

Sean Lemass's Foreign Policy

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'A very broadminded gentleman with a world-wide conception'

The quotation I have just read was from a letter by an enthusiastic German industrialist to Sean Lemass in 1961 after Lemass, then in office as taoiseach for two years, had just opened a factory built by the industrialist concerned as Ireland took its first steps towards membership of the Common Market. In a sense, it sums up the common view of Lemass as a political leader whose main focus was economics, and whose only interest in foreign policy was insofar as it affected economic policy. The purpose of this paper is to explore the degree to which this received view of Lemass is sufficient as an explanation of his view of the world outside Ireland's borders, and to explore other, less well-known aspects of his political thinking in relation to foreign affairs.

There is certainly evidence that, from a very early stage, Lemass saw the interdependence of economic and foreign policy in a very positive light. An avid reader, he followed with particular interest the writings of the French socialist, Aristide Briand, who became Foreign Minister in France in 1925. In 1926 Briand secured agreement with the United States on the Kellogg-Briand pact, which precluded the possibility of war between the two countries, and then hit on the – somewhat premature – idea of 'solving the German problem by making it irrelevant'.¹ In a seminal paper prepared for the infant Fianna Fail party in 1929, Lemass was plainly influenced by Briand's plan, presented to the League of Nations in the same year, for a European federal union that would not impair national sovereignties.

For Lemass in 1929, however, nationalism took precedence over economics, and his view of nationalism as essentially beneficial (at least as far as Ireland was concerned,

¹ Memorandum on economic policy (1929) by Sean Lemass, 1929. NLI, Frank Gallagher papers, MS 18,339.

and certainly in the short and medium term) led him to discount the effect of the nationalism of other, stronger and larger countries, including its effect on Ireland. In addition, then and for many years thereafter, he was content to leave the business of foreign affairs largely to the astute guidance of Eamon de Valera, as indeed did the rest of the party.

De Valera's negative experience of the League of Nations meant that he had little substantial interest in, or hope for, the United Nations, and when he returned to office after the first inter-party government fell in 1951, his appointment of Frank Aiken as Minister for Foreign Affairs also signified a narrowing of his own interest to the sphere of Anglo-Irish relations. Aiken's twelve-year tenure of that office, on the other hand (1951-54 and 1957-69) was marked by an almost total focus on the United Nations, which was of little political interest at home, except for the controversies surrounding the UN involvement in the Congo in the early 1960s. The indefatigable Garrett Fitzgerald calculated in 1966 that, in the previous three years, Aiken had delivered some 20,000 words on Irish foreign policy in the Dail, of which only 589 had been in relation to the Common Market!²

At the same time, there is some evidence that Lemass as Taoiseach kept a closer eye on Aiken and the United Nations than his predecessor had done. Lemass certainly felt that Irish participation in the UN peace-keeping operation in the Congo required him, rather than Aiken, to propose the necessary legislation in the Dail and Seanad, and he dealt brusquely and knowledgeably with malcontents like Noel Browne who believed that such participation favoured Tshombe and Katanga.

In an unrelated issue at around the same time, he leaned gently on Aiken to ensure that Ireland would take a place on the Security Council, not because either he or Aiken passionately desired it (Aiken indeed was very unwilling to go there) but because he saw that this would give Ireland brownie points, as it were, in its core relationship with Great Britain. As Michael Kennedy has remarked, this shows 'an unusual degree of sidelining of Aiken' in relation to UN policy.³ Indeed, the degree to which Lemass also saw relationships with Britain (including Northern Ireland) as

² *The Irish Times*, 29 August 1966.

³ Check ref with MK

essentially part of his brief rather than that of his foreign minister was highlighted towards the end of his period as taoiseach, when he was invited by the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Terence O'Neill, to visit Stormont. As he hastened to accept the invitation, it was left to the ever-watchful secretary of the Department of Finance, T. K. Whitaker, through whom the invitation had reached Lemass, to suggest, with the understatement of which he was a past master, that it might be a good idea if the taoieach were to inform his foreign minister of what was going on! This exclusion of Aiken in relation to matters concerning Britain may well have been also a matter of mutual convenience.

