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FM C G NEW YORK 011910Z APR 85

TO PRIORITY WASHINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 005 OF 1 APRIL 1985 ..

AND TO PRIORITY FCO

INFO ROUTINE NIO LONDON; NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN ..

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CALL ON ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK: 29 MARCH

SUMMARY: ARCHBISHOP O'CONNOR REGRETTED NOT MEETING THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND DURING HIS RECENT VISIT AND INSISTED THAT NO POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO THIS. THE ARCHBISHOP HAD BEEN SURPRISED AND UPSET BY THE REACTIONS OF THE BRITISH PRESS TO HIS ST PATRICK'S DAY SERMON WHICH HE HAD INTENDED AS A CAREFULLY BALANCED STATEMENT. THE ARCHBISHOP IS MORE CRITICAL OF HMG AND MUCH MORE CRITICAL OF DR FITZGERALD'S GOVERNMENT THAN HE WAS SIX MONTHS AGO. HE IS WORKING ON INITIATIVES ON IRELAND BOTH WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN AND WITH THE US BISHOPS.

DETAIL:

2. I CALLED UPON THE ARCHBISHOP AT MY REQUEST TO SEEK ELUCIDATION OF PASSAGES IN HIS ST PATRICK'S DAY SERMON WHICH HAD CAUSED CONCERN AND ANGER IN BRITAIN. I LEFT WITH HIM A COPY OF MR HURD'S SPEECH OF 27 MARCH.
3. ARCHBISHOP O'CONNOR SAID THAT HE REGRETTED THAT HE HAD NOT MET MR HURD DURING HIS RECENT VISIT. NO POLITICAL MOTIVATION SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO THIS WHICH WAS PURELY THE RESULT OF MIS-TIMING. HE HAD MET MR HURD IN BELFAST AND WOULD HAVE BEEN GLAD TO MEET HIM IN NEW YORK AND HAD TOLD A REPORTER SO IN WASHINGTON.
4. THE ARCHBISHOP HAD BEEN SHOCKED AND DISTRESSED BY ATTACKS BY BRITISH NEWSPAPERS ON HIS HANDLING OF THE ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE AND PASSAGES IN HIS SERMON. HE HAD BECOME RESIGNED TO HOSTILE COMMENT BY THE NEW YORK TIMES BUT THE LANGUAGE OF THE DAILY MIRROR WAS SOMETHING HE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY EXPERIENCED. I EXPLAINED THAT THE INTENSITY OF THE REACTION MIGHT IN PART BE DUE TO A RELEASE BY ASSOCIATED PRESS WHICH HAD MISQUOTED HIM AS REFERRING TO QUOTE BRITISH OPPRESSION IN IRELAND UNQUOTE. BUT THE WHOLE INCIDENT SHOWED THAT HIS WORDS WERE TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY NOT ONLY IN NEW YORK AND IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND BUT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM ALSO AND THAT THE BRITISH ALSO HAD STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT WHAT WENT ON IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND ESPECIALLY ABOUT IRA TERRORISM AND THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT WHICH GROUPS SUCH AS NORAID RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED STATES.
5. THE ARCHBISHOP THEN ENTERTAINED ME TO A LONG ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE AND THE REASONS FOR HIS ACTIONS AND HIS STATEMENTS ON THAT DAY. HE HAD CONSISTENTLY WORKED TO PROMOTE THE POSITION OF THE MODERATES IN THE IRISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY. WHEN KING HAD NEVERTHELESS BEEN APPOINTED GRAND MARSHAL HE HAD WARNED GALVIN AND FLANNERY THAT "GENTLENESS IN THE NEW YORK ARCHDIOCESE HAD DIED WITH CANDINAL COOKE". IF NORAID ATTEMPTED TO TURN THE PARADE INTO A POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION OR TO COMMIT ANY UNTOWARD ACTS, SUCH AS SMUGGLING INTO THE PARADE ACTUAL IRA GUNMEN, THEN HE WOULD NOT ONLY REFUSE TO REVIEW THE PARADE BUT WOULD DENOUNCE IT PUBLICLY AND DISSOCIATE NOW AND FOR ALL FUTURE YEARS HIS OFFICE FROM THIS TRADITIONAL IRISH-AMERICAN INSTITUTION. WHETHER OR NOT TO TAKE THE REVIEW HAD BEEN A VERY DIFFICULT DECISION WHICH HE HAD DEFERRED UNTIL THE MORNING OF THE PARADE. HE HAD DECIDED THAT THE BALANCE OF ADVANTAGE LAY IN HIS TAKING THE REVIEW AND PRESERVING THE PEACEFULNESS OF THE PARADE. HIS AIM WAS TO DEPOLITICISE THE PARADE. THE NEW YORK POLICE HAD SAID THAT HE HAD HELPED TO DEFUSE A POTENTIALLY DIFFICULT POLITICAL SITUATION. HE BELIEVED THAT THE SITUATION COULD HAVE BEEN QUOTE VOLCANIC UNQUOTE.

