

NORTHERN IRELAND

PS  
PS/LADY YOUNG  
PS/FUS  
MR GOODALL

PS/ S of S  
PS/MR R ANDREW, QAB 1/56  
MR BRENNAN  
MR BURNS  
MR PN BELL

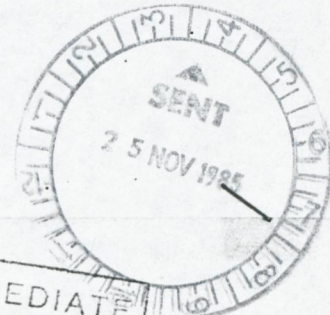
NIO

HD/RID  
Dep. HD/PUSD (2)  
HD/INFO DEPT  
HD/NEWS DEPT

SIR R ARMSTRONG  
DIO  
M. MACLARY  
PS/ NO 10 DOWNING STREET (3)  
CABINET OFFICE

RESIDENT CLERK

14.11.



RESTRICTED  
FM DUBLIN  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 815  
OF 251200Z NOVEMBER 85  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, BIS NEW YORK AND NIO (BELFAST).

IRISH OPINION POLL

SUMMARY

1. AN OPINION POLL SHOWS 2-1 IN FAVOUR OF THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT. THE OPPOSITION'S LEAD OVER THE COALITION PARTIES HAS BEEN CUT BACK TO 8%, AND DR FITZGERALD IS AHEAD OF MR HAUGHEY FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE JULY 1984.

DETAIL

2. AN IRISH TIMES/MRBI POLL CONDUCTED ON 19/20 NOVEMBER INCLUDED QUESTIONS ON THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT, ON SATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND ON VOTING PREFERENCES.

ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

3. THE FIRST QUESTION ASKED FOR REACTIONS TO THE AGREEMENT:

GENERALLY APPROVE	59%
GENERALLY DISAPPROVE	29%
NO OPINION	12%

IN PARTY TERMS, 50% OF FINE GAEL SUPPORTERS, 67% OF LABOUR AND 43% OF FIANNA FAIL WERE BROADLY IN FAVOUR OF THE AGREEMENT.

4. THE SECOND QUESTION ASKED ABOUT THE IMPACT THE AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE:

WOULD IT IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN:	YES	NO	D/K
- THE REPUBLIC AND GB ?	66%	26%	8%
- NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE REPUBLIC ?	50%	43%	7%
- THE TWO COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND ?	42%	5%	8%

WOULD IT REDUCE VIOLENCE ?



IRELAND ?	MA2%	5%	8%
WOULD IT REDUCE VIOLENCE ?	YES	NO	D/K
- IMPROVE LIFE FOR NATIONALISTS ?	49%	39%	12%
- IMPROVE LIFE FOR UNIONISTS ?	31%	52%	17%

5. THE THIRD QUESTION ASKED WHETHER, AS A RESULT OF THE AGREEMENT, A UNITED IRELAND WAS:

CLOSER	30%
FURTHER AWAY	13%
NO DIFFERENCE	53%
NO OPINION	4%

6. THE FINAL QUESTION IN THIS SECTION ASKED WHETHER MR HAUGHEY WAS RIGHT IN THE STAND HE HAD TAKEN:

MR HAUGHEY WAS RIGHT	32%
MR HAUGHEY WAS WRONG	56%
NO OPINION	12%

IT IS INTERESTING THAT MR HAUGHEY GETS RATHER MORE SUPPORT THAN THE AGREEMENT ITSELF (PARA 3), BUT THIS IS EXPLAINED BY RELUCTANCE AMONG HIS SUPPORTERS TO CONDEMN HIM. A BREAKDOWN BY PARTY SHOWS THAT 80% OF FINE GAEL, 69% OF LABOUR, BUT ONLY 34% OF FIANNA FAIL SUPPORTERS DISAGREED WITH HIS POSITION. AMONG FIANNA FAIL SUPPORTERS A MAJORITY (52%) AGREED WITH HIS STAND.

#### POLITICAL PREFERENCES

7. ON VOTING PREFERENCES THE POLL SHOWED A REMARKABLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE COALITION'S STANDING OVER OTHER RECENT POLLS:

	NOV (MRBI)	OCT (RSI)	SEPT (INDO)	JULY (MRBI)
FINE GAEL	37%	30%	30%	33%
LABOUR	6%	6%	7%	5%
FIANNA FAIL	51%	55%	55%	52%
WORKERS PARTY	2%	3%	5%	5%

8. DR FITZGERALD'S PERSONAL RATING HAS IMPROVED EVEN MORE DRAMATICALLY:

	NOV	JULY
DR FITZGERALD	51%	41%
MR HAUGHEY	43%	47%
MR SPRING	36%	25%

#### COMMENT

9. THIS POLL WILL BE VERY HEARTENING FOR THE GOVERNMENT. THEIR ADVISERS HAVE BEEN TELLING THEM THAT THEY MUST BREAK THE INEXORABLE TENDENCY OF DECLINING SUPPORT IN OPINION POLLS NOW IF THEY ARE TO HAVE ANY HOPE OF BLOCKING A FIANNA FAIL SWEEP TO VICTORY IN THE NEXT ELECTION. THE SIZE OF THE SWING IN THIS POLL WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON SUPPORTERS AND ACTIVISTS ALIKE.

10. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO BELL, NIO (L).

GOODISON