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Confidential

Secretary
 Department of Foreign Affairs
 Dublin

VISIT OF MR. GERRY FITT TO
SECRETARY-GENERAL

As you will be aware from press reports Mr. Gerry Fitt, M.P., was received by the Secretary-General on 25th August.

2. On the morning of that date the Acting Consul General informed us that Mr. Fitt, who had arrived in New York the previous evening and had been in touch with Mr. MacKernan, would like to call on the Secretary-General. We sought an appointment, indicating at the same time that Mr. Fitt is M.P. both in Stormont and in Westminster. The Secretary-General agreed to receive him at 4p.m., it being understood that I would accompany him.

3. In a brief conversation I had with Mr. Fitt, before the interview, I told him of the limitations to which the Secretary-General is subject and suggested that it would be better to avoid requesting any course of action from him and to make it clear that, in Mr. Fitt's view, the visit was one of courtesy during which he

- 2 -

would take the occasion to apprise U Thant of the situation in the North. The interview lasted about twenty minutes. It was taken up almost entirely with a full exposition by Mr. Fitt of the evolution of the situation in the North and of the position then prevailing. This exposition was very consecutive and complete. It is hardly necessary to record it in detail for the essential features of the account given to the Secretary-General by Mr. Fitt had been reported from other statements of his in the press. I may, however, note a few salient points all of which will certainly be familiar to you but some of which were not, I think, in the papers.

- (i) The conduct of the Stormont Administration over the years runs counter to the Charter and above all to the Universal Declaration on human rights;
- (ii) internment is being carried out in a quite discriminatory and one-sided fashion;
- (iii) when the British troops were introduced in 1969 they were generally well received in the North, including by himself; however they have now become a completely partisan force;
- (iv) the British army has conducted itself in recent weeks in an outrageous manner and been guilty of gross ill-treatment of detainees;
- (v) it was a great disaster for the North and for Ireland generally when the Labour Government under Mr. Wilson was replaced by the Conservative Government under Mr. Heath in July of 1970;
- (vi) Mr. Heath had shown himself extremely callous and indifferent. It was indefensible that he should have been sailing in "Morning Cloud" when internment was introduced; and his refusal to recall Parliament at the request of the Opposition cannot be justified and is indeed in marked contrast with the recall of Parliament by Mr.

- 3 -

Wilson after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August, 1968 even though it was quite obvious Britain could do nothing whatsoever;

- (vii) the British have for years succumbed to the blackmail exercised by Stormont in trying to impede all and every reform, blackmail in the form of a threat that any such steps would provoke a Unionist backlash. Mr. Fitt himself does not believe that this threat is valid and he so informed Mr. Maudling;
- (viii) the North is in fact a very heavy moral and financial liability for Britain which is an additional reason why she should do something about it;
- (ix) one step the British Government should take is to see to it that the arms, which number 103,000, held under licence by Unionists are recalled;
- (x) the 40% (sic) minority in the North has decided to embark on a course of passive resistance; Mr. Fitt is convinced that this is the only recourse because he does not believe that violence would be morally right or defensible;
- (xi) the opposition in Stormont has withdrawn from all participation in the Six County system and will never resume participation;
- (xii) most non-Unionists occupying public positions were resigning their offices;
- (xiii) the Taoiseach's decision to have a meeting with the Northern Opposition two days earlier was a most important step, as was his declaration that the Government acknowledge the role of the elected opposition members as the principal representative body of the ~~xxxxxxx~~ community; non-Unionist
- (xiv) the only possible course now is to abolish the Stormont administration and have the area ruled by a quadri-partite commission consisting of representatives from London, Dublin, the Unionist administration and non-Unionist minority;
- (xv) it was Mr. Fitt's intention to make a tour of the EEC capitals and explain the position to Socialist colleagues there with whom he has quite good relations.

- 4 -

4. The Secretary-General thanked Mr. Fitt for his exposé. Mr. Fitt could be assured that he (the Secretary-General) is much concerned about the situation on which (he added) I had been keeping him informed. He mentioned that he had told me earlier of Mayor Daley of Chicago having been in touch with him about the possibility of the United Nations taking some action. He expressed particular interest in what Mr. Fitt had said about a quadri-partite commission. He asked Mr. Fitt whether he had put this to Mr. Maudling. The reply appeared to be that Mr. Fitt had mentioned it to Mr. Maudling who expressed no opinion but did not reject the idea.

5. Mr. Fitt then said he would like to give the Secretary-General some documentation he had brought with him and which consisted of a series of well-authenticated statements about the brutality of the British troops. The Secretary-General thanked him. Mr. Fitt went on to say he was not asking the Secretary-General to take any action but that he thought and hoped the information he had provided could be helpful for purposes of any conversations U Thant might have with British or other representatives.

6. It was agreed that in speaking to the press Mr. Fitt might say that the Secretary-General had received him in a courtesy visit and that he (Mr. Fitt) had apprised him of the situation and furnished information which would be helpful to the Secretary-General in any conversations bearing on the subject he might have. This concluded the interview.

7. In the Delegates' Lounge Mr. Fitt met a number of journalists, in particular correspondents of AFP, UP, Reuters and the

- 5 -

Daily Telegraph. In talking to them he mentioned many of the matters he had put to the Secretary-General but on the whole in his references to the interview with the Secretary-General he adhered closely to the formula agreed upon. He also indicated, inter alia, that he had not put any request to U Thant, which (he said) would not have been proper inasmuch as he is not a Government spokesman. He did mention, however, the documentation he had left with U Thant and gave copies to the Press.



Permanent Representative

CCC:md

cc. Mr. Kirwan, Embassy, Wash.D.C.
Mr. MacKernan, Consulate General, N.Y.