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IRELAND

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FROM UKREP BRUSSELS 241955Z JAN  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 329 OF 24 JANUARY  
INFO DUBLIN

FOLLOWING FROM SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY  
ANGLO/IRISH RELATIONS.

1. THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAD TWENTY MINUTES OR SO PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH THE IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER THIS AFTERNOON.
2. BARRY SAID THAT, GIVEN THE NUMBER OF PROBLEMS WHICH THE UK AND IRELAND HAD IN COMMON, HE WAS SURE THAT THERE SHOULD BE A SENSIBLE AND BUSINESSLIKE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DUBLIN AND LONDON, AND THAT CONTACT BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTERS SHOULD BE CLOSE. HE HOPED THAT, IF EVER DIFFICULTIES AROSE, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO GET IN TOUCH BY TELEPHONE RATHER THAN LET DIFFERENCES OF VIEW EMERGE, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE PRESS. MR PYM SAID HE ENTIRELY AGREED WITH THIS. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THEY SHOULD BOTH FEEL FREE TO RAISE TOPICS INFORMALLY WITH EACH OTHER. HE CERTAINLY AGREED THAT THE HABIT OF TELEPHONE CONTACT WOULD BE USEFUL: IT WAS NOT, IN ANY CASE, HIS STYLE TO AIR DIFFERENCES OF VIEW IN THE MEDIA. HE ASKED THAT HIS GOOD WISHES SHOULD BE CONVEYED TO GARRETT FITZGERALD.
3. BARRY SAID THERE WERE MANY ISSUES WHICH COULD USEFULLY BE DISCUSSED. HE HOPED IN PARTICULAR THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO LIMIT THE EFFECTS OF DIFFERENCES ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND ON THE DISCUSSION OF FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES GENERALLY. CLOSE CONSULTATION WOULD BE VALUABLE. MR PYM AGREED.
4. TURNING TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM, MR PYM SAID THAT THE CRITICAL THING WAS THE SECURITY ISSUE. IT WAS PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING THAT THE HABIT OF COOPERATION ON SECURITY ISSUES, PARTICULARLY ALONG THE BORDER, HAD RECENTLY GROWN: IT REMAINED OUR HOPE THAT THIS SITUATION COULD BE MAINTAINED AND IMPROVED. BARRY AGREED, AND SAID THAT HE THOUGHT COOPERATION WAS ALREADY AT A HIGH LEVEL. THE UNDERLYING DIFFICULTY WAS, OF COURSE, THE POLITICAL SITUATION. MR PYM SAID THAT HMG CONTINUED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO WORK TOWARDS A SOLUTION. WHATEVER PROPOSAL ONE PUT FORWARD, HOWEVER, THERE WERE ALWAYS THOSE WHO FOUND DIFFICULTIES. BARRY SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT IN DUBLIN HAD BEEN RATHER LESS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE IDEA OF AN ASSEMBLY. IN HIS VIEW, HOWEVER, THE PROBLEM WAS THAT LOCAL POLITICIANS IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAD THEMSELVES RUN OUT OF IDEAS. MR PYM AGREED AND SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT BARRY WOULD SHORTLY BE MEETING MR PRIOR, AND WAS SURE THAT THAT WOULD PROVIDE A GOOD OCCASION TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN MORE DETAIL.

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4. THERE WAS A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY ISSUES. ON THE CFP BARRY SAID THAT THE IRISH STILL SOUGHT TWO POINTS OF CLARIFICATION BEFORE KNOWING WHETHER THEY COULD SIGNAL THEIR AGREEMENT IN THE COUNCIL TOMORROW. ON OWN RESOURCES, BARRY SAID THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT DID NOT UNDERSTAND HOW COMMUNITY POLICIES COULD BE DEVELOPED WITHOUT AN EXPANSION OF OWN RESOURCES TO FUND THEM. MR PYM EXPLAINED THE UK POSITION.

5. THERE WAS A GENERAL TOUR D'HORIZON ON A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, INCLUDING THE MIDDLE EAST, SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND BELIZE/GUATEMALA. THERE WAS ALSO AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW SOVIET LEADERSHIP. BARRY REFERRED TO RUMOURS IN THE IRISH PRESS ABOUT THE ALLEGED PREPARATION OF SITES IN NORTHERN IRELAND TO STORE OR SET UP CRUISE MISSILES. MR PYM SAID THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTION OF THIS, AND CONFIRMED, IN ANSWER TO BARRY'S QUESTION, THAT THE PRESS COULD BE SO INFORMED. THERE WAS THEN A BRIEF EXCHANGE ON GENERAL ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, TOUCHING ON INFLATION, UNEMPLOYMENT ETC.

6. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE PRESS SHOULD BE TOLD THAT THIS WAS AN INTRODUCTORY MEETING BETWEEN MR BARRY AND MR PYM: THAT IT REFLECTED A DESIRE TO ESTABLISH BETTER ANGLO/IRISH RELATIONS: AND THAT THE MINISTERS HAD DISCUSSED A NUMBER OF MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST, INCLUDING BOTH COMMUNITY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. THEY HAD ALSO BRIEFLY DISCUSSED THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND, WHILE NOTING THAT THIS WOULD BE DISCUSSED FURTHER WITH MR PRIOR. IT WAS ALSO AGREED TO SAY, IF ASKED, THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO DISCUSSION OF THE STORIES IN THE IRISH PRESS ABOUT THE ALLEGED BUGGING OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY.

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