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We've no link to Dublin bombings, says Britain

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Wednesday December 31 2008

BRITAIN assured the [Irish Government](#) in 1973 that it was not conducting espionage activities here and had not been involved, through its agents, in the [Dublin](#) bombings the previous winter.

The assurances were given after [Ireland](#) raised grave concern about the activities of the Littlejohn brothers and their alleged involvement with British intelligence.

Keith and [Kenneth Littlejohn](#) were extradited to Ireland from the UK and convicted for their part in a £67,000 bank robbery in 1972. It was alleged at the time that they had been acting as British agents in the Republic.

Such was the concern of the [Cosgrave Government](#) that the Irish ambassador to [London](#), [Donal O'Sullivan](#), was instructed to spell out Ireland's deep concern over the "Littlejohn business".

State Papers for the period contain a 'secret' report from Ambassador O'Sullivan of an account of his meeting with [Britain's](#) Deputy Under-Secretary of State [Sir Geoffrey Arthur](#) on August 9, 1973.

He told Sir Geoffrey that the publicity given to the Littlejohn business was reviving a lot of things from the past such as the allegations about the bombings in Dublin in 1972 and that the effect of the British using criminals for intelligence work had made a serious impact on the public mind in Ireland.

"I had been instructed to seek a firm assurance from him that they had now told us the whole story. If they had not, I was instructed to ask him 'to come clean'," said the ambassador.

The ambassador reported that Sir Geoffrey gave the most firm assurance that apart from pure intelligence work, the Littlejohns had no authority to engage in anything else.

Two days after that meeting in London, the British Ambassador to Dublin, [Sir Arthur Galsworthy](#), was received by the Taoiseach at Government Buildings for a meeting.

According to an account of the meeting, marked "confidential", the ambassador gave [Liam Cosgrave](#) an "absolute assurance" that the Littlejohn brothers were not authorised to do anything in Ireland other than to pass on information to the British authorities.

Sir Andrew also confirmed that neither the British government nor their agents had any connection with the previous winter's bombings in Dublin -- in which three people were killed.

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