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Prime Minister
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FM WASHINGTON 312350Z AUG 79

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TEL NO 2515 OF 31 AUGUST 1979.

INFO PRIORITY NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN ROUTINE CG AND BIS NEW YORK.

M.I.P.T. U.S. ATTITUDES TO NORTHERN IRELAND.

1. THERE ARE TWO WAYS IN WHICH SOMETHING USEFUL MIGHT BE DONE TO INFLUENCE AMERICAN OPINION, FIRSTLY BY SOME GOVERNMENTAL ACTION AND SECONDLY BY ENHANCED PRESS AND TV COVERAGE. IT MAY BE VERY DIFFICULT, AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING NEXT WEEK WITH MY LYNCH, TO HOPE THAT ANYTHING CAN SUDDENLY EMERGE IN THE FORM OF NEW POLITICAL PROPOSALS. BUT WHAT IS NEEDED, TO COPE WITH THE AMERICAN DIMENSION, IS TO KEEP OPEN THE PROSPECT OF SOME POLITICAL MOVE AND THE EMPHASIS MUST BE UPON A MOVE THAT IS AGREED TO BY BOTH LONDON AND DUBLIN. ALL THAT I THINK IT NEEDS TO HOLD THE SITUATION AT THIS STAGE IS FOR SOME STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY BOTH THE BRITISH AND IRISH GOVERNMENTS THAT APART FROM THE SECURITY SITUATION THERE IS A NEED FOR POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE LONG TERM. THERE MAY OBVIOUSLY BE GREAT DIFFICULTIES ABOUT THIS AND IT MAY BE THOUGHT IMPRUDENT TO THINK IN THESE TERMS UNLESS WE KNOW EXACTLY HOW SUCH DISCUSSIONS MIGHT END. THE ONLY POINT I AM WISHING TO MAKE FROM HERE IS THAT ALL THAT IS NEEDED TO HOLD MODERATE POLITICAL OPINION IS FOR MIRRORS TO SHINE IN SUCH A WAY THAT THERE IS A SHAFT OF LIGHT FOR THE FUTURE.

2. ON THE SUBJECT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS THIS WEEK'S EVENTS HAVE PROMPTED A TIDE OF PRESS INTEREST HERE IN THE IRA AND ITS OVERSEAS LINKS; THIS IS SOMETHING NEW. WE ARE FEEDING SUITABLE EDITORIAL WRITERS WITH ALL THE MATERIAL THAT CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE SO AS TO EXPLOIT THE PRESENT INTEREST. I THINK THAT THE IRISH EMBASSY HERE AND IRISH INFORMATION MATERIAL SHOULD CUT MORE ICE THAN ANYTHING WE CAN PRODUCE. THE IRISH AMBASSADOR AND OTHER IRISH REPRESENTATIVES

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HAVE INDEED BEEN PROMINENT IN DENOUNCING THE TERRORISTS. BUT WE HAVE TO BE READY TO DO OUR PART AND WHERE WE HAVE JUDGED IT EXPEDIENT TO REBUT OBVIOUSLY HOSTILE REMARKS, WE IN THIS EMBASSY, BIS AND CONSULS GENERAL HAVE MADE RADIO AND TV APPEARANCES. WE AND THE IRISH EMBASSY HAVE, HOWEVER, REFUSED TO TAKE PART IN PROGRAMMES ALONGSIDE THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS OR OTHER IRA SYMPATHISERS.

3. FINALLY I SHOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THAT A SPECIAL EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO GET PEOPLE TO COME TO THE UNITED STATES FROM THE IRISH REPUBLIC AND NORTHERN IRELAND SO AS TO EXPOUND THE REALITIES OF THE PROBLEM. I AM NOT THINKING OF PEOPLE IN OFFICIAL POSITIONS BUT IT COULD DO A WORLD OF GOOD IF CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND, SAY HUME AND SMYTH, COULD BE INDUCED TO TAKE PART IN DISCUSSIONS AND SEMINARS HERE. LIKEWISE CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN COULD MAKE A HEALTHY IMPACT, THOUGH HE WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO COME UNDER INDEPENDENT AUSPICES. ALL THIS NEEDS CAREFUL WORKING OUT BUT I BELIEVE THERE IS A GAP AND IT IS ONE THAT WOULD BE WORTH DISCUSSING WITH THE DUBLIN GOVERNMENT.

HENDERSON.

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- 2 -
CONFIDENTIAL

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FM WASHINGTON 312345Z AUG 79

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TEL NO 2514 OF 31 AUGUST 1979

INFO PRIORITY NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN. ROUTINE CG AND BIS NEW YORK.

U.S. ATTITUDES TO NORTHERN IRELAND.

1. FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF LORD MOUNTBATTEN AND PRIOR TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR LYNCH I WILL TRY TO DESCRIBE THE LIKELY TREND OF AMERICAN OPINION ON THIS ISSUE AND THE AFFECT TO THIS ON THE SECURITY SITUATION IN IRELAND. IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM I WILL MAKE SUGGESTIONS FOR WHAT MIGHT BE DONE BOTH TO EXPLOIT THE PRESENT ATMOSPHERE GENERATED BY LORD MOUNTBATTEN'S ASSASSINATION AND TO MAKE SOME USEFUL IMPACT ON AMERICAN OPINION.

