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TO IMMEDIATE F.C.O.

TELEGRAM NUMBER 4197 OF 13 DECEMBER.

MY TELEGRAM NO 3926: PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT : MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

1. THE MEETING WILL OPEN WITH BRIEF WELCOMING SPEECHES BY THE PRINCIPAL HOSTS, VIZ SENATE MAJORITY LEADER ROBERT BYRD, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE TIP O'NEILL, SENATOR FRANK CHURCH AND CONGRESSMAN CLEMENT ZABLOCKI (CHAIRMEN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, RESPECTIVELY). EITHER CHURCH OR O'NEILL WILL FORMALLY INTRODUCE THE PRIME MINISTER AND INVITE HER TO SPEAK (FOR ABOUT 10-15 MINUTES). THERE WILL THEN BE QUESTIONS.

2. THIS MAY BE AN UNTIDY OCCASION, DEPENDING ON HOW MUCH ACTIVITY IS GOING ON ON THE HOUSE AND SENATE FLOORS ON MONDAY AFTERNOON (THERE MAY BE A FILIBUSTER IN PROGRESS IN THE SENATE). IRAN WILL BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF CONGRESSMEN'S MINDS AND MAY DOMINATE THE QUESTION-TIME. AMERICAN FRUSTRATION AT THEIR OWN INABILITY TO RESOLVE THE HOSTAGE PROBLEM HAS LED TO A GROWING TENDENCY TO ACCUSE AMERICA'S ALLIES OF NOT DOING ENOUGH TO SUPPORT HER.

3. MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WILL BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE P.M.'S ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY AND H.M.G.'S ECONOMIC POLICIES AND IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

4. ON NORTHERN IRELAND THE P.M. WILL NO DOUBT WISH TO BRING HOME THE OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE OF COMBATTING THE TERRORIST THREAT (ALTHOUGH THERE IS LITTLE DISPOSITION IN CONGRESS IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES TO CONDONE TERRORISM, THERE IS SYMPATHY IN SOME QUARTERS FOR WHAT IS THOUGHT TO BE THE LEGITIMATE NATIONALIST

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MOTIVATION OF THE IRA). THE BEST APPROACH WITH THIS AUDIENCE MIGHT BE TO SET THE TERRORIST THREAT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF H.M.G.'S DETERMINATION TO PROMOTE POLITICAL PROGRESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND TO CONTRAST THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE INHABITANTS OF THE PROVINCE, AND THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE SECURITY FORCES, WITH THE IRA'S CONTEMPT FOR THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE AND THEIR DEMOCRATIC EXPRESSION. ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT WELL GO AGAINST THE GRAIN TO HAVE TO SAY SO, IT MIGHT BE GOOD TACTICS FOR THE P.M. TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PART PLAYED BY RESPONSIBLE IRISH AMERICAN POLITICIANS, NOTABLY SPEAKER O'SNEILL, IN DISCOURAGING IRISH AMERICANS FROM GIVING SUPPORT TO THE IRA AND ITS FRONT ORGANISATIONS.

5. THERE MAY BE CRITICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS (E.G. THE MAZE PROTEST, AND THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND BENNETT REPORTS) AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE MINORITY COMMUNITY IN SUCH FIELDS AS EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING. IT MAY ALSO BE SUGGESTED (BY ANALOGY WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LANCASTER HOUSE CONFERENCE) THAT ANY CONFERENCE ON NORTHERN IRELAND SHOULD INCLUDE ALL THE PARTIES, I.E. INCLUDING THE PROVISIONALS AND PROTESTANT PARAMILITARIES.

6. ON SALT, THE WHITE HOUSE AND SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BYRD HOPE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL REPEAT IN UNAMBIGUOUS TERMS H.M.G.'S SUPPORT FOR THE TREATY AND ITS EARLY RATIFICATION; AND THAT SHE WILL RESIST EFFORTS BY TREATY OPPONENTS TO PROBE FOR EVIDENCE, WHICH THEY COULD EXPLOIT IN THE RATIFICATION DEBATE, THAT BRITAIN AND OTHER NATO ALLIES ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE TREATY.

7. THERE IS LIKELY TO BE WIDESPREAD PRAISE FOR YOUR AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S HANDLING OF RHODESIA. THERE MAY BE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TIMING OF THE LIFTING OF BRITISH AND U.S. SANCTIONS (THIS QUESTION IS DUE TO BE DEBATED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT VERY DAY).

8. ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES, THE MEETING WOULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET ACROSS TO THIS AUDIENCE (WHERE SECTORAL INTERESTS AND PRESSURES TEND TO PREDOMINATE) THE IMPORTANCE FOR ALL OF US, INCLUDING THE U.S., OF MAINTAINING THE OPEN TRADING SYSTEM DURING THE DIFFICULT MONTHS AHEAD. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO REMIND U.S. LEGISLATORS THAT AS WE EACH TRY TO RESTORE THE DYNAMISM OF OUR ECONOMIES, WE SHOULD AVOID DOING SO AT ONE ANOTHER'S EXPENSE.

HENDERSON

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