

S E C R E T

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NOTE OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN MR. COLES AND MR. NALLY ON MONDAY,
5 DECEMBER; 1983 AT THE ZAPPEION HALL, ATHENS

Mr. Nally gave me a detailed account of the McGovern case from December 1981 onwards.

Having rehearsed the history as he saw it, Mr. Nally said that the Taoiseach still hoped that an investigation of the McGovern case would be carried out in Northern Ireland (as the Chief Constable had promised in May). Dr. FitzGerald's only objective in all this was to get police co-operation back to its proper level. This meant re-establishing the Joint Co-ordinating Committee and healing the breach between the two police chiefs. The best course now might be to work for a successful meeting between Mr. Prior and the Irish Minister of Justice in January. That meeting could agree to re-constitute the Joint Co-ordinating Committee. We should also contemplate the possibility of the meeting being attended by the Commissioner and the Chief Constable. However, while these steps would be welcomed, they might not be sufficient. Press comment in Ireland was beginning to take an ugly turn. There was a suspicion that the Irish Government was involved in a cover-up. Possibly only an enquiry could clear the air. The other possibility was that the pending court cases in both the North and the South should go ahead - and that might remove the need for an enquiry.

I said that I would report these observations, that I thought the Prime Minister might well wish to discuss the matter again with Mr. Prior and that we would consider the extent to which we could use the January meeting to resolve the problems created by the McGovern case.

A. J. Coles.

5 December 1983

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