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FM WASHINGTON 092100Z JAN 81
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NO 73 OF 9 JANUARY
INFO PRIORITY NIO LONDON, NIO BELFAST
ROUTINE BIS NEW YORK
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VISIT TO THE US OF THE REVEREND IAN PAISLEY

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF REPORT IN THE WASHINGTON STAR OF 8 JANUARY, REFERRED TO IN TODAY'S IRISH NEWSPAPER DIGEST:

BEGINS:

THE REV. IAN PAISLEY, THE FIERY LEADER OF NORTHERN IRELAND'S PROTESTANT MILITANTS, IS PLANNING TO ATTEND RONALD REAGAN'S INAUGURATION DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE RECEIVED ONLY A COMMEMORATIVE INVITATION - WHICH THE PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL COMMITTEE SAID WAS A MISTAKE.

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE REP. RICHARD RIGDON OF GREENVILLE SAID HE WILL BRING HIS FRIEND PAISLEY TO THE CEREMONY, USING OFFICIAL INAUGURAL TICKETS HE RECEIVED FOR HIS SERVICE AS THE LOCAL REAGAN CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

QUOTE I SPOKE TO HIM (PAISLEY) YESTERDAY, AND HE'S COMING UNQUOTE RIGDON SAID. QUOTE HE WANTS TO SEE THIS HISTORIC EVENT, AND I WANT TO INTRODUCE HIM TO SOME OF THE SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN I KNOW UNQUOTE.

IF PAISLEY DOES ATTEND, HE WILL PROBABLY BE THE ONLY FOREIGN OFFICIAL OUTSIDE THE LOCAL DIPLOMATIC CORPS TO BE HERE FOR THE INAUGURATION, ACCORDING TO INAUGURAL COMMITTEE SPOKESWOMAN LAURA GENERO. THE STATE DEPARTMENT ACTIVELY DISCOURAGES FOREIGN LEADERS FROM ATTENDING THE CEREMONY, AND TRADITIONALLY THOSE LEADERS HAVE RESPONDED BY STAYING HOME.

IN AN EFFORT TO DISTANCE ITSELF FROM THE CONTROVERSY, THE INAUGURAL COMMITTEE PUT OUT A STATEMENT YESTERDAY SAYING THAT PAISLEY HAD NOT BEEN OFFICIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND ANY INAUGURAL EVENTS.

QUOTE IT WAS ACCIDENTAL AND UNINTENDED THAT HE RECEIVE ANYTHING, UNQUOTE A COMMITTEE SPOKESMAN SAID. QUOTE BUT IT'S MERELY A COMMEMORATIVE INVITATION HE WAS SENT, AND IT DOES NOT ENTITLE HIM TO ATTEND ANY INAUGURAL EVENTS UNQUOTE.

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2. BOTH THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE INAUGURATION COMMITTEE CONFIRM THAT NO OFFICIAL INVITATIONS TO THE INAUGURATION HAVE GONE TO OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES. QUOTE COMMEMORATIVE INVITATIONS UNQUOTE (WHICH ARE SIMPLY A SOUVENIR) HAVE GONE TO 500,000 PEOPLE OF WHOM MR PAISLEY IS APPARENTLY ONE. WHILE MR PAISLEY HAS NOT BEEN DIRECTLY INVITED TO ANY OF THE INAUGURAL CELEBRATIONS, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT STATE ASSEMBLYMAN RIGDON OF SOUTH CAROLINA (WHO AS A DELEGATE TO THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION HAS BEEN INVITED) HAS DECIDED TO INCLUDE MR PAISLEY ON HIS TICKET WHICH ENTITLES HIM TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY ONE OTHER PERSON. WE BELIEVE THAT THE REVEREND MARTIN SMYTH AND JOHN HUME (THE LATTER APPARENTLY INVITED BY SPEAKER O'NEILL) MAY ALSO BE SPECTATORS AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONIES ON A SIMILAR BASIS.

3. THE GUARDIAN CORRESPONDENT HERE IS FOLLOWING UP THE WASHINGTON STAR STORY AT THE REQUEST OF HIS PAPER. IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO OFFER ANY OFFICIAL COMMENT BUT THE POINT COULD BE MADE, BY WAY OF UNATTRIBUTABLE BACKGROUND, THAT NO OFFICIAL INVITATIONS TO THE INAUGURATION HAVE GONE TO OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES AND THAT ATTENDANCE BY MR PAISLEY OR ANY OTHER PUBLIC FIGURE FROM THE UK COULD ONLY BE AS THE INDIVIDUAL GUEST OF AN AMERICAN INVITEE.

HENDERSON

NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED
RID PS/MR HURD
NAD PS/MR RIDLEY
INFORMATION D PS/MR BLAKER
WED PS/PUS
MAED SIR A ACLAND
NEWS D CHIEF CLERK
SECURITY D MR ADAMS
PUSD MR BULLARD
PS MR FERGUSSON
PS/LPS LORD N G LENNOX
MR BRAITHWAITE

ADDITIONAL DISTN.
NORTHERN IRELAND

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