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PS/S of S (L&B) - M

c.c. PS/Mr. Scott (L&B) - M
PS/PUS (L&B) - M 9/3
PS/Mr. Bloomfield - M
Mr. Stephens - M
Mr. Chesterton
Mr. Elliott - M
Mr. Bell

REC-1105
- 9 MAR 1987
STORING

HEAD OF THE N.I.
- 9 MAR 1987
CIVIL SERVICE

DEALING WITH MR. HAUGHEY - THE SECOND PHASE

At his meeting on 5 March the Secretary of State asked for a considered note of the minimum wording which we thought we could accept from Mr. Haughey in relation to Article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The minimum wording which officials would suggest is:

"The Irish Government accepts the Anglo-Irish Agreement as a whole. The Irish Government will honour this international undertaking concluded by its predecessor."

... The attached note suggests how this wording might be put to Mr. Haughey. The note seeks to put the issue in a way which ensures that Mr. Haughey has the option of choosing other wordings if he prefers, but nevertheless indicates clearly where we draw our bottom line.

The attached note does not deal with the question of how this message should be delivered to Mr. Haughey. Although your minute of 6 March does not quite say this, my recollection is that the Secretary of State concluded that it would be better not to ask the Ambassador to attempt to negotiate our wording in the very short interval between now and the election of the Taoiseach on 10 March. It would, however, be possible to take the matter forward through the Ambassador after 10 March; or it might be more profitable to use our own channels through the Secretariat; but the message would probably carry most weight if delivered by the Secretary of State to the new co-chairman (whom we assume will be among the senior Ministers appointed to the new Irish Government on 10 March).

L.M. BURNS
9 March 1987

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SPEAKING NOTE

1. Mr Haughey, when he saw the Ambassador on 3 March, appeared to see no problem in continuing to operate the Agreement in all its parts.
2. But the public record rests on Mr. Haughey's earlier statements which cast doubt on Article 1 and express opposition to it. It will be assumed (not only by Unionists) that this is also the position of the new Irish Government, until that Government clarifies publicly its acceptance of the whole Agreement. It is in our view essential to the continuation of business which both Government's desire that both Governments have, and are seen to have, a shared understanding of the Agreement.
3. The Secretariat have thought that HMG were looking for a positive statement that the new Government accepts Article 1 of the Agreement. That would, of course, be welcome, but we can understand that the Irish Government might find it difficult to identify Article 1 so positively in this way. We assume that the Irish Government will prefer to use some more general wording, for instance, about accepting the Agreement as a whole.
4. The minimum which we believe will indicate a credible Irish commitment to the Agreement is a statement that:
 - the Irish Government accepts the Anglo-Irish Agreement as a whole; and
 - the Irish Government will honour this international undertaking concluded by its predecessor.
5. We recognise that it would not be inconsistent with this for the Irish Government to reaffirm its wish to secure the unity of Ireland by agreement and in peace and therefore to emphasise the importance to that of Article 1 of the Agreement.

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