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IRELAND



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cc: Taoiseach *Leahy*
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A.G. *A. L. L.*

IMMEDIATE (WEDNESDAY MORNING PLEASE)

TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON
FOR B DAVENPORT FROM O'BRIEN

(PLEASE COPY S WHELAN)

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Very Important Report

HURD VISIT

CODED MESSAGE
IMMEDIATE URGENT
CONFIDENTIAL
DATE 27/3/85 TIME 0915
INITIALS SB Bailey

AS YOU KNOW FROM CRONIN'S REPORT IN THIS MORNING'S IRISH TIMES, SECRETARY OF STATE HURD HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY YESTERDAY EVENING WHICH, ACCORDING TO MARK HOSENBALL WHO COVERED IT FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES, WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 15 JOURNALISTS ALL BRITISH EXCEPT CRONIN AND HOSENBALL, WHO IS AMERICAN. HURD'S PRESENTATION WAS VERY LOW KEY ALTHOUGH SLIGHTLY MORE CONFIDENT ON THE ANGLO-IRISH DIALOGUE THAN HOSENBALL HAD ANTICIPATED GIVEN OFFICIAL BRITISH REACTIONS TO THE WEEKEND STORIES IN LONDON WHICH HE NONETHELESS DESCRIBED AS HIGHLY SPECULATIVE AND IN SOME INSTANCES GROSSLY EXAGGERATED. ALTHOUGH PRESSED ON A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC ITEMS, HURD DECLINED TO COMMENT ON ANY OF THEM AND SIMPLY SAID THAT HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE MENU OR THE DETAILS OF THE ONGOING CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. HE DID, HOWEVER, CONFIRM THAT THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ARE SERIOUS AND DESCRIBED THEM BROADLY AS AN ATTEMPT TO SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE TO RECOGNISE THE LEGITIMATE CONCERNS OF THE MINORITY COMMUNITY WITHOUT INFRINGING THE RIGHTS OF THE MAJORITY. HE SAID THAT THERE HAVE TO BE SOME PRACTICAL RESULTS FROM THE DISCUSSIONS FOR THE NEXT SUMMIT MEETING BETWEEN THE TAOISEACH AND THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER AND, THEREFORE, THE "PACE HAS TO BE A SERIOUS ONE". HE TOLD THE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT HE HAD MET EARLIER IN THE DAY FOR BREAKFAST WITH THE WASHINGTON POST, WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NSC (I UNDERSTAND THAT HIS MEETING WAS WITH PETER SUMMER). HE ALSO CALLED ON JUDGE WEBSTER AT THE FBI WHERE HE SAID HE DISCUSSED SECURITY CO-OPERATION. HE HAD LUNCH WITH U.S. JOURNALISTS (SEE BELOW) AND IN THE AFTERNOON HE ALSO MET WITH TOM DONAHUE OF THE AFL-CIO AND WAS JOINING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS FOR DINNER. (THE DINNER WAS ATTENDED BY SENATORS MOYNIHAN, HART, METZENBAUM, REPRESENTATIVES FOLEY AND, SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, GILMAN, AS WELL AS KIRK O'DONNELL, WERNER BRANDT, AND PETER SUMMER OF THE NSC). HE WAS TO CALL ON DEPUTY SECRETARY KENNETH DAM AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT THIS MORNING AND IS HAVING LUNCH WITH CONGRESSMEN MCHUGH, DONNELLY, COUGHLIN, AND MCDADE TODAY.

2. HE TOLD THE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT HE HAD MET WITH HOUSE SPEAKER O'NEILL AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE SPEAKER MAINTAINED CLOSE CONTACT BOTH WITH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT AND WITH JOHN HUME. HE FELT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S IMAGE HAD NOT SLIPPED TOO BADLY AFTER THE CHEQUERS SUMMIT BUT ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS THAT HAD ARISEN FOLLOWING CHEQUERS HAD BEEN CLARIFIED PARTICULARLY IN THE COURSE OF MRS THATCHER'S VISIT IN FEBRUARY. IN REPLY TO FURTHER QUESTIONS, HE SAID THAT THERE WERE NO DISCUSSIONS OF REDRAWING THE BORDER OR OF BRITISH WITHDRAWAL AND THAT "ALL IN DUBLIN AGREE THAT CHANGE CAN ONLY COME ABOUT WITH THE CONSENT OF THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND". ACCORDING TO HOSENBALL, HE WAS UNEQUIVOCAL IN ASSERTING THAT THERE IS A CRUCIAL IRISH DIMENSION TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM AND THAT THAT WAS ONE OF THE ISSUES UNDER DISCUSSION IN THE TALKS. HE ALSO CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD SOUGHT AN APPOINTMENT WITH ARCHBISHOP O'CONOR IN NEW YORK BUT THAT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME COULD NOT BE ARRANGED ALTHOUGH HE HAD INDICATED THAT HE WOULD SHOW EVERY FLEXIBILITY IN MEETING AT ANY TIME SUGGESTED BY THE ARCHBISHOP.

