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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

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INFO IMMEDIATE DUBLIN, NIO

FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER
LISBON, 17 FEBRUARY

SUMMARY

1. FRIENDLY FIRST MEETING WITH ANDREWS AS FOREIGN MINISTER, BRIEFLY COVERING NORTHERN IRELAND, EUROPEAN ISSUES AND DOMESTIC BRITISH AND IRISH POLITICS.

DETAIL

2. THE SECRETARY OF STATE MET ANDREWS FOR 20 MINUTES BEFORE THE START OF THE EPCF MINISTERIAL IN LISBON ON 17 FEBRUARY. ANDREWS RECALLED A PREVIOUS ENCOUNTER WHEN HE HAD DISCUSSED THE BIRMINGHAM SIX WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, THEN NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY (ANDREWS COMMENTED THAT THAT ISSUE HAD COME RIGHT IN THE END, FOR WHICH HE WAS GRATEFUL). THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO WORKING WITH ANDREWS IN HIS NEW CAPACITY, IF HE HIMSELF WAS SPARED.

NORTHERN IRELAND

3. THE SECRETARY OF STATE EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS NOT HIMSELF INVOLVED DAY BY DAY IN THE DETAIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND ISSUES, ON WHICH MR BROOKE HAD THE LEAD. BUT HE HAD HAD AN UNDERSTANDING WITH GERRY COLLINS THAT HE WAS AVAILABLE AND INTERESTED, IF THERE WERE ANY PARTICULAR POINTS WHICH COLLINS WANTED TO DRAW TO HIS ATTENTION. HE HOPED THAT ANDREWS WOULD SIMILARLY LET HIM KNOW IF THERE WAS EVER ANYTHING ON HIS MIND OVER NORTHERN IRELAND. THE NORTH WAS NOW GOING THROUGH AN INTENSE PHASE. THE PRIME MINISTER HAD BEEN ANXIOUS TO HAVE AN EARLY MEETING WITH THE TAOISEACH AND WAS DETERMINED NOT TO LET THE NORTHERN IRELAND PARTIES FEEL THAT, BECAUSE OF THE BRITISH ELECTIONS, THEY COULD RELAPSE INTO THEIR OLD WAYS. HENCE THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING LAST WEEK WITH THE

NORTHERN IRELAND PARTIES. THIS HAD GONE REASONABLY WELL BUT NEEDED TO BE FOLLOWED UP, WHICH MR BROOKE AND THE PRIME MINISTER WERE DOING.

4. ANDREWS SAID THAT HE AND THE TAOISEACH HAD BEEN VERY HAPPY WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONTRIBUTION. REYNOLDS HAD SAID THAT HE ALREADY HAD A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRIME MINISTER FROM THEIR DAYS AS FELLOW FINANCE MINISTERS. THIS WOULD BE A GOOD BASIS FOR THEIR COOPERATION NOW. ANDREWS SAW HIMSELF AS THE NEW BOY, BUT HE HAD A SPECIAL CONCERN ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND AND NORTH/SOUTH RELATIONS, ON WHICH HE FELT HE HAD A REASONABLE RECORD.

5. ANDREWS MENTIONED THE ATTACK ON THE POLICE STATION AT COAL ISLAND ON 16 FEBRUARY AND THE CLASH WITH THE SECURITY FORCES, THE LATEST IN THE DISTRESSING ESCALATION OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS. HE WAS SEEKING FULLER INFORMATION, ON THE BASIS OF WHICH HE EXPECTED TO MAKE SOME PUBLIC STATEMENT LATER ON 17 FEBRUARY. HIS AIM WOULD BE TO BE HELPFUL AND TO TRY TO KEEP THE LID ON THE VIOLENCE. THIS WAS A NECESSITY ON BOTH SIDES. WE WERE JOINTLY DEALING WITH A VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEM. THE SECRETARY OF STATE AGREED. ANDREWS SAID HE WOULD TRY TO GIVE ALL COOPERATION POSSIBLE, WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF POLITICAL PRESSURES IN THE SOUTH.

6. THE SECRETARY OF STATE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS WERE WORKING AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF STRONG DOMESTIC OPINION. THE FIRST COMMENTS BY THE TAOISEACH AND ANDREWS HAD BEEN HELPFUL. HE WISHED TO EMPHASISE NOW ONLY THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE GOING INTO A TRANCE ON THIS SUBJECT WHILE IN THE SHADOW OF THE ELECTIONS. OVER THE LAST WEEKS IN PARTICULAR, THE PRIME MINISTER HAD BECOME PERSONALLY AND EMOTIONALLY ENGAGED. THE ISSUE WAS AT THE TOP OF THE GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA. THE ISSUE WAS AT THE TOP OF THE GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA. THERE WAS NO COMPLACENCY.

EC ISSUES

7. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT WE FACED, WITH IRELAND, AN IMPOSING EUROPEAN AGENDA. ANDREWS AGREED: THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAD IN PARTICULAR TO PREPARE FOR THEIR POST-MAASTRICHT REFERENDUM. THEY WOULD BE PUBLISHING A WHITE PAPER AND SELLING THE TREATY TO THE COUNTRY BEFORE A PROBABLE JUNE REFERENDUM. THE OPPOSITION, MOSTLY FROM FARMERS AND THE PRO-LIFE LOBBY, WERE SOMEWHAT CRANKISH AND DISPARATE BUT THEIR CONCERNS NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED. THE SECRETARY OF STATE MENTIONED THE THREE LINKED PROBLEMS WHICH THE COMMUNITY NEEDED TO UNRAVEL IN THE NEXT MONTHS - GATT, CAP REFORM

AND FUTURE FINANCING.

UK AND IRISH DOMESTIC POLITICS

8. ANDREWS CAST A FLY OVER THE SECRETARY OF STATE ABOUT THE TIMING OF THE UK ELECTIONS. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO DECISION, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS MUCH PRESSURE TO GO EARLY. THE ISSUES WOULD BE OVERWHELMINGLY ECONOMIC. THE SECRETARY OF STATE ASKED IN TURN WHETHER THE DUBLIN POLITICAL SCENE WOULD NOW SETTLE DOWN AFTER THE RECENT UPHEAVALS. ANDREWS SAID THAT THERE WERE SOME SORE HEADS IN DUBLIN - BUT HE EXCEPTED GERRY COLLINS WHO, THOUGH NATURALLY DISAPPOINTED, HAD BEEN MOST GENEROUS AND HELPFUL TO HIM IN THE HAND-OVER. THE NEXT ELECTIONS IN IRELAND WERE DUE BY JUNE 1994. REYNOLDS WOULD CARRY ON FOR 12 MONTHS OR SO BEFORE TAKING STOCK. IF HE HAD THE WIND IN HIS SAILS THEN, HE MIGHT CONSIDER GOING EARLY. THERE WAS CERTAINLY NOW NO PRESSURE FROM OTHER PARTIES FOR EARLY ELECTIONS: FINNA GAEL IN PARTICULAR WERE IN DISARRAY.

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ADDITIONAL

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