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TO IMMEDIATE DUBLIN

TELEGRAM NUMBER 7 OF 20 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY NIO BELFAST

DR FITZGERALD'S ATTENDANCE AT EC DINNER *in BELFAST!*

1. AS YOU KNOW THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE IN BELFAST HAS ARRANGED A DINNER ON 28 JANUARY, DURING MR TUGENDHAT'S VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND, TO MARK THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACCESSION TO THE COMMUNITY OF THE UK, IRELAND AND DENMARK. MARTIN HAS INVITED AMONG OTHERS THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, THE TAOISEACH AND WE BELIEVE MR HAGERUP TO REPRESENT DENMARK. MR PRIOR HAS TOLD MARTIN AND MR TUGENDHAT THAT HE CANNOT ATTEND SINCE HE HAS A LONG STANDING ENGAGEMENT, BUT THE TAOISEACH HAS INDICATED THAT HE WILL ATTEND.
2. ALTHOUGH THE IRISH WILL KNOW THAT MR PRIOR WILL NOT BE THERE (PUS NIO HAS SPOKEN TO DR KENNEDY) WE HAVE HAD NO INDICATION THAT THE TAOISEACH IS RECONSIDERING HIS DECISION. WE BELIEVE THAT EVEN A PRIVATE VISIT OF THIS NATURE BY THE TAOISEACH TO BELFAST JUST NOW MIGHT BE USED TO CREATE A FURORE WHICH COULD CAST AN UNWELCOME SHADOW ON MR PRIOR'S MEETING WITH MR BARRY THREE DAYS LATER. GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD THEREFORE RAISE THIS QUESTION WITH THE IRISH IN LOW KEY AT WHATEVER LEVEL YOU THINK APPROPRIATE (WE SHOULD OF COURSE MUCH PREFER THAT YOUR INTERVENTION SHOULD NOT GET BACK TO MARTIN OR BECOME PUBLIC) DRAWING AS NECESSARY ON THE FOLLOWING ARGUMENTS.
3. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT SHARE OUR VIEW THAT IMPROVED RELATIONS CAN BEST BE ACHIEVED BY MOVING AT A DELIBERATE PACE. THE MINISTERIAL CONTACTS WHICH HAVE BEEN AGREED REFLECT THIS. WE WANT THEM TO GO AHEAD IN AN UNTRoubLED ATMOSPHERE. A VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY A SERVING TAOISEACH EVEN IN A PRIVATE CAPACITY COULD EXCITE EMOTIONS IN AN UNWELCOME

Mt
Agreed
Prime Minister
I hope we succeed in preventing this.
A.J.C. 21/1

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WAY AND AFFECT THE ATMOSPHERE. IF DR FITZGERALD'S ATTENDANCE WERE KNOWN IN ADVANCE SECURITY PROBLEMS WOULD BE INTENSIFIED AND SPECULATION BUILD UP (FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION WE BELIEVE MR EDWARD HEATH HAS ALSO AGREED TO ATTEND AND MEMORIES OF SUNNINGDALE COULD WELL BE EVOKED). THERE MIGHT EVEN BE DEMONSTRATIONS. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER MARTIN HAS INVITED THE NORTHERN IRISH MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BUT THIS SEEMS LIKELY. IF SO, MR PAISLEY AND MR TAYLOR MIGHT WELL SEEK TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL BY WALKING OUT OR MAKING SCENES AT THE DINNER.

4. WE SHOULD LIKE TO MOVE TOWARDS A SITUATION IN WHICH VISITS BY IRISH MINISTERS TO THE NORTH OR NORTHERN IRELAND MINISTERS TO THE SOUTH WERE REGARDED AS NATURAL AND PERHAPS EVEN ROUTINE BUT WE ARE NOT YET IN THAT POSITION.

5. MR MARTIN'S EC FUNCTION MEANS THAT HE ACTS QUITE INDEPENDENTLY OF HMG AND THE DECISION TO INVITE GUESTS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL TO A DINNER IN BELFAST WAS NOT PROMPTED OR ORGANISED BY HMG. IT IS OF COURSE ENTIRELY A MATTER FOR THE TAOISEACH TO DECIDE WHETHER TO MAKE A PRIVATE VISIT BUT WE SHOULD NOT WISH HIM TO BE UNDER ANY MISAPPREHENSION ABOUT THE BACKGROUND TO THIS PARTICULAR INVITATION.

6. IF ASKED YOU CAN SAY THAT OUR CONCERN RELATES ONLY TO A VISIT BY THE TAOISEACH: WE DOUBT IF THE PRESENCE OF A JUNIOR MINISTER WOULD GIVE RISE TO ANYTHING LIKE THE SAME PROBLEMS. YOU MAY ALSO SAY THAT MR PRIOR EXPECTS TO BE REPRESENTED BY MR NICHOLAS SCOTT.

PYM

NORTHERN IRELAND

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