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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

FROM: Donald A Lamont
Republic of Ireland Dept

DATE: 16 July 1996

cc: PS/Secretary of State
PS/Michael Ancram
PS/Sir John Wheeler
PS/PUS
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Legge
Mr Leach
Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Steele
Mr Wood
Mr Stephens
Mr Hill
Mr Beeton
Mr Adams
Mr Maccabe
Mr Perry
HMA, Dublin

PA - Talks
~~Mr. A. S. S.~~
new Myfe

Ms Checksfield

IRISH STATEMENT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1. As we agreed yesterday, I spoke to David Cooney about the handling of pressure in the European Parliament for a statement from the Council about Northern Ireland. David was emphatic that the Irish do not want to encourage a debate. Apart from any other considerations, they feared that this would detract attention from their Statement of Priorities for the Irish Presidency. The tactics which the Irish are adopting are for the Tanaiste to deal with Northern Ireland in the opening section of his speech, responding to some introductory remarks by the President of the European Parliament. Our people in Strasbourg agree that this is the best way of trying to avoid excessive attention being devoted to Northern Ireland by the Parliament.
2. I faxed to you this morning the draft which David Cooney sent me. It seems fine to me - it certainly is not unbalanced. Subject to any comments you may have, I propose to let Colm O Floinn (in David Cooney's absence in Belfast) know that it is acceptable to us, but suggesting that he might also wish to introduce reference to the Secretary of State's remarks yesterday in the House of Commons about a review of arrangements for handling parades and marches. The Tanaiste might also wish to make positive reference to the agreement to hold an IGC on Thursday.
3. It will not be top of the agenda for those involved in the talks in Belfast today, but it would be helpful if someone were able to confirm to the Irish our hope that developments in the

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European Parliament can be handled in a non-contentious way, and thank them for the balanced text on which they have invited our comments.

4. I doubt if we shall escape without a bit of a flurry in Strasbourg; Dr Paisley intends to be there on Wednesday and there are limits to the extent to which we can prepare for all eventualities. The willingness of the Irish to let us comment on the Tanaiste's statement in advance does, however, suggest that it should be possible to prepare reasonable responses to questions without accentuating the divisions between us.

5. In a related area, I should record that the Tanaiste, in presenting the Irish Presidency programme to the General Affairs Council yesterday, referred to Northern Ireland, saying that the task was to re-establish the primacy of politics and to bring parties to the negotiating table. The Foreign Secretary welcomed Dublin's commitment to continued co-operation. I have faxed you the reporting telegram for distribution as you see fit.

SIGNED

Donald A Lamont