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DESKBY 130830Z  
FM MEXICO CITY 121740Z OCT 81  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 468 OF 12 OCTOBER  
INFO WASHINGTON AND DUBLIN

THE IRA IN MEXICO

RECENTLY THE IRA SEEM TO HAVE TAKEN A SPECIAL INTEREST IN MEXICO AND MEXICAN PUBLIC OPINION.

2. ONE IRA AND ONE SINN FEIN REPRESENTATIVE (KIERAN NUGENT AND TOM HARTLEY) WERE IN MEXICO CITY FOR MUCH OF LAST WEEK. THEY GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE AND RADIO INTERVIEWS, BUT DID NOT ATTRACT MUCH PUBLIC ATTENTION. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THIS EMBASSY WAS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE BY TELEPHONE IN A LIVE RADIO DEBATE, AND GAVE AS GOOD AS HE GOT. ALTHOUGH THE TWO IRISHMEN HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING IN THE STUDIO AND HAVING THE LAST WORD IN A PROGRAMME RENOWNED FOR ITS LEFT-WING BIAS, HE WAS ABLE TO GET ACROSS SOME BASIC POINTS WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE GONE UNMENTIONED, FOR EXAMPLE THAT THE IRA USES VIOLENCE, AND THAT A MAJORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND WANT TO REMAIN PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM. AS A RESULT OF OCCASIONAL ANTI-BRITISH PRESS PROPAGANDA ON NORTHERN IRELAND, SUCH FACTS ARE OFTEN GREETED WITH SURPRISE BY THE MEXICAN PUBLIC, WHICH HAS A TENDENCY TO SEE NORTHERN IRELAND AS ONE OF THE LAST BRITISH COLONIES.

3. A CORRESPONDENT OF THE MEXICAN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER, THE NEWS, RECENTLY VISITED NORTHERN IRELAND AND WAS GIVEN AN INTERVIEW BY A QUOTE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE IRA UNQUOTE, APPARENTLY THE FOURTH INTERVIEW OF THIS KIND EVER GRANTED. THE FULL TEXT OF A FOUR DAY SERIES IS BEING SENT BY BAG, BUT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE SOME IMMEDIATE USE OF THE BRIEF SECTION ON THE FUTURE PUBLISHED TODAY. PLEASE SEE MY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELEGRAM.

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FM MEXICO CITY 121755Z OCT 81

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 469 OF 12 OCTOBER

INFO WASHINGTON AND DUBLIN

MY IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING TELEGRAM: THE IRA IN MEXICO

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS PUBLISHED IN THE NEWS OF 12 OCTOBER.

Q. AFTER THE BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SIX-COUNTY STATE, WHAT IS THE NEXT STAGE?

A. THE NEXT STEP WILL BE TO DISMANTLE THE STRUCTURE OF THE SO-CALLED FREE STATE. THE IRISH REPUBLIC IS NO MORE THAN A SELF-GOVERNING ANNEX OF RICH MEN'S DUBIOUS NEO-COLONIALISM. WE WANT A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC FOR ALL IRELAND.

Q. THEN YOUR ARMY WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME A GOVERNMENTAL BODY?

A. NO. I DIDN'T SAY THAT. BEING A SOLDIER IS NO QUALIFICATION FOR BEING A POLITICIAN.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE PROTESTANT FEAR THAT A CATHOLIC-DOMINATED TERRITORY WOULD RESULT IN THE ABOLITION OF SUCH RIGHTS AS DIVORCE AND ABORTION?

A. THERE IS NO PLACE FOR CHURCH IN THE AFFAIRS OF STATE. I HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE MYSELF ACCEPTING A LOT OF CATHOLIC VIEWS. I WOULDN'T WANT TO IMPOSE THEM ON SOME UNSUSPECTING PROTESTANT.

Q. WHAT IF, AS HAS ALREADY BEEN SUGGESTED BY POLLS AND SURVEYS IN EIRE, AFTER THE SIX-COUNTY STATE IS FREED, THE PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN IRELAND DO NOT WISH TO ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL BURDEN OF INCORPORATING THE NEW TERRITORY?

A. WE CALL THE SHOTS. WE DON'T REALLY GIVE A DAMN WHAT THEY WANT. WE HAVE ALWAYS CALLED THE SHOTS.

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