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YOUR TELS 449 AND 450 : NORTHERN IRELAND : ST PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT

1. I CALLED ON STOESSEL THIS AFTERNOON. I TOLD HIM ABOUT MR PRIOR'S DISCUSSIONS WITH THE NORTHERN IRELAND PARTIES (YOUR TELNO 450) AND SAID THAT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT AT THIS DELICATE STAGE THAT NOTHING SHOULD BE SAID BY THE PRESIDENT WHICH COULD JEOPARDISE OUR INITIATIVE. SO AS TO LEAVE STOESSEL IN NO DOUBT ABOUT WHAT I MEANT I QUOTED TO HIM PASSAGES FROM MR HAUGHEY'S STATEMENT ON NORTHERN IRELAND IN THE IRISH PARLIAMENT YESTERDAY (DUBLIN TELNO 67). I SAID THAT IF, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PRESIDENT WERE TO ENDORSE MR HAUGHEY'S SUGGESTION OF A CONFERENCE BRINGING TOGETHER ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED, THIS COULD ONLY HAVE THE EFFECT OF HARDENING OPINION ON BOTH SIDES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND MAKE POLITICAL PROGRESS OF ANY KIND IMPOSSIBLE. EVEN WELL MEANING REMARKS SUCH AS THE REFERENCE TO RECONCILING THE TWO POLITICAL TRADITIONS, WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAD MADE IN HIS LETTER TO DR FITZGERALD LAST YEAR, WERE SEEN IN NORTHERN IRELAND AS INDICATING THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD TAKEN UP A POSITION IN FAVOUR OF REUNIFICATION. STOESSEL SAID THAT HE TOOK THE POINT AND HOPED THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE AS GENERAL AS POSSIBLE IN HIS ST PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT.

2. I GAVE STOESSEL A COPY OF THE EDITORIAL 'MUZZLING IRA GUNS' WHICH APPEARED IN THE TIMES ON 4 MARCH. I ALSO TOLD HIM ABOUT OUR LATEST PIECE OF INTELLIGENCE ON IRA FUNDING IN THE USA INDICATING THAT IT IS RUNNING AT A MUCH HIGHER LEVEL THAN THAT DECLARED BY NORAID. I SAID THAT, NOW THAT THE US COURTS HAD NAMED NORAID AS AGENTS OF THE PROVISIONAL IRA, WE HOPED THAT THE PRESIDENT MIGHT GO FURTHER THAN HITHERTO AND ACTUALLY CONDEMN NORAID BY NAME.

3. I ADDED THAT IF THE PRESIDENT COULD SAY SOMETHING WHICH WOULD ENCOURAGE US INVESTMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND THAT WOULD BE WELCOME TO US, PARTICULARLY GIVEN NORTHERN IRELAND'S PRESENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

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4. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY HAVE SENT TO THE WHITE HOUSE A DRAFT ST PATRICK'S DAY STATEMENT COINED IN TERMS WHICH WE WOULD FIND HELPFUL. I AM SURE THAT STOESEL WILL PASS ON WHAT I SAID TO HIM. BUT IT IS CLARK WHO WILL DECIDE THE SHAPE OF THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT (AND IT IS HE WHO IS MORE LIABLE TO BE ATTRACTED BY HAUGHEY'S PROPOSAL FOR A CONFERENCE AND LESS AWARE OF THE DAMAGE WHICH IT COULD DO). CLARK'S STAFF TELL US THAT THEY HAVE WARNED HIM OF THE DANGERS OF APPEARING TO TAKE SIDES ON THIS ISSUE. I HAVE ASKED TO SEE CLARK MYSELF AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

HENDERSON

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