What is less clear is Lemass's motivation for the framework – rhetorical as well as political – within which he situated any foreign policy initiative he took. One possible motivation is conspicuous by its absence – Ireland's not insignificant UN record under Aiken as a post-colonial, independent country which had, because of this, at least the possibility of acting as honest broker in a limited number of international issues. As Lemass articulated the grounds for his own foreign policy, this potential policy foundation is largely ignored in favour of a de Valera-esque harping on our Christian heritage and, increasingly, an anti-Communism which reflected the international tensions of the previous decade.

My own suspicion, for which I admit the evidence is slight, is that Lemass's view of Christianity was not dissimilar to his view of the Irish language. If Lemass was, at least intermittently, an agnostic in religious terms, in politics he was an instrumentalist of the first water. He once privately observed, with the sardonic realism that was his trademark, that references to the Irish language were often useful in reviving the flagging attentions of a Fianna Fail audience. But rhetorical markers like religion and language can have two functions. They can act as aids in the sometimes complex business of explaining politics to the public. On the other hand, they can also be used as smokescreens, as a sort of light veneer laid on top of the presentation of policies that are often complex and highly significant. The cultural context, additionally, was such in the 1960s such rhetorical framing would not have been at all unexpected or unwelcome to a range of his potential domestic audiences.

What is interesting is that the language in which these sentiments were expressed was on occasion prepared for him not by Cremin in the Department of External Affairs, but by the no doubt even more pious Maurice Moynihan, secretary to the government. Vide the draft submitted by Moynihan for Lemass's Ard Fheis speech in November 1960:

We desire to see [...] materialistic systems disappear, and the true Christian ethic made effective in all areas and all governments of the world. We believe in the beneficial force of nationalism and the right of national communities to freely determine their own political destiny. We stand opposed to colonial exploitation and particularly to the newer more ruthless form of imperialism which has brought so many European countries unwillingly under the Communist yoke.⁴

This was a too rare a steak for Cremin, who suggested diplomatically that the word 'undisciplined' be inserted before 'nationalism'. It was, he reminded Moynihan, 'a very delicate point.' Undisciplined nationalism was the danger, whereas 'nationalism, in its good sense, has been the mainspring of our own resurgence.'⁵ Some days later, a no doubt relieved Cremin reported to Aiken that this and other amendments he had suggested to the Lemass script had all been accepted.

Lemass was to be found beating the same drum in relation to the Congo, when he told the Dail the following year:

Our motive in acceding to the United Nations request is above all possible suspicion as to ulterior aims. It was inspired by the fundamental precepts of our Christian Faith as well as by our obligations to the United Nations. We felt obliged to subscribe to the ideal of human relations which is expressed in the parable of the Good Samaritan. We decided that we could not, having regard to our Faith and our policy, pass by looking the other way when we were called upon to help. That was the ideal that inspired us in accepting the request from the United Nations and I hope that the result of our action and the action

⁴ Moynihan to Cremin, 1 November 1960, NAI, DFA 305/392/1.

⁵ Cremin to Moynihan, 1 November 1960, NAI, DFA 305/392/1.

of all the other Governments that responded in a similar way to that request will be to make possible the establishment of a stable State in the Congo.⁶

Simultaneously, the ground was being prepared for a major shift in Irish foreign policy, and it is undoubtedly significant that the articulation of this shift was at virtually all times articulated by Lemass rather than by his foreign minister. The nature of the shift was clear: its extent and implications were still being left deliberately vague – so vague, indeed, that it took academic and journalistic commentators some time to realise what was actually happening.

At the Fianna Fail Ard Fheis in January of that year he noted that ‘our membership of the EEC may alter to some degree our role in the UN, but it will not weaken our allegiance to the principles of the UN Charter’.⁷ Early in February, in an interview with Nicholas Harman of *The Economist*, he made no bones about answering a leading question on the political implications of Common Market membership.

A movement to political confederation, in some form, is indeed a natural and logical development of economic integration [...] It is possible that political developments in Europe may involve a reconsideration of [neutrality]. ...

Insofar as Ireland’s position within the UN has been related to the fact that she has not heretofore been a member of a closely-knit group of nations, it is reasonable to expect a change in some degree, but our general support for UN aims and our attitude to the main aims which arise within the UN, will not be changed.⁸

Lemass’s Ard Fheis formula was repeated in the Dail by Aiken – but without the first sentence, which omission may or may not have been significant – on 21 February in the same year.

Two things can be noted here. One is the euphemism – ‘a closely-knit group of nations’ – which Lemass uses to describe the Common Market (and perhaps, by

⁶ Dail Debates, 23 November 1960, col. 176.