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6. WHEN CARDINAL COOKE HAD GIVEN HIS LAST ST PATRICK'S DAY SERMON HE HAD EXPLICITLY CRITICISED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT HIS SUCCESSOR HAD BEEN VERY CAREFUL NOT TO DO AND HE HAD NEVER USED THE EXPRESSION "BRITISH OPPRESSION". HE HAD BEEN UNEQUIVOCAL IN HIS CONDEMNATION OF VIOLENCE. THE ARCHBISHOP BELIEVED THAT HIS STATEMENT STRUCK A CAREFUL BALANCE AND WAS ONE WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE FOUND, TAKEN IN ITS ENTIRETY, HELPFUL. THE ARCHBISHOP SAID THAT HE CERTAINLY DID NOT EQUATE BRITISH FORCES WITH THE IRA AND "OF COURSE" AGREED THAT THE USE OF FORCE IN THE SUPPRESSION OF IRA TERRORISM WAS LEGITIMATE.

7. I POINTED OUT THAT IN ITS REFERENCES TO CIVIL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ON THE ONE HAND AND TO THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE TO THEIR BIRTHRIGHT ON THE OTHER, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JUSTICE AND RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL ITS CITIZENS WAS THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF BRITISH POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. IF THE ARCHBISHOP BELIEVED THAT THERE WERE STILL EXAMPLES OF INJUSTICE OR DISCRIMINATION WHICH THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES HAD NOT ADDRESSED, I HOPED THAT HE WOULD SAY WHAT THESE WERE. ON THE OTHER HAND THE CONFLICTING CLAIMS OF THE MAJORITY AND THE MINORITY COMMUNITIES TO WHAT THEY SAW AS BIRTHRIGHTS WAS THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF THE POLITICS OF NORTHERN IRELAND. THERE WERE OBVIOUSLY MANY DIFFERENT POLITICAL VIEWS ON HOW THESE CONFLICTING CLAIMS COULD AND SHOULD BE RECONCILED BUT THE RIGHT OF A PEOPLE TO SELF-DETERMINATION WAS FUNDAMENTAL TO DEMOCRACY AND I HOPED THAT THE ARCHBISHOP AGREED AS DID ALL THE LEGITIMATE POLITICAL PARTIES IN IRELAND THAT UNIFICATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND WITH THE REPUBLIC COULD COME ONLY WITH THE CONSENT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND. THE ARCHBISHOP AGREED THAT THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION AND THAT WHILST INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS TO JUSTICE WERE ABSOLUTE THE RESOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL PROBLEM WAS A COMPLEX ONE ON WHICH DIFFERENT APPROACHES WERE BOTH POSSIBLE AND LEGITIMATE.

