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Reiter suggests Dr L Kiss: does not mention the problems caused by the rapid growth of the numbers of the young in the

Mr Fawcett
Mr Gordan
May we see to see.
13/4

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF IRELAND

Summary

1. Britain and Ireland have a shared inheritance but the Irish are different from us (paragraph 1).
2. Irish Governments feel responsible for the nationalist community in the North. Thanks to Sunningdale, they no longer distrust us. Some people here do not want unity; others fear that terrorism will spread to the Republic and that their State will be undermined. They regard our fight against terrorism as important but feel humiliated when the British media portray all Irish as sympathetic to terrorism (paragraphs 2 and 3).
3. The need to monitor the multiplicity of contacts between our two Governments to ensure that our Departments pursue the same policy (paragraph 4).
4. Racial bias against the 'Anglo-Irish' in the Republic (paragraph 5).
5. The deterioration of the Republic's economy carries with it the risk of destabilisation. Both Governments must prevent this (paragraph 6).
6. Need for frequent visits to Belfast and London by Embassy staff (paragraph 7).
7. We have a chance to restore good relations with the Irish Government. They want 'power-sharing' in the North in one form or another: if we can deliver it, our relations will be transformed (paragraph 8).
8. Tribute to staff and their wives (paragraph 9).

Republic, some were cause problems for the UK given the present free emigration. It has clearly put the Dublin case - rate up dramatically, as the Irish feel. 13/4

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BRITISH EMBASSY,
DUBLIN.

18 March 1983

The Right Honourable
Mr Francis Pym MP
Secretary of State for Foreign
and Commonwealth Affairs
London SW1

Sir,

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF IRELAND

1. As an Englishman with no Irish relations and few links with Ireland, coming to the Republic as British Ambassador was a fascinating experience and one which I shall treasure. The first impression, which my wife and I felt strongly, was the number of our friends in England whom we suddenly discovered were partly or wholly Irish. This gives a jolt to the English system and reminds one of the many ways in which the English and Irish share their inheritance. And in my case it drove me to the crash course in Irish history so necessary before appearing in Dublin. My second impression, as strong now as three years ago, is the contrast between the similarity of British and Irish institutions on the one hand and the dissimilarity of our two peoples on the other. The similarities are around you wherever you look or, if they are not similar, they seem to have a strong British flavour like the Royal Dublin Society, the Royal Irish Yacht Club, the Royal College of Surgeons and so on. The dissimilarity of the British and Irish people becomes soon apparent and the Irish themselves are ready to point out and explain the differences, but not in a superior way. Although a proud people, they are as ready as sometimes we are to be over-modest and self-critical, an attitude deepened by the consciousness of being a small country with few natural resources and

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living in the shadow of a much bigger Britain on whom they must rely for many things. However, there is nothing in this general juxtaposition which need handicap our relationship except, of course, the problem presented by Northern Ireland.

2. Developments in the North are always of deep interest and often of great concern to Irish Governments who feel a responsibility for the nationalist Roman Catholic minority. Since direct rule, and especially since the effort we made at Sunningdale in 1974 to bring the minority into political life through power-sharing, the Irish perception of British policy has changed. They no longer distrust us as they did before. And what impresses them after 11 years of direct rule is the enormous cost in money and resources which we incur in running the Province. The Irish business community, who see their own country in such a difficult financial position, have a very clear view about the North. Union may or may not be a good thing, they say, but do not ask us to pay for it. Others, perhaps less concerned with finance, may have less sympathy than formerly with the Roman Catholics in the North. They regard both sides of the sectarian divide as filled by thoroughly difficult people with whom it would be awkward to associate. So I suppose it is a compound of financial cost and what appears to be endemic terrorism which causes people here to avert their eyes. Others yet again are concerned that if we cannot bring normal life back again in the North and finally subdue the terrorists, then in some way the disease will spread South across the border and start to destabilise the State here.

3. It was at the time of the second hunger strike in 1981, when the anti-H-Block Committee were organising violent demonstrations in Dublin, that I first became aware of the real fear of the Irish that violence could erupt here and destroy their institutions. Those who are concerned for the safety of the Irish State regard our fight against the terrorist as enormously important. That is why they criticise us for not, in their view, fighting it subtly and intelligently;

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shades, indeed, of their criticism of the way we handled the hunger strike. Another consequence of terrorist violence which worries the Irish is the effect it has on the position of the Irish in Britain. Some of them feel humiliated when the more popular British media portray all Irish as terrorists under the skin. More difficult for others were their personal experiences of anti-Irish feeling in Britain following the Falklands campaign. I wish there were more in Britain who could speak out for the ordinary Irish person who feels shamed and degraded by what is done in their name. The fund raised by the Royal Dublin Society following the Hyde Park and Regents Park bombings was composed mostly of very small donations from every county in the Republic and many of the letters were most moving.