⁷ Text of Ard Fheis speech, NAI, DFA 2001/43/1044.

⁸ Text of interview, NAI, DFA 2001/43/1044.

implication, NATO) in public. The second is the degree to which this marked a definite breach, at least in embryo, with Aiken's UN policy in relation specifically to Europe. It should be remembered that in December 1957, some three years earlier, Aiken had suggested at the UN that there should be a 'mathematical drawing back' of all foreign troops from central Europe. This was a call he repeated in each of the two following years, despite the fact that this suggestion 'did not attract the support of the United States, Britain, West Germany or of the NATO Powers generally.'⁹

It is, in the words of a current cliché, hardly rocket science to conclude that to move from a position proposing the withdrawal of NATO troops from Europe to one of flirtation with the same alliance marks a fairly dramatic policy shift. The documentary evidence, however, reflects a flurry of advice which Lemass would have been receiving at about this time and which raised the possibility – which of course could never be admitted to in public – that Ireland's long-standing opposition to joining NATO, as enunciated particularly by Lemass's mentor, Eamon de Valera, had been based on a serious misinterpretation of the treaty which had founded that organisation. It had also been enunciated, albeit in a slightly modified form, by Lemass in his speech to the Oxford Union in October 1959.

In preparations for a meeting between Lemass and the heads of government of the six Common Market nations in early 1962, the Irish Ambassador in Brussels was warning that it was essential 'to distinguish our position from that of ideological neutrality'.¹⁰ The same source was warning Dublin about the danger of framing our application in too specifically Christian terms: there were, Lemass advised, a number of major socialist parties in Europe who might look askance at this kind of rhetoric.

The memoranda criss-crossing Stephen's Green were even more interesting. A first draft by T.K. Whitaker of the statement which Lemass would make to the Six suggested the following phraseology:

That we have not been a member of NATO is due to the incompatibility of an obligation to guarantee, and even defend, the territorial integrity of the

⁹ Speaking note for Taoiseach, 28 October 1962. NAI, DFA 2001/43/1044.

¹⁰ Frank Biggar, Brussels, to secretary, DFA, 9 December 1961. NAI DFA CM 9/3.

countries party to the Treaty with the fundamental aspiration of the Irish people to see the unity of our country restored.¹¹

This formula had already raised storm signals in Iveagh House, where Cremin had commented, in relation to an earlier draft, that it might ‘raise some doubts’ and that ‘according to our assessment of the situation that particular objection to our participation in NATO does not exist in relation to the EEC.’¹² Twenty-four hours later, Whitaker had shifted his ground, and communicated his ‘second thoughts’ to Cremin. These involved the total excision of the traditional formula and its replacement by the brilliantly vague statement that the Irish non-membership of NATO had been simply ‘due to special circumstances’.¹³

By March 1962 Lemass was biting the bullet in public. He told the Dail:

I confess I never read the text of the North Atlantic treaty until it became necessary for me to do so when certain questions were addressed to me in the Dail relating to its provisions. I had no occasion to study it earlier. When I did read it, however, and came across this article which had been interpreted over the years as implying that accession to the Treaty would involve some implication in relation to partition, some undertaking to do nothing about partition, I began to ask myself was it wise in the national interest that we should persist in forcing that interpretation on the treaty article.¹⁴

One of the first people to notice what was happening was Colonel Dan Bryan, former head of Military Intelligence, who, in a pointed article in the *Irish Times*, suggested that the policies enunciated by Lemass and Aiken were contradictory. Ireland’s foreign and defence policy, he told his readers, were now ‘in the process of complete re-orientation’. He added: ‘The greatest political changes since the creation of the

¹¹ Draft, T.K. Whitaker, 1 December 1961. NAI DFA CM 9/3.

¹² Cremin to Whitaker, 25 November 1961. NAI DFA CM 9/3.

¹³ Whitaker to Cremin, 2 December 1961. NAI DFA CM 9/3.

¹⁴ Dail Debates, 8 March 1962, col. 1322.