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3. I SPOKE TO MICHAEL KILIAN OF THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE ABOUT HURD'S LUNCH WITH U.S. JOURNALISTS. IT WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY TOM BRADEN, A COLUMNIST WITH THE WASHINGTON TIMES; MARY MCGRORY, WASHINGTON POST; WALTER FRIEDENBERG, SCRIPPS HOWARD; RICHARD JAROSLOVSKY, WALL STREET JOURNAL; AND BERNARD WEINRAUB OF THE NEW YORK TIMES. KILIAN WAS VERY IMPRESSED BY HURD'S TONE AND STYLE. HE THOUGHT HIM MUCH MORE PERSUASIVE THAN PRIOR AND HE ALSO PROJECTED HIMSELF AS HAVING A SOLID WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH MRS THATCHER UNLIKE HIS PREDECESSOR WHO, ON HIS U.S. VISITS, CONSTANTLY EMPHASISED HIS DIFFICULTIES AND POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. WHILE HE WOULD NOT COMMENT ON ANY OF THE WEEKEND SPECULATION, HE EMPHASISED THAT BOTH THE TAOISEACH AND THE PRIME MINISTER WERE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN DUBLIN AND LONDON. HE EXPECTED THAT A DATE FOR THE NEXT ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT MEETING WOULD BE AGREED EN MARGE OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN BRUSSELS BUT THAT THE SUMMIT WAS UNLIKELY TO BE HELD BEFORE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS. IF AN AGREEMENT EMERGES FROM THE PRESENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN LONDON AND DUBLIN, HE THOUGHT THAT PAISLEY WILL DENOUNCE IT AS WILL THE LEADER OF FIANNA FAIL ALTHOUGH HE ADDED THAT THE LATTER COULD BE EXPECTED TO TAKE A DIFFERENT VIEW IF HE WAS IN OFFICE. WHEN PRESSED ON THE NATURE OF THE PARAMETERS OF THE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS, HE SAID THAT THBBVZ I

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THAT THE UNIONIST COMMUNITY WOULD BE ASSURED OF THIS THROUGH A FIRM COMMITMENT TO THE MAINTENANCE OF BRITISH INSTITUTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND. MRS THATCHER WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY AGREEMENT WHICH INFRINGES ON BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY AND HE ADDED THAT SHE HAS NO AMBITION TO CREATE A "PROTESTANT IRA". HE SAID THAT SHE WAS GREATLY DISTRESSED BY THE WEEKEND PRESS SPECULATION IN LONDON AND DUBLIN WHICH SHE CONSIDERED VERY UNHELPFUL. ANY PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE AGENDA FOR THE PRESENT TALKS FED ANXIETIES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND WAS THE LEAST CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION THAT ANYBODY COULD MAKE TO THE PRESENT DIALOGUE. HE TOLD KILIAN PRIVATELY THAT SHE WAS FURIOUS AT THE WEEKEND MEDIA COVERAGE.

