



INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

26 JUL 1976

In reply refer to:  
I-7579/76

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting With Minister of Defense of Ireland

Irish Participants

The Minister of Defense, Patrick S. Donegan  
Private Secretary to MOD, Austin Bolger  
MOD Official, Patrick O'Hara  
Irish Ambassador to the US, John G. Molloy  
Minister, Joseph Small

United States Participants

The Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld  
Military Assistant, RADM M.S. Holcomb  
Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Eugene McAuliffe  
Deputy Assistant Secretary (European and NATO Affairs), Maynard W. Glitman  
Assistant for Northern Europe, James H. Timberlake

Time: 1530-1605, 9 July 1976

Place: Office of the Secretary of Defense, Pentagon

Secretary Rumsfeld and Minister Donegan exchanged pleasantries on Operation Sail '76 and other aspects of the Minister's visit to the US. Secretary Rumsfeld arranged for the Minister and his party to attend the tattoo at the Marine Barracks that evening.

Irish Defense Policy. Minister Donegan reaffirmed the Irish belief that Ireland's contribution to global security and stability is enhanced by its remaining militarily uncommitted. He regretted that the Government was forced to bring its peacekeeping forces home to support the civil authorities against subversion. Ireland has only a small Army and coping with subversion eats up its manpower. He expressed the hope that Irish troops could return to UN peacekeeping duties as and when the situation in Ireland improves.

The Minister noted that Ireland has no tradition of armed forces. The Irish Defense Forces total only 14,700. The Navy has a protection

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SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF  
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED  
AT 5 YEAR INTERVALS. DECLASSIFIED ON 31Dec82



of fishing role and will be inadequate for some years to come. It needs to be enlarged. The Air Force has a small number of helicopters whose missions are reconnaissance and search and rescue. Secretary Rumsfeld, responding to the Minister's complimentary remarks about West Point and Annapolis, both of which he had just visited, said that there had been a lot of talk about the quality of officers and enlisted men under the volunteer force. So far the skeptics had been proven wrong. He thought the present economic environment would allow the volunteer force to work, and, if the cost of college education continues to rise, the armed forces would be even better able to get their choice of students.

Minister Donegan voluntarily reaffirmed Ireland's policy not to join NATO or any existing military alliance. He stated, however, that Ireland would join its EC partners in a European defense arrangement if that should develop.

European Security. Secretary Rumsfeld expressed concern at the Soviet buildup and the great momentum that appears to lie behind it. He believes that as European countries, in and out of NATO, become aware of this, they will respond the way the US has. The facts will drive them to conclude that present trends are unacceptable. European countries are incrementally shifting their defense budgets and beginning to ask, not how much they can cut, but whether they are providing enough defense. Mr. McAuliffe noted that it takes time for the facts to get to our legislatures and people. President Ford made the effort and succeeded in getting a Democratic Congress to respond.

Northern Ireland. Secretary Rumsfeld and Minister Donegan discussed briefly the situation in Northern Ireland. Minister Donegan felt that the Protest and extremists are becoming isolated as people conclude that things "cannot go on this way". He said that no one knows how much the "troubles" have cost. One cannot say how many decisions have been made in the US not to invest or build factories in Ireland. The effect on tourism has also been bad. About 300 to 400 people had been killed last year, and 1,500 since 1969. In response to Secretary Rumsfeld's question about IRA financial aid from the US, the Minister said that the joint communique of the President and Prime Minister Cosgrave, issued on March 18th, had helped, but some money continued to flow from the US to the IRA.

Prepared by:

James H. Timberlake

OASD/ISA/ED

Coordination:

*AK* 2/22/76  
ASD/ISA

Approved by:

*DR*  
Secretary of Defense

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