State are being made without the public or, in fact, the Dail understanding or realising them. The Government at best probably only partly appreciate them.’¹⁵

In private, Lemass was being even more unbuttoned. He told Joseph Sweeney, a State Department official who visited Ireland in the summer of 1962, that although there had been a lot of ‘hazy talk’ about the relationship between NATO and the Irish application to join the Common Market, there had been no indication that NATO membership would be a prior condition of entry. He told Sweeney: ‘If such a concrete statement were made seriously, Ireland would examine the whole question dispassionately and meticulously’.¹⁶ Incidentally, Sweeney’s ability to get his interlocutors to talk frankly was exemplified in quite another context later when, towards the end of this mission to Ireland, he met the crusty and bigoted premier of Northern Ireland, Lord Brookeborough, in Stormont. Brookeborough told him – in an admission that would have been tantamount to committing political suicide had it been published within Northern Ireland, that Lemass was a leader with whom he thought he could “do business”.

To return to the NATO issue, it is important to distinguish the various elements of this budding controversy. One is the relevance of NATO membership to EEC entry. Another is its relationship to Irish neutrality. Finally, there is the question of Lemass’s tactical use of this issue in relation to the campaign for EEC entry.

It is unclear how the NATO hare was started, or who started it, except to the extent that it might have been assumed to be of relevance because of Ireland’s expressed willingness, as expressed most cogently by Lemass in his press conference in Bonn in February 1962, to offer “full and unreserved” acceptance of the coordination of foreign policy, defence and cultural affairs in the event of Ireland’s membership bid being accepted. The then existing members of the EEC, of course, were all members of NATO, as was Britain. There was scant evidence of any of the existing EEC members making this a precondition of entry. The Americans, who might have been

¹⁵ Irish Times, 24 April 1962.

¹⁶ Memorandum, Kevin Rush, Washington Embassy, to Secretary, DFA, 14 June 1962, detailing conversation with Sweeney on his return to Washington. NAI, DFA 434/751.

assumed to have a major interest in such a topic, apparently never brought it up in their various discussions with Irish officials and leaders in the 1960s, preferring to concentrate on the much more commercially critical issue of landing rights in Ireland for US airlines. The issue which aroused most political anxiety in the preparation of Ireland's bid was not defence, but the degree to which we could advance the case for transitional arrangements for some of our weaker industries and at the same time avoid falling into the trap of parading our economic weaknesses so effectively that it might be concluded that we were not ready for entry at all.¹⁷

The internal memoranda of 1961-62 in Lemass's department and in the Department of External Affairs make it clear that officials and politicians alike had woken up, conveniently or otherwise, to the fact that the link between Ireland's non-membership of NATO and our neutral status, long assumed to be an article of faith by successive Irish governments, was in fact a chimera. There is no clearer evidence of Lemass's desire to obscure the fact and the nature of this sudden conversion than his untypical retreat, during a series of exchanges in the Dail on the issue, behind the convention that he could not reply to supplementary questions on complex issues of foreign policy without adequate notice.

Lemass's tactical use of the issue was two-fold. Abroad, he made it clear, whenever he thought it useful to do so, that NATO membership would not present any obstacle. At home, he tended to avoid the issue of NATO, although emphasising general commitment to participate in EEC defence policy. In the autumn of 1962, when perhaps it was becoming evident that the British application was in serious danger, he went so far as to say that the Irish government would not wish to receive an invitation to join NATO "at this time":¹⁸ the qualification was typical. He convinced some people – Dr. Garrett Fitzgerald among them – that the whole NATO issue was irrelevant, but others were not so persuaded, not least the military analyst Col. Dan Bryan. Bryan concluded that Ireland was "marching into Nato", but added carefully

¹⁷ See, for example, memorandum by Nicholas Nolan of the department of the taoiseach to T.K. Whitaker, 14 December 1961, about the need for continuing tariffs for 'difficult industries'. NAI, CM 9/3.

¹⁸ Quoted by Garrett Fitzgerald, *The Irish Times*, 12 September 1962.

that he was not suggesting that this was not the best solution!¹⁹ Military men, even in supposedly neutral countries, are never exactly averse to getting their hands on some new hardware.

This development in Irish foreign policy under Lemass has been variously interpreted. Ronan Fanning has suggested that “the debate within the Irish foreign policy establishment about the tension between the independence enshrined in neutrality and the interdependence enshrined in the EEC had by then been effectively resolved [in favour of] the realism of interdependence”.²⁰ Owen Dudley Edwards, in a review of Fanning’s and other contributions to the debate, argued, instead, that Lemass had “thrown away the obvious advantage of holding de Gaulle’s respect as an independent, nationally-conscious, Catholic minor power, and had hitch-hiked a lift on British subservience to the U.S.A.” Both judgments seem a tad over-stated, Fanning’s in that it implies an umbilical link between neutrality and independence, and Edwards’ in that it is perhaps unduly optimistic about de Gaulle’s willingness to take us at our own estimation of ourselves.