8. THE ARCHBISHOP DID NOT CHALLENGE THE CLAIM THAT BRITAIN HAD RE-ESTABLISHED CIVIL RIGHTS FOR ALL IN NORTHERN IRELAND BUT AGREED THAT IN REFERRING TO INDIGNITIES HE HAD IN MIND SUCH THINGS AS STRIP SEARCHES. WHILST IN NORTHERN IRELAND HE AND HIS FELLOW BISHOPS HAD BEEN CONTINUALLY REGALED WITH COMPLAINTS FROM THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY ON SUCH MATTERS AS STRIP SEARCHES, SINGLE JUDGE TRIALS AND THE PROTRACTED DETENTION OF PERSONS AWAITING TRIAL. I EXPLAINED IN THE STANDARD TERMS THAT THE REASON FOR NON-JURY TRIALS WHICH WAS PRECISELY TO ADMINISTER JUSTICE IN SPITE OF THE EFFORTS OF THE TERRORISTS TO FRUSTRATE IT AND POINTED OUT THAT THE CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES IN NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONS STOOD COMPARISON WITH THOSE IN OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES, CERTAINLY NOT EXCLUDING THOSE IN THE UNITED STATES. I DID NOT DOUBT THAT LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCES OCCASIONALLY AROSE BUT SUCH GROUPS AS NORAID OBVIOUSLY WORKED SYSTEMATICALLY TO EXPLOIT THESE QUESTIONS FOR CYNICALLY PROPAGANDIST AND POLITICAL PURPOSES.

9. TO MY SURPRISE THE ARCHBISHOP THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE AND HIS FELLOW BISHOPS HAD BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTED BY A MEETING WHICH THEY HAD HAD WITH THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND. THE US BISHOPS HAD WANTED TO DISCUSS JOB DISCRIMINATION AND HAD BEEN SINCERE IN WISHING TO HELP PROMOTE INVESTMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND. BUT THEIR VIEWS ON JOB DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CATHOLICS HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN SERIOUSLY. IT WAS THE FRUSTRATION OF PERMANENT UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH IN MANY CASES LED DIRECTLY TO AGGRESSION AND THE AGGRESSION WAS INEVITABLY DIRECTED AGAINST BRITAIN. I EXPLAINED OUR POSITION ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND QUOTAS AND ON THE CURRENT GOLDIN PROPOSALS AND THE STRENUOUS EFFORTS BEING MADE TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT BY US COMPANIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND FOR THE BENEFIT OF BOTH COMMUNITIES.

10. THE ARCHBISHOP SAID THAT HE QUOTE HAD DIED A THOUSAND DEATHS UNQUOTE WHEN HE HAD HEARD REPORTS OF THE REMARKS OF THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE SUMMIT WITH DR GARRETT FITZGERALD. THEREAFTER HIS DIALOGUE WITH LEADERS OF THE IRISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAD BECOME MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND THE MOVEMENT WHICH LED TO THE ELECTION OF KING AS GRAND MARSHAL HAD BEEN STRENGTHENED.

(the sermon was referring to different categories of rights.)

11. ARCHBISHOP O'CONNOR THEN WENT ON TO CRITICISE DR GARRETT FITZGERALD. FITZGERALD APPEARED TO HAVE HAD NO INFLUENCE UPON THE PRIME MINISTER. WITHIN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND HE SEEMED TO BE DEVELOPING ULTRALIBERAL POSITIONS WHICH WERE OPPOSED TO THE TEACHING OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON SUCH MATTERS AS ABORTION. THE ARCHBISHOP FOUND THIS VERY WORRYING BECAUSE GARRETT FITZGERALD WAS PUTTING AT RISK THE CREDIBILITY OF HIS GOVERNMENT WITH THE BISHOPS OF IRELAND, WITH THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AND WITH THE PROTESTANT LEADERS WHO WOULD KNOW THAT GARRETT FITZGERALD WAS SIMPLY NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CATHOLIC OPINION IN IRELAND. THIS WOULD TEND TO UNDERMINE THE POSITION OF THE DUBLIN GOVERNMENT IN ANY AGREEMENT WHICH IT MIGHT REACH WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. A POINT COULD BE REACHED AT WHICH A GOVERNMENT LED BY CHARLES HAUGHEY MIGHT BE SEEN AS MORE DIFFICULT BUT MORE HONEST AND MORE REPRESENTATIVE. I POINTED OUT THAT THE PREFERENCE OF POLITICIANS IN IRELAND, NORTH AND SOUTH, FOR THEIR MORE EXTREME TO THEIR MODERATE OPPONENTS WAS A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS TOWARDS RECONCILIATION.

