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PS TO PM. NO 10 DOWNING STREET.

FM DUBLIN 231655Z MAR 1982

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 76 OF 23 MARCH

AND TO INFO IMMEDIATE N I O (BELFAST)

F C O PLEASE PASS SAVING TO WASHINGTON

M I P T

1. I CALLED THIS MORNING ON DONLON TO ASK ABOUT THE JOINT STATEMENT WITH THE S D L P AND TO GET SOME EXPLANATION OF MR HAUGHEY'S POLICY. THE MEETING WITH THE S D L P HAD BEEN AT THEIR REQUEST AND MR HUME HAD ONLY YESTERDAY MORNING RETURNED FROM THE U S A. IT SEEMS THAT HE WAS LESS KEEN THAN THE OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY TO ISSUE A STATEMENT AND THE HARD LINE HAD BEEN MAINTAINED BY SEAMUS MALLON. BEFORE THE MEETING MR HAUGHEY HAD HAD A CAREFUL BRIEFING ON MR PRIOR'S PROPOSALS BY NELIGAN.

2. DONLON ADMITTED THAT NEITHER HE NOR ANY OFFICIALS HAD EVEN NOW HAD ANY MEANINGFUL TALK WITH MINISTERS ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT THAT MUCH OF MR HAUGHEY'S RECENT REMARKS WERE A HANG-OVER FROM ELECTIONEERING AND STIMULATED BY THE EXCITEMENT OF ST PATRICK'S DAY AND THE VISIT TO PRESIDENT REAGAN. HE SAW IT AS VERBAL REPUBLICANISM AND POINTED OUT THAT MIGHT ALSO BE THE PRICE HE HAD TO PAY FOR BLANEY'S SUPPORT. WE HAD HEARD A LOT ABOUT THE PRICE PAID FOR GREGORY'S SUPPORT AND WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT BLANEY IS NOT A MAN TO BE TAKEN OFR GRANTED BY FIANNA FAIL.

3. I SAID THAT WHILE I WAS NOT SPEAKING ON INSTRUCTIONS, I WAS GLOOMY ABOUT THE WAY THINGS WERE GOING. WE HAD HOPED THAT THE INSTITUTION OF THE ANGLO-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL WOULD PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR INTER GOVERNMENTAL EXCHANGES OF VIEWS IN A PRIVATE WAY AND THAT WE COULD GET AWAY FROM THE DANGEROUS METHOD OF POLICY MAKING THROUGH PRESS CONFERENCES AND PUBLIC SPEECHES. I ASKED HIM TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE TAOISEACH THAT MR PRIOR HAD FOUGHT THE MINORITY'S CORNER IN THE NORTH PRETTY HARD OVER RECENT MONTHS AND HE DESERVED BETTER SUPPORT THAN HE WAS GETTING FROM DUBLIN. I ADDED THE POINT IN MY TELEGRAM NO 71 ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AN ELECTED ASSEMBLY AND A PARLIAMENTARY TIER.

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4. IN THE DAIL THIS AFTERNOON AT QUESTION TIME THE TAOISEACH REITERATED THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHED TO A PARLIAMENTARY TIER AND SAID IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION THAT HE THOUGHT NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICIANS MIGHT BE FOUND TO JOIN IT EITHER THROUGH NOMINATION BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES OR BY ELECTION HELD EXPRESSLY FOR THIS PURPOSE. THE SECOND METHOD IS A NEW DEPARTURE.

5. DONLON ASSURED ME THAT , AT THE OFFICIAL LEVEL AT ANY RATE, THEY WOULD KEEP OPEN AS MANY LINES AS POSSIBLE TO UNIONISTS AND OTHERS IN THE NORTH IN ORDER AT LEAST THAT MR HAUGHEY AND OTHER MINISTERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF WHAT PEOPLE IN THE NORTH WERE THINKING. AS REGARDS A POSSIBLE MEETING BETWEEN MR COLLINS AND MR PRIOR HE WAS NOT YET SURE OF WHAT HIS MINISTER WANTED AS HE HAD BEEN AWAY FROM DUBLIN VIRTUALLY SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT. I THINK IT IS THEREFORE UNLIKELY THAT MR COLLINS WILL ASK FOR AN EARLY MEETING. ON THE OTHER HAND, I GATHERED THAT THEY WOULD BE VERY READY TO FIX UP A MEETING IF MR PRIOR WANTED ONE QUICKLY. IN VIEW OF THE RECENT STATEMENTS I THINK SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE HELPFUL.

6. AS REGARDS THE WASHINGTON VISIT, DONLON TOLD ME THAT THE ACTUAL TIME IN WHICH MR HAUGHEY SPOKE WITH THE PRESIDENT WAS ONLY ABOUT 15 MINUTES. THERE WAS NO SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF ANY KIND AT LUNCH.

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(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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