

NORTHERN IRELAND

PS  
PS/LADY YOUNG  
PS/PUS  
MR GOODALL

PS/ S of S  
PS/MR R ANDREW, OAB 1/56  
MR BRENNAN  
MR BURNS  
MR J LYON

NIO

HD/RID  
p. HD/PUSD (2)  
HD/INFO DEPT  
HD/NEWS DEPT  
RESIDENT CLERK

SIR R ARMSTRONG )  
DIO ) CABINET OFFICE  
PS/ NO 10 DOWNING STREET (3)

14.11.8

CONFIDENTIAL  
FM DUBLIN 241550Z JUNE 85  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 397 OF 24 JUNE  
INFO IMMEDIATE NIO BELFAST

**IMMEDIATE**

MIPT: IRISH LOCAL ELECTIONS

ADVANCE COPY

MT

SUMMARY

1. THE GOVERNMENT, AS IT EXPECTED, FARED BADLY IN THE LOCAL ELECTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN DUBLIN, BUT IS UNDER NO IMMEDIATE THREAT. THE POLL WAS LOW. DR FITZGERALD MAY NOW BE EVEN KEENER TO BRING THE ANGLO/IRISH TALKS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.

DETAIL

2. THE RESULT OF THE LOCAL ELECTION HELD IN THE REPUBLIC ON 20 JUNE WAS MUCH AS WAS GENERALLY EXPECTED (MY TELNO 386) DR FITZGERLAD EXPECTED FINE GAEL TO DO EVEN WORSE THAN THIS OVERALL. MOST SIGNIFICANT IS FIANNA FAIL'S STRONG SHOWING IN THE DUBLIN AREA, WHERE IT OBTAINED 41.6% OF THE VOTE TO FINE GAEL'S 24.5%, WINNING MORE THAN HALF THE SEATS AND CONFOUNDING PREDICTIONS THAT ITS OPPOSITION TO PROPOSALS FOR A FARM TAX AND TO LIBERAL SOCIAL REFORMS WOULD ALIENATE URBAN VOTERS. DR FITZGERALD WILL BE CONCERNED AT THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF FINE GAEL EVEN IN ITS SAFEST AREAS IN SOUTH DUBLIN. ON THIS SHOWING A NUMBER OF ITS MARGINAL DAIL SEATS WOULD BE LOST IN A FUTURE GENERAL ELECTION.

3. FINE GAEL SUPPORTERS POINT OUT HOWEVER THAT THIS IS NOT SUCH A BAD MID-TERM RESULT FOR THEM AS THE 1979 LOCAL ELECTION WAS FOR FIANNA FAIL. THEY ALSO SAY THAT THE COMPLETION OF THE 3 YEAR ECONOMIC PLAN WILL CHANGE THE PICTURE BEFORE THE NEXT ELECTION. THE ONLY IMPORTANT EXCEPTION TO THE NATIONAL TREND WAS IN LIMERICK CITY, WHERE FINE GAEL WON CONTROL FROM FIANNA FAIL. CONTINUING RESENTMENT OVER THE EXPULSION OF DES O'MALLEY FROM FIANNA FAIL WAS CLERALLY THE MAJOR FACTOR HERE (LIMERICK IS MR O'MALLEY'S CONSTITUENCY). BUT NEITHR THIS NOR INDIVIDUAL GOOD PERFORMANCES BY FIANNA FAIL DISSIDENTS SUCH AS MARY HARNEY IS THOUGHT TO PROVIDE A GOOD ENOUGH SPRINGBOARD FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW PARTY BY MR O'MALLEY.



A NEW PARTY BY MR O'MALLEY.

4. THE LABOUR PARTY HAS SURVIVED, BUT ONLY JUST. ITS VOTE WAS HIGHER THAN RECENT OPINION POLLS HAD INDICATED. BUT IT WAS OUTPOLLED IN INNER DUBLIN BY THE WORKERS' PARTY AND IS UNDER THREAT FROM THEM IN A NUMBER OF OTHER CONSTITUENCIES. THE WORKERS PARTY WILL BE PARTICULARLY PLEASED AT HAVING SECURED 6 PLACES ON DUBLIN CORPORATION TO LABOUR'S 2. IT ALSO DID WELL IN GALWAY, WHERE IT TOPPED THE POLL, AND HAS HELD OFF THE CHALLENGE FROM SINN FEIN, WHOSE SUCCESSES WERE LARGELY CONFINED TO TRADITIONALLY REPUBLICAN BORDER AREAS. SINN FEIN WON ONLY ONE SEAT IN THE DUBLIN AREA.

