

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/VE WHITNEY

PS/PCS

~~SIR J. BULLOCK~~

VE JENKINS

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SIR B. ARMSTRONG

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UNCLASSIFIED

FM DUBLIN 041700Z JUL 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 310 OF 4 JULY 1984

INFO PRIORITY NIO (BELFAST) NIO (LONDON) WASHINGTON BIS NEW YORK
AND UKMIS NEW YORK

MY TELNO 305: FORUM DEBATE

1. THE TAOISEACH AND MR HAUGHEY COMMENTED YESTERDAY ON THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE, AND MR BARRY HAS TODAY ISSUED A STATEMENT ON IT.

2. DR FITZGERALD CONFINED HIMSELF TO SAYING ONLY THAT THERE HAD BEEN MUCH THAT WAS "POSITIVE AND INTERESTING" IN THE DEBATE.

3. MR HAUGHEY, SPEAKING ON RTE RADIO, SAID THAT MR PRIOR'S SPEECH AMOUNTED TO "A COMPLETE REJECTION OF THE FORUM REPORT BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT". IT CONSTITUTED "THE GREATEST AND MOST CONSIDERED REBUFF TO DEMOCRATIC IRISH NATIONALISM" IN MODERN TIMES. THE BRITISH RESPONSE HAD "FURTHER ENTRENCHED INTRANSIGENT UNIONISM AND, BY REJECTING THE VIEWS OF DEMOCRATIC NATIONALISTS, GIVEN A FURTHER BOOST TO VIOLENCE". MR PRIOR'S STATEMENT "ENDORSES THE RIGHT OF UNIONISTS TO SELF-DETERMINATION, BUT DENIES THE SAME RIGHT TO THE NATIONALIST PEOPLE". THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD "MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DO NOT INTEND TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO BRING LASTING PEACE AND STABILITY TO NORTHERN IRELAND". THE MEETING BETWEEN THE TAOISEACH AND MRS THATCHER WOULD NOT EVEN BE A SUMMIT, SINCE MRS THATCHER HAD DOWN-GRADED IT TO "ONE OF OUR USUAL BILATERALS". (SEE MIFT FOR COMMENT)

4. MR BARRY'S STATEMENT, WHICH QUOTES LIBERALLY FROM MR PRIOR'S SPEECH, FOCUSSES ON 'A NUMBER OF POSITIVE FEATURES IN THE DEBAT SUCH AS THE RECOGNITION GIVEN TO THE PROBLEMS OF ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR THE TWO IDENTITIES IN THE ISLAND AND OF ALIENATION WITHIN THE MINORITY COMMUNITY. REFERRING TO THE 'COURAGE' SHOWN BY CONSTITUTIONAL NATIONALISTS IN THE FORUM IN ACKNOWLEDGING 'INADEQUACIES IN (THEIR) OWN TRADITIONAL APPROACHES'', MR BARRY SAYS: 'IT IS HEARTENING THAT MR PRIOR TOO HAS FOUND THE COURAGE TO MAKE SIMILAR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS''. THE STATEMENT NOTES WITHOUT COMMENT THAT MR PRIOR'S SPEECH 'CONTAINED THE FIRST CLEAR ACCEPTANCE BY A BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAS A LEGITIMATE ROLE IN SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONALISTS OF NORTHERN IRELAND'', AND THAT IT 'RECOGNISED THAT THE DANGERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND OF.... DOING NOTHING ARE GREATER THAN THE OBVIOUS RISKS OF SEEKING TO MAKE SOME ADVANCE''.

5. ON THE MODELS FOR THE FUTURE IN THE FORUM REPORT ITSELF, MR BARRY'S STATEMENT SAYS THAT 'THE SECRETARY OF STATE CONFINED HIMSELF TO EXPRESSING THE VIEW THAT UNIONISTS WOULD NOT AGREE TO THEM 'INASMUCH AS ANY OF THESE MODELS SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND' ''. MR BARRY MAKES IT CLEAR HOWEVER THAT IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH HMG, THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WILL 'CONTINUE TO DISCUSS THE REPORT... IN ALL OF ITS ASPECTS''. HE STATES HIS BELIEF THAT 'THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN MR PRIOR'S STATEMENT IS HIS PROPOSAL TO HOLD TALKS WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL PARTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND WITH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WILL, OF COURSE, PARTICIPATE FULLY IN SUCH TALKS''. HE BELIEVES THAT 'THERE IS NOW CONSIDERABLE COMMON GROUND BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS IN OUR ANALYSIS OF WHAT IS WRONG IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THAT WE HAVE DEVELOPED A GOOD DEAL OF COMMON THINKING IN WHAT THE FORUM IDENTIFIED AS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SITUATION.... IN THE MONTHS AHEAD THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE SEEKING TO BUILD ON THE POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECH, AND INDEED UPON OTHER POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MANY SPEAKERS, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF NORTHERN UNIONISM''. WHETHER THESE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE FRUITFUL IS AS YET UNPREDICTABLE, 'BUT THE DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS HAS AT LEAST SIGNALLED THAT THE EFFORT TO MAKE SUCH PROGRESS IS NOW WORTHWHILE''.

6. FULL TEXT OF MR BARRY'S STATEMENT FOLLOWS BY BAG TO RID AND NIO (LONDON) AND (BELFAST)

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