

1. cc. Mr. N. Hamilton *RA* Cont. See.

2. Mr. Bove.

*Mr. [unclear] 166/3*

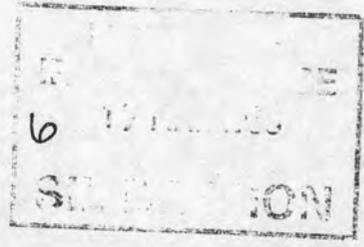
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FM WASHINGTON  
TO DESKBY 170930Z FCO  
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INFO IMMEDIATE DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK, BTDO NEW YORK



MY TELNO 670: ST PATRICK'S DAY  
SUMMARY

1. OMENS NOT ENCOURAGING. CONGRESSMAN KENNEDY LEADS A MIXED DELEGATION TO HAND OVER A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER, AND HAS AN ANIMATED MEETING IN THE EMBASSY. DESPITE LAST MINUTE DISPUTE OVER EVEN TOUGHER LANGUAGE FRIENDS OF IRELAND STATEMENT EXPECTED TO BE ESSENTIALLY AS FORECAST. POSSIBLE PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT, AS AT PRESENT DRAFTED, A HELPFUL CONTRAST.

DETAIL

2. AS FORESHADOWED IN MY TELNO 644, CONGRESSMAN JOE KENNEDY (D-MASSACHUSETTS) LED A DELEGATION TO THE EMBASSY ON 16 MARCH TO HAND OVER A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER (TEXT IN MY FIRST IFT: ORIGINAL BY BAG TO RID) CALLING FOR QUOTE AN END TO DISCRIMINATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND UNQUOTE. KENNEDY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A MIXED GROUP OF SECOND RANK CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, ASSEMBLED AS A RESULT OF HIS MEETING THEM IN THE SOUTH ON MARTIN LUTHER KING'S BIRTHDAY: CONGRESSMEN BUSTAMANTE (D-TEXAS: HISPANIC CAUCUS) AND LEWIS (D-GEORGIA: BLACK CAUCUS), MARTIN LUTHER KING III (SON OF THE LATE CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER), THE REV. JOSEPH LOWERY (THE (BLACK) PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, OF WHICH DR KING WAS THE FIRST PRESIDENT) AND CESAR CHAVEZ (UNITED FARMWORKERS' UNION, AND A FRIEND OF JOE KENNEDY'S LATE FATHER, BOBBY). THE GROUP GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY BEFORE AND AFTER THE MEETING WITH ME.

3. IN HIS PRIVATE MEETING WITH ME, KENNEDY EXPLAINED THAT ST PATRICK'S DAY WAS AN APPROPRIATE OCCASION TO EXPRESS THE VIEW THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND UNTIL THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF CATHOLIC UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE WERE SOLVED. A LIVELY 45 MINUTE DISCUSSION FOLLOWED, RANGING OVER COMPARISONS BETWEEN NORTHERN IRELAND AND SOUTH AFRICA, EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

SOUTH AFRICA AND NORTHERN IRELAND

4. LOWERY WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT HMG HAD FAILED TO WORK FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN BOTH NORTHERN IRELAND AND SOUTH AFRICA. HE SAW

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GREAT SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND WANTED TO CONVEY TO THE PRIME MINISTER BLACK AMERICANS' WISH FOR VIGOROUS BRITISH ACTION ON SOUTH AFRICA, AND IN PARTICULAR AN APPEAL FOR CLEMENCY ON THE SHARPEVILLE SIX.

5. I REPLIED THAT THE APPEAL FOR CLEMENCY HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE. IT WAS QUITE WRONG TO DRAW ANY PARALLEL BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA (WHERE DISCRIMINATION WAS GOVERNMENT POLICY), AND NORTHERN IRELAND (WHERE DISCRIMINATION WAS TOTALLY ILLEGAL).

