

NORTHERN IRELAND: ADVANCE COPIES

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| PS | N IRELAND OFFICE | - PS TO SEC OF STATE |
| PS/LPS | | RM 66 A/2 GGS |
| PS/PUS | N IRELAND OFFICE | [4 copies] |
| MR BULLARD | | SIR K STOWE |
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| HD/PUSD (2) | | MR BUXTON |
| HD/IPD | | |
| HD/NEWS DEPT | CABINET OFFICE | - SIR R ARMSTRONG |
| | | DIO |

... / ...
... ..

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

~~RESIDENT CLERK~~

IMMEDIATE

UNCLASSIFIED

FROM DUBLIN 281130Z JULY 1981

TO IMMEDIATE F C O (DESKBY 281300Z)

TELEGRAM NUMBER 225 OF 28 JULY

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O (BELFAST) (DESKBY 281300Z)

ADVANCE COPY

HUNGER STRIKE.

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT MADE BY THE TAOISEACH,
DR FITZGERALD, IN THE DAIL THIS MORNING.

BEGINS:

"MR JOE MC DONNELL WHO WAS ON HUNGER STRIKE IN THE MAZE PRISON DIED SHORTLY AFTER FIVE O'CLOCK THIS MORNING. OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY GOES OUT TO HIS WIFE WHOM I MET LAST FRIDAY, AND TO HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS AS IT MUST GO OUT TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF EVERY VICTIM OF THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

MR MC DONNELL'S DEATH COMES AT A TIME WHEN THE WORK OF THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN PROVIDING THE BASIS FOR A SOLUTION WAS AT AN ADVANCED STAGE. A SOLUTION IS MORE THAN EVER NECESSARY NOW TO BRING AN END TO THE SAD CYCLE OF SUFFERING AND DEATH IN THE MAZE PRISON. IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF IRELAND THAT THE TRAGEDY OF JOE MC DONNELL SHOULD NOT BE USED, ON ANY ACCOUNT OR BY ANY INTEREST, AS AN OCCASION TO DELAY THE FINDING OF SUCH A SOLUTION.

I HAVE REPEATEDLY SAID THAT A SOLUTION CAN BE REACHED THROUGH A FLEXIBILITY OF APPROACH WHICH NEED NOT SACRIFICE ANY PRINCIPLE. THE ONUS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SHOWING THIS FLEXIBILITY RESTS ON BOTH SIDES AND THERE HAS INDEED BEEN EVIDENCE OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS OF A CLEARER AND MORE WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION OF THIS FACT. BUT THE GREATER RESPONSIBILITY MUST, AS ALWAYS, REST ON THOSE WITH THE GREATER POWER. WE, FOR OUR PART, HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES ON MANY OCCASIONS TO IMPRESS ON THEM THE NEED FOR AN URGENT SOLUTION. INDEED, I HAVE BEEN IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER ON THE MATTER. THE HOUSE WILL UNDERSTAND THAT I CANNOT SAY MORE AT THIS CRITICAL MOMENT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO ALL WE CAN TO HELP IN BRINGING AN END TO THE DISPUTE.

WHILE EFFORTS CONTINUE TO FIND A SOLUTION, BEFORE FURTHER DEATHS OCCUR, INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE PRISON, I WOULD URGE THAT ALL CONCERNED - SHOULD DO NOTHING TO DAMAGE THE INTERESTS OR THE GOOD NAME OF OUR COUNTRY."

ENDS.

FIGG.

NNNNN

SENT / RECD A TPIQWPWZ HMT/DMH