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Title:	Copy minutes of a meeting [held in London on 30 July 1970] between Ambassador of Ireland to Great Britain Donal O'Sullivan, Minister Plenipotentiary Kevin Rush and E Gallagher, Department of External Affairs, on the Irish side, and Thomas Brimelow, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and others on the British side, held to discuss the situation in Northern Ireland
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Irish side:

His Excellency Dr. Donal O'Sullivan,
Ambassador, Embassy, London.

Mr. Kevin Rush, Minister Plenipotentiary,
Embassy, London.

Mr. E. Gallagher, Department of External Affairs.

British side:

Sir Thomas Brimelow, Foreign and Commonwealth
Office.

Mr. Drinkall, ditto.

Mr. Thorpe, ditto.

Mr. Cairncross, Home Office

Mr. North, ditto.

Sir Thomas Brimelow invited the Ambassador to speak first. The Ambassador described the content of what the Taoiseach would say in his wind-up speech in the Dáil debate later that evening and explained the reasoning behind the Taoiseach's remarks. He said of course that the Taoiseach might say other things in response to statements made by others in the House and we could not fully anticipate this. However, the general tenor of his remarks would be consistent with his policy of a quiet approach to the subject of the North which looked to the future while analysing as exactly as possible the present situation.

Sir Thomas asked if we expected some official reply from any member of the British Government to the Taoiseach's proposed remarks. The Ambassador said that his purpose was simply to interpret the spirit of the Taoiseach's remarks to the British officials and he was not asking for any comment on them.

By previous agreement, the Ambassador then asked Mr. Gallagher to discuss our view of what had happened in East Belfast on the night of 27th/28th June and the consequences of that particular weekend. Mr. Gallagher said that we now understood that tension had been building up around the area of St. Matthew's Catholic Church for several days. This had been brought to the attention of the RUC [REDACTED] was mentioned - and he is said to have brought the matter to the attention of the British Army.

it appears, however, that the Army did not take the matter sufficiently seriously. On the Friday evening it was noticed that hostile people were approaching the area of St. Matthew's Church. They penetrated the area and burned the Sexton's house. At this stage some guns were produced in defence of the Church and the attackers were held off until Army units reached the scene. We understand that a publication is being prepared which will state these things.

Mr. Gallagher continued by saying that even if this interpretation was inaccurate it still did not justify the "curfew" of the Lower Falls Road area the following weekend as there had been no trouble in that area since the previous August. In response to Mr. Cairncross Mr. Gallagher said that there was no opposition on our side to the idea of arms searches anywhere in the Six Counties but it was clear that when Balkan Street was searched on the evening of Friday 3rd July considerably greater preparations were already in hand for a full curfew of the whole Lower Falls Road area. This suggested that the Balkan Street seizure was an excuse for what followed immediately later.

Unfortunately the effect, apart from the deaths of four people who were certainly not snipers, was to end the friendly relations which had existed between the people of the Falls Road area and the British Army.

We felt, continued Mr. Gallagher, that if the Security Forces should take unusual action in future it would be useful if Dublin were advised in advance so that it could react appropriately. Our difficulty in regard to the Falls Road curfew was that we did not know what the British intentions were and Lord Balniel's remark to the effect that there had been shooting from the Falls Road the previous weekend - which we believe to be untrue - had worried us considerably as it seemed to reflect unusually bad briefing and even a possible change of policy. To this had been added the spectacle of Captains Brooke and Long parading through the Falls Road on Saturday 4th July. If we knew in advance of unusual activity and the reason for it we would be in a better position

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