2. THE MURDERS HAVE PRODUCED A WAVE OF REVULSION AGAINST THE IRA. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT UNIONIST VOICE IN THE UNITED STATES, COMMENTATORS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO PAY SERIOUS ATTENTION TO THE PROTESTANT DIMENSION. BUT THE MOOD WILL NOT LAST AND EXTREMIST PRO-REPUBLICAN AMERICANS HAVE BEEN UNAFFECTED.

3. THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM HERE LIES IN THE FACT THAT THESE EXTREMISTS, LED BY THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS (INC) AND THE NORTHERN IRISH AID (NORAID) AND SUPPORTED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BY 130 MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON IRISH AFFAIRS LED BY BIAGGI, HAVE HARNESSSED AND DISTORTED FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES THE SENTIMENTS OF THE 13 MILLION IRISH-AMERICANS IN FAVOUR OF IRISH UNITY. THE MOTIVES OF THE AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN WHO ARE LOUD IN DENOUNCING ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS OBVIOUSLY POLITICAL: THEY SEEK TO STRENGTHEN THEIR HOLD ON THE IRISH - AND INDEED THE CATHOLIC - VOTE WHICH HAS BEEN TENDING TO WAVER (FOR VARIOUS REASONS EG GREATER PROSPERITY AND CARTER'S UNSOUNDNESS ON ABORTION.). THE AIM OF THE QUOTE FOUR HORSEMEN UNQUOTE (O'NEILL, CAREY, MOYNIHAM AND KENNEDY) IS TO TRY TO PREVENT IRISH AMERICAN OPINION FROM

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BEING EXPLOITED IN THIS WAY. THEY HAVE CONSISTENTLY CONDEMNED THE VIOLENCE. BUT THEIR ADVOCACY OF PEACEFUL PROGRESS TOWARDS IRISH UNITY MUST REMAIN CREDIBLE, AND THEY WILL THEREFORE CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR VISIBLE MOVEMENT TOWARDS A POLITICAL SOLUTION.

4. THE PRESIDENT AND THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION WILL REMAIN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO THE IRISH-AMERICAN LOBBY. CARTER HIMSELF PROBABLY KNOWS VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE COMPLEXITY OF THE IRISH PROBLEM. BUT HE IS AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL INFLUENCE FOR GOOD OR ILL OF THE IRISH VOTE. HIS ATTITUDE WAS MADE CLEAR IN HIS STATEMENT OF AUGUST 1977, WHICH IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED WAS ISSUED AT THE PROMPTING OF O'NEILL AND KENNEDY; THIS EMPHASISED U.S. IMPARTIALITY AND THEIR SUPPORT FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH COMMUNITIES. THE ADMINISTRATION ARE ALSO SENSITIVE TO THE BEARING OF THE QUESTION ON ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND THE MISHANDLING OF THE ISSUE OF ARMS SUPPLIES FOR THE RUC (THE REVIEW OF POLICY ON ARMS FOR THE RUC MAY WELL NOW BE SPEEDED UP).

5. LOOKING AHEAD AS REGARDS AMERICAN OPINION THE ISSUE IS WHETHER THE QUOTE FOUR HORSEMEN UNQUOTE AND THE MODERATES GENERALLY ARE GOING TO BE PREPARED TO WITHSTAND THE PRESSURE OF THE EXTREMISTS. THIS WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON HOW THEY SEE BRITISH POLICY DEVELOPING AND HOW CLOSELY DUBLIN AND LONDON ARE WORKING TOGETHER. MY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELEGRAM DEALS WITH THIS. BUT THE POINT HERE IS THAT I THINK THERE IS A DANGER TO OUR INTERESTS IF THE EXTREMISTS' INFLUENCE BECOMES GREATER AT THE EXPENSE OF THE MODERATES.

6. IT MIGHT WELL BE THOUGHT THAT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF LONDON IT DOES NOT REALLY MATTER WHAT THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE IS. THE IRA FOR INSTANCE ARE NOT GOING TO GIVE UP THE STRUGGLE EVEN IF THE IRISH-AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THEM DIMINISHES. NOR DO THE IRA DEPEND ALL THAT MUCH UPON THE AMERICANS FOR MONEY OR ARMS, BOTH OF WHICH CAN BE OBTAINED ELSEWHERE. BUT THE QUESTION OF MORAL SUPPORT IS SURELY IMPORTANT. IF AMERICAN OPINION - AND THERE IS ALREADY A TENDENCY HERE TO SAY THAT THE BASIC TROUBLE DERIVES FROM A LACK OF RESOLUTION IN LONDON AND AN UNWILLINGNESS TO FORCE THE

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UNIONISTS BACK FROM THEIR COMPLETELY INTRANSIGENT POSITION -
BECOMES MORE SYMPATHETIC TO THE IRA OR LESS UNDERSTANDING OF THE
COMPLEXITIES OF THE PROBLEM AND OF LONDON AND DUBLIN'S
SINCERE EFFORTS TO SOLVE IT, THEN THIS COULD PROVIDE AN ENORMOUS
BOOST FOR THE IRA WITH OBVIOUS SECURITY IMPLICATIONS.

7. PLEASE SEE MY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELEGRAM.

HENDERSON

FCO/WH DISTN.

RID