

00 N I O BELFAST

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GRS 350
CONFIDENTIAL
DESKBY FCO 032030Z
FM DUBLIN 031925Z FEB 84
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 42 OF 3 FEBRUARY 1984
INFO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST) AND NIO (LONDON)

VISIT BY HRH THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH TO NORTHERN IRELAND

1. LILLIS SUMMONED ME THIS EVENING ON THIS TOPIC. HE SAID THAT AFTER THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO DRUMADD BARRACKS THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE TO MAKE A STATEMENT PROTESTING AT HER VISIT TO A BARRACKS WHERE THE UDR BATTALION WAS STATIONED 8 MEMBERS OF WHICH HAD RECENTLY BEEN CHARGED WITH MURDER, GENERALLY SEEN AS SECTARIAN. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAD MADE NO PUBLIC REFERENCE TO THIS. THEY HAD SPOKEN TO US ABOUT IT. THEY HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT MRS THATCHER HAD NO INFORMATION BEFORE HER VISIT ABOUT ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MINORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THEY HAD ASCRIBED IT TO THE MISFORTUNE WHICH DOGS OUR RELATIONS.
2. HE WAS INSTRUCTED TO SAY THAT THOSE MEMBERS OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WHO WERE INVOLVED IN ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS IN A PRIMARY ROLE FOUND THE VISIT TODAY BY A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY TO THE SAME BARRACKS INEXPLICABLE. HE GAVE ME NO PAPER.
3. I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD REPORT THIS. I HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS. BUT THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH WAS, I UNDERSTOOD, COLONEL-IN-CHIEF OF THE GRENADIER GUARDS, THE FIRST BATTALION WAS STATIONED AT DRUMADD, AND I DID NOT BELIEVE THAT HE COULD BE ADVISED NOT TO VISIT THEM. IN ANY CASE, HRH WAS NOT A MEMBER OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT, NOR IN THE SAME POSITION AS THE QUEEN IN RELATION TO MINISTERIAL ADVICE.
4. LILLIS SAID THAT DR FITZGERALD WAS EXTREMELY UPSET. HE HAD HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY IN PERSUADING DR FITZGERALD NOT TO ISSUE AN IMMEDIATE PUBLIC STATEMENT. HE WAS HIMSELF VERY EMOTIONAL. HE WAS AFRAID THAT PUBLIC REACTIONS HERE TO THE VISIT WOULD BE VERY ADVERSE. IT CAME AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT IN THE DRAFTING OF THE FORUM REPORT AND HE FEARED IT COULD HAVE VERY UNFORTUNATE REPERCUSSIONS. I DID MY BEST TO CALM HIM DOWN.

5. RESIDENT CLERK PLEASE INFORM RID THIS EVENING. NIO PLEASE INFORM MR NICHOLAS SCOTT.

GOODISON

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SENT THR 02 AT 040823Z RV//
QSL SAME TIME BY FM

- PRIVATE OFFICE
- PUS
- MR. BOURN
- MR. MERIFIELD
- MR. GILLILAND
- MR. BUXTON
- MR. COULSON
- MR. REEVE
- LIAISON x 2
- RUC

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① Sir EWART BELL

- 6 FEB 1984

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FM DUBLIN 041325Z FEB 84
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 43 OF 4 FEBRUARY 1984
AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (LONDON) AND NIO (BELFAST)
INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON AND BIS NEW YORK



MR. BOURN
MR. MERIFIELD
MR. GILLILAND
MR. EWART BELL
MR. BUXTON
MR. COULSON
MR. REEVE
LIAISON x 2
RUC

MY TELNO 42: DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S VISIT

Rec'd on.....

1. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S REACTION TO THIS VISIT WAS THE LEAD STORY ON IRISH RADIO AND TELEVISION NEWS. IT MAKES THE MAIN HEADLINE IN THE 3 MORNING PAPERS AND THE SUBJECT OF THE MAIN EDITORIAL.

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2. HEADLINES READ:

ANGLO-IRISH ROW FLARES (IRISH PRESS)
GOVERNMENT ANGER AT PRINCE'S NORTH VISIT (INDEPENDENT)
BARRY PROTESTS OVER ROYAL VISIT (IRISH TIMES).

