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Taoiseach

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✓ MR. F MURRAY

MR. P TEAHON

MR. S. DONLON

MR. T DALTON

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*Mr. Hare
Pm*

Contact from Fr. Brendan Callanan,

Provincial of the Redemptorists

4/5 September, 1995

6/9/95

[The message is extraordinary on so many counts and

1. I met at his request yesterday evening and again this morning with Fr. Brendan Callanan, Provincial of the Redemptorists. His purpose in calling on me was to convey a message from Fr. Alex Reid (at present in Belfast). *have you. about activity of the same*
2. The message was that if the Taoiseach at the Summit joined the British Prime Minister in a statement on the broad lines being discussed, he would publish the terms of the understanding with the previous Government so that the public could judge whether the Irish Government had been in breach of the fundamental terms underlying the peace process in their conduct since they took office. He said he would also give his own public assessment on the issue, and would let us have an advance copy. (All indications are that he would say there was such a breach).
3. I spoke to Fr. Callanan yesterday evening in the strongest terms on the danger of this course. I rejected totally the notion of any such breach. It was not that the Government was bound by any such understanding, but rather that their policy was in any case consistent with its broad lines, as I understood them.
4. I said Fr. Reid's public judgement could, literally, condemn many people to death. He had the same moral duty as a judge in a hanging trial to take scrupulous account of every possibility that he could be wrong (as I believed he was).
5. I pointed out to Fr. Callanan that the proposed course of action would have wide ramifications for the perception of

the Church, and its relationship with violence. I suggested in view of the gravity of the issue it would be appropriate for him to take wider ecclesiastical counsel (e.g. with the Cardinal).

6. I said on a more immediate level Fr. Reid's approach would reinforce existing Government fears that there was an attempt by Sinn Fein to use the threat of violence as a blackmail and it would draw the corresponding reaction. It would be counter-productive also in that the things the Government might say or do in political self-defence would probably aggravate the suspicions Fr. Reid was responding to from his Republican contacts.
7. I pointed out it was also likely that any statement from Fr. Reid would be used for polemical purposes, and possibly become a partisan political football.
8. I asked him to speak to Fr. Reid and come back to me. In the interval I would refrain from passing around our system a message which would do so much damage.
9. Fr. Callanan called to see me again this morning. He had spoken to Fr. Reid, who, he said, would be "acting on the assumption that the message had been noted". I said in the circumstances I would communicate it immediately to the Tanaiste and Taoiseach. I repeated my objections and I asked him to report to Fr. Reid my firm view that it would be totally negative and counter-productive for him to proceed as he envisaged.

Sean O hUiginn
5 September, 1995