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Meeting with Mr David Tatham, British Embassy,
on 10 April 1984

1. Mr Tatham called in response to queries put to him by Mr Lillis over the weekend. He handed over the attached piece of paper, which he described as a Speaking Note, for our information. He made the point that we were free to use the contents of the Note but not to treat it as a formal verbatim Note.
2. I raised the question put by Mr Lillis as to when the British authorities would publicly make clear that, contrary to the implications contained in the Chief Constable's statement, there are explicit instructions against such incursions and that these instructions were breached on this occasion. He said that he had no instructions on this matter other than to say that British Government policy on this issue was as indicated to the Taoiseach by the British Ambassador on 5 April. The British would be responding to press queries etc. along those lines.
3. I asked Mr Tatham about the nature and type of enquiry which was being set up by the DPP. Mr Tatham said that he had no instructions on this matter but knew that a decision was shortly to be taken. I asked him to inform us immediately of the nature of the enquiry which is to be set up.
4. I contested the assertions in the Speaking Note that any discrepancy between what the British authorities and the RUC had said is more apparent than real. Mr Tatham, while trying to maintain this position, admitted that the way in which the statement had been phrased had caused difficulties and accepted that the Taoiseach had no choice but to make our position clear. He similarly tried to defend the Chief Constable's position as referred to in the last two paragraphs of the Speaking Note.
5. Mr Tatham made two final points which he said were of a personal nature. He felt that the response to the Chief Constable's statement had not been as vehement as might have been expected and he hoped that the matter would not be blown up out of all proportion.

I pointed out to Mr Tatham the contradictions contained in the Chief Constable's statement vis-a-vis the British Government's position and the difficult situation in which this had landed the Irish Government. He again accepted this point. Finally, he said in the context of the killing of Mary Travers it would be odd if the Irish authorities were to over-emphasise the difficult situation which has arisen. I again pointed out to Mr Tatham that this situation had been caused by actions on their side and in particular by the Chief Constable's statement. Mr Tatham will be available to answer any further queries we may have during the course of the day.

6. Mr Tatham has since telephoned me, on instructions from London, to say that the British authorities would hope that everything possible would be done to damp down further speculation on this matter. If strong statements are made here in Dublin it may mean that the British authorities would also have to respond due to pressure from the "other side". I reminded Mr Tatham again of the difficult situation which the Irish Government had been placed in by the Chief Constable's statement which left us no alternative but to make our position clear.



Martin Burke

10 April 1984