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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 372 OF 11 DEC

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O BELFAST

INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON B I S NEW YORK

*Mr Haughey gave little
away - mo*

DAIL DEBATE ON THE MEETING BETWEEN MRS THATCHER AND MR HAUGHEY

1. THIS MORNING THE DAIL DEBATED A MOTION MOVED BY THE GOVERNMENT THAT "THIS HOUSE TAKES NOTE OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING THE MEETING BETWEEN THE TAOISEACH AND THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER IN DUBLIN, ON 8 DECEMBER 1980". FULL TEXTS OF THE TAOISEACH'S OPENING AND CLOSING SPEECHES AND THOSE OF MESSRS FITZGERALD AND CLUSKEY FOLLOW BY TOMORROW'S BAG.
2. MR HAUGHEY OPENED THE DEBATE WITH A CAREFULLY PHRASED, SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE STATEMENT. HE DESCRIBED THE BRITISH DELEGATION AS "THE MOST IMPORTANT TO VISIT THIS COUNTRY SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THIS STATE ON INDEED FOR A LONG TIME BEFORE THEN", AND THE TALKS AS "EXTREMELY VALUABLE ... CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT IN THE MOST CONSTRUCTIVE SPIRIT." HE REFERRED REPEATEDLY TO THE TEXT OF THE COMMUNIQUE WHICH "DESCRIBES SPECIFICALLY WHAT EMERGED" FROM THE MEETING.
3. THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF HIS STATEMENT REFERS TO PARAGRAPH 6 OF THE COMMUNIQUE:
"THE JOINT STUDIES WILL EMBRACE POSSIBLE NEW INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES, CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS, SECURITY MATTERS, ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE UNDERSTANDING. IT WOULD BE OUR WISH AND OUR INTENTION THAT THE APPROACH TO POSSIBLE NEW INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES WOULD BE OPEN AND FLEXIBLE, UNRESTRICTED BY PREJUDICE AND THAT DIFFERENT CONCEPTS WOULD BE CONSIDERED SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF WHETHER OR NOT THEY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTED TOWARDS PEACE AND RECONCILIATION, . THE WORDS "TOTALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THESE ISLANDS" IN MY VIEW SIMPLY MEAN THAT THE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION TO WHICH OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE DEVOTED DOES NOT EXCLUDE ANYTHING THAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVE PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND STABILITY, AND TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES ... IT IS SCARCELY TO BE EXPECTED

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/THAT THERE

THAT THERE WILL BE A FULL COINCIDENCE OF IDEAS. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THERE IS AGREEMENT TO CONDUCT JOINT STUDIES IN WHICH ALL WAYS FORWARD CAN BE EXPLORED WITHOUT ANY COMMITMENT ON EITHER SIDE''.

4. ON H BLOCK , MR HAUGHEY SAID THAT THE ''IRISH GOVERNMENT'S DEEP CONCERN AND ANXIETY ABOUT THE...SITUATION FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN OUR DISCUSSION. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT CONCERN AND I BELIEVE THAT OUR MEETING AND THE STATEMENT INCLUDED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ABOUT THE H BLOCK PROTEST CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A PROCESS WHEREBY A SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND'' HE ADDED , ''WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT IT IS ON THE BASIS OF THE HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS, AS OUTLINED BY THE NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY OF STATE IN HIS STATEMENT OF DECEMBER 4TH , THAT A SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND''.

5. MR HAUGHEY DESCRIBED THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND, PARTICULARLY THE UNIONIST SECTION OF THAT COMMUNITY'' AS A ''SPECIAL PERSONAL PRIORITY'', AND AFFIRMED, ''NORTHERN IRELAND'S POLITICAL LEADERS CLEARLY HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT PART TO PLAY IN ANY SOLUTION AND I WOULD LIKE TO SEE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPROPRIATE INVOLVEMENT OF SUCH LEADERS IN FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. IN PARTICULAR, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THEY HAVE PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE JOINT STUDIES ON SECURITY MATTERS WHICH COULD WELL BE INTER-RELATED WITH THOSE ON POSSIBLE NEW INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES''.

6. MR HAUGHEY DEVOTED MUCH OF THE REMAINDER OF HIS SPEECH TO A DEFENCE OF THE MEETING AGAINST''COMMENTATORS WHO FOR THEIR OWN REASONS HAVE TRIES TO PUT DIFFERENT GLOSSES ON WHAT WAS SAID.

7. THE FINE GAEL LEADER DR GARRET FITZGERALD SPOKE NEXT. HIS STATEMENT WAS MEASURED AND RESTRAINED. HE STRESSED AT THE OUTSET THAT HE DID NOT PROPOSE TO REFER TO THE H BLOCK ISSUE WHICH HE SAIND WAS A MATTER ON WHICH HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MR CLUSKEY AND THE TAOISEACH IN THE PAST WEEK SEMICOLON ''NOTHING THAT COULD BE SAID IN THIS HOUSE AT THE PRESENT TIME ON THIS ISSUE COULD ADD ANYTHING USEFUL TO WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY SAID''. TURNING TO MEETING ITSELF , DR FITZGERALD SPOKE OF HIS ''REGRET'' THAT MRS THATCHER ''SHOULD HAVE PLACED THE UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRELAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM AS DERIVING FROM THE FACT THAT OUR STATE IS THE ONLY ONE WITH WHICH THE U K SHARES A LAND FRONTIER'', HE THOUGHT THAT THE UNIQUENESS STEMMED FROM CLOSE ECONOMIC , SOCIAL , AND CULTURAL LINKS THAT WERE THE PRODUCTS OF JOINT HISTORY. HE ALSO REGRETTED THAT SHE ''SHOULD HAVE FELT IT NECESSARY TO SAY THAT THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO POSSIBILITY OF CONFEDERATION FLOWING FROM THE DISCUSSIONS AT DUBLIN CASTLE '' , DR FITZGERALD CONCLUDED THAT THE TAOISEACH'S CHOICE OF AN INDIRECT APPROACH WHICH INVOLVED IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN AS THE CONTEXT FOR

CHANGE IN ATTITUDES IN THE NORTH WAS A LONG ROAD, AND THE MATTER WOULD NOT BE SETTLED OVER THE HEADS OF THE PEOPLE IN THE NORTH. HOWEVER, HE WISHED THE TAOISEACH'S EFFORTS WELL.