4. The links between Northern Ireland and the Republic and between Britain and the Republic are extensive even at the official level. Departments speak to each other without reference to either the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin or the FCO in London. This is a healthy state of affairs and I think the more things develop this way the better. But at the same time we need some means of monitoring this multiplicity of contacts to make sure that a policy being pursued by one department or institution is not out of step with the policy of another department or even against our general interest. Two examples come to mind. The financial burden of border security is a heavy one for the Irish. As they depend on us for some equipment and training it would be in our general interest for the Ministry of Defence to charge them the preferential rates which we accord our allies rather than the full rates we apply now. A second example has recently come to our notice. A Cork company wishes to lay on cable TV in the area, especially to make BBC broadcasts available. But the BBC are asking such a price for the licence that the project is now in doubt. It is surely more in our international interest that the people of Cork should be exposed to our broadcasts than that the BBC should screw an extra penny out of a licence fee. It is in these situations that

BBC TV
is already
available
free to most
of the Republic
to our broadcasts
should
complain



the Embassy can try and play a part but because contacts between the two countries are so numerous it is often pure chance that one knows when something is going askew.

5. The position of the Anglo-Irish community in the Republic is of historical and social interest and one which I find difficult to analyse. Of equal interest I suppose is the related question of how much does Roman Catholicism and a Gaelic tradition permeate life in the Republic. I think the answer is quite a lot and this shows up in the experiences of the Anglo-Irish and the attitudes they adopt. A friend of mine among their ranks, who has an English sounding name, was challenged by a fellow Irishman at dinner the other night with not being a true Irishman. Apparently he failed to qualify because he didn't speak Irish; had an English name and belonged to the Church of Ireland. It was no good his claiming that his family had been here 400 years; that he had an Irish passport; that he spent his life entirely in the Republic running his farm; and, above all, that he invested all his capital and income here. This is not, I am afraid, a rare example of racial bias and explains why 'Anglo-Irish' is now a rather muddling term, especially for the newcomer. Most Anglo-Irish I have met, and certainly all those who are in any way prominent in Irish life, regard themselves as totally Irish, as indeed does my friend to whom I have referred above. It must be disheartening that the allegiance of one's heart, mind and pocket is sometimes seen as not enough. If Dr FitzGerald can one day resurrect successfully his 'crusade' to alter the constitution in a way less offensive to the Unionists, the real beneficiaries may well be the Protestant minority in the South.

6. It is against the background of violence in the North that the deteriorating economy of the Republic should be seen. Recession seems to have come later to Ireland than to Britain and the worst effects have not yet been felt here. When I arrived 100,000 unemployed was something the political

/parties

no doubt
he has
farm



parties would taunt each other with. Now the figure is soon expected to reach 200,000 and may go much higher. To compare Irish and British statistics the usual method is to multiply by 20, so their employment prospects look awful. The tightest budget known was introduced in February and there is growing discontent amongst PAYE employees about the incidence of taxation on the lower paid. The Irish have not taken their housekeeping seriously for so long that the measures needed to get out of the mess are relatively more painful than those we are experiencing in Britain. I do not wish to be in the least alarmist, but it is not difficult to envisage a scenario where the destabilising forces in the North see their chance in the South in the discontent bred by severe economic constraints. It is in the joint interests of the British and Irish Governments to prevent such a situation arising and future bilateral meetings will have plenty to discuss.

7. I should here like to say a brief word about the position of the Embassy in relation to the Northern Ireland Office (in both Belfast and London) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the importance of the triangular relationship between Dublin, Belfast and London. The contacts one must develop and foster are numerous, and frequent visits north to Belfast and east to London are essential by all the UK-based diplomatic staff. The trip to Belfast is easy by road; the trip to London is more difficult to arrange and I hope the device of carrying the bag will long be available. And I should like to record here my thanks for the good working relationship which we have with the NIO in both Belfast and London.

