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MR. NALLY
MR. BROSNAN
COUNSELLORS AT.

SECURE FAX NO. 1467

3 December, 1992

FOR : A/Sec O hUiginn
FROM : Joint Secretary

1. In advising me yesterday of the Prime Minister's visit to Dublin next Monday in the pre-Edinburgh round, Robert Alston said he did not expect Anglo-Irish matters to be raised. He mentioned, in fact, that the NIO had not even been asked for a brief. I thought that in current circumstances a substantive discussion was unlikely, but but that it would be odd if there was no word of Anglo-Irish matters during the visit. Grateful to know views in Dublin.
2. Alston raised the Prime Minister's intention to visit President-elect Clinton before Christmas. He indicated that the British were relaxed about Clinton's initiative for a peace envoy, this was something to be expected of a Democratic administration. The Prime Minister would mention the difficulties connected with the proposal but would do so lightly. I suspect the British are wary of giving too much prominence to a proposal they do not expect to be seriously advanced by the new administration or to cause controversy about it by "raising the ante" as Alston put it. Alston asked what view we would express to the new administration. I said I had no instructions but I thought personally that we would not want to give any impression of discouraging the interest of the new administration in the Northern Ireland problem, on the contrary we would welcome it. We might have some private scepticism, however, that the campaign promise of a peace envoy would be fulfilled in a serious way. If it were, and an envoy arrived with authority to commit, say, \$10 bn. in the first year, I assumed both Governments would pay very close attention to his proposals (Alston agreed, smiling). Grateful for an update on the Clinton team's views and our position.
3. I have had a lengthy discussion with Alston on the political talks and some other contacts with senior people here this week. I will be recording these separately.