelpfulness of Cardinal O Fiaich's remarks over the weekend, I think there is good sense in giving considered thought to the suggestion that the Catholic church might once again take some fresh step in diminishing terrorism, or at least support for it, and I would be grateful if, in consultation with Messrs Daniell, McConnell and George (and, if Mr Wilson agrees, Mr Bell) you would consider what imaginative proposal might be worked up.

purpose of this letter is simply to say that we shall now be giving thought to just that, and to your helpful comments on it. It may be a little while before we come back to you, and even then it will probably be in the spirit of testing ideas with you. John Bradley and colleagues in FCO.

SIGNED

your letter, copies go to John Bradley and Timothy George.

I M BURNS  
29 November 1989  
OAB 6447  
DUSL/MR/13166

Mr Walker

Mr McClusker

My thoughts?

M 4/12

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

### Deputy Under Secretary

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Sir Nicholas Fenn KCMG  
HM Ambassador  
British Embassy  
DUBLIN

DUSL/MR/13165  
29 November 1989

29 November

POSSIBLE INITIATIVE BY THE HOLY SEE OVER VIOLENCE  
IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Nick,

POSSIBLE INITIATIVE BY THE HOLY SEE OVER VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Many thanks for your letter of 21 November, which shows Archbishop Gerada in the same positive light as when he had lunch in Belfast this summer with Mr King (then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) and myself. Like you, I would like to reflect further on his idea for an initiative, and the purpose of this letter is simply to say that we shall now be giving thought to just that, and to your helpful comments on it. It may be a little while before we come back to you, and even then it will probably be in the spirit of testing ideas with you, John Broadley and colleagues in FCO.

As with your letter, copies go to John Broadley and Timothy George.

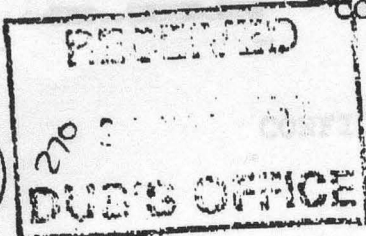
Yours truly

*Pa*  
T M BURNS

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HCC. Mr Blackwell.  
PS/Bir K Bloomfield.  
Mr Miles  
Mr Thomas.  
Mr Wilson.  
Kirk





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BRITISH EMBASSY,  
DUBLIN.

21 November 1989

Mr Ian Burns  
Deputy Secretary  
NIO(L)*Dear Ian,*POSSIBLE INITIATIVE BY THE HOLY SEE OVER VIOLENCE  
IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. My Papal colleague called on me on 16 November. I attach a note of our conversation.
2. Archbishop Gerada makes a refreshing change from his predecessor Alibrandi. He makes orthodox diplomatic calls to find out what is going on (para 1). He is the first Nuncio ever to attend a Remembrance Day service in Ireland (para 5 and 6).
3. The purpose of this letter is to consult you about para 4. Gerada is contemplating advising the Papacy to make some new move to condemn the IRA. It may be relevant that he had recently been talking to Bishop Cahal Daly, to John Hume, and to Archbishop Desmond Connell of Dublin. He has been stimulated by Mr Brooke's "One Hundred Day" interviews.
4. I do not suppose that the Pope would be at all likely to convene Cardinal O'Fiaich and Archbishops Eames, Connell and Caird. If he did, I doubt if the Protestants would feel able to go. Moreover such an initiative would not be effectively ecumenical without the Presbyterians who would certainly not go.
5. Nevertheless Gerada's heart is in the right place and I would like to encourage him if we can turn his thinking to constructive account. He is aware that the Pope's classical denunciation of the use of violence has been qualified by his views on the right to resist injustice; and that this has been used by the apostle of "Liberation Theology" in Latin America as well as by apologists for the IRA (but is strongly rejected by John Hume). John Broadley will no doubt be able to fill in the background.
6. We have corresponded before about the failure of the Catholic Church to excommunicate terrorists, and the contrast between the episcopal statements on violence during the 1956-62 Border Campaign and in November 1987. Our copies of this correspondence were casualties of our recent Registry fire. I see no reason why the Nuncio in Dublin should not be encouraged to move the papacy and the Catholic hierarchy here to stiffen its condemnation of terrorism. Possibilities include:

a./

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- a. looking again at the possibility of excommunicating convicted terrorists (less for its effect on the terrorists than for its effect on the Catholic community);

- b. the Pope's dramatic appeal against Irish terrorism ("On my knees.....") is now over 10 years old. The Pope might call all the Irish Catholic bishops (including perhaps from the Diaspora) to Rome to issue a joint appeal, focussing particularly on the immediate benefits an end to terrorism would have on deprived Catholics in Northern Ireland:

- an end to violence;
- an end to the inevitably intense security force activity;
- the opening up of West Belfast as a plausible place for investment?

- c. if the Catholic Church were minded to proceed on these lines, parallel but independent appeals might be arranged from the major protestant churches.