5. MR HAUGHEY'S TACTICS HAVE PAID OFF. HE HAS WON CONTROL OF MOST LOCAL COUNCILS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND WILL HOPE THAT THE UNIFORMITY OF THE TREND DESPITE A LOW POLL WILL PAVE THE WAY FOR NEXT GENERAL ELECTION. HE HAS SHOWN THAT THERE IS STILL A MARKET FOR 'LIVE NOW PAY LATER' ECONOMIC POLICIES, AND THAT MIDDLE CLASS VOTERS WILL VOTE FOR HIM. MINISTERS HAVE SAID THAT THEY WILL NOT BE DEFLECTED FROM CARRYING OUT TOUGH POLICIES BUT COALITION BACKBENCHERS REACTIONS HAVE BEEN MORE ANXIOUS AND TODAY'S PAPERS REPORT THAT MR HAUGHEY NOW PLANS TO CONCENTRATE HIS ATTACKS ON LABOUR IN AN ATTEMPT TO DESTABILISE THE COALITION. MR SPRING HAS INDICATED THAT HE HAS NO PLANS TO LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT SAYING THAT IF THE COALITION FELL 'IRELAND'S PROBLEMS WOULD ONLY BE BEGINING'. THERE IS THEREFORE NO IMMEDIATE THREAT TO THE COALITION BUT THE LABOUR PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY HAS ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION AND LABOUR MINISTERS ARE LIKELY TO FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO HOLD OFF THE ANTI-COALITIONISTS WHEN THE SUBJECT NEXT COMES UP FOR DEBATE IN THE PARTY, PERHAPS IN THE LATE AUTUMN. IN THE SHORT TERM, RUMOURS OF A GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE TO IMPROVE ITS IMAGE AND INJECT NEW ENTHUSIASM ARE LIKELY TO GAIN IMPETUS.

6. THE LAST THING ON MOST VOTERS MINDS IN THIS ELECTION WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S NORTHERN IRELAND POLICY. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE QUITE WRONG TO INTERPRET THE RESULT AS ENDORSING MR HAUGHEY'S VIEWS ON ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS. THE MAIN EFFECT OF THE RESULT ON ANGLO-IRISH TALKS MAY WELL BE AN EVEN GREATER SENSE OF URGENCY ON THE PART OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT TO BRING THE TALKS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. IF THAT SHOULD PROVE UNATTAINABLE DR FITZGERALD WILL CERTAINLY SEEK TO PIN THE BLAME UNEQUIVOCALLY ON THE BRITISH SIDE. BUT EITHER WAY, ISSUES WILL BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN THE NEXT IRISH GENERAL ELECTION AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE A VERY TOUGH JOB ON ITS HANDS TO WIN ON THESE.

7. FCO PLEASE PASS IMMEDIATE TO NO 10, LYON N10 (L) AND TO BRIGHT (CABINET OFFICE).

GOODISON

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 PS/PUS  
 MR GOODALL  
 HD/RID  
 HD/PUSD (2)  
 HD/INFO DEPT  
 HD/NEWS DEPT

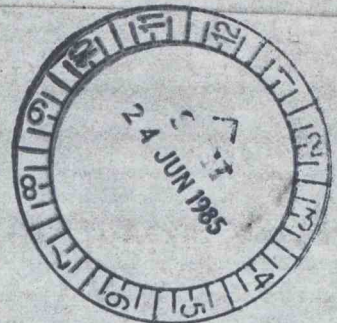
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 MR BRENNAN  
 MR BURNS  
 MR J LYON

NIO

SIR R ARMSTRONG  
 DIO } CABINET OFFICE

PS/ NO 10 DOWNING STREET (3)

UNCLASSIFIED  
 FM DUBLIN 241000Z JUN 85  
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 396 OF 24 JUNE 1985  
 INFO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)



MY TELNO 386: IRISH LOCAL ELECTION

SUMMARY

1. THE COUNTING OF TRANSFERRED VOTES IN THE LOCAL ELECTION CONTINUES TODAY. FIANNA FAIL HAVE A COMMANDING LEAD.

DETAIL

2. WITH A FEW SEATS STILL TO BE ALLOCATED ON TRANSFERS OF VOTES, THE STATE OF THE PARTIES IS AS FOLLOWS (FIGURES IN BRACKETS ARE PERCENTAGES GAINED IN THE 1979 LOCAL AND NOVEMBER 1982 GENERAL ELECTION):

	%	FIRST PREFERENCES
FIANNA FAIL	45.8%	(38.2/45.2)
FINE GAEL	30.0%	(34.0/39.2)
LABOUR	7.9%	(12.3/9.4)
WORKERS PARTY	3.3%	(2.2/3.3)
SINN FEIN	2.8%	(NOT AVAILABLE)
OTHER	10.2%	

3. TURN-OUT WAS LOW THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY (55%), BUT PARTICULARLY SO IN DUBLIN (44%).

4. SEE MIFT FOR COMMENT.

5. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE LYON NIO LONDON.

GOODISONOZA