

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

THE OUTLOOK FOR DUBLIN'S EC PRESIDENCY

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## OUTLOOK FOR DUBLIN'S EC PRESIDENCY

### C O N T E N T S

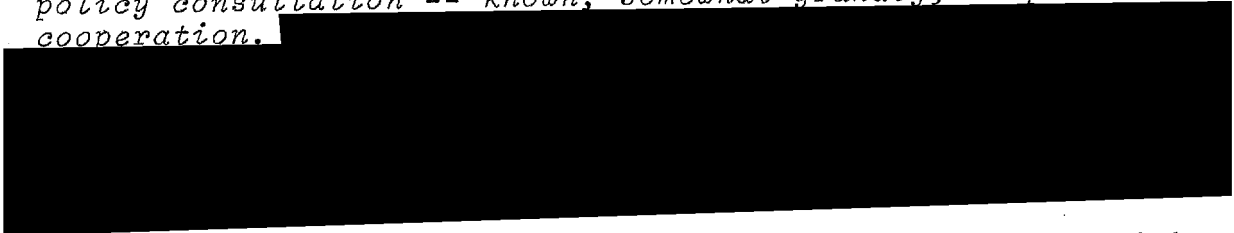
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11 December 1974

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Precis

On January 1, the Irish begin their first six-month tour in the presidency of the EC. The task involves chairing the EC's Council and subsidiary bodies as well as the various committees that are part of the EC-Nine's system of foreign policy consultation -- known, somewhat grandly, as political cooperation.



Prime Minister Cosgrave's policies reflect basic Irish opposition to communism and colonialism. Further elements of continuity are Ireland's insistence on staying out of military alliances, its long-standing Francophile biases, and its pragmatic determination to avoid contravening basic British interests. But Foreign Minister Fitzgerald has also made certain innovations in policy since the National Coalition came to power in Dublin 20 months ago: a new emphasis on supranationalism in Brussels; expansion of foreign ministry horizons to take account of the EC's world-wide interests; and a new sense of responsibility toward the developing countries. Within these constraints, Irish foreign policy toward specific areas is still fluid. Dublin will be extremely sensitive to the attitudes of the other EC members and of Washington toward Irish efforts to fill the presidency -- particularly with respect to how its presidency is used in consultations between the US and the EC.

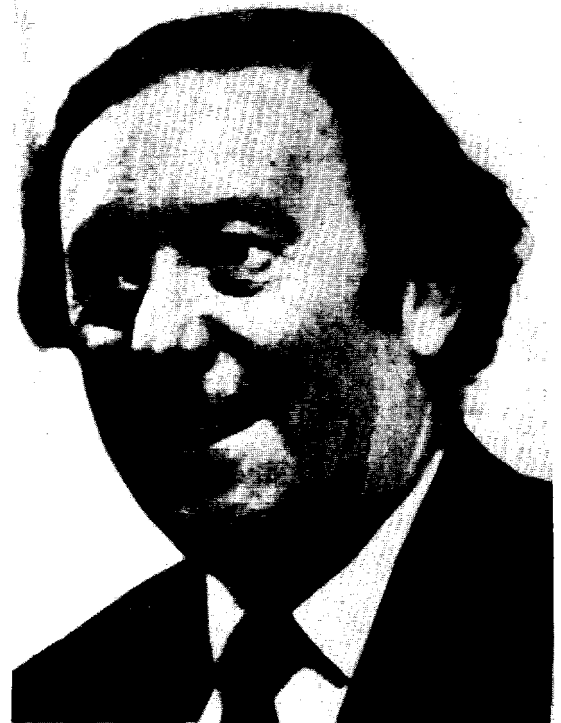
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COSGRAVE, Liam  
Prime Minister