8. I am now on my fourth Irish Government and there is a good chance that the Coalition under Dr. FitzGerald will be able to remain in office for some time. But it is not particularly stable and the severe economic measures necessary are already putting it under strain. Our relationship touched
/a very



a very low point last year under Mr Haughey's leadership and if he were ever to come back to power it is likely that our relationship will suffer again. Hopefully we now have a chance to restore good relations, but it will be hard going and will, I fear, depend on how far we are able to restore political life in the North and, hopefully, end the violence. Because of the emotive effect of Sunningdale, 'power-sharing' is no longer a phrase to use. But that in one form or another is what the Irish Government will be looking to us to deliver. And if we can deliver it Anglo-Irish relations will be transformed. We would then have reached a plateau where the minority in the North was seen from the South to be safeguarded at last in their political and civic rights; a great cause of Anglo-Irish friction would have been removed. I do not wish to try and look further ahead than that.

9. During my time here I have often had reason to give thanks for an excellent staff and I hope I won't be misunderstood if among the staff I include the wives as well. In our difficult times they have been splendid. Morale depends as much on them as on anyone else. Whether in my service career during the war or during times of excitement in the Diplomatic Service I have found that morale goes in inverse proportion to the danger of the job. Most Administration Officers and Heads of Chancery may agree that staff problems are more demanding in countries where life is placid than where people are up against it and have to depend on each other. I have depended on a lot of people in the Service during 36 years and I am grateful.

10. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in London and Belfast, the Secretary of State for Defence, HM Ambassador at Washington and HM Representatives at EC posts, UKRep Brussels and to the Head of British Information Services, New York.

I have the honour to be
Sir

Your obedient Servant



Mr Figg 18/4
Mr Goodall 18/4
AS 18/4

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 April 1983

Sir L Figg KCMG
Heads of Mission Section
POD

N 8512
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Dear Leonard,

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF IRELAND

1. I am afraid that bag schedules conspired to delay the arrival here of your valedictory despatch of 18 March until just before Easter. We were, however, most grateful to receive it: it is difficult for those of us who have not served in Dublin (or Belfast) to get to grips with the psychological complexities of the Anglo-Irish relationship; and it is particularly helpful to have this sort of advice. Your despatch has been sent for reproduction as a diplomatic report (sadly despatches are no longer to be printed).

2. As you know, we have for some time recognised the proper interest of the Republic in the affairs in Northern Ireland. But for us in London there is always a temptation to read too much into the pronouncements on Irish unity made by Irish politicians. I would agree that the more moderate views of the business community are in practice at least as important; and the more the Embassy can feed them into their reporting the better.

3. In paragraph 3 of your despatch you very correctly drew attention to Irish concern for the safety of their State. The Irish Government's obsession in recent months with the deteriorating position of the SDLP vis-à-vis Sinn Fein is, I think, symptomatic of this. We of course accept the importance they attach to the fight against terrorism and acknowledge their contribution to the policing of the border areas (security cooperation was, as you know, raised when the Prime Minister met Dr FitzGerald on 21 March). But their criticism of our efforts might be easier to take - and better targetted - if they displayed more real knowledge of events in the North. At his meeting with Mr Prior on 1 February the Irish Foreign Minister was conspicuously badly briefed on the political situation in the Province despite the fact that he had visited Belfast and Londonderry a few days before. The more we can do to persuade Irish officials to call on the NIO in Belfast when they are visiting the Province and to make more use of official sources of information in London the better. The Irish Embassy here are also slow to make use of the contacts open to them. I cannot help feeling that more-regular contact would be of benefit to both sides, and we shall do what we can to encourage them.

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4. Your despatch also draws attention to the need to develop some means of monitoring the multiplicity of Anglo-Irish contacts without, of course, imposing unnecessary constraints on the relationship. We discussed what you had in mind when you gave me lunch. I agree that there is a problem, and for our part we shall do what we can to ensure that all concerned share the same goals and pull together towards them.

✓ 5. It is, as your despatch implies, difficult at this stage to make any firm assessment of the prospects for Anglo-Irish relations. My own feeling is that Dr FitzGerald's government has a good chance of being around for some time - if not its full term - despite the unpopular economic medicine it will have to dispense; and there is no doubt that we are better off with Dr FitzGerald than with Mr Haughey. So far FitzGerald has shown every sign of adopting a constructive approach to Anglo-Irish relations, although I am less sanguine about the views of his Foreign Minister; and we shall not, as you know, be able to do much in response before our own General Election. But whatever happens it will, as you say, be hard going; and Northern Ireland is bound to dominate the relationship.

Yours ever,

Patrick

P H C Eyers
Republic of Ireland
Department

cc: D E Tatham Esq DUBLIN
S W Boys Smith Esq SIL NIO(L)
D Colvin Esq Cabinet Office