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K O N F I D E N T I A L

FM DUBLIN 28:1845Z JULY 1981

TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY 29:0830Z FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 271 OF 28 JULY 1981

REPEATED FOR INFO TO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST) AND WASHINGTON

MY TWO I.P.T'S: THE PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER TO SENATOR KENNEDY AND OTHERS

1. THE TWO THINGS WHICH I THINK HAVE AFFECTED DR FITZGERALD AND PROFESSOR DOOGE MOST ARE THE EFFECT ON THE IRISH/AMERICAN POLITICIANS AND ALSO ON THE FAMILIES OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS WHOM THE TAOISEACH MET YESTERDAY. THE MEETING WAS UNSATISFACTORY, WITH THE FAMILIES COMPLAINING THAT THE TAOISEACH WAS DOING NOTHING. HE TOLD ME THAT THEY HAD SAID THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WAS THE SAME AS THE BRITISH. THE WORDING OF ANY PRIME MINSISTER'S LETTER WOULD BE TAKEN AS PROOF BY THE FAMILIES AND THE IRA THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WERE AT ONE WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON THE WAY OF DEALING WITH THE HUNGER STRIKE.

2. AS REGARDS THE EFFECT OF THE LETTER IN THE UNITED STATES, HM AMBASSADOR WASHINGTON WILL NO DOUBT BE COMMENTING. BUT I POINTED OUT TO THE TAOISEACH THAT THE IRISH TIMES WAS READ WIDELY AND THE

2. AS REGARDS THE EFFECT OF THE LETTER IN THE UNITED STATES, HM AMBASSADOR WASHINGTON WILL NO DOUBT BE COMMENTING. BUT I POINTED OUT TO THE TAOISEACH THAT THE IRISH TIMES WAS READ WIDELY AND THE PIECE THE PRIME MINISTER HAD QUOTED AND WHICH CAUSED HIM SO MUCH CONCERN HAD PROBABLY BEEN READ WIDELY AT THE TIME.

3. THE TAOISEACH FEELS WE HAVE LET HIM DOWN AND I HOPE WE CAN TRY AND DO WHAT WE CAN TO SHOW THAT, WHATEVER THE FACTS OF THE MATTER, WE CARE ABOUT HIS FEELINGS. AND THE BEST WAY TO DO SO IS TO GIVE HIM SOME KIND OF REPLY. IN ORDER TO HEAD OFF AN UNWELCOME PUBLIC STATEMENT I TOLD HIM I WOULD TRY AND GIVE HIM SOME EXPLANATION PRIVATELY. I HOPE THIS CAN BE ARRANGED, TOGETHER WITH ANY PERSONAL MESSAGE THE PRIME MINISTER MAY CARE TO SEND.

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SENT/RECD THREE AT 28:2010Z CB/~~sent~~QSL PSE KKM~~sent~~

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FM DUBLIN 28:1735Z JULY 1981

TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY 29:0830Z FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 270 OF 28 JULY 1981

REPEATED FOR INFO TO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST) AND WASHINGTON

M.I.P.T.

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF TACISEACH'S SPEAKING NOTE:

I REGRET THAT A LETTER FROM THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER TO U.S. POLITICIANS DELIVERED ON SUNDAY NIGHT AND MONDAY MORNING AND PUBLISHED WITHOUT NOTICE TO OR CONSULTATION WITH OUR GOVERNMENT CONTAINED A UNILATERAL VERSION OF MY POSITION IN RELATION TO THE HUNGER STRIKE WHICH IS MISLEADING AND WHICH WAS KNOWN TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OVER 48 HOURS BEFORE DELIVERY NOT TO REPRESENT MY POSITION OR THAT OF MY GOVERNMENT.

