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FM FCO 141820Z DEC 81
TO PRIORITY WASHINGTON
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1928 OF 14 DECEMBER
INFO PRIORITY DUBLIN
INFO SAVING NIO BELFAST

YOUR TELEGRAM NO.1889 : JUDGE CLARK ON IRISH UNIFICATION

1. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND SPOKE TO CLARK ON THE TELEPHONE ON 8 DECEMBER. CLARK EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT HIS REMARKS ABOUT IRISH UNITY HAD CAUSED NO PROBLEM AND THAT IT HAD NOT PLACED THE GOVERNMENT IN ANY DIFFICULTY. HE WAS EVIDENTLY ANXIOUS TO REPAIR ANY DAMAGE WHICH THE REMARK MIGHT HAVE CAUSED TO RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. HE ASSURED MR PRIOR THAT HIS COMMENT HAD BEEN AN OBSERVATION NOT AN EXPRESSION OF AMERICAN POLICY. HE INVITED MR PRIOR TO LET HIM KNOW IF AT ANY STAGE HE OR THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT COULD BE OF ANY HELP. MR PRIOR TOLD CLARK THAT THERE HAD BEEN A FAIRLY BRISK REACTION BUT THAT HE EXPECTED IT TO DIE DOWN BEFORE TOO LONG. HE EMPHASISED THAT THE REACTION TO THE INTERVIEW HAD DEMONSTRATED THE SENSITIVITY OF AFFAIRS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.
2. THE LORD PRIVY SEAL RETURNED MR CLARK'S TELEPHONE CALL ON 9 DECEMBER. MR CLARK TRIED TO CLAIM THAT OUR OBJECTIONS TO WHAT HE HAD SAID HAD BEEN EXAGGERATED AND FAILED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE CONTEXT OF HIS REMARKS. WHAT HE HAD SAID WAS PURELY AN OBSERVATION OF POPULAR FEELING, NOT OF POLICY. THE LORD PRIVY SEAL EXPLAINED THE PROBLEM CAUSED FOR US BY THE CREATION OF AN APPARENT LINK BETWEEN RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO TRADITIONS IN IRELAND, WHICH WE SUPPORT, AND UNIFICATION, AND REMINDED HIM THAT ANY STATEMENT ON IRELAND BY A LEADING MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION MUST NECESSARILY APPEAR TO REFLECT POLICY. THAT BEING SAID, THE MATTER WAS NOW WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE.
3. IN VIEW OF THESE CONVERSATIONS AND OF THE LINE TAKEN BY

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THE STATE DEPARTMENT (YOUR TELEGRAM NO.3743), MINISTERS ARE INCLINED TO DRAW A LINE UNDER THIS UNHAPPY INCIDENT, AND YOU NEED TAKE NO FURTHER ACTION.

4. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR EFFORTS IN GETTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO USE THE LANGUAGE THEY DID.

CARRINGTON

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