THE STORIES REFLECT GOVERNMENT BRIEFING AND IMPLY THAT MR BARRY (RATHER THAN LILLIS) SPOKE TO ME. THE EARLIER IRISH "PROTEST" OVER THE PRIME MINISTERS VISIT TO DRUMADD BARRACKS IS RECALLED AND THE IRISH GOVERNMENT ARE SAID TO BE "FURIOUS". THEY FELT THERE WAS A CALCULATED DECISION TO IGNORE THEIR EARLIER PROTEST: "A STUDIED INSULT" GOVERNMENT SOURCES TOLD THE IRISH TIMES.

3. EDITORIALS ARE EQUALLY HEATED: THE IRISH TIMES UNDER THE HEADING "A ROYAL MESS", BELIEVES THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WERE RIGHT TO PROTEST. "THE VISIT HELPS NOT AT ALL IN THE PROCESS OF PEACEMAKING IN THE NORTH: FOR SYMBOLS AND FLAGS CAN KILL THERE..." IT ADDS:

"THE VISIT MAY PROVE EMBARRASSING TO JIM PRIOR. REPORTS SEEM TO INDICATE THAT IT WAS UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT ADVANCE WARNING TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE. IT WAS SEEMINGLY ORGANISED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ACTING ON THEIR OWN."

4. THE INDEPENDENT SAYS "ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS WERE PLACED IN PERIL YESTERDAY BY THE STARTLING INSENSITIVITY OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE ON A DELICATE MATTER TO WHICH OFFICIALDOM IN BELFAST AND LONDON SEEM NOT EVEN TO HAVE ADVERTED (SIC)". IT CONCLUDES:

"WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME, MRS THATCHER IS THE POINT IN GIVING GRATUITOUS OFFENCE TO SO MANY OF YOUR NEIGHBOURS? IT IS QUITE BEYOND OUR UNDERSTANDING."

5. THE IRISH PRESS EDITORIAL (HEADLINED "COAT TRAILING") SAYS THAT HAD THE IRISH GOVERNMENT PROTESTED PUBLICLY OVER MRS THATCHER'S VISIT TO DRUMADD BARRACKS YESTERDAY'S "PROVOCATIVE AFFAIR" MIGHT NEVER HAVE HAPPENED. THE DUKES TRIP SHOWS THAT FOR:

"THIS PARTICULAR TORY GOVERNMENT... THE FEELINGS AND PROTESTS OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT AND THE SENSITIVITIES OF THE MINORITY IN THE NORTH DON'T MATTER A DAMN... HOW CAN ANYONE HAVE ANY HOPE THAT THE FORUM REPORT, WHATEVER ITS RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY A BRITISH GOVERNMENT..."

THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT MRS THATCHER HAS:

"PROVIDED SINN FEIN AND ITS MILITARY WING WITH INVALUABLE PROPAGANDA. ALL IN ALL A SHOCKING DAY'S WORK, THAT HAS SERIOUS AND DISTURBING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NORTH AND ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS GENERALLY."

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PRIVATE OFFICE
PUS
MR. BOURN
MR. MERIFIELD
MR. GILLILAND
MR. BUXTON
MR. COULSON
MR. REEVE
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Sir EWART BELL

- 6 FEB 1984

Rec'd on.....

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GRS 140
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AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (LONDON) AND NIO (BELFAST)

MY TELNO 43: DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S VISIT

1. MR NICHOLAS SCOTT SPOKE APPROPRIATELY TO THE TAOISEACH AFTER THE RUGBY INTERNATIONAL ON 4 FEBRUARY AND SAID HE HOPED THIS INCIDENT COULD BE REGARDED AS NO MORE THAN A HICCOUGH IN OUR RELATIONS. THE TAOISEACH APPEARED TO AGREE.
2. I SHALL SEE LILLIS AT NOON ON 6 FEBRUARY AND WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE THE TEMPERATURE THEN. BUT IN VIEW OF MR SCOTT'S CONVERSATION AND FROM WHAT WE HAVE HEARD OF THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN MR PRIOR AND THE IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER, I THINK IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO AVOID ANY FORMAL REPLY TO THE IRISH.

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