The most surprising aspect of Lemass’s foreign policy, however, especially in the light of the developments of the past fifteen years, is the episode that might be described, in the words of Sherlock Holmes, as the dog that didn’t bark in the night. This is, of course, the whole question of the possible involvement of the United States in the campaign for Irish unity.

Prior to John F. Kennedy’s visit to Ireland in 1963, Irish officials held high hopes that this first Catholic president of the United States could be enlisted in this noble cause, and an official was despatched to brief him, armed with statements in support of Irish unity ranging from George Washington in 1784 (“Patriots of Ireland! Your cause is identical to mine”), to Abraham Lincoln in 1853 (“England is perpetuating a very atrocious injustice against poor Ireland”), and ending with Richard Nixon in 1952 (“One thing that occurs to me is the possibility of putting pressure on the British, and

¹⁹ *The Irish Times*, 24 April 1962.

²⁰ Skelly, p. 285.

when it comes to handing out American money then it can be made clear that we do not favour their policy in relation to Ireland.”²¹

As early as March 1963 the Irish Ambassador to Washington was reporting the likelihood that Kennedy would prefer not to address this issue as it would be embarrassing for Britain. In June another attempt was made, but when the subject was brought up at a meeting between Kennedy and the Irish ambassador, President Kennedy “looked as if another headache had struck him and asked if he was expected to say anything in public.”²² The subsequent silence on this issue, both during Kennedy’s visit to Ireland and Lemass’s subsequent visit to the United States not long before Kennedy’s assassination, spoke volumes about the willingness of both leaders to studiously avoid an issue that was problematic for both of them, although for different reasons: for Kennedy, because he did not want to embarrass Britain; and for Lemass, because he could not risk a rebuff.

The two other areas of foreign policy in which Lemass seems to have had a declared interest underline the Taoiseach’s belief that Aiken’s attempt to carve out a unique role for Ireland at the UN would, if necessary for any reason, be expendable. Initially it did not always look like that. Lemass, for instance, vigorously supported Aiken’s attempt to get Communist China admitted to the United Nations without the sacrifice of Formosan membership. He said as much to one of his visitors, William Randolph Hearst Jr, who subsequently, in his syndicated column in his own papers, reported – with his own agreement – Lemass’s inability to “understand, on a basis of dealing with realities, the continued opposition in [the United States] to admitting red China to the UN.”

“He hastened to add”, Hearst reported, “that he was not urging the expulsion of the Republic of China (i.e. Formosa). That stalwart government (...) is a reality too.”²³

²¹ Dossier in NAI, DFA P 262/1.

²² Fay to DFA, 17 June 1963, NAI, DFA P 262/1.

²³ Syndicated column in all Hearst newspapers, 22 May 1966. Copy in NAI, DFA 96/3/202.

This policy stance, however, which was interpreted widely, and incorrectly, at home in Ireland (and in powerful Catholic circles in the USA) as a betrayal of Catholic objectives, was buttressed by a typically trenchant Lemassian defence of US policy in South East Asia. Lemass told Hearst that the US had to fulfil its commitment to Vietnam, “however messy and discouraging it is”, because if the US folded up and pulled out, “we will destroy the faith of other small nations in the integrity of US agreements – we will suffer a debacle of international prestige. Geographically, if we pull out, we will open the door to Communist domination of all South East Asia and thereby imperil our own security”.²⁴

Lemass’s forthrightness appeared to come as a pleasant surprise not only to Hearst but also to William Fay, the Irish Ambassador in Washington, who cabled home:

The Taoiseach appears to have expressed himself more definitely on the issue than we have hitherto done, in public at least. I should be very glad to know if the report can be relied on as expressing the point of view of the government because, if it is, it provides a reasonably coherent point of view which I might use if obliged to do so.²⁵

Aiken’s measured attempt to straddle the dividing line between east and west of some nine years earlier was by now truly moribund, as was evidenced little more than a year later when, under Lemass’s successor, the foreign minister intervened to prevent the national broadcasting station from sending a team of reporters and cameramen to North Vietnam.

