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From the Private Secretary

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ACT 2000

10 February 1992

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND
MR ALBERT REYNOLDS

The Prime Minister telephoned Mr Albert Reynolds this morning to offer him his congratulations on his election as leader of Fianna Fail.

The Prime Minister said that he had agreed with Mr Haughey that they would meet twice a year, once in Dublin and once in London. He thought there was a good case for a meeting between Mr Reynolds and himself sooner rather than later. He hoped such a meeting could take place quite informally. We would see if we could find a time and a place. Apart from bilateral issues, this was going to be a big year in Europe and it would be useful to discuss that as well. He had in mind future financing, the CAP and enlargement.

Mr Reynolds agreed. He was pleased that the Prime Minister was calling in the leaders of the Northern Ireland political parties. The situation in the North was very bad at present. The Prime Minister agreed. He saw no reason for the constitutional talks in Northern Ireland to be held back. Mr Reynolds agreed. The Prime Minister added that the situation in the North was not tolerable. It seemed particularly ludicrous to find ourselves in this situation when we were both members of the European Community. Mr Reynolds agreed that it was crazy in an EC context. Mr Reynolds advised the Prime Minister to be careful on the internment issue. He should not take decisions lightly. The Irish were a funny race of people. Some things did not matter. Others did. Internment would give the IRA a recruitment platform. In the past some things had been done at the wrong time. The Prime Minister said that he understood that.

We are telling the press that the Prime Minister has spoken to Mr Reynolds on the telephone to congratulate him on his

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election and that the two men have agreed to meet in the near future. We are adding that no dates have yet been fixed.

I am copying this letter to William Fittall (Northern Ireland Office) and Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

J. S. WALL

Richard Cozney, Esq.
Foreign and Commonwealth Office