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UNCLASSIFIED

FM DUBLIN 12/1230Z FEB 1981

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 37 OF 12 FEB

AND TO PRIORITY N I O (BELFAST)

DAIL P Q'S ON POSSIBLE DEFENCE PACT.

1. ON 11 FEB MR HAUGHEY REPLIED TO TWO QUESTIONS IN THE DAIL ABOUT POSSIBLE DEFENCE ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE U K AND THE REPUBLIC .

2. DR NOEL BROWNE ASKED: 'WHETHER THE QUESTION OF A DEFENCE PACT BETWEEN IRELAND AND THE U K IS CURRENTLY ON THE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN BRITISH AND IRISH OFFICIALS: AND WHETHER THIS ISSUE IS LIKELY TO ARISE WITHIN THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE'. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE TAOISEACH TOLD DR BROWNE THAT HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM OR DENY NEWSPAPER REPORTS THAT A DEFENCE PACT WITH BRITAIN HAD BEEN DISCUSSED DURING

HIS MEETING WITH MRS THATCHER IN DECEMBER.

3. DR GARRET FITZGERALD ASKED " WHETHER ANY REFERENCE HAS BEEN MADE IN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER, TO A POSSIBLE DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRITAIN AND IRELAND". MR HAUGHEY REPLIED THAT THE JOINT STUDIES COMMISSIONED BY MRS THATCHER AND HIMSELF INCLUDED POSSIBLE NEW INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES, CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS, SECURITY MATTERS, ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND MEASURES TO IMPROVE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THE DETAILS OF THE STUDIES SHOULD BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE PRESENT. IF DETAILS WERE GIVEN, IT WOULD VITIATE THE VALUE OF THAT TYPE OF PERSONAL DISCUSSION. DR FITZGERALD THEN COMMENTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN PRESS REPORTS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP, AND THAT WAS A MATTER WHICH SHOULD BE DISCUSSED FIRST IN THE HOUSE BEFORE BEING BROACHED WITH A FOREIGN PRIME MINISTER - A FACT WHICH THE TAOISEACH HAD NOT DENIED. MR HAUGHEY COUNTERED THIS BY SAYING THAT DR FITZGERALD WAS MAKING AN ASSUMPTION WHICH HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM OR DENY BECAUSE THIS WOULD BREACH THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE DISCUSSIONS.

4. THE DEBATE BECAME HEATED AS DR BROWNE ASKED WHETHER IRELAND'S TRADITIONAL POLICY OF NEUTRALITY WAS NOW IN QUESTION AS A RESULT OF THE CLAUSE IN THE COMMUNIQUE MENTIONING " THE TOTALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS". MR HAUGHEY SAID THAT THERE WAS AN UNDERSTANDING ON ALL SIDES OF THE HOUSE THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNION, IF SOME DEFENCE ARRANGEMENT WAS AGREED, IRELAND WOULD PARTICIPATE IN IT. ASKED BY DR BROWNE ABOUT DE VALERA'S PROVISION THAT IRELAND WOULD NOT ENTER INTO A DEFENCE PACT WITH BRITAIN WHILE THE LATTER STILL OCCUPIED THE NORTH, MR HAUGHEY REPLIED THAT IRELAND WAS STILL NOT ABLE TO JOIN N A T O BECAUSE OF ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SIX COUNTY SITUATION. HE WENT ON TO SAY IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM MR CLUSKEY THAT ALTHOUGH IRELAND WAS NOT A MEMBER OF A MILITARY ALLIANCE, IT WAS A MEMBER OF OF THE E E C, AND WAS NOT NEUTRAL ON MANY POLITICAL ISSUES ARISING IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

5. WE WILL SEND THE VERBATIM TEXT OF THESE EXCHANGES BY BAG, WHEN THIS BECOMES AVAILABLE.

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