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Ref. A01821

MR. WHITMORE

Mr. Stowe sent you a copy of his letter of 25th March about Mr. Haughey's line of approach to the Prime Minister when they meet at the forthcoming meeting of the European Council.

2. We shall of course be providing the Prime Minister with briefing against this meeting nearer the time. What follows is very much preliminary and personal observations.

3. Mr. Haughey's line seems to me ^{and} potentially very troublesome. His predecessors have tended to restrict security co-operation, and tried to use improvements as a means of buying political concessions from the British Government. It looks as if Mr. Haughey's line is rather more subtle: the security co-operation since he succeeded Mr. Lynch has been better than it has ever been. I wonder whether he may be hoping to create a situation in which we come to depend on it, and the political prices are then demanded, not for further improvements but for maintaining the degree of co-operation on which we have come to depend.

4. Mr. Haughey is also trying hard to give the Northern Ireland problem a European dimension, as is apparent from his meeting with President Giscard and now from the suggestion that we might seek Community financial support for the security effort. I am sure that the Community as a whole, including President Giscard, will not want to be dragged into the political dimension of Northern Ireland - though that does not exclude the possibility of Community expenditure to support the economy of Northern Ireland. What will be more worrying is if Mr. Haughey tries to bargain political concessions on Northern Ireland for support of our budget contribution. I have no doubt that we can avoid being trapped in that kind of linkage. But I think we can expect to find the pressures from Dublin both more subtle and more intense in future.

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ROBERT ARMSTRONG

28th March, 1980



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MR. WHITMORE

Mr. Stowe sent you a copy of his letter of 1st March about Mr. Haughey's line of approach to the Prime Minister when they met at the forthcoming meeting of the European Council.

We shall of course be providing the Prime Minister with briefing against this meeting nearer the time. What follows is very much preliminary and personal observations.

Mr. Haughey's line seems to be potentially very troublesome. It is clear that the Government have tended to restrict security co-operation, and this to use improvements as a means of buying political concessions from the British Government. It looks as if Mr. Haughey's line is rather more subtle: the security co-operation since he succeeded Mr. Lynch has been better than it has ever been. I wonder whether he may be hoping to create a situation in which we come to depend on it, and the political price is then demanded, not for further improvements but for maintaining the degree of co-operation in which we have come to depend.

Mr. Haughey is also trying hard to give the Northern Ireland problem a European dimension, as is apparent from his meeting with President Giacobbe and how from the suggestion that we might seek Community financial support for the security effort. I am sure that the Community as a whole, including President Giacobbe, will not want to be dragged into the political dimension of Northern Ireland - though that does not exclude the possibility of Community expenditure to support the economy of Northern Ireland. What will be worrying is if Mr. Haughey tries to use this political dimension on Northern Ireland as a lever to get out of our budget contribution. I have no doubt that we can win being the bigger fish in the pond. But I think we can expect to find the pressure from both more subtle and more intense.

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