FIRST, WITH RESPECT TO THE QUESTION OF PRESS REPORTS WHICH HAVE GIVEN VARYING VERSIONS OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION: THE MINISTER DESIGNATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS INFORMED THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR ON FRIDAY, 24 JULY, THAT HE SHOULD IGNORE PRESS REPORTS WHICH HAD APPEARED EARLIER IN THE WEEK AND WHICH DID NOT REFLECT

AMBASSADOR ON FRIDAY, 24 JULY, THAT HE SHOULD IGNORE PRESS REPORTS WHICH HAD APPEARED EARLIER IN THE WEEK AND WHICH DID NOT REFLECT OUR POSITION. THE PRESS REPORTS ON WHICH THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER RELIES HAD BEEN PUBLISHED ON THE PREVIOUS WEDNESDAY AND HER GOVERNMENT WAS THEREFORE ON NOTICE TWO DAYS BEFORE DELIVERY OF THE LETTER IN WASHINGTON THAT SUCH REPORTS DID NOT REFLECT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION. THE TRUE POSITION WAS THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO FIND A SOLUTION WERE CONTINUING WITH URGENCY IN VIEW OF THE CLOSENESS TO DEATH OF KIERAN DOHERTY AND KEVIN LYNCH AND THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT STILL FELT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD SHOW ITSELF MORE READY TO RESPOND TO THE PROPOSALS OF THE COMMISSION ON JUSTICE AND PEACE.

IN THE COURSE OF HIS DISCUSSION WITH THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR, THE MINISTER DESIGNATE ALSO PRESSED THE DESIRABILITY OF TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY PROVIDED FOR PROGRESS BY THE PROPOSAL OF COUNCILLOR CANNING OF DUNGANNON WHICH, THE AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD, WE UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE EMERGED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH A BRITISH OFFICIAL, MR BLACKWELL.

FINALLY DURING THESE DISCUSSIONS THE MINISTER DESIGNATE MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT WAS THE VIEW OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT THAT THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES SHOULD MAKE A NEW PRESENTATION OF ITS POSITION REGARDING PRESENT CONDITIONS AS TO THE END OF THE HUNGER STRIKE AND THAT, AS WE HAD REPEATEDLY STRESSED IN THE PAST, THIS PRESENTATION SHOULD APPROXIMATE, AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE, TO THAT WORKED OUT ON 6 JULY BY THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE AND MINISTER OF STATE ALLISON.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER COULD SEEK TO PRESENT SUCH A VERSION OF MY POSITION TO U.S. POLITICIANS UNILATERALLY AND WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION OR CONSULTATION. IT IS EVEN LESS EASY TO UNDERSTAND HOW SUCH STATEMENTS ABOUT MY POSITION COULD BE PRESENTED TO IRISH AND WORLD OPINION GENERALLY THROUGH PUBLICATION OF THAT LETTER.

THE IRISH GOVERNMENT CANNOT FEEL THAT SUCH A PRESENTATION OF MY POSITION CAN BE HELPFUL TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WHICH IT HAS BEEN THE WISH OF OUR GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE AND INDEED TO TRANSFORM - OR INDEED HELPFUL TO THE TASK OF INFORMING IRISH-AMERICAN OPINION IN THE UNITED STATES.

ENDS.

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FM DUBLIN 28:1815Z JULY 1981

TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY 29:0330Z FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 259 OF 28 JULY 1981

AND REPEATED FOR INFO TO IMMEDIATE NIO (B) AND WASHINGTON

THE PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER TO SENATOR KENNEDY AND OTHERS.

1. THE TAOISEACH ASKED ME TO CALL AT 4.30PM THIS AFTERNOON. PROFESSOR DOOGE AND MR NELIGAN WERE PRESENT.

2. HE SAID THAT HE WAS MOST DISTURBED BY THE LETTER THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SENT TO THE IRISH/AMERICAN POLITICIANS WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN THE IRISH TIMES TODAY. ONE OF THE ADDRESSEES HAD ALREADY QUERIED WHAT WAS GOING ON AND HAD ASKED FOR A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IN REGARD TO THE HUNGER STRIKE. THE POSITION THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAD BUILT UP SO CAREFULLY OVER THE YEARS IN THE U.S.A. IN REGARD TO THE I.R.A. WOULD BE JEOPADISED. THIS WOULD HURT BOTH OUR INTERESTS. HE WAS PERSONALLY ASTONISHED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER COULD HAVE PRESENTED HIS VIEWS WITHOUT CONSULTING HIM AND THAT SHE HAD DONE SO ON THE BASIS OF PRESS REPORTS. HE KNEW THAT PROFESSOR DOOGE HAD ALREADY TOLD ME WHEN I SAW THE LETTER ON FRIDAY THAT THE IRISH