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

6. I DREW ATTENTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS ANNOUNCED ON 2 MARCH AND TO HMG'S ABSOLUTE DETERMINATION TO END EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT, WITH WHOM WE HAD CONSULTED THROUGH THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE, HAD BROADLY WELCOMED OUR PROPOSALS. SOME STEPS, SUCH AS STRENGTHENING THE FEA, WERE BEING TAKEN STRAIGHTAWAY. IN REPLY, KENNEDY AND HIS COLLEAGUES REPEATEDLY SAID THAT OUR PRIMARY LEGISLATION LACKED A FIRM COMMITMENT TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE FORM OF GOALS AND TIMETABLES. OUR EXPLANATIONS OF WHAT THE LEGISLATION WAS LIKELY TO INVOLVE, AND WHEN IT WOULD BE ENACTED, WERE ECHOES OF EXCUSES FOR PROCRASTINATION GIVEN TO THE US CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE 1960S. JOHN HUME'S CALL FOR JOBS NOT PRINCIPLES AND THE BOSTON-IRELAND VENTURE WERE QUOTE GOOD AND APPLE PIE UNQUOTE: BUT THE REAL ISSUE WAS THE NEED FOR TEETH IN THE LEGISLATION. LOWERY AND LEWIS CALLED FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, WHICH HAD PROVED TO BE THE ONLY WAY TO HELP BLACKS IN AMERICA. THEY DID NOT ACCEPT THAT THIS MIGHT ENTAIL REVERSE DISCRIMINATION. MARTIN LUTHER KING III REFERRED TO THE LESSONS OF HISTORY: HIS FATHER AND OTHERS WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED IN 1960 HOW MUCH PROGRESS THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WOULD MAKE IN THE NEXT 25 YEARS.

7. WE EXPLAINED THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE US CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE. BOTH COMMUNITIES IN NI WERE EQUAL UNDER THE LAW: BOTH COMMUNITIES THEMSELVES RESISTED BEING BROUGHT TOGETHER. THE PROBLEM WAS NOT SO MUCH RACIAL AS TRIBAL, RELIGIOUS, SECTARIAN AND TERRORIST. TERRORISM WAS A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO POLITICAL PROGRESS. EACH MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION SHOULD VISIT NORTHERN IRELAND TO SEE THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM FOR HIMSELF.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

8. I SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCE OF EVENTS RECENTLY. ALTHOUGH EACH WAS EXPLICABLE AND JUSTIFIABLE, WE WERE WELL AWARE OF THE CONCERN WHICH THEY HAD PRODUCED. WE WANTED PEACE AND AN END TO TERRORISM. THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND, AND ELSEWHERE, FACED A SERIOUS TERRORIST THREAT: WITNESS

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ENNISKILLEN AND THE DISASTER NARROWLY AVERTED AT GIBRALTAR. STALKER HIMSELF HAD CONCLUDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO (NO) SHOOT TO KILL POLICY. IN A BIZARRE TWIST, KENNEDY CLAIMED THAT MCANESPIE'S RIBCAGE HAD BEEN REMOVED TO COVER UP HIS DELIBERATE KILLING BY A DIRECT SHOT.

9. THERE FOLLOWED VIGOROUS DISCUSSION OF DIPLOCK COURTS, IN WHICH WE RESPONDED IN STANDARD TERMS (RATIO OF ACQUITTALS, WRITTEN JUDGEMENT, AUTOMATIC RIGHT OF APPEAL) TO AN AUDIENCE WHICH REFUSED TO BE IMPRESSED.

10. KENNEDY DESCRIBED THE REFUSAL TO PUBLISH THE RUC CODE OF CONDUCT AS INCOMPREHENSIBLE. WE EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS AN INTERNAL POLICE DOCUMENT, AND ITS PUBLICATION A MATTER FOR THE INDEPENDENT POLICE AUTHORITY AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE.

11. THE MEETING ENDED WITH BUSTAMANTE REMINDING KENNEDY TO HAND OVER THE LETTER IN MY FIRST IFT, AND LOWERY SUMMING UP THE DELEGATION'S MESSAGE AS A CALL FOR QUOTE GREATER AGGRESSION UNQUOTE ON THE PART OF HMG IN TACKLING NORTHERN IRELAND'S PROBLEMS. HE WARNED THAT HE AND OTHERS IN THE ROOM MIGHT JOIN IRISH-AMERICANS IN DEMONSTRATING AT THIS EMBASSY AS THEY HAD AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY.

