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TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON
FOR O FLOANN FROM SHERIDAN

MMVSGYL

KENNEDY

HEREUNDER TEXT OF STATEMENT ISSUED BY SENATOR KENNEDY RE LONDON BOMBINGS:

QUOTE

I STRONGLY CONDEMN THESE BRUTAL ACTS OF IRA TERRORISM, AND I EXTEND MY DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS. THIS LATEST VIOLENCE IS A TRAGIC SETBACK FOR THE NOBLE GOAL OF IRISH UNITY, AND DESERVES TO BE DENOUNCED IN THE CLEAREST POSSIBLE TERMS BY ALL AMERICANS WHO CARE ABOUT PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

UNQUOTE

2. PRIOR

ABOVE GAVE CONFIDENTIAL BRIEFING TO U.S. JOURNALISTS AT LUNCH TODAY. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE WHO WAS PRESENT, PRIOR WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE TAOISEACH, MINISTER AND LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION. WITH REFERENCE TO THE TAOISEACH, HE SAID THAT IN THE LAST ELECTION CAMPAIGN THE TAOISEACH HAD MADE ONLY ONE SPEECH ON NORTHERN IRELAND, FOLLOWED IT WITH A SHORT HARSH STATEMENT AFTER HIS ELECTION AND, WHEN ADDED TO THE STRAIN CAUSED BY THE FALKLANDS ISSUE, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE TAOISEACH HAD DELIBERATELY OBSTRUCTED PROGRESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE MINISTER'S SPEECH LAST WEEK WAS REFERRED TO IN DISMISSIVE TERMS. PRIOR (AND GILLELAND) SAID THAT THE MINISTER'S CONCEPT OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO CONSULT ON ALL DEVELOPMENTS RE NORTHERN IRELAND WAS WISHFUL THINKING. CLEARLY LONDON'S PERCEPTION OF THAT SAME MEETING WAS QUITE DIFFERENT AND AT ANY RATE HAD BEEN SUPERCEDED BY THE SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH GARRET FITZGERALD. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION REGARDING A PROPOSAL BY THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION FOR A JOINT NORTH-SOUTH SECURITY FORCE, PRIOR CHARACTERISED THE IDEA AS WISHFUL THINKING WHICH ANYONE COULD SEE WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE UNIONIST COMMUNITY. PRIOR SAID THAT OVERALL THE ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN DUBLIN HAD GIVEN CREDENCE TO EXTREME UNIONIST PREDICTIONS REGARDING ULTRA-NATIONALISM. HE RULED OUT ANY QUESTION OF A CHANGE IN POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND BECAUSE OF THE BOMBINGS IN LONDON TODAY.

5. 22486
Secret copy to the Lord
to Kitman (in return)
Files

COPY MESSAGE
20/7 1421
PP

Corrected copy
Corrected copy

21-7-82

mentioned to
Taoiseach
23/7

Taoiseach
23/7

23/7

AT THE FOI MEETING WHICH LASTED 45 MINUTES, 30 MINUTES WERE TAKEN BY AN ASSESSMENT BY PRIOR OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN N.I. AND AN OUTLINE OF HIS PROPOSALS. HE MADE LITTLE REFERENCE TO ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT THERE HAD BEEN A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAST TAOISEACH AND THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP HAD DISSAPATED SOMEWHAT PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE IRISH STANCE ON THE FALKLANDS ISSUE. HE ALSO REFERRED TO THE TAOISEACH'S DECISION NOT TO PURSUE THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES PROPOSED BY THE LAST GOVERNMENT. THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY SENATOR DODD AND THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE - FOLEY, BINGHAM, HOWARD, MCHUGH, WILLIAMS, FENWICK, HECKLER, BOLAND, EARLY, SHANNON AND DOUGHERTY. DOUGHERTY ASKED SOME LEADING QUESTIONS. HE DEMANDED TO KNOW WHY THE STANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THE FALKLANDS SHOULD HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO WORSEN ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS AND WHY A PREDICTABLE NEUTRALITY WAS NOT UNDERSTOOD. PRIOR REPLIED THAT DEMOCRACIES TENDED TO BE THE SLAVES OF PUBLIC OPINION AND THAT BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION DID NOT APPRECIATE THE IRISH STANCE. DOUGHERTY ALSO ASKED WHY PROPOSALS FOR DEVOLUTION WERE BEING PURSUED WHEN THEY DID NOT ENJOY WIDE SUPPORT IN EITHER COMMUNITY AND WERE LIKELY TO FAIL. PRIOR SAID HE DID NOT ACCEPT THE PROPOSALS WOULD FAIL AND COMMENTED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO GET A CONCENSUS ON ANY ISSUE IN N.I. NEITHER DID HE ACCEPT DOUGHERTY'S VIEW THAT DIVISIONS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITIES WERE WIDER NOW THAN EVER BEFORE. SHANNON ASKED A QUESTION ON THE SO-CALLED IRISH DIMENSION IN THE DEVOLUTION PROPOSALS AND QUERIED THE BASIS FOR SDLP OPPOSITION TO WHICH HE RECEIVED A VAGUE AND GENERAL ANSWER.

IN RELATION TO THE LONDON BOMBINGS, PRIOR SAID THAT RENEWED IRA VIOLENCE WAS NOT UNEXPECTED AND THAT THERE WAS ALWAYS THE PROSPECT THEY WOULD ENDEAVOUR TO DETRACT ATTENTION FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE BY SOME OUTRAGE.

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red
think
because of the restraining effect of the London bombings
OVERALL, THE MEETING IS REGARDED AS HAVING BEEN POLITE AND CORDIAL AND, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF QUESTIONS FROM DOUGHERTY AND SHANNON, WITHOUT CONTROVERSY. NEITHER KENNEDY NOR O'NEILL ATTENDED ALTHOUGH THEY WERE REPRESENTED BY AIDES.

PRIOR LEAVES WASHINGTON TODAY FOR NEW YORK FOLLOWING A BRIEFING HE WILL GIVE FOR BRITISH JOURNALISTS. HE IS EXPECTED TO APPEAR ON ALL THREE TV NETWORKS TOMORROW ON THE EARLY MORNING TALK SHOWS. UNDERSTAND THAT HUME WILL ALSO APPEAR ON THE CBS SHOW AND POSSIBLY ON THE OTHER TWO AS WELL.

END
20 JULY 1982
SENT 21TH JULY 1982
TIME SENT:::0937HRS
25300F ESTR E1

IS THAT OK PLS???: SUT THANKS VM

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