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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

A W Rawsthorne Esq
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate

12th July 1983

N.S.P.R.

A.S.C. $\frac{12}{7}$

v-a.

Dear Tony,

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

I attach the text of a message the Secretary of State has received from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ireland.

You are already aware of the Secretary of State's views about the restoration of capital punishment in Northern Ireland for terrorist murder, both as it might affect the Province and the climate of co-operation between ourselves and the Irish on which the effective implementation of our security policies in part depends. During a radio interview over the weekend Dr FitzGerald made a number of the points on this message, and the Press touched briefly on the possibility that a message had been sent. We propose, if asked, to confirm that we have received a message and to say, if asked to do so, that it was in the same sense as Dr FitzGerald's remarks. The Home Secretary may wish to be guided by the same approach if questions are put to him during the course of Wednesday's debate.

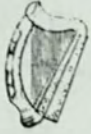
I am sending copies of this letter to John Coles (No 10), John Holmes (FCO), David Staff (Lord Chancellor's Department) and Henry Steel (Law Officers' Department).

Yours ever,

J M LYON

KL

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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

7 Grosvenor Place

SW1X 7HR

8th July 1983

My dear Secretary of State,

I have been asked by our Foreign Minister, Mr Peter Barry TD, to send you the following message today:

The Rt Hon James Prior MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

Dear Jim

I know that you are aware of the view of the Irish Government on the Irish implications of the possible reintroduction of capital punishment soon to be debated in your House of Commons. I felt nevertheless that I should state our view very briefly in writing so as to ensure that you and all your Government colleagues would be in a position to state, if asked, that you have been made aware of our concern.

The execution of Irish people under British law for politically inspired offences would almost certainly create a situation worse than anything our two Governments have experienced during the past thirteen years and would adversely affect the climate of our relations. The IRA, the INLA and other terrorist organisations would take full advantage of their opportunity.

I feel that with your direct experience of the situation in Northern Ireland you are fully aware of the seriousness of the position and that you can see that our fears are not in any way exaggerated.

/...

In suggesting that you might consider mentioning to your Government colleagues the grave anxiety we feel in Dublin, I should stress that the Irish Government will scrupulously respect the fact that the vote on this motion is a matter of conscience to be decided upon by the individual Members of the House of Commons. You will have noted therefore that, despite our anxiety on this matter, we have carefully refrained from taking any action which might give the appearance of lobbying at Westminster.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Geoffrey Howe MP.

Yours sincerely

Peter Barry
Minister for Foreign Affairs

A letter signed by Mr Barry and containing this text is on its way and will be delivered to you on arrival.

I have also been asked to send a copy of the message to The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Yours very sincerely
Eamon Kennedy

Eamon Kennedy
Ambassador

The Rt Hon James Prior MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Office
Government Offices
Great George Street
London SW1P 3AJ