

CONFIDENTIAL

FM DUBLIN D11155Z SEPT 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 427 OF 1 SEPTEMBER 1984

INFO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST) NIO (LONDON)

VISIT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND TO DUBLIN ON 31 AUGUST

SUMMARY

1. DURING A VERY CORDIAL EVENING HR PRIOR ATTEMPTED TO MAKE IRISH MINISTERS' EXPECTATIONS FROM HMG MORE REALISTIC.

DETAIL

2. IN A NOTABLY FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE, THE TAOISEACH AND THE IRISH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPENT NEARLY THE WHOLE OF A FOUR HOUR MEETING OVER DINNER ON THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND. MR PRIOR GAVE A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE CONTACTS HE HAD HAD WITH THE LEADERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PARTIES IN THE NORTH. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THESE HAD NOT GOT VERY FAR AND THAT HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE RESULTS OF INTER-PARTY TALKS. HE STRESSED THAT THE PRINCIPAL AIM OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS TO FIND A WAY IN WHICH THE MINORITY COMMUNITY COULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH DECISION MAKING IN THE NORTH. HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS OF 1974 COULD BE REPEATED, AND AT ONE POINT HE REJECTED THE IDEA OF A NOMINATED EXECUTIVE DRAWN FROM THE PARTIES. THE IRISH SIDE PUT FORWARD NO CLEAR IDEAS ON THIS TOPIC AND WENT LITTLE FURTHER THAN REPFATING THE SLOGAN OF POWER CHARING. THERE WAS RATHER A SHARP

EXCHALGE BETWEEN MYSELF AND MR BARRY WHEN I SAID THAT I DID NOT THINK IT WAS REASONABLE OF HIM TO COMPLAIN IN A RECENT SPEECH THAT THERE WAS NO DEMOCRACY IN THE WORTH, GIVEN THAT THE BDLP HAD BOYCOTTED THE ASSEMBLY AND MAD BONE SO WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF A DUBLIN GOVERNMENT, THOUGH NOT THAT OF BR FITZGERALD. HE WAS INSISTENT THAT THE ASSEMBLY WAS NOT A BUITABLE BODY FOR THE SDLP. THE IRISH MINISTERS MADE IT CLEAR THAT ANY ARRANGEMENTS WE MADE WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THEM AND THE SDLP JOINTLY. THEY COULD THEN REINFORCE EACH OTHER IN SELLING THEM TO THEIR PUBLIC. APART PERHAPS FROM MALLON, THEY THOUGHT THE PARTY WOULD STICK TOGETHER THEY CONSIDERED THAT IT WAS UP TO HMG TO DELIVER THE UNIONIS MR PRIOR STRESSED THAT THIS WAS NOT IN OUR POWER.

- 3. THEY WERE NOT PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN A PARLIAMENTARY TIER AND SAID THEY HAD DIFFICULTY IN SEEING A USEFUL JOB FOR
- 4. THEY WERE CONCERNED LEST DOMESTIC PROBLEMS IN THE UK, SUCH AS THE MINERS STRIKE, SHOULD DEFLECT MINISTERIAL INTEREST AWAY FROM ANGLO/IRISH RELATIONS.
- 5. MINISTERS DID NOT DISCUSS COMMUNITY BUSINESS, INCURSIONS INTO THE REPUBLIC OR BORDER CROSSINGS.
- 6. RESIDENT CLERK PLEASE INFORM CLARK, RID, OF RECEIPT OF THIS TELEGRAM AND OF MY 3 MIFTS.

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