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FROM DUBLIN 061517Z OCTOBER 1981

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 348 OF 06 OCTOBER

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O BELFAST

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PREPARATION FOR ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT

1. WHEN I CALLED ON MR NALLY THIS MORNING TO HAND OVER A COPY OF MR PRIOR'S STATEMENT ABOUT THE MAZE PRISON HE SAID THAT THE TAOISEACH WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO ME ABOUT HOW HE SHOULD PREPARE FOR HIS MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ON 6 NOVEMBER.

2. DR FITZGERALD SAID THAT HE HAD CHOSEN TO TAKE A POLITICAL RISK IN MAKING HIS STATEMENT ON 27 SEPTEMBER ABOUT CHANGING ARTICLES 2 AND 3 OF THE IRISH CONSTITUTION. IT HAD HAD A MIXED RECEPTION IN THE REPUBLIC WHERE ON THE WHOLE IT HAD BEEN QUITE WELL RECEIVED BY UPPER INCOME GROUPS BUT LESS WELL BY WHAT HE CALLED THE WORKING CLASS WHERE REPUBLICAN TRADITIONS WERE STRONGER. HE HAD RECEIVED A FAVOURABLE RESPONSE FROM SOME UNIONISTS. HOWEVER, HE COULD NOT SIMPLY LEAVE THINGS AS THEY WERE AND HE WOULD TAKE HIS CAMPAIGN A STAGE FURTHER IN A SENATE DEBATE ON FRIDAY. IF HIS GENERAL APPROACH WERE TO SUCCEED THERE WOULD HAVE AT SOME TIME TO BE A POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM HMG. THIS MEANT THAT THE FORTHCOMING MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD NOW HAVE MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANCE FOR HIM. HE IS LOOKING FOR WHAT HE CALLED A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN BRITISH THINKING. I ASKED HIM WHAT HE MEANT BY A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT AND HE QUOTED SUNNINGDALE AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT HE MEANT. WHAT WAS NEEDED FROM THE BRITISH SIDE WAS SOME ADVANCE ON THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ABOUT NO CHANGE IN THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE MAJORITY. HE SAID THAT THERE WERE MANY WAYS IN WHICH THIS COULD BE TURNED INTO SOMETHING POSITIVE WITHOUT IN ANY WAY GIVING THE MAJORITY CAUSE FOR UNEASINESS. AND HE REMINDED ME THAT THE BRITISH DECLARATION AT SUNNINGDALE HAD SAID THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD SUPPORT THE WISH OF THE MAJORITY IF THAT WERE IN FAVOUR OF A UNITED IRELAND. THAT WAS A POSITIVE STATEMENT BUT WE HAD NOT REPEATED IT FOR A LONG TIME.

3. AT THIS STAGE DR FITZGERALD REVERTED TO THE QUESTION OF PROFESSOR DOOGE'S INVITATION TO MR PRIOR TO COME DOWN TO DUBLIN FOR A MEETING. HE SAID THAT HE WAS MOST DISAPPOINTED THAT THIS INVITATION HAD BEEN REFUSED. I SAID THAT THERE WERE GOOD POLITICAL REASONS WHY IT WAS INADVISABLE FOR MR PRIOR TO COME TO DUBLIN SOON AFTER TAKING OFFICE BUT THAT HE WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO SEE PROFESSOR DOOGE IN LONDON. DR FITZGERALD THEN EXPLAINED THAT THE IMPORTANT POINT WAS FOR HIM PERSONALLY TO MEET MR PRIOR IN ORDER TO GET TO KNOW HIM AND EXPLORE THE POINTS HE HAD MADE TO ME IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH. ONLY IN THIS WAY DID HE FEEL THAT HE COULD PROPERLY PREPARE HIMSELF

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FOR HIS MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. SUCH WAS THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT MEETING THAT IT WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT FOR OFFICIALS TO MEET AND PREPARE THE GROUND (I.E. ON THE LINES OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING IN BELFAST - SEE PARA 4 OF MY LETTER TO EYERS) ALTHOUGH IT WOULD STILL BE IMPORTANT FOR THEM TO MEET. THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE POLITICAL INPUT INTO THE PREPARATION OF THE SUMMIT MEETING AND HE FELT STRONGLY THAT THIS COULD ONLY BE DONE BY HIS PERSONALLY MEETING WITH MR PRIOR. WOULD IT NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO COME TO DUBLIN IN, SAY, THREE WEEKS' TIME? BY THAT TIME THE FACT THAT THE SUMMIT WOULD BE TAKING PLACE IN EARLY NOVEMBER WOULD BE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND HIS VISIT COULD PROPERLY BE DESCRIBED AS A PREPARATION FOR THAT MEETING.

4. DR FITZGERALD IS A MAN OF GREAT SINCERITY AND HE CLEARLY ATTACHES ENORMOUS IMPORTANCE TO TALKING WITH MR PRIOR BEFORE THE SUMMIT. HE MADE NO BONES ABOUT A MEETING BETWEEN PROFESSOR DOOGE AND MR PRIOR IN LONDON BEING OF LITTLE USE, EXPLAINING THAT IT WAS HE AND NOT THE PROFESSOR WHO WOULD BE TALKING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. WHILE I REALISE THERE COULD BE DIFFICULTIES FROM THE UNIONIST SIDE IN NORTHERN IRELAND, I RECOMMEND STRONGLY THAT MR PRIOR SHOULD TRY AND MAKE THIS VISIT WHICH COULD EASILY BE DONE WITHIN A DAY AND, AS DR FITZGERALD SAID, COULD BE CONVINCINGLY EXPLAINED AS PREPARATION FOR THE SUMMIT.

5. PLEASE SEE MIFT FOR OTHER POINTS WHICH WERE MENTIONED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

FM DUBLIN 061530Z OCT 81

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 349 OF 6 OCTOBER 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO(BELFAST)

M.I.P.T.

1. IN ADDITION TO THE MAIN POINTS MADE IN M.I.P.T, THE TAOISEACH SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE STATEMENT ON THE MAZE PRISON WAS MOST USEFUL AND SHOULD DO MUCH TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION IN THE PRISON. HE WAS NOT SO SURE ABOUT THE FUTURE AND VOICED SOME FEARS ABOUT THE POLITICAL ADVANCE THE IRA HAD MADE NORTH AND SOUTH. HE DID NOT ELABORATE.

2. AS REGARDS THE SUMMIT, HE SAID OF COURSE THERE WERE OTHER THINGS TO TALK ABOUT SUCH AS THE SUGGESTED ANGLO-IRISH COOPERATION COUNCIL SEMICOLON THE QUESTION OF FUGITIVE PRISONERS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ALL-IRELAND COURT WHICH HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT SUNNINGDALE. HE SAID HE WAS ONLY MENTIONING THESE AS EXAMPLES OF THINGS WHICH COULD BE DISCUSSED.

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