FITZGERALD, Garret  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

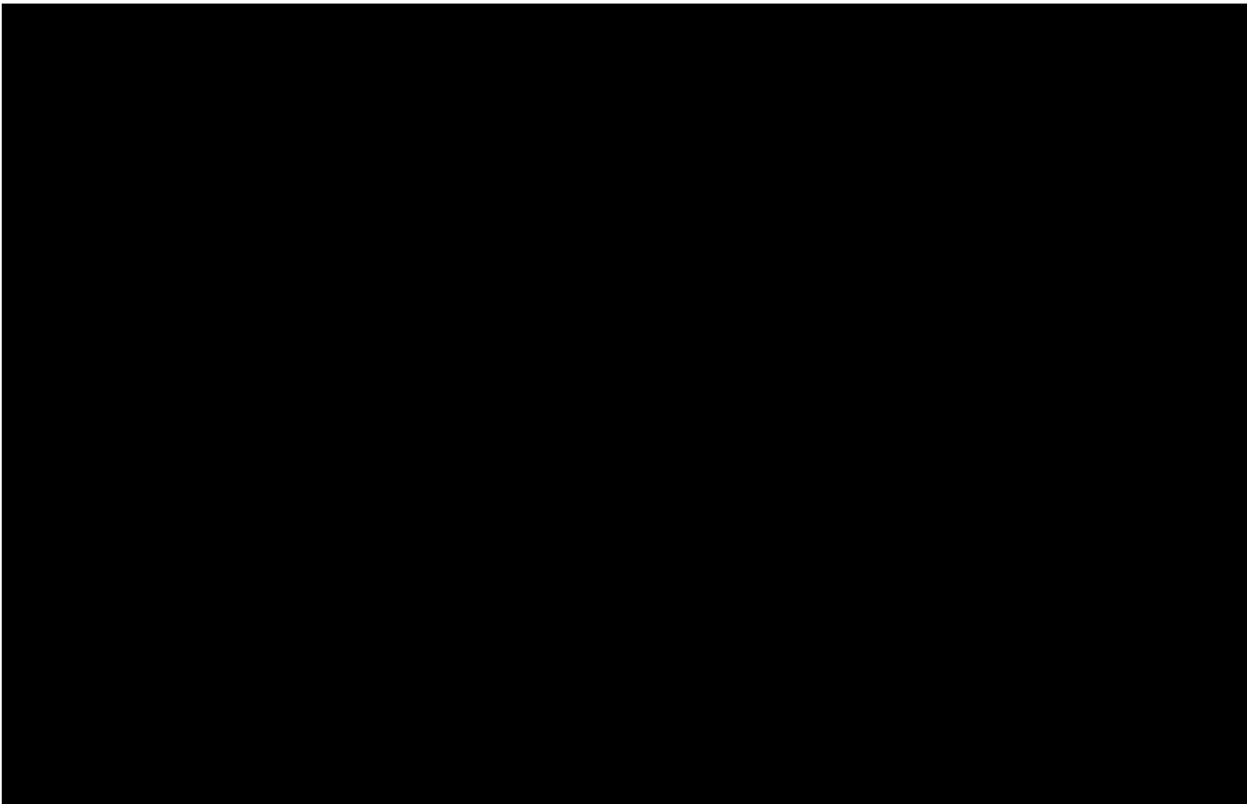


CRUISE-OBRIEN, Conor  
Communications Minister

Foreign Policy Orientation

The present government gives more importance to foreign affairs than its predecessor did, and the EC is the focus of Irish foreign policy. Almost all the country's leaders strongly favor the country's EC membership. Ireland's earlier concentration on US ties as a source of help toward political independence has been succeeded by reliance on the EC connection, in part as a way to lessen Ireland's economic dependence on Britain. The shift in the balance of Irish diplomatic interest was dramatized in the Cosgrave government's diplomatic appointments when it came to power in early 1973, shortly after Ireland's accession to the community. The country's most able diplomats were sent to the major European posts while J. Molloy, the non-political assistant secretary in charge of administration, was sent to Washington.

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Fitzgerald's Attitudes and Views

Fitzgerald has provided strong and innovative leadership since coming to office and has made some new policy thrusts. Considerable fluidity still marks Irish policy, but Fitzgerald recognizes that three basic points of Irish foreign policy remain fairly stable: neutrality, refusal to contravene basic British interests, and the Irish Franco-ophile bias.

