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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: December 19, 1961

(6)

SUBJECT: Courtesy Call by the Irish Minister for External Affairs

<p><u>U.S.</u> PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary Mr. James E. Bowers, Assistant Chief of Protocol Mr. Joseph Sweeney, BNA</p>	<p><u>Irish</u> Mr. Frank Aiken, Minister for External Affairs Ambassador Thomas J. Kiernan</p>
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In a courtesy call on the Secretary at the request of the Minister for External Affairs the following subjects were discussed:

1. Non-dissemination of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. Aiken explained he was working for the non-dissemination of nuclear weapons through the Irish resolution he had presented to the UN General Assembly. Some agreement along this line was possible, he believed, and he thought the Russians would go along with it. Inspection was unnecessary and, so far as he was concerned, impractical. If the Great Powers would agree not to give nuclear weapons to other countries and if the other countries agreed not to manufacture them, this would be a great step forward.

The Secretary observed there was no question about our attitude. We had rigorously tried not to "spread this nuclear word." However, it was a little difficult to know how to proceed when a country like France did what it had done. Mr. Aiken said he understood our difficulties, and volunteered that he had never taken the view that the Big Powers should not take nuclear weapons wherever they go.

The Secretary observed that while he understood Mr. Aiken's approach, he thought it was also important to press for disarmament generally. Mr. Aiken claimed the Great Powers would never accept general and complete disarmament. The Secretary agreed that it could not be worked out if you were left, to use Briand's phrase, with "dupes and victims." Mr. Aiken felt the best that could be achieved was some limitation of arms and no nuclear weapons among the lesser powers. There was agreement that this point of view should be promoted particularly in Africa.

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2. Partition.

Mr. Aiken indicated he wanted to say something about partition and smilingly noted that the Secretary did not have to make any comment. He then launched into a relatively restrained Irish nationalist argument against partition. According to Mr. Aiken, British government officials agree with him that a united Ireland would be desirable, but they are unwilling to say this publicly. Mr. Aiken suggested that if the Secretary felt that he could, he might wish to say that he thought the reunification of Ireland was desirable and that Ireland and the United Kingdom should get together and work it out. The Secretary referred to the obvious political difficulties of our becoming involved in this question between Ireland and the United Kingdom and said he would take note of what Mr. Aiken had said.

3. Ireland and the Common Market.

The Secretary asked what developments might emerge from Irish membership in the Common Market which would tend to lessen problems relating to Anglo-Irish differences over the border. This was precisely why Ireland was so keen on entering the Common Market, Mr. Aiken replied. He went on to emphasize that Ireland thought it would get along all right in the Common Market generally, but even if they had to take some immediate knocks due to agriculture and their infant industries, they would be better off in the long run.

The Secretary said he gathered that the provisions of the Treaty of Rome did not bother Ireland. At first, Mr. Aiken explained, the Irish were concerned that membership in NATO was a sine qua non, and the Secretary interjected, "not quite," and went on to point out we hoped the Treaty of Rome would not be diluted. Mr. Aiken said apart from partition Ireland would have no political difficulties with membership in EEC.

Mr. Aiken explained he did not know quite how to phrase it, but he hoped we would not try to get a mass-produced Europe too quickly, but rather allow the new Europe the gradual growth it required. He would not like, for example, to see European integration pressed to the point where the neutrals could not be associated with it. It was hoped that this could be worked out, the Secretary explained. Mr. Aiken stressed that the Irish wanted to get into the European Community as a full member.

4. International Payments Union.

Mr. Aiken suggested that in connection with the developments of the EEC we should consider an international payments agreement. Explaining that he had advocated an international payments agreement for a number of years, Mr. Aiken urged that we study the advantages of such an agreement. The Secretary said he would ask his colleague, Mr. Ball, to look into this.

5. Presidential Visit to Ireland.

Mr. Aiken concluded his courtesy visit by saying that Ireland would welcome President Kennedy if he ever came to Ireland, however, the Irish Government were fully aware of the President's heavy responsibilities and had no intention of pressing him to come. He brought this up because there had been stories the President might visit Ireland.

The Secretary said he knew that the President would like to visit Ireland and if the arrangements could be worked out on short notice he would be pleased to make inquiries. Mr. Aiken replied he was not extending an invitation, but only making clear that if the President should decide on a visit he would be made welcome.

Mr. Aiken urged the Secretary to visit Ireland if he ever had an extra 24 hours, or indeed, as long as he could stay, and he assured him he would be most welcome. The Secretary said he would enjoy such a visit and would love to have time for a little fishing.

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