

MOST SECRET

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NAR/SR  
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

C194484

The United States Ambassador told me this morning that information he had received from Washington about the initiation of the United States note to the Irish Government made it plain that it had been strictly a United States military initiative, occasioned solely by reasons of military security. Stettinius had seen the Irish Minister in Washington yesterday, and had made this plain to him. He had also told him that the undertaking given by the United States to Ireland in 1942, when United States troops moved into Northern Ireland, to the effect that the United States did not contemplate any occupation of Irish territory under any circumstances, still held good.

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Mr. Hearne came to see this morning with the draft telegram to his Government which he had prepared after his interview with you yesterday. I checked it against your note of the conversation, and asked him to make it clear to Mr. De Valera that you, personally, would greatly welcome the closing of Axis missions in Ireland, that their expulsion would remove a grave potential threat of misunderstanding between Ireland and the countries of the United Nations, and would also be an important positive indication of Irish goodwill.

I told Hearne I thought his Government had been dealing with the matter too much in more or less metaphysical terms of sovereignty, independence, status and external compulsion. The question of substance should not be overlooked, and I thought the Irish might take some initiative in proposing other interim methods of meeting the United States and United Kingdom requests. For instance, they could deny cypher privileges to the Axis missions. There was a precedent for this in the action taken by Argentina some months before the severance of relations. They could also perhaps concert with the United Kingdom and United States security people methods for completely smothering Axis agents who were allowed to remain in Dublin. I thought there might be some advantage, from an Irish point of view, in them including direct contacts with the United States security officers in this work instead of dealing only with the United Kingdom.

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