

19/3
PRIME MINISTER

MEETING BETWEEN THE ATTORNEYS GENERAL
OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AND THE
UNITED KINGDOM

14
I have read with interest the Attorney General's
minutes to you of 25 March about his meeting with the
Irish Attorney General on 23 March when Mr. Costello
raised the proceedings brought by the Irish Government
to the European Court of Human Rights, and in particu-
lar the possibility of either prosecuting or taking
disciplinary action against those responsible in 1971/
72 for acts found by the Commission to have been in
breach of Article 3.

It is my view (confirmed by Brian Faulkner before
his death) that the decision to use methods of torture
in Northern Ireland in 1971/72 was taken by Ministers -
in particular Lord Carrington, then Secretary of State
for Defence.

If at any time methods of torture are used in Northern
Ireland contrary to the view of the Government of the day
I would agree that individual policemen or soldiers should
be prosecuted or disciplined; but in the particular
circumstances of 1971/72 a political decision was taken.

I do not believe that the Irish Government understand
the nature of the situation in 1971/72 - a situation which
to his credit, Mr. Heath ended.

I am copying this to member of 111 and to Sir John Hunt

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