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FM WASHINGTON 302355Z JUL 81
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 2299 OF 30 JULY

INFO DUBLIN NIO BELFAST NIO LONDON

MY TELNO 2148: IRISH PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN

1. THE WHITE HOUSE HAVE TOLD US THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS REPLIED TO FITZGERALD'S LETTER TO HIM OF 14 JULY. THE WHITE HOUSE DESCRIBE THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY, WHICH WAS DELIVERED BEFORE THE LATEST FITZGERALD FRACAS (MY TELNO 2282), AS MASTERFULLY NON-COMMITTAL. IT MAKES CLEAR THAT, WHILE MR. REAGAN REGRETS THE NEEDLESS DEATHS OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS, HE SEES NO CAUSE FOR U.S. INTERVENTION.

2. ACCORDING TO THE WHITE HOUSE, FITZGERALD WAS RUEFULLY APOLOGETIC AT THE FACT THAT HIS LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN MADE PUBLIC. HE WAS AT A LOSS TO KNOW HOW THIS COULD HAVE HAPPENED. OUR WHITE HOUSE CONTACT SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY TOOK THIS EXPLANATION WITH A PINCH OF SALT.

3. THERE IS NO SIGN HERE OF OVER-EXCITEMENT RESULTING FROM FITZGERALD'S RECENT MESSAGE TO THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND. NOR, AS FAR AS WE CAN ESTABLISH, IS THERE ANYTHING IN YESTERDAY'S PRESS REPORTS FROM IRELAND SUGGESTING THAT THE FOUR HORSEMEN HAVE ASKED FOR AN URGENT MEETING WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN. CONGRESS HAS BEEN TOTALLY PREOCCUPIED BY THE REAGAN TAX BILL THIS WEEK AND WILL GO INTO RECESS EITHER TOMORROW OR EARLY NEXT WEEK, UNTIL THE SECOND WEEK OF SEPTEMBER. THE WEDDING HAS ALSO DOMINATED THE NEWS.

HENDERSON

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