8. PREDICTABLY, MR CLUSKEY WAS MORE AGGRESSIVE, ALTHOUGH HE PREFACED HIS REMARKS BY SAYING THAT HE TOO DID NOT PROPOSE TO SPEAK ABOUT THE H BLOCK SITUATION. HE SAID THAT BUT FOR THE DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS BETWEEN LONDON AND DUBLIN OF THE OUTCOME OF THE MEETING, HE WOULD HAVE HAD CAUSE TO CONGRATULATE THE TAOISEACH. HE CONTRASTED MR HAUGHEY'S STATEMENTS IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE ('' FULL OF IMPLICATION, HINTING, INNUNENDUES'') WITH MRS THATCHER'S CLEAR EXPLANATION OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED. HE SAID THAT MR HAUGHEY HAD SPOKEN IN THIS WAY IN ORDER TO GAIN POLITICAL ADVANTAGE AND SUGGESTED, (AMID MURMURS OF 'DISGRACEFUL' FROM THE FIANNA FAIL BENCHES) THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN TRUTHFUL. IN HIS VIEW, EXPLOITING THE RISING SECTARIAN TENSIONS IN THE NORTH WAS NOTHING SHORT OF CRIMINAL, AND HE CHALLENGED THE TAOISEACH TO SAY WHAT HAD BEEN AGREED IN THE MEETING.

9. THERE FOLLOWED A SERIES OF SHORT SPEECHES . MR LENIHAN STRESSED THAT THE REACTION TO THE MEETING BY THE MEDIA HAD BEEN HIGHLY CONSTRUCTIVE'' AND THAT THIS WAS IMPORTANT IN MOBILISING PUBLIC SUPPORT IN IRELAND AND BRITAIN.

WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS POSITIVE THINKING. THE REMAINDER OF HIS SPEECH WAS TIED CLOSELY TO THE COMMUNIQUE.

MR NEIL BLANEY CHARACTERISTICALLY ASSAULTED THE GOVERNMENT FOR HAVING TALKS WITH THE BRITISH AT A TIME WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS STILL PARTITIONED AND WHEN IRISHMEN WERE DYING IN BRITISH JAILS. FAR FROM BEING ''UNIQUE'', HE THOUGHT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRITAIN AND IRELAND WAS ''BIZARRE''. HE DEMANDED TO KNOW WHY THE REPUBLIC SHOULD HAVE TO PAY TO MAINTAIN THE BORDER, AND WHETHER THE TAOISEACH HAD ASKED MRS THATCHER TO DECLARE HER INTENTION OF WITHDRAWING THE BRITISH PRESENCE FROM IRELAND.

10. MR MICHEAL O'KENNEDY REPLIED MR CLUSKEY'S CRITICISMS. HE THOUGHT THAT THE LABOUR LEADER'S INSISTENCE ON KNOWING WHAT PRECISELY WOULD BE DONE AT EACH STAGE WAS A MARK OF HIS WANT OF ''EXPERIENCE'' IN DEALING WITH SUCH ''DEEP HISTORICAL PROBLEMS''. HE THEN TOUCHED ON HIS BY NOW FAMILIAR THEME, THE SHORT COMINGS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ECONOMY . WHAT WAS NEEDED, HE THOUGHT , WAS AN ADAPTATION OF STRUCTURES THERE TO MEET THE FUTURE.

IN THIS CONTEXT HE THOUGHT THE JOINT STUDIES WOULD BE USEFUL, BUT HE ADDED THAT HE PROBLEMS OF DERRY, STRABANE, AND CARRICKFERGUS WOULD ''TAX INGENUITY''

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WINDING UP FOR THE GOVERNMENT, THE TAOISEACH DELIVERED A LOW KEY STATEMENT, REITERATING HIS BELIEF THAT THE MEETING HAD BEEN "CONSTRUCTIVE AND SIGNIFICANT". DESCRIBING MR CLUSKEY'S INTERVENTION AS MORE THAN USUALLY DEPRESSING". AND STATING CATEGORICALLY THAT NO DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN MRS THATCHER AND HIMSELF EXISTED. HE STRESSED IN REPLY TO AN EARLIER QUESTION FROM MR PADDY HARTE (FINE GAEL SPOKESMAN ON THE NORTH) THAT HE HAD "NEVER ONCE USED THE WORDS 'CONFEDERATION , OR FEDERATION' OR THE WORD ' CONSTITUTION'". HE SAID HE HAD WATCHED MRS THATCHER ON THE TELEVISION , AND WAS IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH HER WHEN SHE SAID THAT " WE ARE EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF SEEING WHETHER WE CAN GIVE SOME FORM OF INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION TO THE UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES SO AS TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND STABILITY AND IMPROVE RELATIONS ". HE ADDED "WE ARE CONCERNED IN THIS PARTICULAR COMMUNIQUE WITH INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING NEW INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES, WHICH WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE OBJECTIVES WHICH WE HAVE IN MIND. I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS ANY ROOM FOR AMBIGUITY ABOUT THAT....."

THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.

FIGG

FCO/WHITEHALL
RID

ADDITIONAL DISTN.
NORTHERN IRELAND