

GRS 533

CONFIDENTIAL

FM FCO

TO DESKBY 221715Z DUBLIN

TELNO 257

OF 221630Z OCT 85

INFO IMMEDIATE NASSAU FOR PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY AND SECRETARY
OF STATE'S PARTY

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, BIS NEW YORK

He is alleged
to have spoken
disparagingly of
the Garda. 22/1751

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YOUR TELNOS 704-706 : CHIEF CONSTABLE'S ALLEGED STATEMENT

1. IT SEEMS THAT THERE IS SOME POSSIBILITY THAT THE CHIEF
CONSTABLE WAS MISREPORTED. ONE OF THE REPORTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR
THE IRISH TIMES' STORY APPARENTLY SAID IN A RADIO INTERVIEW LAST
NIGHT THAT HE DID NOT ALWAYS USE THE CHIEF CONSTABLE'S OWN WORDS.
WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN A TRANSCRIPT OF THAT INTERVIEW. THE
CHIEF CONSTABLE HIMSELF IS ALSO LETTING THE NIO HAVE A NOTE OF
WHAT HE CLAIMS TO HAVE SAID. IN THE MEANTIME, THE NORTHERN
IRELAND SECRETARY HAS BEEN CONSULTED. YOU SHOULD REPLY TO IRISH
REPRESENTATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING LINES:-

'WE HAVE NOT SEEN A FULL TEXT OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE'S
COMMENTS. NEVERTHELESS WE WOULD WISH TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE
BRITISH GOVERNMENT DOES NOT DOUBT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S
OPPOSITION TO TERRORISM, AND GREATLY APPRECIATES THE
MEASURES WHICH HAVE SO FAR BEEN TAKEN, IN CO-OPERATION WITH
THE SECURITY FORCES IN NORTHERN IRELAND, TO PREVENT ACTS OF
VIOLENCE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER. WE BELIEVE THAT THERE
IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN SUCH CO-OPERATION, AND THIS HAS
BEEN A CONSTANT THEME IN OUR RECENT DISCUSSIONS. WE WOULD
THEREFORE WISH TO ASSURE THE IRISH GOVERNMENT OF OUR
COMMITMENT TO CONTINUING AND DEVELOPING CO-OPERATION.'

2. YOU MAY TELL THE IRISH THAT THEY MAY DRAW ON THE ABOVE IF THEY SHOULD NEED TO DO SO IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONING IN THE DAIL.
3. YOU SHOULD ALSO DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO THEM IN CONFIDENCE:-

- (A) WE REGRET THE UNFORTUNATE IMPACT WHICH THE REPORT OF SIR J HERMON'S REMARKS HAS HAD, BUT A PUBLIC STATEMENT BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT IN OUR VIEW HELP MATTERS. IT WOULD EITHER DIVIDE THE NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY FROM THE CHIEF CONSTABLE, WITH THE ASSOCIATED RISKS OF A UNIONIST BACKLASH, OR THE BRITISH FROM THE IRISH GOVERNMENT. EITHER WAY THIS COULD ONLY SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THOSE OPPOSED TO OUR POLICIES IN BOTH COUNTRIES.
- (B) WE VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO THE CHIEF CONSTABLE WILL NOT (NOT) BE SEEN AS AN OBSTACLE TO THE CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS WHICH ARE TAKING PLACE.
- (C) WE HOPE TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH THE IRISH. THE CHIEF CONSTABLE WILL REMAIN IN POST, AND IS BOUND THEREFORE TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT PART IN DEVELOPING THE UNDERSTANDINGS BETWEEN US. IT SEEMS THEREFORE IN BOTH OUR INTERESTS TO PLAY DOWN THE INCIDENT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

4. YOU SHOULD ALSO KNOW THAT NEWS DEPARTMENT, THE NIO PRESS DEPARTMENT AND THE RUC ARE IN GENERAL DECLINING TO COMMENT. IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TO HOLD THAT LINE IF PRESS INTEREST IN THE STORY HERE GROWS. OUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE SHOULD BE TO DRAW ON THE STATEMENT IN PARA 1 ABOVE ABOUT HMG'S POLICY ON SECURITY CO-OPERATION WITH THE REPUBLIC.

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