12. THE ARCHBISHOP SAID THAT HE HAD A GREAT AFFECTION FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN. HE WAS HOPING TO SEE THE PRESIDENT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. HE ACCEPTED THAT THE APPOINTMENT OF A PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY IN IRELAND WAS FRAUGHT WITH PROBLEMS BUT HE WOULD COMMEND TO THE PRESIDENT THE IDEA OF APPOINTING A PERSONAL ADVISER ON IRISH AFFAIRS. SUCH AN ADVISER WOULD NOT THREATEN ANYONE'S POSITION AND WOULD BE FREE TO GO BACK AND FORTH REPORTING TO THE PRESIDENT THE VIEWS OF ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED.

13. THE ARCHBISHOP SAID THAT HE WAS READY TO DO WHAT HE COULD PERSONALLY AND TO BRING THE SUPPORT OF HIS OFFICE TO ANY APPROACH TO A SOLUTION TO THE CENTURIES OLD PROBLEMS OF NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH COULD BE ADVANCED IN A DIGNIFIED AND PEACEFUL WAY. HE HAD BEEN APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE US CATHOLIC BISHOPS TO HEAD THE COMMITTEE WHICH DEALT WITH IRISH AFFAIRS AND WAS EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A LINK BETWEEN THAT COMMITTEE AND THE BISHOPS OF IRELAND. HE WAS CONSIDERING MAKING AN APPROACH TO THE BISHOPS OF IRELAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES TO ASK WHETHER THEY ALSO MIGHT BE ASSOCIATED WITH THESE DELIBERATIONS.

14. FINALLY, THE ARCHBISHOP RETURNED TO THE CASTIGATION OF THE BRITISH PRESS. THESE ATTACKS TENDED TO DELIVER HIM TO THE RADICAL IRISH-AMERICANS WHO ARE NOW CLAIMING THAT QUOTE THEIR UNQUOTE BISHOP HAD BEEN ATTACKED BY THE BRITS. THIS WAS NOT SUPPORT WHICH HE WELCOMED. HE HOPED THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD SEEK TO SEND SIGNALS WHICH WOULD ENCOURAGE IN SUBTLE WAYS THE MODERATES AMONGST THE IRISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY WHO WERE WORKING FOR SENSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE ENORMOUSLY COMPLEX PROBLEMS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND.

COMMENT.

15. THIS WAS A GENERALLY DEPRESSING CONVERSATION OF A SORT NO DOUBT FAMILIAR TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND. ARCHBISHOP O'CONNOR IS STEEPED IN THE TRADITIONAL ATTITUDES OF IRISH CATHOLICISM AND ANTI-BRITISH SENTIMENT BUT BELIEVES THAT HE IS THE SOUL OF REASONABLENESS AND THE VOICE OF MODERATION. HE CONCEDES THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT STRIVES TO UPHOLD THE RIGHTS OF BOTH COMMUNITIES BUT GOES ON TO SAY THAT IN THEIR RECENT VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND HE AND HIS FELLOW BISHOPS TENDED TO ASSUME THAT THE PROTESTANT VIEW WAS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S VIEW. HE HAD BECOME MUCH MORE CRITICAL OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN DUBLIN THAN WHEN I SPOKE TO HIM SIX MONTHS AGO (MY TELNO 56 TO FCO OF LAST YEAR) AND APPEARS TO HAVE LEFT NORTHERN IRELAND MORE CRITICAL OF HMG THAN WHEN HE ARRIVED. HE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY RATTLED BY THE VEHEMENCE OF THE STRICTURES OF THE BRITISH PRESS UPON HIS ST PATRICK'S DAY PERFORMANCE AND THIS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A BAD THING IF IT HAS JOLTED HIM INTO A BETTER APPRECIATION OF CONCERN IN THE UNITED KINGDOM OVER NORTHERN IRELAND AND ESPECIALLY OVER TERRORISM AND THE SUPPORT WHICH IT RECEIVES FROM SOME WHO WOULD CLAIM TO BE MEMBERS OF THE ARCHBISHOP'S FLOCK. INSTINCTIVELY THE ARCHBISHOP IS NO FRIEND OF BRITAIN'S BUT HE WILL CONTINUE TO BE AN IMPORTANT LEADER IN THE IRISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD MAINTAIN A CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION WITH HIM AND DO WHAT WE CAN TO NUDGE HIM TOWARDS MORE HELPFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE POSITIONS.

WASHINGTON PLEASE PASS TO SAVING ADDRESSEES.

ENGLAND?