

529 JR 19/5/93

66.10 mB 27/5/93



Head of the Northern Ireland
Civil Service
David Fell, CB

Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST
Tel. Belfast (0232) 763011

Mrs Swain 1/6
Mrs Bailey 2/1/93
for Post Office

HCS/444/93

26 May 1993

Mr Douglas B Archard
Consul General
Consulate General of the USA
BELFAST BT1 6EQ

- hc: Mr Ledlie
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Steele
- Mr Briant
- Mr Leach, SPOB1
- Mr Marsh, SPOB2

R. Lysky 1/6

Dear Doug

Thank you for your letter of 26 April about your experiences at the Cloghogue checkpoint on 16 April. I apologise for not having replied sooner but you will readily understand that I had to make some enquiries with the Army before replying.

I need scarcely point out that the issue of the checkpoint at Cloghogue is vexed. I am not the only one here who would much prefer, if circumstances permitted, to be able to do without it because inevitably it can cause a certain dislocation to normal life both for the local population and for travellers. But the security forces concluded that the threat to the area and to Newry in particular was such that the installation was necessary. I would not be eager to second-guess that view.

That said, enquiries were made of the Army as to why there seems to have been more dislocation on 16 April than at other times. I understand, however, that none of their records help explain why you were held up on that day. Regrettably, therefore, in the circumstances I can do no more than assure you that the inconvenience caused has been drawn to their attention, and to suggest to you that you might wish to take up your experience directly with them. I would expect that your interest would receive particular attention.

I wholly accept your observations about the effect which some types of security force activities can have on economic development and tourism. My understanding had indeed been that the new installation at Cloghogue was widely regarded as a material improvement on the previous checkpoint, though clearly your experience underlines the point that it is not just the installation but the way in which it is operated which can cause more or less disturbance.



I need scarcely underline to you that part of the skill of the terrorist is in confronting governments with the most acutely difficult choices between measures to preserve the life of the citizen and steps which represent such interference as to help further the terrorist's cause. I would be rash to claim that we always get the balance right. But I can assure you - cold comfort though I know it is in many cases - that the balance is a result of the most careful judgement by security forces, officials and Ministers.

As ever, I appreciate the positive and constructive way in which you wrote to me, I know your concern is genuine.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David', is written above the printed name.

DAVID FELL