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SAVING TELEGRAM

Ireland

BY BAG

12.35 TO PM

FROM DUBLIN

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Read in full

To: FCO Telegram no.19 Saving of 27 May 1980
Repeated Saving to NIO (Belfast) and Washington

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FAREWELL CALLS

1. I had thirty minutes alone with the Taoiseach on 23 May. His attitude was very friendly.
2. He said he had been most impressed by the Prime Minister at their meeting on 21 May. The atmosphere had been "wonderful" and he greatly enjoyed the relaxed way in which the lunch had gone. He had much appreciated the fact that he and Mrs Thatcher, in their tête à tête, had been able to speak frankly. Each had listened to what the other had to say. He had, "to be honest", been surprised that everything had gone so well in London (an echo of what he said at the end of the talks, on 21 May). "But," he added, "we must keep up the impetus."
3. He went on to say that he understood why the so-called guarantee could not be withdrawn. I had, he said, explained that to him earlier (my telegram no.152) and the Prime Minister had made it very clear. All the same, how was he ever going to manage to talk to Paisley with the guarantee behind him? Paisley would ignore him: yet it was important that he should talk to Paisley and others. I suggested that perhaps with time the contacts would develop. He replied, "I haven't got any time!" What was needed was something positive to go parallel with the guarantee. I replied that that thought was surely in paragraph 4 of the communiqué. He assented.
4. He then went back to the time-scale in his contacts with Northerners. People, he said, talked about "wooing" them. But that would take a lot of time. I said that nonetheless whether it was called "wooing" or something else, Northern Protestants had genuine misgivings about their role and position if there ever were a united Ireland and those had to be allayed. Speaking as a Protestant, I said I could understand how they felt. I mentioned an encounter I had had with Bishop Lucey of Cork, adding that I knew he was an extreme case. Haughey laughed and said, "He's a a Calvinist!" He continued that he was not a deeply religious man and did not mind if someone wanted to "worship Ali Baba and the Seven (sic) Thieves", but time was one of his problems. Could I suggest anyone he might invite from the North to receptions and so on? I replied that he might consider Peter Froggatt, Vice Chancellor of Queen's, David Cooke, ex-Lord Mayor of Belfast, Oliver Napier, of Alliance, all of whom I knew well. He dismissed Napier at once as being of no importance. Could I give him a list of suitable people? If it is thought appropriate, NIO might let us have suggestions which either Staples or my successor could give to Nally. Ewart Bell, it seems to me, could inject a lot of common sense here!

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5. I asked Haughey if he had put forward any specific ideas on the North, or on Anglo-Irish relations to Mrs Thatcher, and he replied he had not. He did not elaborate.

6. Later that night, at Staples' house, Nally and O'Rourke both said that Haughey was "lyrical" about the 21 May meeting. Nally had been instructed to compile the list mentioned in para 4 above.

7. I had half an hour alone with Lenihan on 26 May. He was his usual affable self and dwelt at length on how good the "vibes" were after the 21 May meeting. He also spoke of his and Haughey's admiration for the Prime Minister. The only other thing of significance to emerge was his reiteration, not prompted by me, that the Republic would be prepared to take part in defence cooperation (my telegrams nos. 138 and 150). I asked if that included possible membership of NATO and ^{he} replied that it did. In his view, the Republic's neutrality was diminished as soon as it joined the EC. He admitted, in reply to my question, that he might be a bit before his time so far as the general public and some of his colleagues were concerned. The public would have to be educated for the change which he was sure would come.

Comment

8. Haughey was clearly very well pleased with his visit to London which went much better than he had expected. He was greatly impressed by the Prime Minister. On future occasions, he will want to deploy some of the ideas he and others have spoken to us about - defence cooperation, NATO, broader contexts and so on. He will want to achieve and be seen to achieve something on Northern Ireland and, as he said to me, he has not much time.

9. I have sent copies of minutes about my farewell calls on Garret FitzGerald and Frank Cluskey to Newington, RID.

HAYDON

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