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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1163 OF 19 MARCH 80.

INFO PRIORITY DUBLIN, NIO LONDON AND NIO BELFAST.

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MY TEL NO 1046 : VISIT OF IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER : 16 - 18  
MARCH : NORTHERN IRELAND.

1. FUNSETH, DIRECTOR, NORTHERN EUROPEAN BUREAU OF STATE DEPARTMENT, WHO WAS PRESENT, GAVE US THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF LENIHAN'S MEETING WITH VANCE ON 18 MARCH, READING FROM A REPORTING TELEGRAM WHICH HE SAID HAD EXTREMELY RESTRICTED DISTRIBUTION.

2. LENIHAN (WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DONLON, NELIGAN AND ONE OTHER OFFICIAL) HAD SAID THAT SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND. THE TIME WAS RIPE FOR A JOINT POLITICAL INITIATIVE BY THE BRITISH AND IRISH GOVERNMENTS. HE SAID THAT YOU YOURSELF WERE RECEPTIVE TO THIS IDEA. ASKED WHAT KIND OF INITIATIVE, LENIHAN WAS NOT SPECIFIC. HE SPOKE OF SOME KIND OF POLITICAL STRUCTURE INVOLVING THE PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES GUARANTEED BY THE IRISH AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENTS.

3. LENIHAN HAD SAID THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WAS WILLING TO EMBARK ON TALKS WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND ASKED VANCE

EMBARK ON TALKS WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND ASKED VANCE TO ENCOURAGE HMG TO TALK TO THE IRISH GOVERNMENT ABOUT SUCH A POLITICAL INITIATIVE. FUNSETH SAID THAT VANCE DID NOT RESPOND TO THIS REQUEST.

4. VANCE ASKED LENIHAN WHETHER HE SAW A ROLE FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. LENIHAN HAD REPLIED YES, BUT THAT EC INVOLVEMENT HAD TO BE CONFINED TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES. EC TRANS-BORDER PROJECTS WERE ALREADY UNDER WAY BUT THAT DID NOT STOP THE VIOLENCE OR FILL THE POLITICAL VACUUM. FUNSETH SAID THE TALK LASTED ABOUT TEN MINUTES AND COVERED NO OTHER GROUND.

5. THE IRISH EMBASSY TELL US THAT MOST OF LENIHAN'S VISIT WAS TAKEN UP BY ST PATRICK'S DAY EVENTS AND THERE WAS NO SUBSTANTIVE EXCHANGE WITH THE PRESIDENT AT THE WHITE HOUSE DINNER. BIAGGI WAS PRESENT BUT ACCORDING TO THE IRISH, THE PRESIDENT ABANDONED HIS EARLIER INTENTION TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND. HIS SPEECH (TEXT BY BAG) WAS INNOCUOUS. LENIHAN DID NOT SPEAK, OTHER THAN TO MAKE THE TRADITIONAL SHAMROCK PRESENTATION.

6. ALTHOUGH LENIHAN USED HIS VISIT TO SEEK U.S. SUPPORT FOR HAUSHEY'S POLICIES ON NORTHERN IRELAND, THE IRISH EMBASSY SAY THAT HIS PITCH WAS LOW KEY AND THAT HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS, A POINT CONFIRMED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT. IRISH EMBASSY SEE HAUSHEY'S VISIT TO PARIS AS A MUCH MORE DETERMINED EFFORT TO SEEK SUPPORT FOR THE IRISH POSITION.

HENDERSON

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