- Dublin set its course of neutrality in 1938, at the time when it abrogated the defense provisions of the Anglo-Irish treaty and achieved full sovereignty. The principal reason cited for neutrality was the fact that not all of Ireland had been united in the Irish Republic and the six northern counties remained part of the United Kingdom. After the second World War, Eamon De Valera undertook an overseas speaking tour to promote international sympathy for bringing the partition of Ireland to an end and uniting the island under Dublin. He had little success in his quest for sympathy but his pronouncements on Irish relations with London committed Dublin more strongly than ever to retaining neutral status as long as partition continued.
  
- With the Irish economy still closely entwined with Britain's, Dublin makes it a cardinal point not to espouse any policy contravening basic British interests. For its own as well as London's benefit, Dublin has been pressing the French to take a more generous position toward the UK's effort to negotiate more favorable terms for its EC membership.

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- The pro-French leaning of political leaders is a constant thread of Irish foreign policy, and since accession to the EC in January 1973, Dublin has stood unequivocally apart from the French on only one major issue: the organization of the integrated energy program. On this issue, the Irish evidently feel some confidence in their position and have urged Paris to be less recalcitrant about membership in the International Energy Agency.

Within the continuities just mentioned, Fitzgerald's tenure as foreign minister has been marked by three changes: a greater willingness to press for supranationalism in Brussels, a considerable expansion of the ministry's range of interests, and a new emphasis on aid to the Third World.

- Fitzgerald believes that Irish external relations were for too many years confined to the UK and the US, and that the main Irish interest now lies with the EC. Regarding the future development of the EC, Fitzgerald and the National Coalition have, more than the preceding Fianna Fail government, pressed for more democratic control of EC affairs through the European parliament and a consequent lessening of national power in the Council of Ministers. The preceding government also favored supranationalism in Brussels but never pressed the point. Ireland thus shows signs of adopting the typical small-power mentality in the community -- an attitude that may bring it into conflict with French positions.
- Early in Fitzgerald's tenure, after an initial meeting with officials called home from overseas, the foreign minister said that one striking fact to emerge had been the great number of issues on which Ireland, because of its EC accession, now had to have views. In a later public

speech, Fitzgerald spelled out his rationale: "Our job," he said, "is to ensure that the evolution of the community will take a form suited to Irish needs while, at the same time, we make a contribution to the community and its general welfare, such that when we seek to press the particular needs of this country we shall be listened to attentively and willingly.... This means that we must extend our range of interests much more widely...to problems throughout the world."

The Fitzgerald foreign ministry has also shown a new commitment to foreign aid. Fitzgerald told the Dail last month: "...as a country which within its own corner of the world is poorer than its near neighbors, we have a particular and instinctive sympathy with the developing world...." Ireland's total development aid has quadrupled since early 1973, an increase exceeding even the considerable expansion required by EC membership.

Apart from these particular focuses, Irish foreign policy has considerable fluidity. On the Middle East, for example, Dublin has gone along with Paris on a pro-Arab position, and even voted with France to invite the Palestine Liberation Organization to address the full UN Assembly session.

#### Keeping the US Informed

The Irish favor using the EC presidency as the principal channel for US-EC consultations. They are aware that this is a mechanism which is only now evolving, however,



and they have two major questions about the prospects for this process during Dublin's presidency: Does Washington mean to pursue consultations with the EC presidency when a small country holds the post? Will the consultations be reciprocal?

Ireland is aware that it is the first of the small EC countries to hold the presidency since the acrimonious US-European debate about the importance of mutual consultations gave birth last spring to the "Gymnich solution." Under this formula, the Nine keep Washington informed through the EC presidency except on topics barred by one or more members' vote. Taking account of the practical workings of the US-European relationship, the Gymnich solution also provided that information might be given to Washington by individual members.

Consultation through the EC presidency worked fairly well during Bonn's presidency, which lasted until June 30 of this year. During the current Paris presidency, the process has been free of open acrimony, but Paris has sought to impose a total embargo on communicating to Washington the proceedings of some meetings of the EC-Nine, such as the sessions of EC Asian specialists in September and November.

The Irish [REDACTED] will be under pressure from Paris similarly to [REDACTED] withhold information. However, their position is likely to depend on how seriously they think the presidency is being taken as a channel for consultations. At present the Irish are questioning whether Washington may not be more interested in consulting with the larger EC members than with the EC as a unit.

