

FONTOBEL 001/26

PF NIO BELFAST

GR 900

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 260100Z MAY 82

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1900 OF 25 MAY

INFO PRIORITY TO NIO LONDON NIO BELFAST, ROUTINE BIS NEW YORK.

MY TELEGRAM NO 1805: NORTHERN IRELAND: VISIT OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND

1. ONE OTHER PERSON HAS NOW BEEN ADDED TO THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND DELEGATION WHOSE COMPOSITION IS AS FOLLOWS:

THE HON THOMAS S FOLEY (D WASHINGTON)
(HOUSE MAJORITY WHIP)
THE HON CHARLES F DOUGHERTY (R PENNSYLVANIA)
THE HON JAMES N SHANNON (D MASSACHUSETTS)
MR KIRK O'DONNELL
(GENERAL COUNSEL TO SPEAKER TIP O'NEILL)
MR JAMES R FERGUSON
(ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO SPEAKER O'NEILL)
MR WERNER BRANDT
(ASSISTANT TO CONGRESSMAN FOLEY)
MR TOBIAS (TOBY) SEGGERMAN
(LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT TO SENATOR DODD)

2. THE GROUP WILL TRANSIT LONDON ON THEIR WAY TO DUBLIN ON THE MORNING OF 28 MAY (ARRIVING AT HEATHROW ON PANAM 106 AT 0725 AND DEPARTING FOR DUBLIN AT 0925 ON AIR LINGUS 153). IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO HELP THEM IN TRANSIT BY SPEEDING UP FORMALITIES, THIS WOULD BE VERY WELCOME.

3. THE ADDITIONAL MEMBER OF THE GROUP (FERGUSON) IS BASED IN BOSTON AND IS O'NEILL'S LINK WITH THE IRISH COMMUNITY THERE. THE OTHER THREE STAFF AIDES ARE CLOSE CONTACTS OF OURS AND WELL-DISPOSED. O'DONNELL ATTENDED LAST YEAR'S DITCHLEY MEETING ON IRELAND. WERNER BRANDT (A FORMER STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICER) IS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL AND WE SUGGEST THAT THE NIO TURN TO HIM IF ANY SNAGS ARISE.

4. THE FOLLOWING ARE BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION:

(A) TOM FOLEY

AGED 53. A CATHOLIC IRISH-AMERICAN WITH A SIZEABLE IRISH AMERICAN ELEMENT IN HIS CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT. FOLEY HAS BEEN IN CONGRESS SINCE 1964, WHEN HE CAPTURED WHAT HAD HITHERTO BEEN A REPUBLICAN DISTRICT. BECAUSE OF ITS DISTANCE FROM WASHINGTON DC (3000 MILES) FOLEY DID NOT CULTIVATE HIS CONSTITUENTS AS ASSIDUOUSLY AS SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES AND WAS FACED WITH AN UPHILL BATTLE TO KEEP THE SEAT IN 1980. HE HAS SINCE WORKED HARD AT THE DISTRICT, RETURNING THERE EVERY WEEKEND.

FOLEY WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE UNTIL 1981 WHEN HE GAVE UP THE CHAIRMANSHIP TO BECOME HOUSE MAJORITY WHIP. ALTHOUGH PARTY DISCIPLINE IS SLACK AND CONGRESSIONAL WHIPS DO NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY OF WHIPS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, FOLEY IS ONE OF THE LEADERS IN THE HOUSE, WIDELY REGARDED AS A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO TIP O'NEILL SHOULD O'NEILL STAND DOWN AS SPEAKER IN TWO YEARS TIME.



MR. BLELLOCH
MR. WYATT
MR. GILLILAND
MR. BUXTON
MR. COULSON
MR. BLATHERWICK
LIAISON x2
RUC

26 MAY 1982
Rec'd on.....
BIS NEW YORK.

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FOLEY KNOWS THE UK, INCLUDING NORTHERN IRELAND, WELL AND HAS BEEN A LEADING MODERATE INFLUENCE IN THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND. IT WAS AT HIS INSISTENCE THAT THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND INCLUDED IN THEIR LAST TWO ST PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENTS THE SENTIMENT THAT IRISH UNITY COULD ONLY COME ABOUT BY CONSENT. HE HAS ALWAYS KEPT AN OPEN DOOR TO VISITORS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND, INCLUDING THE DUP DELEGATION WHO WERE HERE IN JANUARY AND WHOM OTHERS IN CONGRESS REFUSED TO SEE. HIS OVERALL APPROACH IS REASONED AND OBJECTIVE AND HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONCERNED TO AVOID POSITIONS WHICH COULD SUGGEST THAT CONGRESS WAS INTERFERING IN UK INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

(B) CHARLES DOUGHERTY.

AGED 44. FIRST ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 1978, DOUGHERTY, A FORMER MEMBER OF THE MARINE CORPS AND SUBSEQUENTLY A TEACHER, HAS BEEN COMBATIVE IN THE HOUSE, OFTEN LINING UP WITH DEMOCRATS. HE HAS ALSO BEEN AT ODDS WITH THE REPUBLICAN ORGANISATION IN PHILADELPHIA (HIS CONSTITUENCY). AS THE ONLY CONGRESSMAN FROM PHILADELPHIA REPRESENTING A DISTRICT WITH A HIGH DEMOCRATIC PARTY REGISTRATION, DOUGHERTY IS VULNERABLE TO IRISH AMERICAN PRESSURES AND HAS AN ACTIVE NORA GROUP CONSTANTLY AT HIS HEELS. HIS LIFE WAS THREATENED DURING THE HUNGER STRIKE WHEN, ALONE AMONG LOCAL POLITICIANS, HE REFUSED TO TAKE PART IN HUNGER STRIKE MARCHES. AT THE SAME TIME HE WAS VOCIFEROUSLY CRITICAL OF BRITAIN, MAINTAINING THAT UNLESS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TOOK STEPS TO INDICATE ITS SUPPORT FOR EVENTUAL REUNIFICATION, HE MIGHT INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO CURB US COOPERATION WITH BRITAIN, EG IN THE DEFENCE FIELD. NOTHING CAME OF THESE THREATS. DOUGHERTY SWITCHED FROM MEMBERSHIP OF BIAGGI'S AD HOC COMMITTEE WHEN THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND WAS FORMED.

(C) JIM SHANNON.

AGED 30. A CATHOLIC IRISH AMERICAN, FIRST ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 1978 AND QUICKLY BRANDED AS QUOTE SPEAKER'S PET UNQUOTE BECAUSE OF HIS ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF O'NEILL ABOUT WHOM HE WROTE A THESIS WHILE AT COLLEGE. SHANNON HAS QUICKLY MADE A NAME FOR HIMSELF AS AN EFFECTIVE CONGRESSMAN. HE WAS CRITICAL OF BRITAIN DURING THE HUNGER STRIKE. WHEN MR ALISON CAME HERE IN JULY 1981 SHANNON TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD NO BUSINESS COMING TO WASHINGTON WHEN HE SHOULD BE IN BELFAST SETTLING THE STRIKE. NONETHELESS, HE HAS BEEN FRIENDLY AND OPEN TO DISCUSSION, HAS ESTABLISHED A GOOD RAPPORT WITH HAROLD MCCUSKER MP AND WAS THE ONLY CONGRESSMAN WHO RESPONDED TO MY LETTER SENDING DETAILS OF OUR NORTHERN IRELAND PROPOSALS BY RINGING UP TO ASK QUESTIONS.

HENDERSON

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SENT/RECD AT 26/0846Z APH/KLA