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FM DUBLIN 131030Z MAY 1982

TO IMMEDIATE F C O (DESKBY 131500Z)

TELEGRAM NUMBER 147 OF 13 MAY

ALQ 50/598/1		
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DESK OFFICER		REGISTRY
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AND TO INFO IMMEDIATE N I O (BELFAST) AND ROUTINE UKMIS
NEW YORK, UKREP BRUSSELS AND WASHINGTON.

282 MY TELNO 144 (NOT TO ALL): FALKLANDS

1. I SAW DR GARRET FITZGERALD FOR HALF AN HOUR YESTERDAY EVENING. HE WAS MOST CRITICAL OF THE LINE BEING TAKEN BY THE IRISH GOVERNMENT, BOTH IN THE COMMUNITY AND AT THE U N, AND WORRIED ABOUT THE DAMAGING EFFECT IT WOULD HAVE ON OUR RELATIONS. HE CONFIRMED THAT IRISH GOVERNMENT POLICY WAS BEING INFLUENCED IN PART BY THE DUBLIN WEST BY-ELECTION WHERE THE TAOISEACH THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT FOR FIANNA FAIL TO BE SEEN TO BE TAKING A LINE BOTH INDEPENDENT AND CRITICAL OF THE BRITISH. HE SAID THAT THE WAY THE BRITISH TABLOID PRESS HAD BEEN REPORTING THE CRISIS HAD GIVEN MANY IRISH THE IMPRESSION, QUITE WRONGLY, THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS INTENT ON WAR AND NOT INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATION. WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT THE CIRCULATION OF THESE BRITISH PAPERS, PARTICULARLY IN THE GREATER DUBLIN AREA, WAS ALMOST AS HIGH AS IRISH NEWSPAPERS AND THEY WERE READ EXTENSIVELY BY THE WORKING CLASS. HE HAD BEEN CRITICISED IN THE BY-ELECTION FOR TAKING TOO BRITISH A LINE AND HE HAD TO TAKE GREAT CARE WHAT HE SAID PUBLICLY. HE DID NOT DEMUR WHEN I SUGGESTED THAT THIS WAS THE EXPLANATION OF HIS SAYING IN HIS SPEECH IN THE DAIL THAT THE ISSUES IN THE CRISIS WERE PRIDE AND LOSS OF FACE.

2. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT DR FITZGERALD UNDERSTANDS BRITISH POLICY WELL AND THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ME TO EXPLAIN IT. HE MUCH LOOKS FORWARD TO SEEING MR PRIOR WHEN HE COMES OVER FOR THE DIMBLEBY LECTURE.

FIGG

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