If Aiken’s work at the United Nations bore relatively little tangible fruit in the longer term, with the possible exception of his initiatives aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, and even if Ireland’s commitment to UN peace-keeping operations from the Congo onwards was a positive one, there is little evidence that, under Lemass, the ambitions of Irish foreign policy were in any way global. If Ireland was to play part as an independent nation with a neutralist track record, it would have been important for it to establish ties not only with third world countries but also with

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Fay to Cremin, 7 June 1966. NAI DFA 96/3/602.

the Soviet bloc, but the evidence is that it neither sought nor welcomed such contacts, nor indeed did it follow through on some rhetorical flourishes about the evils of Soviet imperialism.

In September 1964, in an extraordinary cloak and dagger type episode, an assistant principal officer in the Revenue Commissioners, Seamus O Conaill, arrived at Lemass's private house saying that he had been asked to convey a message regarding the desire of the Russian government to have some form of diplomatic contact with Ireland, and "an indication that this need not be of a formal character if that would cause difficulties for us."²⁶ Lemass, plainly unimpressed, simply forwarded this communication to Aiken, and the trail goes cold, but there are other - as yet closed - files in the National Archives detailing other contacts by Russian interests with various Irish diplomatic missions around this time, so perhaps the full story remains to be told. In the event, diplomatic relations between Ireland and the Soviet Union were not established until 1974. Equally, although Lemass had complained publicly about the oppression by the Soviet Union of its client states, notably in the Baltic region, both his government and that of his successor studiously avoided any meaningful interaction with emigrant groups of Latvians and Estonians who were seeking to draw attention to their grievances.²⁷ This was in some contrast to the sympathetic view, in our permanent mission to the UN, of the plight of the Tibetans under the Chinese yoke.

What conclusions can one meaningfully draw about Lemass's foreign policy from these somewhat disconnected threads of evidence? The first, perhaps, is that under Lemass the bifurcation of foreign policy which had begun under de Valera was continued and intensified. Not only Britain and Northern Ireland, but now Europe as well, was now – in policy terms – firmly located in the department of the taoiseach, with the department of Foreign Affairs operating, in relation to these issues, almost as an annex of that department rather than in direct concert with its own minister. The second is that Lemass's own nationalism had undergone a sea-change. He was still, as ever, intensely nationalist in the sense that he had a profound belief in Ireland's ability to progress socially, economically and politically as an independent state. But it was

²⁶ NAI, DFA 17682A/95.

²⁷ NAI, DFA 97/6/233.

no longer a nationalism *contra mundum* – a nationalism based on the myth of economic self-sufficiency and in particular on a deep suspicion of the neighbouring island’s aims and objectives. It was, more particularly, a nationalism which continued the reversal of his priorities of three decades earlier, in that it saw economics as the key lever of national development, and one to which even long-cherished political mythologies could and would have to be sacrificed.

Finally, it is fascinating to see that the former revolutionary who had taken up arms against British imperialism and colonialism half a century earlier, and who was still prepared to defend tiny Formosa against the expansionary ambitions of Communist China, was so insensitive to the growing phenomenon of neo-colonialism. This concept was not part of either his conceptual vocabulary nor his ideological outlook, and his view of colonialism itself was strictly geographically and politically limited to that version of it practised by China and the Soviet Union. Of course Vietnam was a Communist issue. But it was also, we can aver without perhaps too much benefit of hindsight, a national liberation issue, and one which might have attracted a measure of sympathy from even an ageing Irish revolutionary. In this respect, at least, he was less visionary than in many of his other policies, and justified Professor Desmond Williams’ prediction that “Irish involvement in either the British or the European world might reduce the impact of Ireland’s past representational qualities as an ex-colonial state”.²⁸

But perhaps Sean Lemass, this self-confessed agnostic, might also have smiled wryly at a communication which was forwarded to him from the Papal Nuncio at about the time of his retirement, in which the Nuncio informed him that the Pope “had expressed warm appreciation of the manner in which the Irish government had at international gatherings always supported the Catholic point of view.”²⁹ If his support for Communist China had not been forgotten, it had at least been forgiven.

1 July 2007.

²⁸ *The Irish Times*, 17 December 1966.

²⁹ Note of conversation with Nuncio, 13 October 1966, NAI, DFA 305/392/1