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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

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1 December 1993

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Sean O hUiginn
Assistant Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs

PST
PSS
Mr. F. Murray
Mr. T. Dalton
Amb. Small
J.S.
2/12

Dear Assistant Secretary

MEETING AT THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

I met this morning in the NSC with the Director of European Affairs, Dr Jane Holl. The following points in our conversation are of interest:

• Clinton call on Major

I took the opportunity to mention to Dr Holl that O'Clery's report in this morning's Irish Times was not based on any briefing by the Embassy. She did not seem in the least exercised or concerned about it. Moreover, she indicated that contact with the British Government on this issue has not been confined to the conversation between Clinton and Major - "contacts at other levels have been and are being undertaken". She said that the President's interest in Northern Ireland (which clearly has filtered down through the system) was genuine and that the NSC greatly appreciated the continuing intensive contact with the Embassy in the context of the unfolding developments. The Administration's concern was "to keep the players on the field and keep them heading towards the goal - we are cheering from the sidelines", she added. She was aware of the meeting planned in Dublin tomorrow and of the series of meetings planned for the near future. She said that the logic of Major's position, having more than comfortably survived the revelation of contacts with Provisional Sinn Fein, was that he should go forward and not retreat.

• Possible visit to Ireland

I mentioned to Holl that a letter from the Taoiseach to the President could be expected and that we hoped that it will be possible that the President would visit Ireland next year. She

said that while the planning for the President's various visits to Europe next year was very much up in the air, a visit to Ireland was something on which they were focussed and that it was "very much in the mix". She seemed to discount the possibility of a visit to Ireland in June and suggested that there might be a better prospect in July when the President visits Naples for the G7 Summit.

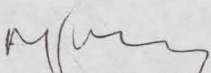
- IFI Funding

Internal discussions in the Administration on the 1995 budget are currently taking place and nearing completion. In view of the continuing severe pressures on US foreign aid and the likelihood of more drastic cuts in the context of reducing the budget deficit, I told Holl that we would be concerned to ensure that the 1995 funding be on a par with that for 1994. I said that if the President could include a provision for IFI funding in his budget, as he had done last year, this would be very helpful indeed. I suggested that it was important that the President's interest in Ireland be complemented by continuing funding of the IFI at current levels. She said that our interests and concerns were "duly noted". (The Ambassador has also spoken to Jim Lyons, the U.S. Observer to the Fund, in the same sense).

- State Department Human Rights Report on Northern Ireland

I mentioned to Dr Holl that there was some concern in Dublin that this year's State Department Human Rights report on Northern Ireland might be a dilution of the rather helpful 1992 report (Declan Kelleher wrote to me separately about this). I said that I welcomed the reassurances that had been given to me on this issue by the State Department but thought it useful to mention it to her nonetheless. I said that we had found the little bit of extra bite in the 1992 report to be helpful and that the issues that it addressed were ones which were constantly on the agenda of the Anglo-Irish Conference. Holl said that in view of all that was now happening there might be a concern about the political environment in which the 1993 report was introduced. I said that our concern was to ensure that slippage from the approach in 1992 be avoided - apart from the signal that that might send it could also give rise to unfavourable and negative comparisons in the media.

Yours sincerely



Michael Collins
Counsellor