

GRPS 340

R E S T R I C T E D

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M.

FM DUBLIN 29:1240Z SEP 81

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 335 OF 29 SEPTEMBER 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)

MY TELNO 332:

REVISION OF CONSTITUTION: REACTIONS FROM FIANNA FAIL.

1. THE TAOISEACH'S REMARKS ON 27 SEPTEMBER WERE ATTACKED BY THE FIANNA FAIL LEADER, MR HAUGHEY, ON 28 SEPTEMBER ON RTE RADIO.
2. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MR HAUGHEY ACCUSED DR FITZGERALD OF UNDERMINING THE CONSTITUTION, ABANDONING THE ASPIRATION FOR NATIONAL UNITY AND OF PROVIDING THE ENEMIES OF UNITY WITH A PROPAGANDA WEAPON TO USE AGAINST THE REPUBLIC. HE DESCRIBED THE TAOISEACH'S BROADCAST AS AN "HYSTERICAL OUTBURST" AND SAID THAT NO MATTER WHAT CHANGES WERE INTRODUCED, NORTHERN UNIONISTS DID NOT WANT TO JOIN IN A UNITED IRELAND. IN HIS VIEW, THERE HAD BEEN TOO MUCH "WISHY-WASHY TALK OF APPEASING THE UNIONISTS." IT WAS IMPORTANT TO SAY THAT THE UNIONIST PEOPLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND, THE POLITICIANS PARTICULARLY, HAD AVAILED OF THEIR STRONG POLITICAL POSITION IN THE BRITISH ESTABLISHMENT SET UP 60 YEARS AGO TO CARVE FOR THEMSELVES A STATE WHICH WOULD ASSURE THEIR SUPERIORITY, ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY. THEY HAD MAINTAINED THAT POSITION EVER SINCE SEMICOLON THEY RESTED FIRMLY ON A GUARANTEE BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. AS LONG AS THAT GUARANTEE REMAINED, THE NORTHERN SITUATION WAS NOT GOING TO CHANGE. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT HE HAD DIRECTED HIS EFFORTS WHEN TAOISEACH TO RAISING THE PROBLEM OF THE NORTH TO AN INTERNATIONAL PLANE, TO PERSUADE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO BRING FORWARD NEW POLITICAL STRUCTURES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH WOULD ENABLE THEM ALL TO MAKE A FRESH START.
3. MR HAUGHEY DENIED THAT ARTICLES 2 AND 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION COULD BE USED TO JUSTIFY VIOLENCE, AND DESCRIBED THEM AS A SIMPLE EXPRESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASPIRATION FOR UNITY. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S TACTICS WERE DESIGNED TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THE ECONOMY. FIANNA FAIL WOULD NOT ACCEPT THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CLAIM TO NORTHERN IRELAND SHOULD BE REWORDED. FIANNA FAIL WAS COMMITTED TO THE NATIONAL ASPIRATION, AND MR HAUGHEY WAS NOT PREPARED, IN ADVANCE OF A MAJOR NEW POLITICAL STRUCTURE FOR IRELAND AS A WHOLE TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION IN THAT RESPECT. MR HAUGHEY ALSO DEFENDED FIANNA FAIL AGAINST THE TAOISEACH'S CRITICISM THAT THE PARTY HAD CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED LEGISLATION BASED ON THE THEOLOGY OF ONE CHURCH (SEE THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE TAOISEACH'S BROADCAST.)

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4. THIS IS THE STRONGEST ATTACK ON THE PROPOSED REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION TO COME FROM FIANNA FAIL SO FAR ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE ALREADY CRITICISED THE TAOISEACH'S CORK EXAMINER INTERVIEW (MY TELNO 328). ON 24 SEPTEMBER, THE FIANNA FAIL NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UNDER MR HAUGHEY'S CHAIRMANSHIP PASSED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION UNANIMOUSLY "THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF FIANNA FAIL CATEGORICALLY REJECTS THE CONTENTION BY THE TAOISEACH, DR FITZGERALD, THAT THERE HAS BEEN A GROWTH OF PARTITIONISM AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC, AND REAFFIRMS ITS DETERMINATION TO DEFEAT ANY ATTEMPT TO MODIFY OR DELETE ARTICLES 2 AND 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION WHICH GIVE EXPRESSION TO THE LEGITIMATE ASPIRATION OF THE IRISH PEOPLE TO THE UNITY OF IRELAND." THE FORMER MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR LENIHAN SPOKE ALONG THESE LINES ON 25 SEPTEMBER.

5. SEE ALSO M.I.F.T.

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