

GRS 360

# CONFIDENTIAL

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 FM DUBLIN  
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
 TELNO 30  
 OF 131810Z FEBRUARY 86  
 INFO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)

## IRISH GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE

1. THE TAOISEACH ANNOUNCED A RESHUFFLE OF HIS GOVERNMENT THIS AFTERNOON. THE NEW LIST IS:

- ⊕ TAOISEACH                      GARRET FITZGERALD (FG)
- ⊕ TANAISTE                        DICK SPRING (LAB)
- ⊕ AGRICULTURE                    AUSTIN DEASY (FG)
- ⊕ COMMUNICATIONS                JIM MITCHELL (FG)
- DEFENCE                            PADDY O'TOOLE (FG)
- EDUCATION                         PADDY COONEY (FG)
- ENVIRONMENT                      JOHN BOLAND (FG)
- FINANCE                            JOHN BRUTON (FG)
- FISHERIES AND FORESTRY            LIAM KAVANAGH (LAB)
- ⊕ FOREIGN AFFAIRS                PETER BARRY (FG)
- HEALTH                             BARRY DESMOND (LAB)
- INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE            MICHAEL NOONAN (FG)
- JUSTICE                            ALAN DUKES (FG)
- LABOUR AND PUBLIC SERVICE        RUAIRI QUINN (LAB)
- SOCIAL WELFARE                    GEMMA HUSSEY (FG)

⊕ INDICATES NO CHANGE

2. NINE MINISTERS HAVE NEW PORTFOLIOS AND BARRY DESMOND HAS LOST PART OF HIS TO GEMMA HUSSEY. NO CABINET MINISTER HAS BEEN DROPPED.

3. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN SOME CHANGES AT MINISTER OF STATE LEVEL. THREE HAVE BEEN DROPPED (JOE BIRMINGHAM, DONAL CREED AND MICHAEL D'APCY), AND REPLACED AS FOLLOWS:

EDUCATION AND SPORT	ENDA KENNY (FG)
ENVIRONMENT	TADHG O'SULLIVAN (LAB)
FINANCE	AVRIL DOYLE (FG)

WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS ALSO TO BE A NEW CHIEF WHIP, BUT THE DETAILS OF JUNIOR APPOINTMENTS ARE NOT YET CLEAR.

COMMENT .  
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4. THE FACT THAT THIS RESHUFFLE HAS TAKEN PLACE TODAY IS SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE: THE FIRST ANYONE KNEW OF DR FITZGERALD'S PLANS WAS AT A FINE GAEL PARLIAMENTARY PARTY MEETING LAST NIGHT. A RESHUFFLE WAS WIDELY EXPECTED IN DECEMBER/JANUARY, BUT THE PROSPECT WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE RECEDED IN RECENT WEEKS. IMMEDIATE REACTIONS ARE THAT THE MOVE WAS PROMPTED BY FINE GAEL'S DECLINING FORTUNES IN THE POLLS (MY TELNO 76), AND THE GOVERNMENT'S POOR IMAGE FOLLOWING A NUMBER OF UNPOPULAR DECISIONS AND THE RECENT BUDGET. IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THIS RESHUFFLE WILL DO MUCH TO IMPROVE MATTERS EITHER WITH THE ELECTORATE OR WITH DISGRUNTLED BACKBENCHERS. THERE IS NO REASON TO EXPECT ANY CHANGES OF POLICY AND THE EFFECT MUST BE LARGELY COSMETIC.

5. JOHN BRUTON'S APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER OF FINANCE HAS EVOKED MOST COMMENT SO FAR: HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE JANUARY 1982 BUDGET WHICH LED TO THE FALL OF THE THEN COALITION. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, HOWEVER, THE MOST INTERESTING NEW APPOINTMENT IS THAT OF ALAN DUKES TO JUSTICE. HE IS CLEARLY VERY ABLE AND HE SHOULD PROVE AT LEAST AS FIRM AS HIS PREDECESSOR. HE IS NOT REPEAT NOT KNOWN TO HAVE STRONG NATIONALIST VIEWS. I HAVE ALWAYS FOUND HIM VERY FRIENDLY AND HE SHOULD BE EASIER TO DEAL WITH PERSONALLY THAN NOONAN.

6. FCO PLEASE PASS IMMEDIATE BELL, NIO (L).

GOODISON

STANDARD PALACE  
R.D.

CORESTO  
ASS STAFF, CAB OFF  
MR BELL NIO (L)

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