BASIS OF PRESS REPORTS. HE KNEW THAT PROFESSOR DOOGE HAD ALREADY TOLD ME WHEN I SAW THE LETTER ON FRIDAY THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN BOTHERED ABOUT THE MISREPORTING OF THEIR POSITION (SEE PARA 5 OF MY TELNO 259). THE FACT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD PUT ON NOTICE THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAD REFERRED TO THE PRESS REPORTING IN THIS WAY 48 HOURS BEFORE THE LETTER WAS DELIVERED MADE THE WHOLE THING MUCH WORSE. DR FITZGERALD SPOKE FROM NOTES WHICH ARE IN MY I.F.T. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE IN THE FORM OF A STATEMENT, THEY ARE MERCIFULLY NOT EVEN THE DRAFT OF ONE AND WERE USED AS SPEAKING NOTES.

3. I SAID THAT I DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THE PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER UNTIL I HAD READ THE REPORT OF IT IN THIS MORNING'S PAPER. I SUGGESTED THAT THE PARAGRAPH QUOTING DR FITZGERALD HAD BEEN DRAWN FROM A REPORT IN THE IRISH TIMES OF LAST WEEK WHICH I KNEW HAD BEEN IN QUOTATION MARKS. THIS HAD GIVEN THE PRESS REPORT SOME KIND OF AUTHENTICITY. I ALSO SUGGESTED THAT PROBABLY THE PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER HAD BEEN DRAFTED BEFORE MY TELEGRAM OF FRIDAY 24 JULY HAD BEEN RECEIVED. ANYWAY, I SAID THAT I MUST POINT OUT THAT MY CONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR DOOGE CONCENTRATED MAINLY ON THE H-BLOCKS AND THE QUESTION OF MACFARLANE. THE SECONDARY MATTER OF THE PRESS REPORTS HAD BEEN RAISED BECAUSE OF THE FINANCIAL TIMES ARTICLE OF 23 JULY (SEE MY TELNO 258).

4. THE TAOISEACH AND PROFESSOR DOOGE THEN SHOWED ME THE DRAFT OF A PUBLIC STATEMENT THEY THOUGHT THEY MIGHT MAKE. THEY SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE ROYAL WEDDING THEY HAD THOUGHT IT BETTER NOT TO MAKE A STATEMENT IN STRONG TERMS - AND ESPECIALLY AS THEY HAD NOT RECEIVED AN EXPLANATION FROM US. THE PIECE THEY SHOWED ME LOOKED FAIRLY MILD BUT HAD IN IT A STATEMENT THAT THE TAOISEACH HAD RAISED THIS WHOLE MATTER WITH ME AND ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION. I VENTURED TO POINT OUT THAT THIS WOULD ONLY EXCITE THE INTEREST OF THE PRESS AND WE WOULD FIND OURSELVES IN A UNWELCOME ONGOING SITUATION WHICH WOULD DO OUR RELATIONS NO GOOD. I SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THEY SIMPLY MADE A STATEMENT WHICH ENDED THE MATTER AND DID NOT LOOK FORWARD TO SOME NEW DEVELOPMENT. AS REGARDS THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION THIS COULD SIMPLY BE BASED AS THEY HAD TOLD US IN THE PAST (MY TELNO 260), ON THE PROPOSALS OF THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE. THEY BOTH SAID THEY SAW THE POINT ABOUT NOT HAVING A STATEMENT WHICH MIGHT EXCITE FUTURE INTEREST AND THEY WOULD REFLECT ON WHAT I HAD SAID.