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MEETING WITH JUDGE WILLIAM P CLARK, NATIONAL SECURITY
ADVISER, AT THE WHITE HOUSE, 4 OCTOBER, 1982.

The meeting took place in the White House situation room and lasted about 45 minutes. Clark was accompanied by Denis Blair and the Minister by the Secretary of the Department and the Ambassador. Clark looked very well and received the Minister in a relaxed and very friendly manner. The Minister handed him a message from the Taoiseach repeating the invitation to the President to visit Ireland, and Clark undertook to transmit it to the President.

2. After welcoming the Minister, Clark remarked on the value of keeping in touch with friends and not taking them for granted, even when crisis problems were very pressing. There were continuing problems on which contact was advisable, e.g. El Salvador which was not much heard of in the press since it became obvious that the population had opted for free elections. He repeated the U.S. offer of an information sharing arrangement, especially as regards Nicaragua. The Secretary mentioned the progress made in this respect and the Minister agreed with the desirability of keeping in touch, mentioning his discussion at the United Nations with the Foreign Minister of Nicaragua, a Maryknoll priest.

3. The Minister brought up the Middle East and described our attitude on the withdrawal of troops from Lebanon and our role in UNIFIL, particularly our encouragement of other troop contributors to continue in the Force. Two countries had spoken of withdrawal and there had been complaints about the mandate, even from Security Council members such as France who had passed it originally. Clark mentioned the MNF and the President's terms for its involvement. Habib was returning to report on the negotiations with Syria and Israel. There was progress here and even if there had been and probably would continue to be incidents such as the attack on the bus which predictably led to the bombing of Syrian positions in the Bekaa Valley, both Israel and

Syria had announced their intention to withdraw from Lebanon, and a peaceful solution could be achieved if UNIFIL stayed there. President Reagan was pushing for practical steps to that end. It would on the other hand be very unsettling if UNIFIL were to pull out. Clark spoke of a buffer zone in South Lebanon in connection with the attainment of a settlement. Gemayel he described as a good man, not identified with Israel as his brother had been. He was refusing to see Begin and Sharon but he was maintaining close diplomatic contact in the search for a solution.

4. On the Iran-Iraq war Clark said the Iranians could claim some successes but not to the extent that they could some weeks ago. The United States and the Soviets were to some extent in the same boat as regards that conflict. When the Minister expressed surprise at this Clark said the Soviet posture on the Middle East was interesting, particularly since the losses suffered by Syria. They would like to be a party to a Middle East settlement but they couldn't "get their nose under the tent".

5. Clark moved to the Northern Ireland question and said they were interested in our Government's position, particularly on the Prior plan. They understood we felt the elections would leave a void and that this could be filled by the IRA if the moderates failed to participate. The Minister confirmed that this was the biggest fear we had. He described the history of the Anglo-Irish process and how it had slipped back from the position reached in December 1980. We hoped our friends would gently nudge the British to deal with this problem, otherwise terrorism might come forward again to the centre of the stage. Relations with the British were at a low ebb at present. The impression had been created that this was due to the Falklands affair but this was not true. (Clark said that was certainly what they had been led to believe). The Minister explained how British backtracking from the Dublin agreement had occurred before the Falklands. Blair intervened to suggest that Prime Minister Haughey's statements "last Fall" contributed to the deterioration of relations, but the Minister explained that Mr Haughey was not Taoiseach last Fall.

6. Clark asked whether there was "anything we might do in that relation in a subtle way". The Minister said that when the dust had settled down after the elections, perhaps in four week's time, we could make contact through the Ambassador in Washington as to how the United States might gently and in a very discreet way nudge the British towards a resumption of a positive process in this matter. Clark said he would do nothing before then. He would want to consider the situation and discuss it with Secretary of State Shultz. He said they had good relations with Pym and went on to speak of transatlantic matters, technological transfers, credits, Cocom, etc., and the President's policy on these. They had been unable to convince their friends that the President was concerned with human rights and that it was not a matter of economic sanctions for economic results. He was pleased with the Canadian talks and the progress made towards energy independence. The Minister described our own position in relation to these problems and our practical non-involvement in steel and the pipeline, mentioning our Kinsale Head gas reserves and the construction of the pipeline to Belfast as well as other practical measures of cooperation with the North.

7. At a dinner in the Embassy residence the following evening, at which Mrs Collins was present, Clark laid great stress on the value of Ireland's peacekeeping role and on our involvement in UNIFIL, especially our efforts to encourage other participants. There would be a role for UNIFIL in a Lebanon settlement and he welcomed Ireland's commitment to continued participation.
