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TO PRIORITY DUBLIN

TELEGRAM NUMBER 148 OF 8 NOVEMBER

INFO PRIORITY NIO BELFAST, WASHINGTON AND BIS NEW YORK

INFO SAVING BONN, PARIS

ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT: TAOISEACH'S PRESS CONFERENCE

1. DR FITZGERALD GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE IRISH EMBASSY ON THE EVENING OF 7 NOVEMBER FOLLOWING THE ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT MEETING AT CHEQUERS. HIS REMARKS HAVE BEEN WIDELY REPORTED IN THE BRITISH AND IRISH DAILY NEWSPAPERS AS WELL AS ON RADIO AND TELEVISION. HE AVOIDED REVEALING THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE ATMOSPHERE HAD BEEN GOOD AND THAT ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS HAD BEEN RESTORED TO THE STATE THEY WERE IN FOLLOWING THE LAST SUMMIT MEETING IN NOVEMBER 1981. THE FOLLOWING POINTS ARE WORTH RECORDING.

JOINT SOVEREIGNTY

2. THE TAOISEACH WAS PRESSED REPEATEDLY ABOUT WHETHER HE HAD RAISED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THE POSSIBILITY OF JOINT SOVEREIGNTY PROVIDING THE BASIS FOR A SOLUTION TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM. HE EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT IT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AND WHEN ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT JOINT SOVEREIGNTY MEANT SAID THAT HE WAS NOT SURE. DR FITZGERALD POINTED OUT THAT JOINT SOVEREIGNTY HAD NOT BEEN CONSIDERED BY THE NEW IRELAND FORUM, ALTHOUGH HE HOPED THAT THE FORUM WOULD QUOTE IN DUE COURSE TURN ITS MIND TO ALTERNATIVE MODELS UNQUOTE.

NEW IRELAND FORUM

3. THE TAOISEACH SAID THAT HE HAD TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN TO THE PRIME MINISTER HOW THE NEW IRELAND FORUM WAS ORGANISED AND WHAT IT WAS DOING. HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOT ATTEMPTED TO PREDICT THE OUTCOME OF ITS DELIBERATIONS AND HAD NOT ASKED FOR A REACTION FROM THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO HAD SIMPLY LISTENED WITH INTEREST. THERE HAD BEEN NO DISCUSSION ON THE SUBJECT. DR FITZGERALD HOPED THAT THE FINAL REPORT OF THE FORUM WOULD PROVIDE A BASIS FOR FUTURE ANGLO-IRISH COOPERATION.

PRIVATE OFFICE
PUS
MR. BOURN
MR. MERIFIELD
MR. GILLILAND
Sir EWART BELL
MR. BUXTON
MR. COULSON
MR. REEVE
LIAISON x 2
RUC

WJA 10/11

Rec'd on 10 NOV 1983

2) GEN/24
with copies
MR
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NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICAL SITUATION

4. DR FITZGERALD SAID THAT HE AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD QUOTE REFLECTED TOGETHER ON THE PROBLEM UNQUOTE. HE ADDED THAT THE VALUE OF THE MEETING LAY IN THE OPPORTUNITY IT HAD GIVEN FOR A RELAXED DISCUSSION WITHOUT THE PRESSURE TO REACH DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS. THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED. THE GOOD RELATIONSHIP WHICH HE HAD BUILT UP WITH THE PRIME MINISTER SINCE MEETING HER IN 1975 WOULD BE HELPFUL IN RESOLVING THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM THOUGH QUOTE INTRANSIGENT FACTS UNQUOTE WOULD NOT GO AWAY. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PROBLEM OF THE ALIENATION OF THE MINORITY COMMUNITY FROM THE FORCES OF LAW AND ORDER QUOTE IS AND MUST BE A MATTER OF CONCERN UNQUOTE AND WAS SOMETHING WHICH QUOTE WE MUST APPLY OURSELVES TO UNQUOTE. ASKED WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER WAS PREPARED TO GIVE A HIGHER PRIORITY TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM, DR FITZGERALD DECLINED TO COMMENT BUT SAID THAT WHEN, IN 1973 AT SUNNINGDALE, QUOTE WE ONCE CAME CLOSE TO FINDING A WAY THROUGH THE MORASS UNQUOTE, IT WAS THE RESULT OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS GIVING THE MATTER A HIGH PRIORITY. HE HOPED THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS WOULD DO THE SAME IN THE COMING YEAR OR SO.

SUPERGRASSES

5. ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE USE OF SUPERGRASSES, DR FITZGERALD GAVE A LONG AND SOMEWHAT CONFUSED REPLY BUT SUGGESTED THAT IT DID RAISE SOME PROBLEMS. IN PARTICULAR HE SAID THERE WAS EVIDENCE THAT SUPERGRASSES HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE ALIENATION OF BOTH COMMUNITIES FROM THE FORCES OF LAW AND ORDER. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT THEY HAD BEEN USEFUL IN CONVICTING TERRORISTS.