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TELNO 576
OF 230900Z DECEMBER 92
INFO PRIORITY NIO(L), NIO(B), BIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON

SINN FEIN RESPONSE TO SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND'S
'CULTURE AND IDENTITY' SPEECH: IRISH REACTIONS

SUMMARY

1. CAUTIOUS PRESS VERDICT ON STATEMENT BY GERRY ADAMS. DFA
ON FIRST SIGHT SEE NOTHING NEW IN SUBSTANCE.

DETAIL

2. ONLY THE IRISH TIMES GIVES MUCH COVERAGE TO GERRY ADAMS' RESPONSE ON 21 DECEMBER TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY'S 'CULTURE AND IDENTITY' SPEECH. ITS EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS ADAMS' COMMENT THAT 'WHAT IS NEEDED IS A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE AND PEACE. THIS MEANS LONDON ADOPTING A POLICY AIMED AT ENDING PARTITION AND WHICH SEEKS, WITH DUBLIN, TO ACHIEVE THIS IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME CONSISTENT WITH OBTAINING MAXIMUM CONSENT TO THE PROCESS AND MINIMISING COSTS OF EVERY KIND AND RECOGNISING THE CENTRALITY OF INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE IN THE PROCESS.' IT SUGGESTS FROM THIS THAT ADAMS 'RECOGNISES THE NEED FOR CONSENT, FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL AS WELL AS INTER-PARTY CONSULTATION AND TO MINIMISE COSTS - NOT LEAST, IT MUST BE HOPED, IN HUMAN LIFE'.

3. THE PAPER CLAIMS THAT ALTHOUGH ADAMS BLAMES THE BRITISH PRESENCE AND PARTITION FOR IRELAND'S ILLS, FAILS TO MENTION THE CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE, AND REPEATS THE SINN FEIN CLAIM TO A PLACE AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE, 'THERE MAY BE MORE GROUND FOR HOPE HERE THAN IN SINN FEIN'S FAMILIAR RESPONSES TO THE STATEMENTS OF SIR PATRICK'S PREDECESSORS.' IT CONCLUDES THAT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES 'SIR PATRICK'S SPEECH WAS ENCOURAGING BOTH IN TONE AND CONTENT.'

4. IN THE DAIL ON 22 DECEMBER PETER BARRY (FINE GAEL DEPUTY LEADER) DESCRIBED THE SPEECH AND ADAMS' RESPONSE AS 'HOPEFUL STATEMENTS WHICH SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF EVERYONE

IN THIS HOUSE''. O'HUIGINN (UNDER SECRETARY, DFA) PRIVATELY DESCRIBED THE SPEECH AS VERY WELCOME IN TONE, THOUGH CONTAINING NO NEW SUBSTANCE: ADAMS' RESPONSE SEEMED TO REWORK OLD MATERIAL.

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