The Irish will also be influenced by how forthcoming the US proves to be about the flow of information between Washington and the EC presidency. They hope that the US will, in effect, bolster the EC presidency by using it during Dublin's tenure to inform the EC on matters of mutual concern as well as considering it a source for information. They believe that this process will strengthen EC unity. Thus for Dublin the particular channels for information flow are as important as the flow itself. A

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25X6 senior Irish official recently said he believed the US might have chosen to route some information to NATO that should have gone to the EC instead. This concerned him not only because Ireland is not a NATO country but because the EC must develop its own identity.

The Work-Load Problem

25X6 Considerable concern is evident both in Dublin and among the other Eight as to whether Ireland -- which has only one percent of the total EC population -- may be too small to provide the diplomatic resources and general support to carry out all the responsibilities of the EC presidency.

25X6 [REDACTED] Fitzgerald has already called home some diplomats because of the projected strains on the ministry in Dublin.

At cabinet level, the country of the presidency must provide officers to chair all meetings of the Council of Ministers -- foreign, finance, agriculture, development, etc. It is customary to provide a second cabinet-level officer to fill the country's regular chair. In addition, the foreign minister represents the community as a whole in certain aspects of its external relations with the rest of the world. At the civil service level, about 160 EC committees and working groups must be chaired.

Simple attendance at EC meetings has already taxed Dublin's resources. The 190-man foreign ministry tends to forego production of briefing papers, despite the handicap this imposes on Irish representatives. The lack of staff capabilities for producing such papers on a wide variety of topics will be especially serious during the period of the presidency. It will be nearly impossible,

for example, for Dublin to conduct the meetings of experts in political cooperation along normal lines, which require the host country to set up the agenda of topics for a broad area such as Asia or the Middle East and to introduce each topic with a round-up of the aspects of EC interest.

In addition, the mechanism of political cooperation -- in fact, foreign policy consultation -- which has developed with remarkable rapidity during the last two years, is a particular responsibility of the presidency. There is no political secretariat, equivalent to the secretariat of the Council of Ministers, or the European Commission. All the preparatory and follow-up work related to political cooperation has to be carried out by the foreign ministry staff of the country holding the presidency. This involves meetings of area experts, high-level officials and foreign ministers in the capital of the presidency and coordination of the position of the Nine in international institutions and conferences. If a crisis develops, coordination of the reactions of the Nine has to be carried out in the capital of the presidency through consultation with the ambassadors of the other eight member states.


The difficulty of physical communication with Ireland compounds the Irish problem. Travel to Dublin, where meetings on political cooperation are to be held, will be troublesome for the Eight. Only London among the EC capitals has frequent flights to Dublin. The others generally have only one or two flights daily, and the West Germans, with no direct commercial flight from Bonn or Cologne, would have to fly through Frankfurt or London. France is nevertheless backing Dublin in opposing a transfer of political cooperation meetings to Brussels.

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Outlook

The Irish will have their hands full when they take over the EC presidency. They are conscious of the hard road ahead and are determined to put on the best show they can. Other small countries have held the post with some success in the past but they had more experience in European affairs, and in any case the presidency has become more demanding with each succeeding term. The other EC countries -- particularly France -- may offer to help Dublin in various ways. Only so much can be done along these lines, however, and to some extent help from an EC partner will also give that partner considerable influence over Irish policies and positions. In the end, both Irish foreign policy and foreign attitudes toward Dublin are likely to be shaped for some time to come by the way the Irish handle the EC presidency. At the same time, the intrinsic strength of the EC presidency will be tested during the coming six months when the least experienced of EC members is in the chair. In any event, Dublin will be extremely sensitive to the attitudes of the other EC members and of Washington toward Irish efforts to fill the presidency -- particularly with respect to how its presidency is used in consultations between the US and the EC.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Denis Clift  
NSC Staff

I am sending herewith two copies of the paper on Ireland's presidency of the Economic Communities which was done at your request.

We will not be giving this additional circulation at this time. Shortly before Ireland assumes the presidency, however, we will probably adapt parts of this paper for use in Agency publications.



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10 December 74  
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