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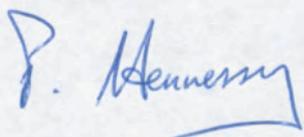
IRELAND



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As regards the present situation Haines was pessimistic about the likely Government reaction to the Forum. He criticised Prior for refusing to get rid of Nicholas Scott following the strong party reaction to the Hennessy Report. While understandable in human terms the effect was to weaken still further Prior's capacity to launch a worthwhile Anglo-Irish initiative. In any event he forewaw the greatest difficulty in motivating Mrs Thatcher in a direction which went against all her instincts. While Haines himself readily accepted the alienation argument, and the consequent need to provide substantive recognition of the political identity of the minority, he was obviously preoccupied by the apparent impossibility of securing unionist acquiescence in such arrangements. Interestingly our conversation did, however, convey a definite sense that Haines himself may not be absolutely wedded to the papers position over recent years of support for early withdrawal. At the very least he has no great confidence that it will produce a stable society; he merely doubts the viability of any less radical alternative. He nevertheless undertook to study the Forum material which I provided and we agreed to keep in regular contact over the coming months.

Yours sincerely



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