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FCO/NIO 001/30



RR NIO (B)

GRS 660

CONFIDENTIAL

FM DUBLIN 291200Z MAY 85
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 326 OF 29 MAY
INFO NIO (B)

PS/SOSNI
PS/MR SCOTT
PUS
MR STEPHEN DUSIB
MR BLOOMFIELD
MR MERIFIELD
MR GILLILAND
MR BUXTON
MR COULSON
MR REEVE
LIAISON X 2
RUC

RECEIVED 3.0 MAY 1985

CALL ON THE IRISH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

1. SUMMARY. MR HAUGHEY WOULD BE VERY MUCH OPPOSED TO ANY ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT THAT WE COULD MAKE.
2. DETAIL. WHEN I MET MR HAUGHEY SOCIALLY LAST WEEK HE SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD HAVE A TALK AND I CALLED ON HIM ON 28 MAY AT THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING. I TOOK THE PRECAUTION OF LETTING THE IRISH GOVERNMENT KNOW IN ADVANCE.
3. MR HAUGHEY ASKED ME ABOUT THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS. I REPLIED ON STANDARD LINES, MAKING IT CLEAR THAT HMG'S POLICY WAS DIRECTED TO SECURING THE PARTICIPATION OF THE MINORITY COMMUNITY IN A DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTH IN THE CONTEXT OF A LIMITED IRISH DIMENSION. I STRESSED THAT THERE COULD BE NO CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF NORTHERN IRELAND AS PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE MAJORITY THERE. I SAID (WITH MY TONGUE IN MY CHEEK) THAT THIS WAS A POLICY TO WHICH HE HAD COMMITTED HIMSELF IN THE PAST BILATERALLY AND IN THE FORUM REPORT. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT SO. HE WAS ONLY COMMITTED AT PRESENT TO OBTAINING THE CONSENT OF THE UNIONISTS TO THE FORM OF A NEW IRELAND (FORUM REPORT 5.2(3)). THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF THEIR CONSENT BEING SOUGHT TO A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. I ASKED HOW, IN THAT CASE, THEY WERE TO BE BROUGHT TO THE TABLE. HE SAID THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD EVENTUALLY TELL THEM THAT ITS PATIENCE WAS EXHAUSTED AND THEY WOULD HAVE NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE. I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE SUPPOSED THAT MRS THATCHER WOULD TAKE ANY SUCH ACTION. HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT (REPEAT NOT). HE BELIEVED THAT ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS MUST AWAIT THE RIGHT MAN. THERE HAD BEEN NO SUCH MAN SINCE GLADSTONE. I LAUGHED AND SAID THAT IF THAT WAS HIS TIME SCALE, THEN WHAT HE SAID DID NOT DISTURB ME. I DID NOT QUOTE TO HIM THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF HIS MEETING WITH MRS THATCHER OF 21 MAY 1980 WHEN HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR THE CONSENT OF A MAJORITY.
4. I ASKED HIM WHAT HIS ATTITUDE WOULD BE IF WE ACHIEVED AN AGREEMENT WHICH HAD THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE SDLP. HE SAID THAT HE HAD DISAGREED WITH MUCH OF WHAT THE SDLP HAD SAID DURING THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE FORUM. I QPHNOT SUPPOSE THAT HE WOULD FEEL ANY NEED TO SUPPORT JOHN HUME. HE IMPLIED THAT HE WAS INTERESTED IN ANOTHER SECTION OF THE SDLP. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION HE REVERTED TO THIS POINT TO STRESS THAT I MUST NOT SUPPOSE THAT THE SUPPORT OF THE SDLP FOR AN ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT WOULD DETER HIM FROM ATTACKING IT.

5. I ASKED HIM ABOUT THE DOMESTIC SITUATION. HE QUOTED CONFUCIUS (I THINK HE MEANT LUCRETIVS) TO THE EFFECT THAT THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING AGREEABLE IN WATCHING THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS, THAT IS, IN HIS CASE, THE COALITION GOVERNMENT. HE SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT NOBODY HAD ANY SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF THE REPUBLIC. WHAT WE NEEDED WAS A NEW ECONOMIC GURU AND NONE WAS FORTHCOMING. HE SEEMED TO BE LOOKING FOR SOME MIRACLE TO SAVE IRELAND FROM HER ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. MEANWHILE HE WAS CONTENT TO LET THE GOVERNMENT BEAR RESPONSIBLY. HE DID NOT MENTION THAT HE WAS LAUNCHING THAT VERY DAY A NEW ECONOMIC PLATFORM (BEING REPORTED BY BAG) IN PREPARATION FOR THE LOCAL ELECTIONS.

6. IN VIEW OF THE FUSS HE AND OTHER PEOPLE ARE MAKING ABOUT IRISH NEUTRALITY I THOUGHT IT AS WELL TO ASSURE HIM THAT THE MAIL ON SUNDAY HAD BEEN QUITE WRONG IN SUGGESTING THAT THERE WAS ANY DEFENCE ELEMENT IN THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS. HE SEEMED TO ACCEPT THIS READILY. HE SAID IT HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR TO HIM AT THE 1980 DUBLIN ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT THAT OUR STRATEGISTS DID NOT REGARD IRELAND AS SIGNIFICANT. HE SAID THAT THIS WOULD NOT PREVENT HIM FROM TALKING ABOUT THE THREAT TO IRISH NEUTRALITY IN PUBLIC.

7. WE ALSO DISCUSSED THE LEBANON. HE ASKED ME IF IT WAS A RELIGIOUS WAR BUT DID NOT RISE WHEN I REPLIED THAT I THOUGHT THAT, LIKE NORTHERN IRELAND, IT WAS MORE THE SCENE OF A STRUGGLE FOR POWER.

8. COMMENT: MR HAUGHEY WAS CORDIAL, PARTLY PERHAPS BECAUSE I DID MY BEST WITHIN THE LIMITS OF DISCRETION TO TALK TO HIM IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD WAY. HE PUT FORWARD NO POSITIVE AND REALISTIC IDEAS AND, ALTHOUGH HE WOULD CLEARLY PREFER POWER HE OBVIOUSLY ENJOYS THE NEGATIVE ROLE OF A LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION. THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION THAT HE INTENDED TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE OR HELPFUL IN ANY WAY IN HIS APPROACH TO AN ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT. WHETHER WE SUCCEED IN ACHIEVING ONE OR FAIL HE WILL CERTAINLY RELISH THE OPPORTUNITY OF ATTEMPTING TO DESTROY DR FITZGERALD.

9. IF HE BECAME TAOISEACH WITH AN ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT IN OPERATION, HOWEVER, WE NEED NOT SUPPOSE HE WOULD AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE TRY TO UPSET ARRANGEMENTS THEN IN PLACE. HE WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO APPROACH THE MATTER PRAGMATICALLY AND SEE WHAT HE COULD GET OUT OF IT, PERHAPS TRYING TO RENEGOTIATE THE AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE COULD DO BETTER THAN DR FITZGERALD.

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CCN PARA 9 " BE MORE LIKELY TO APPROACH THE MATTER PRAGMATICALLY AND SEE WHAT HE COULD GET OUT OF IT,"

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