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4. IN THE GENERAL DISCUSSION HURD ACCEPTED THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF MEASURES WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT COULD UNDERTAKE SUCH AS THE REPEAL OF THE FLAGS AND EMBLEMS ACT ALTHOUGH HE WOULD NOT WISH TO MOVE ON SPECIFIC ITEMS AT THIS STAGE IN ISOLATION FROM THE ONGOING DISCUSSIONS WITH DUBLIN. AMONG THE OTHER ITEMS WHICH HE MENTIONED WERE CHANGING THE NAMES OF STREETS TO READ BOTH IN IRISH AND ENGLISH AND INSTITUTE OR INCREASE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES TO THE TEACHING OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE, THE PROMOTION OF IRISH CULTURE, AND THE SUPPORT OF GAELIC GAMES. KILIAN SAID THAT HE WAS DEFENSIVE ON THE ISSUE OF PLASTIC BULLETS WHICH WERE RAISED BY A NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT THE LUNCH BUT HE ARGUED THAT THEY WERE A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE TO SOLDIERS ON PATROL THAN THE USE OF REAL BULLETS. IN VIEW OF MEDIA SPECULATION ABOUT THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS AND IN THE EVENT THAT THEY PRODUCED SPECIFIC RESULTS, HE EXPECTED AN INCREASE IN PROVISIONAL IRA ACTIVITY. HE HOPED, HOWEVER, THAT THE CONTENT OF THE PROPOSALS, IF AGREED, WOULD BE SUCH AS TO ISOLATE THE P.I.R.A. SINCE HE HOPED THAT THEY WOULD WIN BROAD ACCEPTANCE FROM BOTH COMMUNITIES. IT WAS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE, HOWEVER, THAT ANY AGREEMENT THAT EMERGED FROM THE CURRENT TALKS WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO COLLAPSE AS HAD THE SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT AND BOTH THE BRITISH AND IRISH GOVERNMENTS WILL HAVE TO DECIDE ON THIS AS WILL THE "MODERATES" IN NORTHERN IRELAND. HE FELT THAT ANY AGREEMENT WHICH EMERGED WOULD REQUIRE THE SDLP TO GO INTO THE ASSEMBLY AND TO TAKE THEIR PLACES IN A NUMBER OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND INCLUDING THE POLICE ADVISORY BOARD. THIS STATEMENT APPARENTLY DREW A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ON THE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND AGAIN, ACCORDING TO KILIAN, HE BECAME PARTICULARLY DEFENSIVE ON THE ROLE OF THE UDR WHICH HE SOUGHT TO PLAY DOWN IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION. HE SAID THAT IT WAS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HIS STRATEGY TO INCREASE THE PRIMACY OF THE RUC AND HE DENIED THAT HE SAW THE UDR REPLACING THE ARMY AS THE LATTER'S NUMBERS WERE SCALED DOWN IN THE NORTH.

5. ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS, KILIAN DID NOT FIND HURD AS CONFIDENT ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE SDLP AS EITHER SEAMUS MALLON OR HAROLD MCCUSKER, BOTH OF WHOM RECENTLY MET KILIAN WHILE IN WASHINGTON. HURD'S ASSESSMENT WAS THAT SINN FEIN WILL MAKE GAINS IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE, THROUGH EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION, TO MOVE LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE TO THE POLLING BOOTHS IN THE COURSE OF THE ELECTIONS. HE DID NOT AT THE SAME TIME ANTICIPATE ANY SIGNIFICANT DROP IN THE SDLP VOTE. HE WAS UNCERTAIN IN PREDICTING THAT THE OUP WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTAIN INCREASED SUPPORT FOR THE DUP. HE ALSO TOLD KILIAN PRIVATELY THAT HE DID NOT THINK THAT THERE WOULD BE A SUMMIT MEETING BETWEEN THE TAOISEACH AND MRS THATCHER IF NO AGREEMENT EMERGED FROM THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS. THERE SIMPLY COULD NOT BE A REPEAT OF WHAT HAPPENED AT CHEQUERS. IF AN AGREEMENT EMERGES, HE HOPES THAT THE U.S. AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WILL BE FORTHCOMING ON ECONOMIC AID AND HE ALSO CONFIRMED TO KILIAN THAT LONDON WILL NOT BE FOUND WANTING IN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. KILIAN'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF HURD WAS THAT HE WAS EARNEST ABOUT HIS NORTHERN IRELAND BRIEF AND FUNCTIONING TOTALLY AS MRS THATCHER'S SERVANT WHOM KILIAN FELT REALITY HAD NOW DAWNED UPON.

6. I HAD A BRIEF WORD WITH VIRGINIA HAMILL AT THE WASHINGTON POST ABOUT HURD'S BREAKFAST AT THE NEWSPAPER YESTERDAY MORNING. THE BREAKFAST HAD NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY WELL ATTENDED AND THE CONVERSATION FOCUSED ONLY PARTLY ON NORTHERN IRELAND WITH SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS WANTING HURD TO DISCUSS OTHER FOREIGN POLICY AND DOMESTIC ISSUES, IN PARTICULAR ARMS CONTROL, CENTRAL AMERICA, THE AFTERMATH OF THE MINERS STRIKE, AND THE BRITISH ECONOMY. THE SECRETARY OF STATE ALSO GAVE AN INTERVIEW TO NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO, THE TEXT OF WHICH I WILL FORWARD AS SOON AS I RECEIVE THE TRANSCRIPT.