

GRPS 240

C O N F I D E N T I A L

CONFIDENTIAL

FM DUBLIN 05:1805Z MAY 1981

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 141 OF 05 MAY 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)

HUNGER STRIKE:

MY TELNO 139.

1. FROM THE TAOISEACH'S STATEMENT FOLLOWING SANDS'S DEATH AND THE ONE HE MADE YESTERDAY, IT SEEMS THAT HE STILL FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT IN SOME WAY THE STRIKE COULD BE ENDED BY MANIPULATING THE EXISTING PRISON REGULATIONS. I AM NOT SURE TO WHAT EXTENT HE REALLY BELIEVES THIS BUT I THINK IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO SUPPOSE THAT HE IS NOT BEING SINCERE. I AM QUITE SURE HE BELIEVED WHAT HE SAID WHEN HE SPOKE TO ME ON 26 FEBRUARY (MY TELNO 51). HE SHOULD OF COURSE KNOW BY NOW THAT THE VERY DIFFERING CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH WE WORK IN THE MAZE AND THE IRISH WORK IN PORT LAOISE MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO FUDGE THE ISSUE IN THE WAY THE IRISH CAN (PALMER'S RECORD OF HIS TALK WITH MURRAY ON 2 APRIL). BUT ON THE EVIDENCE WE HAVE IT IS UNFORTUNATELY CLEAR THAT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THIS.

2. ASSUMING PARA 1 REPRESENTS THE TAOISEACH'S SINCERE BELIEF THEN IT IS VERY FAR FROM THE WAY WE SEE THINGS, AND INDEED FROM WHAT HE WAS TOLD AT THE DECEMBER SUMMIT. AT THAT TIME HE APPEARED TO ACCEPT THAT THE PROVISIONALS WERE GOING FOR POLITICAL STATUS AND NOTHING ELSE. IF SO, IT IS NO LONGER THE CASE AND OUR DIFFERING VIEWS OF WHAT THE PROVISIONALS ARE AIMING FOR COULD LEAD TO A BIT OF A ROW. MR HAUGHEY HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS TO BE SEEN TO BE TALKING TOUGH WITH US AND I THINK WE MUST GIVE HIM CREDIT FOR WHAT IS SEEN HERE AS THE CALM LINE HE HAS TAKEN. HOWEVER, I THINK THE TIME HAS COME TO TRY AND RECONCILE OUR DIVERGENT VIEWS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THERE IS PLENTY OF CHAPTER AND VERSE SHOWING THAT THE HUNGER STRIKE IS AIMED AT POLITICAL STATUS. GIVING HIM A PIECE OF PAPER ON THESE LINES, TOGETHER WITH ANY NEW THOUGHTS WE MAY HAVE, WOULD BE BETTER THAN NOTHING.

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FM DUBLIN 05/0915Z MAY 1981

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 139 OF 05 MAY

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O (BELFAST) PRIORITY WASHINGTON

YOUR TELMO 661 TO WASHINGTON: DEATH OF SANDS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT RELEASED BY THE TAOISEACH,
MR HAUGHEY, SHORTLY AFTER 2 AM:

BEGINS

THE DEATH OF BOBBY SANDS IS YET ONE FURTHER TRAGEDY IN A LONG
LINE OF SUCH TRAGEDIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND. IT MUST SURELY BRING
HOME TO ALL CONCERNED THE NEED TO FIND A SOLUTION THAT WILL BRING
A JUST AND LASTING PEACE TO THE AREA.

SINCE THE HUNGER STRIKE BEGAN I HAVE SOUGHT CONSTANTLY BY
EVERY MEANS OPEN TO ME TO SECURE A HUMANITARIAN SOLUTION THAT WOULD
AVOID LOSS OF LIFE. I DEEPLY REGRET THAT SUCH A SOLUTION COULD
NOT HAVE BEEN FOUND THROUGH A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE PRISON.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PRISON.

TO THE SANDS FAMILY AND TO THE FAMILIES OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE
SUFFERED BEREAVEMENT OR INJURY, I EXTEND SINCERE SYMPATHY
ON MY OWN BEHALF AND ON BEHALF OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT.
I APPEAL NOW TO ALL SECTIONS OF THE IRISH PEOPLE THAT THERE SHOULD
BE NO FURTHER SUFFERING, INJURY OR LOSS OF LIFE, AND THAT THE SORROW
AND GRIEF WHICH EXISTS SHOULD BE EXPRESSED IN A CALM AND DIGNIFIED
MANNER.

ENDS

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TO: (B)

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