

FROM: E C HALLETT - SIL
27 FEBRUARY 1989



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CENT SEC

- cc PS/Secretary of State (B) - B
PS/Minister of State (L&B) - B
PS/Dr Mawhinney (L&B) - B
① PS/Sir K Bloomfield - B
Mr Burns - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Miles - B
Mr Masefield - B
Mr Blackwell - B
Mr Kirk - B
Mr J McConnell - B

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L) - B

FIANNA FAIL ARD FHEIS : MR HAUGHEY'S REMARKS ON NORTHERN IRELAND.

As expected, Mr Haughey's key note speech on 25 February, contained a substantial section on Northern Ireland. A summary is attached. Significant points were the emphasis on limited progress under the Agreement "in the last 18 months" (ie implying that progress had only begun once Fianna Fail had returned to office), and his renewal of his offer to talk to Unionists without preconditions. His suggestion that the British Government would not be involved in the process of deciding the future of Ireland "which should be left to all the Irish people to decide for themselves", seems almost calculated to ensure that his offer is rejected, however, and some Unionist politicians have already done so. The speech also contained carefully coded references to the need for Ireland to play its part in defeating terrorism and in bringing fugitive offenders to justice, while making sure that their legal rights were not prejudiced.

2. Mr Haughey's speech contained nothing particularly new or surprising. The suggestion that the future of Ireland should be decided by Irish people alone, and the implication that only limited progress had so far been made under the Anglo Irish Agreement were not particularly helpful from our point of view, nor was his emphasis on the need to consider extradition in the context of

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ensuring that the rights of the individual were not prejudiced in advance. On the whole, however, Mr Haughey's remarks appear to be an attempt to strike a careful balance between the need to appear constructive and conciliatory while satisfying an audience of the party faithful. We should at least be grateful that he omitted his familiar reference to Northern Ireland as a "failed political entity".

(signed:)

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27 February 1989
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FD/SIL/11485

MR HAUGHEY'S SPEECH FIANNA FAIL ARD FHEIS - 25 FEBRUARY 1989

Summary of Section on Northern Ireland

Mr Haughey said that the key to overcoming historical problems often lay in the development of new relationships. The 1980 framework for Anglo Irish relations was such a development, and Mr Haughey was pleased that "following on from that a Joint Irish British Parliamentary Body will now be set up". The Anglo Irish Agreement had "contributed to a degree of progress and reform over the last 18 months which needs to be further consolidated". Examples Mr Haughey cited were "the new Fair Employment Legislation, special assistance to under developed areas with high unemployment, and reforms in prison policy". But changes were also required however "to improve confidence in the security and judicial systems and to put an end to harassment".

Mr Haughey claimed that since his Government had come into office they had implemented "in good faith a solemn and binding international agreement with its attendant advantages and disadvantages". The Agreement could not be treated as if it were "a bargaining counter". No one claimed that it represented a lasting solution, "but until such time as something better or more acceptable can be negotiated and agreed to take its place, the present agreement must stand".

A natural development of the present situation would be, "in parallel with the working relationship between the British and Irish Governments, to develop the ultimately more important relationship between the two major traditions on this island". The people of the northern Protestant tradition "belong in this country, that is accepted without question by the Government and people of this State".

Political progress might not in itself bring violence to an end but would "undermine its base and make it even more meaningless and irrelevant".

Mr Haughey made clear his "earnest wish to enter into dialogue with the Unionist leadership so that I may hear from them at first hand what are their priorities and their hopes for the future". If such a development could lead away from violence, "it is difficult to see how the Unionist leadership can be morally justified in refusing the invitation which I now again extend to them". The political circumstances were opportune for such a meeting which would be welcomed by "a great majority of men and women of good will all over Ireland".

Both parts of Ireland had a vital common interest in the development of the single European market by 1992. "In 1992 the economic border will disappear" and "no political differences can obscure this economic reality". Mr Haughey would therefore welcome an early dialogue with political leaders in Northern Ireland to see if "we could agree on a common approach to the economic future of the whole island".

Mr Haughey made clear that "recourse to violence to achieve political objectives has no place in the affairs of the family of western parliamentary democracies". His Government understood, however, "the legitimate grievances and deep sense of alienation among the nationalist people of the North, where it is only now recognised that a far greater effort must be made by the responsible authorities to create conditions of equality and respect of the ethos and identities of both traditions".

His commitment was "to unifying the Irish people in peace and harmony and in that unity to achieve the highest possible level of prosperity for all the people of this island".

If violence were to cease, the possibility would open up "for a broad consensus among nationalists on how to achieve political stability based on justice. Our efforts, supported by a large majority of Irish people everywhere, could then be constructively directed to persuading our Unionist countrymen that their future lay with us in a partnership of equals and in convincing the British Government that the future of Ireland could and should be left to all the Irish people to decide for themselves".

To achieve this broad objective, it was essential that Ireland "accepted International standards in the administration of justice and guaranteeing human rights" and did not "neglect in anyway to play our part in defeating international terrorism and crime and to take all reasonable steps to prevent violence and bloodshed". At the same time, Mr Haughey said that he was determined to ensure that the rights of Irish citizens wanted for offences outside Irish jurisdiction "will be fully safeguarded under our legislation". It was essential that "the rights of the individual are not prejudiced in advance but left to be decided in the calm atmosphere of the judicial process".

The task of the Irish Government was "to persuade all the people of Ireland that the present state of affairs need not continue and that together we can create the far better future in harmony and understanding".