

RESTRICTED

FM CG NEW YORK 142105Z MAY  
TO PRIORITY WASHINGTON  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 12 OF 14 MAY 1981  
INFO PRIORITY F C O.

MY TELNO 11 OF 29 APRIL.

## NORTHERN IRELAND: HUNGER STRIKE

1. DEMONSTRATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE IRA, EXPLOITING THE HUNGER STRIKE OF SANDS AND OTHERS, HAVE BEEN MOUNTED DAILY SINCE 4 MAY OUTSIDE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OFFICES ON THIRD AVENUE HERE (THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE HAS SO FAR BEEN SPARED). A FEW DEMONSTRATORS HAVE APPEARED EACH MORNING AND LARGER NUMBERS, ON MOST DAYS BETWEEN 50-200, HAVE JOINED THEM IN THE AFTERNOON. THE DEMONSTRATORS ARE MUCH IN EVIDENCE BECAUSE THEY OCCUPY ROADWAY SPACE DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO OUR BUILDING, THEY SHOUT AND SCREAM A LOT, USING LOUDSPEAKERS, AND INSULTING REMARKS HAVE OCCASIONALLY BEEN DIRECTED AT STAFF ENTERING OR LEAVING THE BUILDING. AS BEFORE HOWEVER A STRONG POLICE PRESENCE HAS KEPT THE DEMONSTRATORS UNDER STRICT CONTROL AND NORMALLY WITHIN WOODEN BARRIERS, THOUGH THE SPACE ALLOWED TO DEMONSTRATORS IS EXPANDED ACCORDING TO THEIR NUMBERS AND ON SATURDAY, 9 MAY, WHEN THERE WAS A LARGE DEMONSTRATION BY ABOUT 6,000 PEOPLE, THEY BLOCKED THIRD AVENUE ENTIRELY. THE NUMBER OF BOMB THREATS HAS DIMINISHED.

2. A FLAT-BED TRUCK HAS FORMED A BASE FOR THE DEMONSTRATORS. IT CARRIES AMPLIFYING EQUIPMENT AND A CAGE REPRESENTING THE MAZE PRISON. THE TRUCK HAS BEEN PARKED FOR A WEEK IN A TRAFFIC LANE NORMALLY RESERVED FOR BUSES, A POWER CABLE HAS BEEN CONNECTED TO IT FROM A NEARBY BAR, AND ON 9 MAY AN ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC LANE WAS BLOCKED BY STALLS SELLING IRA T-SHIRTS AND OTHER MEMENTOES. A FURTHER LARGE DEMONSTRATION IS EXPECTED THIS SATURDAY. OUR STAFF ARE CARRYING ON AS USUAL THROUGHOUT ALL THIS AND DOING THEIR BEST TO IGNORE THE DEMONSTRATORS AND THEIR INFLAMMATORY AND MENDACIOUS SLOGANS, BUT IT IS NOT EASY.

3. SO FAR, THE DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN LARGELY CONFINED TO OUR OFFICES AND TO THE UN HEADQUARTERS. THE LATEST DEMONSTRATION TECHNIQUE IS TO FORM UP BY ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, AND MOVE THENCE TO OUR OFFICES AND ON TO THE UN AND BACK AGAIN, WITH SPEECHES AND RELIGIOUS SERVICES (ON THE DEATH OF SANDS AND HUGHES) ON THE WAY. THERE HAVE BEEN VERY MINOR DEMONSTRATIONS IN FRONT OF BRITISH AIRWAYS AND THE BTA: BRITISH COMMERCIAL FIRMS HAVE SO FAR BEEN SPARED. THERE IS NATURALLY SOME CONCERN AMONG THE BRITISH BUSINESS COMMUNITY, THOUGH THEY ARE NOT SERIOUSLY WORRIED AND ARE SIMPLY KEEPING THEIR HEADS

RESTRICTED

/DOON.

RESTRICTED

DOWN. AFTER THE IRA PROPAGANDA EXCESSES OF LAST WEEK AND THE SCANDALOUSLY ONESIDED REPORTING OF THE AMERICAN MEDIA, MORE OBJECTIVE COMMENT HAS STARTED TO APPEAR. IN THIS RESPECT THE TV INTERVIEWS GIVEN HERE BY MR CECIL PARKINSON AND BY THE NORTHERN IRISH NONCONFORMIST MINISTERS NOW VISITING THE UNITED STATES HAVE HAD A GOOD EFFECT.

4. FOLLOWING DISCUSSION WITH HM AMBASSADOR AND SIR A PARSONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND THEIR EFFECT UPON VIP VISITS, ETC., I CALLED YESTERDAY ON THE POLICE COMMISSIONER FOR NEW YORK CITY AND COMPLAINED ABOUT THE HARASSMENT TO WHICH WE ARE BEING SUBJECTED AND APPARENT CONTINUANCE OF A PERMANENT IRA DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF OUR DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR PREMISES. I ASKED THAT, AS A FIRST STEP, THE DEMONSTRATORS SHOULD BE MOVED FURTHER AWAY FROM THE BUILDING. MR MCGUIRE MADE NO PROMISES, BUT SAID THAT HE WOULD URGENTLY STUDY MY REQUEST IN CONSULTATION WITH THE US ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE. HE AND HIS STAFF PREDICTABLY ARGUED THAT THE IRA DEMONSTRATORS WERE UNDER EFFECTIVE POLICE CONTROL (WHICH IS TRUE) AND EXPLAINED WHY, IN THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF NEW YORK WITH MANY DEMONSTRATIONS, THE POLICE FOUND IT GOOD TACTICS TO BE LIBERAL. RECORD OF CONVERSATION FOLLOWS BY BAG. I AWAIT MR MCGUIRE'S REPLY WITH INTEREST.

OVERTON

NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED

RID  
NAD  
INFORMATION DEPT  
WED  
MAED  
NEWS DEPT  
SECURITY DEPT  
FUSD  
PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/MR HURD

PS/MR RIDLEY  
PS/MR BLAKER  
PS/PUS  
SIR A ACLAND  
CHIEF CLERK  
MR ADAMS  
MR BULLARD  
MR FERGUSSON  
LORD N G LENNOX  
MR BRAITHWAITE  
*MR DAY*  
*MR WRE*

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION  
NORTHERN IRELAND

2  
RESTRICTED