

## ADVANCE COPY

1. cc PS/NOW

2. Security 2/26/92

K

RESTRICTED

FM DUBLIN

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 063

OF 071255Z FEBRUARY 92

INFO IMMEDIATE NIO(L), NIO(B), WASHINGTON, BIS NEW YORK

INFO IMMEDIATE UKREP BRUSSELS, ACTOR

MIPT: REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: NEW LEADER OF FIANNA FAIL

## SUMMARY

1. PEN PICTURE OF ALBERT REYNOLDS.

## DETAIL

2. REYNOLDS WAS BORN IN 1932 IN CO ROSCOMMON, IN THE IRISH MIDLANDS, AND RETAINS HIS HOME AND HIS POLITICAL BASE THERE (HE HAS BEEN DEPUTY FOR LONGFORD WESTMEATH SINCE 1977). HE BEGAN HIS WORKING LIFE AS A CLERK, BUT HIS ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS SOON BECAME EVIDENT: VENTURES INCLUDED A CHAIN OF DANCEHALLS IN THE 1960'S, HOTELS, BARS, FACTORIES AND A NEWSPAPER. HE NOW OWNS A LUCRATIVE PET FOOD BUSINESS, AND HAS SHARES IN PROPERTY. HE FIRST BECAME INVOLVED WITH FIANNA FAIL IN THE MID-60'S AND JOINED THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE IN 1974 AND THE LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL IN 1975.

3. A STRONG SUPPORTER OF HAUGHEY IN THE EARLY YEARS, REYNOLDS QUICKLY ACHIEVED PROMOTION AND HAS HELD SEVERAL MINISTERIAL POSTS: COMMUNICATIONS (1979-81), INDUSTRY AND ENERGY (1982), INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (1987-8) AND FINANCE (1988-91). HIS DISILLUSIONMENT WITH HAUGHEY IS SAID TO STEM FROM THE 1989 ELECTION, WHICH HE BELIEVED WAS ILL-TIMED. HE RESENTED HAUGHEY'S GOING OVER HIS HEAD DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS. HE WAS SACKED IN NOVEMBER 1991 FOLLOWING HIS SUPPORT FOR THE BACKBENCH MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE TAOISEACH.

4. REYNOLDS IS A TOUGH, SHREWD AND PRAGMATIC OPERATOR WHO BRINGS A BUSINESS APPROACH TO POLITICAL PROBLEMS. HIS FIRST TASK WILL BE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL BIND UP THE WOUNDS OF FIANNA FAIL. HE HAS ALREADY SAID THAT HE EXPECTS THE COALITION TO CONTINUE: DESPITE HIS PAST RESERVATIONS, THE PDS WILL PROBABLY WORK WELL WITH HIM.



5. WHILE REYNOLDS IS AT HOME WITH FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL MATTERS, HE HAS LITTLE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE OF NORTHERN IRELAND. HIS FIRST CAUTIOUS COMMENTS (SEE MIPT) SUGGESTS THAT HE WILL BE LESS SLIPPERY THAN HAUGHEY AND ACCEPTS THAT THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM IS A LONG TERM ONE INVOLVING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITIES. HE MAY NOT FOR EXAMPLE PRESS HAUGHEY'S IDEAS FOR AN IMPOSED SETTLEMENT. HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO STRESS HIS GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

6. REYNOLDS IS MARRIED, WITH SEVEN CHILDREN. HIS WIFE, KATHLEEN, IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING TREATMENT FOR BREAST CANCER. HE IS A DIABETIC.

BLATHERWICK

YYYY

DISTRIBUTION

13/4

ADVANCE

13/4

- .NORTHERN IRELAND
- PS 2
- PS/PUS
- HD/RID
- HD/INFO D
- HD/NEWS D 2
- PS/SEC OF THE CABINET, CAB OFF

- MR CHILCOTT NIO(L)
- PS/S OF S NIO(L)
- PS/LORD BELSTEAD NIO(L)
- MR THOMAS NIO(L)
- MR BELL NIO(L)
- MR COOKE SIL NIO(L)

NNNN