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FM UKMIS GENEVA 021713Z  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 324 OF 02 OCTOBER 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

MY TELNO 322 : ICRC AND NORTHERN IRELAND

1. SCHMIDT, DELEGATE GENERAL FOR EUROPE OF THE ICRC, CALLED ON ME ON 2 OCTOBER . HE HANDED OVER COPIES OF THE REPORT (WHICH HAS 85 PAGES ) ON THEIR VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND. IT INCLUDES THE MEMORANDUM OF 30 JULY. HE ALSO HANDED OVER A COVERING LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC, ALEXANDRE HAY, TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND.
2. SCHMIDT WENT ON TO STRESS THAT THE ICRC DID NOT RECOMMEND PUBLICATION . THEY REGARDED THE REPORT AS CONFIDENTIAL. THEY WOULD LIMIT THEMSELVES STRICTLY TO CONFIRMING TO THE PRESS THAT IT HAD BEEN HANDED OVER. IF IN DUE COURSE WE DECIDED TO PUBLISH IT, THE ICRC WOULD BE GRATEFUL TO HAVE AS MUCH NOTICE AS POSSIBLE , AND IN PARTICULAR TO RECEIVE FROM US A FULL COPY OF THE TEXT WE INTENDED TO PUBLISH. ON PAST EXPERIENCE THEY WOULD EXPECT TO BE ASKED BY THE PRESS TO CONFIRM THAT THE PUBLISHED TEXT DID IN FACT COINCIDE WITH THE TEXT THAT THEY HAD TRANSMITTED TO US. (AS YOU KNOW ICRC POLICY REQUIRES THAT IF A REPORT IS PUBLISHED AT ALL ITS FULL TEXT MUST BE PUBLISHED. IF A GOVERNEMENT WHICH HAS RECEIVED A REPORT PUBLISHES PART OF THE TEXT, THE ICRC ITSELF MUST THEN RELEASE THE FULL TEXT. )
3. I THANKED SCHMIDT FOR THE REPORT AND THE COVERING LETTER AND SAID THAT THEY WOULD BE TRANSMITTED FORTHWITH TO LONDON. COPIES HAVE ALREADY LEFT IN TODAY'S BAG. I ASKED SCHMIDT WHETHER THE COVERING LETTER WAS TO BE CONSIDERED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE REPORT AND THEREFORE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH IT. SCHMIDT REPLIED THAT IT WAS NOT (NOT) AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE REPORT, THOUGH HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT WE MIGHT WISH TO PUBLISH IT WITH THE REPORT BECAUSE IT CLARIFIES THE ICRC'S STANDPOINT IN ADOPTING SOME OF THE POSITIONS SPELLED OUT IN THE REPORT. I HAVE MY DOUBTS ON THIS : SEE PARA 4 BELOW.
4. I SHOULD LIKE TO STUDY THE REPORT IN DETAIL BEFORE OFFERING FURTHER COMMENT ON ITS HANDLING. A QUICK READING OF THE COVERING LETTER AND THE REPORT, TAKEN TOGETHER WITH SCHMIDT'S ORAL COMMENTS, SUGGEST THAT THE ICRC HAVE FELT UNABLE TO GO VERY FAR IN RESPONSE TO OUR REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT THE MEMORANDUM. THE COVERING LETTER IS, HOWEVER , HELPFUL TO A CERTAIN EXTENT. I RECOMMEND STRONGLY , HOWEVER, THAT WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOW TO AVOID ANY HASTY COMMITMENT TO MAKE THE REPORT PUBLIC

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IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THERE WOULD ALSO BE MERIT IN KEEPING CONFIDENTIAL THE EXISTENCE OF THE COVERING LETTER, IN CASE WE DECIDE NOT TO PUBLISH IT WITH THE REPORT.

5. I ALSO RECOMMEND THAT A SHORT MESSAGE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND THANKS SHOULD BE SENT FAIRLY QUICKLY FROM MR PRIOR TO MR HAY, MAKING IT CLEAR THAT IT IS SENT IN ADVANCE OF A DETAILED STUDY OF THE REPORT, WHICH MAY TAKE SOME TIME. THIS WOULD OBIVIATE ANY NEED TO SEND LATER A MORE DETAILED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT WHICH MIGHT WELL BE DIFFICULT TO COMPOSE.

MARSHALL

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