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Mr J A D Kennedy
Clerk to the Assembly
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ROM/666/89/SH

28 February 1989

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 27 February. I am sorry that you should have been concerned in this way.

I agree that the whole project on which you are working, and your involvement in it, must remain strictly confidential. It is at present known only to a limited number of officials in the Northern Ireland Office, all of whom are well aware that it is classified confidential. I hope that on reflection you will be able to relax somewhat the limitation on circulation of your paper which you propose. If only Sir Kenneth Bloomfield and I were to see it, its usefulness would be much reduced. May we leave it that any conditions you impose, including for example anonymity or any excisions, would be honoured?

I have spoken to the official to whom you refer in the first paragraph of your letter, Robin Masefield. As you probably know, he is a member of the Northern Ireland Office who is at present assigned to the Anglo-Irish Secretariat at Maryfield. He was already aware (and I have now confirmed to him) that your project is confidential to UK officials, and there is no question of its being mentioned to Irish members of the Secretariat. If we were to take your first paragraph literally, I should be in some difficulty because I too am a member of the Anglo-Irish Secretariat.

I am glad to hear that you are going ahead with the project, which must be as difficult as it is interesting. I wish you the best of luck.

*Yours sincerely
Rover Miles*

R O MILES

cc Sir Kenneth Bloomfield

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I was perturbed to learn last week that Anglo Irish Secretariat staff at Maryfield are conversant with the assignment, by way of a little pilot study, which I was invited to undertake at my discretion into an aspect of IRA terrorism.

Hitherto I had assumed that the fact that I was engaged in such a task was to remain a matter of the utmost confidentiality: but with Maryfield aware of what I am doing I cannot be sure that others are not similarly informed about this inevitably contentious and potentially dangerous area of activity.

In the light of this situation I feel extremely inhibited about committing to paper some of the points which have been made to me.

I have enjoyed the trust and advice of certain individuals who would not have been prepared to co-operate if they had thought that their confidences would be divulged, however obliquely, to anybody other than HMG. In view of the highly sensitive nature of the matters that have been covered in discussions the people to whom I refer would regard my tacit acceptance of any form of communication with Maryfield as tantamount to a gross breach of faith.

As Clerk to the Assembly - holding a warrant of appointment from The Queen - it is vital that my position should be beyond reproach from any section of the community, a principle to which I have endeavoured to adhere as a Stormont stalwart for over 26 years. It is, after all, the policy of HMG to try to re-establish a devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland and I have been retained in post accordingly. The last thing, therefore, that I would wish is for my independence and integrity to be brought into question at this point in life.

Furthermore, there is the risk of career prospects in the public service being jeopardised in having the Clerk's name linked to a candid report stating harsh realities that may cause resentment or dismay in some circles. In this connection one accepts that there may not always be the prospect of heading a fully-fledged Assembly and that it may be necessary to perform other work. Certainly I and my family intend to remain in Northern Ireland, a factor which in this context has also to be taken into account.

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While I am content to proceed with my researches (and I don't pretend that they will necessarily provide any novel insights) I am firmly of the opinion that in order to protect my position as Clerk to the Assembly, it must be clearly accepted that apart from Sir Kenneth Bloomfield (to whom I am copying this letter) no one else will see the paper which I hope to prepare for you without my prior approval.

I would like to have your written assurance on this point.

J A D KENNEDY

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