7. I did not say any of this to the Nuncio. But I should be grateful for your views, and for those of John Broadley and Timothy George, to whom I am copying this letter.

long but in the determination of one million Irishmen to be British  
I described our efforts to move "to or towards" devolution, and the  
implausibility of a Unionist response. *Yours ever,* Haughey's invitations  
to direct talks in Dublin. I was confident that in time the con-  
stitutional parties in Northern Ireland would find a way of moving  
forward.

Yours ever,

Thick

Nicholas Fenn

4. Archbishop Gervais wondered aloud what the Catholic Church could do more to help. He had in mind to convene the Holy See to convene some form of gathering of Catholic and Protestant clergy (perhaps in the first instance the four **Nicholas Fenn** issue an unequivocal call on the terrorists to lay down their arms, to condemn violence and to discountenance the notion that any injustices in Northern Ireland justified killing. I said that I was glad Mr J K Broadley CMG on these lines. The more categorical the HMA the condemnation of violence in Northern Ireland the better. Holy See like to reflect further with his idea for an initiative.

Mr J K Broadley CMG  
HMA  
Holy See

Mr T J B George made history by attending the Remembrance Day  
RID service at the Church of Ireland St Patrick's Cathedral on 12  
FCO October. He had done so instinctively without understanding the  
signification which he would provoke. Asked by journalists why he  
had attended, he had replied "Why ever not?"



## CONFIDENTIAL

DHM

Mr Fergusson

cc Mr George, RID  
HMA Holy See  
Mr Burns, NIO(L)

CALL BY PAPAL NUNCIO

1. The Papal Nuncio called on me by appointment on 16 November. Unlike his predecessor Archbishop Gerada functions as a diplomat and was calling - in the orthodox diplomatic manner - to sound British views on recent developments in Anglo-Irish relations.

2. I briefed him on the outcome of the three long and difficult recent meetings of the IGC. In order to dispel the Irish complacency with which he was filled I laid some stress upon the unacceptability of Irish ~~proposals~~ about the UDR, plastic baton rounds and - particularly - the Irish insistence on announcing in advance that the Stevens' Enquiry would be inadequate: but I confirmed that the Agreement itself and its institutions were never in question.

3. He asked about political developments and Mr Brooke's recent interviews. I gave him the text of these interviews; they had not been "a gaffe" (Irish Press) but carefully worded statements. It was plain commonsense that the IRA could not be defeated by military means alone. Mr Brooke had not said that we would negotiate with terrorists, but that it would be wrong for him to circumscribe in advance what he or his successors might do in a post-terrorist situation. The Secretary of State had himself explained publicly that the parallel with Cyprus was open to misinterpretation. Northern Ireland was not a colony and the problem did not lie in British hegemony but in the determination of one million Irishmen to be British. I described our efforts to move "to or towards" devolution, and the implausibility of a Unionist response to Mr Haughey's invitations to direct talks in Dublin. I was confident that in time the constitutional parties in Northern Ireland would find a way of moving forward.

4. Archbishop Gerada wondered aloud whether the Catholic Church could do more to help. He had in mind to advise the Holy See to convene some form of gathering of Catholic and Protestant clergy (perhaps in the first instance the four Archbishops) to issue an unequivocal call on the terrorists to lay down their arms, to condemn violence and to discountenance the notion that any injustices in Northern Ireland justified killing. I said that I was glad that he was thinking on these lines. The more categorical the Catholic condemnation of violence in Northern Ireland the better. I would like to reflect further with his idea for an initiative.

[5. The Nuncio made history by attending the Remembrance Day Service in the Church of Ireland St Patrick's Cathedral on 12 November. He had done so instinctively without understanding the indignation which he would provoke. Asked by journalists why he had attended, he had replied "Why ever not?"]

6. Archbishop Gerada confessed that he had been taken aback by the furore which has followed his attendance at the Remembrance Day Service.

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The (Catholic) Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Connell, had remonstrated with him privately. He, Dr Connell, had not gone because he had not been invited. If he had been invited, he would have declined. (Comment. Which is why he was not invited). If the Nuncio had consulted him he would have advised him against attendance because it would be misleading the faithful and because the Dean of St Patrick's was ambitious to make the Protestant Cathedral "the National Cathedral of Ireland". I explained to the Nuncio some of the ambivalence which lay behind this reaction. I encouraged him in his straightforward decision to participate and gave him a copy of the speech I had made last year ("This is not a Protestant Poppy").

/on 15  
November). 7. The Nuncio said that Dr Connell had gone on to complain that he (Connell) was not well received in Protestant circles in the way that the Nuncio himself was received. There had been some personal unpleasantness at Trinity College (I am not sure of the background to this but it may have been connected with the address delivered at TCD Chapel by Bishop Cahal Daly, Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, and Bishop Samuel Poyntz, Church of Ireland Bishop of Connor). The Nuncio wondered whether I could have a word with the authorities at Trinity. I said that intervention by a British Ambassador would be misunderstood. Trinity College was not a British or a Protestant institution. I would have a private word with Provost Watts on a social occasion if opportunity offered. I had a great respect for the Archbishop of Dublin who was a friend of mine. But if the Nuncio wondered why Dr Connell was not well received in Protestant circles, he had only to consider the Archbishop's ringing defence of conservative Catholic positions on social issues



16 November 1989

Nicholas Fenn