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DESKBY 030830Z OCTOBER  
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TELEGRAM NUMBER 318 OF 2 OCTOBER 1979

IMPACT OF THE PAPAL VISIT ON IRISH GOVERNMENT THINKING ON SECURITY AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE NORTH

1. WE ARE TOO CLOSE TO THE EVENTS FOR A FULL APPRAISAL OF THE IMPACT OF THE POPE'S VISIT TO BE POSSIBLE, AND I SHALL BE REPORTING ON THE VISIT AT GREATER LENGTH BY BAG. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT, TOO, WILL NO DOUBT NEED TIME TO ASSESS THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEM, ESPECIALLY OF THE POPE'S VARIOUS SPEECHES WHILE HE WAS HERE. THERE REMAINS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE POPE WILL ADD TO THESE BY SOME REFERENCE TO THE IRISH SITUATION DURING HIS VISIT TO THE USA. THE FOLLOWING THEREFORE REPRESENTS ONLY SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S REACTIONS

TO THE VISIT IN RELATION TO:

- (A) THEIR WISH FOR A POLITICAL INITIATIVE BY HMG ON NORTHERN IRELAND
- (B) SECURITY COOPERATION.

#### POLITICAL INITIATIVE

2. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WILL FEEL THAT THE POPE HAS CRITICISED HMG FOR "ALLOWING" A POLITICAL VACUUM TO EXIST IN THE NORTH, AND THEY WILL SEE THIS AS SUPPORT FOR THEIR OWN POSITION IN CONTINUING TO URGE ON US THE NECESSITY FOR SOME POLITICAL INITIATIVE TO FILL THE VACUUM. IRISH OFFICIALS HAVE ALREADY TOLD US (AT THE MEETING HERE ON 27 SEPTEMBER) THAT MR O'KENNEDY WILL RAISE THE POLITICAL SITUATION WHEN HE MEETS SOSNI ON 5 OCTOBER. THE POPE'S WORDS ON THIS SUBJECT MAY CAUSE HIM TO STRENGTHEN THE TERMS IN WHICH HE DOES SO. THERE IS THE FURTHER POINT THAT MR LYNCH NO DOUBT SEE HIS WATERVILLE SPEECH (MY TELS NOS 305 AND 309) AND HIS FACING DOWN OF THE CHALLENGE WITHIN HIS OWN PARLIAMENTARY PARTY BY SILE DE VALERA AS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, -A GESTURE IN OUR DIRECTION. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT MAY THEREFORE BE ENCOURAGED TO HOPE FOR SOMETHING TO EMERGE FROM US IN THE SHAPE OF WHAT THEY WOULD SEE AS A RECIPROCAL GESTURE.

#### SECURITY COOPERATION

3. THE POPE'S CONDEMNATION OF VIOLENCE IS UNLIKELY TO MAKE ANY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE TO THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S DECISIONS ON THE EXTENT OF SECURITY COOPERATION WITH US. THEY BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY EXPLAINED TO US (MOST RECENTLY AT THE OFFICIALS' MEETING ON 27 SEPTEMBER) THE CONSTRAINTS UNDER WHICH THEY OPERATE AND THE POPE'S WORDS HAVE NOT ALTERED THOSE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE IRISH WILL NOT HAVE BEEN INDUCED BY WHAT THE POPE SAID TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSIONS TO US WHICH THEY WOULD NOT OTHERWISE HAVE MADE. IT IS JUST POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT THE UNEQUIVOCAL NATURE OF THE POPE'S CONDEMNATION OF VIOLENCE, COUPLED WITH THE FACT THAT IT HAS ALREADY BEEN PUBLICLY REJECTED BY PIRA AND PSF, MAY INDUCE THE IRISH TO BE SOMEWHAT MORE FORTHCOMING IN DISCUSSING THOSE AREAS OF SECURITY COOPERATION WHERE IT ALREADY SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT THEY MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE.

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