

Prime Minister CONFIDENTIAL

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MDHIAN 6330

CONFIDENTIAL

FM DUBLIN

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 542

OF 271550Z NOVEMBER 89

INFO IMMEDIATE NIO(L), NIO(B)

MIPT AND DUBLIN TELNO 531: ANGLO IRISH RELATIONS: PM-TAOISEACH MEETING

- Agree to the usual brief bilateral with Mr. Haughey in Strasbourg?*
Mr Powell N70
we spacey
It less trouble to have it than not to have it.
28/11
can 29/11
1. IN THE LIGHT OF THE DAIL DEBATE ON ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS, I RECOMMEND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD AGREE TO A BRIEF BILATERAL WITH THE TAOISEACH IN THE MARGINS OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AT STRASBOURG FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS.
 2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS IS NOT COSY, BUT IT IS CRUCIAL IN SUSTAINING IRISH COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISM AND AQUIESCENCE IN OUR NORTHERN IRELAND POLICIES. IT WOULD NOT BE WISE OR NECESSARY TO TRY TO MOUNT A FREE STANDING SUMMIT AT THIS STAGE. WE HAVE TRIED TO DEVISE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR A NATURAL MEETING-BUT THE 'WORK OF ANGELS' IDEA CAME TO NOTHING. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, I SHOULD BE LOATH TO SEE A GAP IN THE REGULAR SERIES OF LOW-PROFILE BILATERALS WHICH REPRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE TWO PRINCIPLES TO TAKE STOCK OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT AROUSING EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS.
 3. CONVERSLY THE ABSENCE OF A BILATERAL WOULD BE TAKEN AS A SIGN THAT ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS WERE AT A PARTICULARLY LOW EBB. THIS WOULD BE INCONGRUOUS IN THE LIGHT OF LAST WEEKS DAIL DEBATE ON ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS.
 4. THERE WAS A NOTABLE LACK OF ANTI-BRITISH RHETORIC, A UNIVERSAL CONDEMNATION OF TERRORISM IN THE DAIL, AND A CONSENSUS THAT THEY SHOULD WORK WITH US AFTER THEIR FASHION TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REPUBLIC. EVEN MR HAUGHEY TEMPERED HIS REPUBLICAN ASPIRATIONS WITH A RECOGNITION OF REALITIES AND MAY NOT BE UNHELPFUL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY IN ENCOURAGING POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND. WE NEED TO BUILD ON THIS.
 5. THERE WILL BE EC BUSINESS TO DISCUSS. THE IRISH PRESIDENCY WILL NOT BE ROBUST. BUT MR MAUDES VISIT LAST WEEK CONFIRMED THAT THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF COMMON GROUND IN THE COMPLETION OF THE SINGLE MARKET AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STAGE 1 OF DELORS. THE PRIME MINISTER MAY WISH TO ENCOURAGE THE INCOMING PRESIDENT TO CONCENTRATE ON THE ACHIEVABLE

RATHER THAN THE IDEALISTIC. MR HAUGHEY WILL DEFEND IRISH INTERESTS, BUT HE WILL NOT BE UNRECEPTIVE TO PRAGMATIC PROPOSALS. THE PRESIDENCY IS A KIND OF CROWN TO HIS POLITICAL LIFE: IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO MINISTER TO HIS VANITY.

6. MR HAUGHEY HAS JUMPED THE GUN BY TELLING THE DAIL THAT HE EXPECTS TO MEET MRS THATCHER AT STRASBOURG. THIS WAS NOT MALIGN. HE WAS DEFENDING HIMSELF AGAINST THE CHARGE OF HAVING NEGLECTED THE RELATIONSHIP BY NOT ARRANGING A SEPARATE SUMMIT. HIS LINE WAS THAT THE REGULAR BILATERALS AT EUROPEAN COUNCILS ARE USEFUL AND ADEQUATE. I THINK THAT FOR THE MOMENT HE IS RIGHT.

7. IF THE PRIME MINISTER AGREES TO A BILATERAL, IT WOULD MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION IF, FOR A CHANGE, THE INITIATIVE TO SET UP THE ARRANGEMENTS COULD COME FROM US.

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ADDITIONAL

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