12. SPEAKING TO THE PRESS ON LEAVING THE EMBASSY, KENNEDY SAID THE MEETING HAD NOT GONE TOO WELL. BRITISH ATTITUDES TO THE PROBLEMS OF NORTHERN IRELAND WERE CALLOUS. HMG'S FAIR EMPLOYMENT PROPOSALS WERE QUOTE USELESS UNQUOTE. THE BRITISH WERE NOT COMMITTED TO CHANGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND, TO HIRING CATHOLICS, TO CHANGING THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, OR TO FINDING OUT IF A SHOOT TO KILL POLICY WAS BEING OPERATED. LOWERY ADDED THAT THE BRITISH ARGUMENTS DEPLOYED AT THE MEETING WERE VIRTUALLY A RE-RUN OF THOSE HEARD IN THE US AT THE HEIGHT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: QUOTE THE ALMOST IDENTICAL WORDS AND PHRASES UNQUOTE.

STATEMENT BY FRIENDS OF IRELAND

13. OUR CONTACTS ON THE HILL EXPECT THE STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND ON 17 MARCH TO BE ALMOST EXACTLY AS IN MY TELNO 660. BUT IT WILL BE A CLOSE RUN THING. MAINLY FOR ELECTORAL REASONS (HE IS UP FOR RE-ELECTION IN NOVEMBER), SENATOR KENNEDY HAS BEEN PRESSING VERY HARD FOR EVEN TOUGHER LANGUAGE, INCLUDING A HARSH REFERENCE TO THE GIBRALTAR SHOOTINGS AND THE DROPPING OF THE WELCOME FOR OUR FAIR EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION. LATE ON 16 MARCH IT LOOKED AS THOUGH COOLER HEADS WOULD PREVAIL, BUT WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN UNTIL THE STATEMENT IS ISSUED TOMORROW.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

14. MY SECOND IFT CONTAINS THE DRAFT OF A (VERY HELPFUL) STATEMENT WHICH THE NSC STAFF HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT THE PRESIDENT

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ISSUE ON 17 MARCH. IT IS NOW WITH THE WHITE HOUSE SPEECHWRITERS, AND WHETHER AND HOW IT WILL EMERGE WILL NOT BE CLEAR UNTIL THE MORNING: THE PRESIDENT ALREADY ISSUED HIS USUAL INCONSEQUENTIAL GREETING TO IRISH-AMERICANS AND IRISH PEOPLE AROUND THE GLOBE, AND MAY NOT WISH TO DO MORE. WE SHALL REPORT BY TELEGRAM ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THIS STATEMENT (IF IT APPEARS) AND ON THAT FROM THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND.

COMMENT

15. OTHER EVENTS, INCLUDING TODAY'S FUNERALS IN BELFAST AND THE IRAN-CONTRA INDICTMENTS, WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED MEDIA COVERAGE OF CONGRESSMAN KENNEDY'S DEMARCHE, AND PERHAPS HAVE ELIMINATED IT ALTOGETHER FROM THE NATIONAL PRESS AND NETWORK NEWS. IN ANSWER TO ENQUIRIES, WE HAVE CONFIRMED THAT I RECEIVED KENNEDY AND HIS DELEGATION, AND SAID THAT THE DISCUSSION WAS VERY FRANK ON BOTH SIDES: ADDING UNATTRIBUTABLY THAT THE PROBLEMS OF NORTHERN IRELAND ARE TOO COMPLICATED TO BE SOLUBLE BY SIMPLE SLOGANEERING.

16. IN RESPONDING TO KENNEDY'S LETTER, WE SHALL NEED TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN DIGNIFYING HIS ACTIVITIES WITH MORE ATTENTION THAN THEY WOULD OTHERWISE DESERVE AND PROVOKING HIM INTO MORE EXTREME METHODS OF PROTEST. AS THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND WILL REMEMBER FROM HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE CONGRESSMAN ON THE HILL LAST SEPTEMBER, KENNEDY IS AN EMOTIONAL AND SOMEWHAT UNSTABLE CHARACTER, AND IS SO REGARDED BY MOST OF HIS CONGRESSIONAL COLLEAGUES. AS I HOPE THE ABOVE ACCOUNT OF OUR DISCUSSION SHOWS, HE IS NOT EASILY SUSCEPTIBLE TO REASONED ARGUMENT. I UNDERSTAND THAT HE IS CONSIDERING WRITING TO ME TO FOLLOW UP OUR MEETING TODAY. I SHALL SEND ADVICE ON THE LEVEL AND CONTENT OF OUR REPLY TO KENNEDY'S LETTER, AND ON THE HANDLING OF HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO IRELAND (MY TELNO 645), IN THE LIGHT OF ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE NEXT 36 HOURS, INCLUDING ANY FURTHER COMMUNICATION FROM THE CONGRESSMAN.

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