

CONFIDENTIAL

GROUPS 290
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FROM DUBLIN 221654Z APRIL 1981
TO FLASH F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 116 OF 22 APRIL
AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O (BELFAST)

1. THE TAOISEACH ASKED ME TO CALL AT 4.30 PM THIS AFTERNOON. HE SAID HE WAS VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE RECENT VIOLENCE IN THE NORTH AND FEARED IT COULD SPILL OVER INTO THE REPUBLIC IF SANDS DIES. MATTERS HAD TAKEN A TURN FOR THE WORSE BECAUSE OF THE ELECTION OF SANDS TO PARLIAMENT. HE WAS UNDER PRESSURE TO DO SOMETHING BECAUSE THE PRIME MINISTER HAD BEEN DRAWN INTO THE AFFAIR BY THE TELEGRAM SENT TO HER BY THE THREE IRISH EURO-MPS. HE WISHED TO CONSULT US ABOUT WHAT HE MIGHT SAY.

2. MR HAUGHEY SAID HE HAD QUITE AN OPEN MIND. A PUBLIC STATEMENT SEEMED DESIRABLE BUT HE WANTED TO FIT IT IN TO SOMETHING WE COULD DO ON OUR SIDE. A POSSIBLE FORMULA MIGHT BE BUILT ON THE VISIT TO LONDON BY TWO EUROPEAN COMMISSIONERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WHOM THE IRISH BELIEVED TO BE NORGAARD AND FROWEIN. FOLLOWING MR ATKINS'S STATEMENT LAST NIGHT THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO TALK TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IF THEY REQUESTED IT, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE FOR THE TWO COMMISSIONERS TO VISIT THE MAZE PRIVATELY TO SEE WHAT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PRISON ADMINISTRATION BASED ON THE CRITICISMS IN PARA 64 OF THEIR REPORT HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT. EVERYONE KNEW THAT MUCH HAD BEEN DONE IN THIS RESPECT, INCLUDING CIVILIAN CLOTHING. IF THIS BACKGROUND COULD BE ARRANGED, THEN THE TAOISEACH THOUGHT HE COULD APPEAL IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT TO SANDS TO COME OFF THE HUNGER STRIKE BECAUSE OF THE INTEREST AND ATTENTION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION.

3. MR HAUGHEY THOUGHT THAT ALTHOUGH SANDS MIGHT BE PREPARED TO DIE, AT HEART HE PROBABLY DID NOT WISH TO DO SO. IT WAS IN OUR URGENT INTERESTS TO PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER AND DEVISE SOME FORMULA LIKE THAT IN PARA 2 WHICH MIGHT JUST POSSIBLY DO THE TRICK. MR HAUGHEY SAID HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO SEE ME AT ANY TIME TOMORROW MORNING WITH ANY SUGGESTIONS WE MIGHT HAVE AND I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR URGENT INSTRUCTIONS ACCORDINGLY.

FIGG

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