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UNCLASSIFIED
DESKBY 211400Z
FM FCO 211324Z APRIL 81
TO IMMEDIATE ABU DHABI
TELEGRAM NUMBER 123 OF 21 APRIL

FOLLOWING FOR ALEXANDER, PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY, FROM SANDERS,
10 DOWNING STREET.

NORTHERN IRELAND

IN VIEW OF THE ARGUMENTS ABOUT POLITICAL STATUS, WHICH ARE CONTINUING, YOU MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE THE TEXT OF A LETTER FROM GERRY ADAMS PUBLISHED IN TUESDAY'S GUARDIAN. IT REFERS IN PLACES TO THE GUARDIAN EDITORIAL OF 15 APRIL. TEXT IS AS FOLLOWS:
QUOTE ... NONE OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS IS DOING IT FOR POLITICAL STATUS SOLELY FOR HIMSELF. MR. SANDS SOUGHT ELECTION AS REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL THE POLITICAL PRISONERS NOW ON PROTEST IN THE H-BLOCKS AND ARMAGH WOMEN'S PRISON. SUGGESTING THAT HE OR THE OTHER HUNGER STRIKERS BE GIVEN QUOTE SOME SORT OF POLITICAL STATUS UNQUOTE IS COMPARABLE TO SUGGESTING THAT A MEMBER ELECTED ON A HOUSING PROGRAMME FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BE SATISFIED IF HE WERE TO BE GIVEN A HOUSE.

IF ONE IS TO ADDRESS ONESELF SERIOUSLY TO QUOTE THE QUESTION OF THE MOMENT UNQUOTE WHICH IS QUOTE HOW TO CONTRIVE MATTERS SO THAT A PRISONER WITH THE POLITICAL STATUS OF A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT ... DOES NOT STARVE HIMSELF TO DEATH UNQUOTE, THEN ONE HAS TO EXAMINE THE REAL POLITICS OF ABSURDITY WHICH CREATE THE PRESENT CRISIS.

THESE ARE, PUT SIMPLY, THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AS PART OF A MAJOR PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN TO PROJECT RESISTANCE TO THEIR PRESENCE IN THIS COUNTRY AS CRIMINAL, ATTEMPTED AMONG OTHER THINGS TO CRIMINALISE THE IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS. NO ONE, DESPITE BRITISH PROTESTATIONS TO THE CONTRARY, PRESUMES THAT ANY OF THESE PRISONERS ARE CRIMINAL. AN INTRICATE NETWORK OF SECRET POLICE, BRITISH ARMY AND OTHER CROWN FORCES, A CONVEYOR BELT OF BRUTAL INTERROGATION CENTRES, REMAND LAWS, SPECIAL QUOTE EMERGENCY UNQUOTE LEGISLATION AND NON JURY COURTS HAS BEEN CONTRIVED TO DEAL WITH THIS ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL PROBLEM.

THAT THE POLITICAL PRISONERS REFUSE TO ACCEPT THEIR CRIMINALISATION IS UNDERSTANDABLE, THAT THEY HAVE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT AND THAT THE PROPAGANDA EXERCISE OF CRIMINALISATION HAS FAILED, IS NOW OBVIOUS. ATTEMPTS TO FIND A PROGRESSIVE, JUST AND REASONABLE ENDING TO THE PRISON CRISIS, BY THE PRISONERS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN PERSISTENTLY WRECKED BY THE STUPIDITY AND HIGH HANDED ATTITUDES OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WHICH IS MORE INTERESTED, AS ALWAYS, IN PROTECTING ITS OWN INTERESTS IN THIS COUNTRY THAN ITS ALLEVIATING THE HARDSHIPS AND CORRECTING THE ABSURDITIES THAT ITS INVOLVEMENTS CREATES.

BOBBY SANDS AND HIS COMRADES NOW FACE DEATH, NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE DENIED POLITICAL RECOGNITION, BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE DENIED THE RIGHT TO HUMAN DIGNITY AND TO TREATMENT AS POLITICAL PRISONERS. FIVE SIMPLE, JUST AND REASONABLE CONDITIONS CAN SECURE AN END TO THE SUFFERINGS OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO HAVE ENDURED A DIFFICULT PROTEST FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

THE RIGHT TO WEAR THEIR OWN CLOTHES:
THE RIGHT NOT TO DO PENAL WORK:
THE RIGHT TO ASSOCIATION:
THE RIGHT TO ONE VISIT PER WEEK, PARCELS, ETC:
FULL REMISSION.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS TO MOVE ONLY A LITTLE FROM ITS
PRESENT POSITION TO THAT OUTLINED ABOVE. THAT IT REFUSES TO DO
SO IS A GREAT ABSURDITY. THAT IRISH PEOPLE HAVE TO LIVE AND DIE
DESPITE AND BECAUSE SUCH ABSURDITIES IS CRIMINAL.”

CARRINGTON

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FM FCO 211215Z APR 81

TO IMMEDIATE ABU DHABI

TELEGRAM NUMBER 122 OF 21 APRIL

FOLLOWING FOR ALEXANDER, PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY, FROM SANDERS,
10 DOWNING STREET.

MY 2 IPTS : NORTHERN IRELAND: SECURITY SITUATION

THE NIO ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF THE TDS VISIT IS:-

QUOTE

THIS VISIT HAD TO COMPETE AS NEWS WITH THE RIOTING WHICH HAS BEEN TAKING PLACE IN LONDONDERRY. THE VISIT HAS APPEARED IN NORTHERN IRELAND AS SOMETHING OF A DAMP SQUIB BECAUSE IT HAS HAD NO OUTCOME OF SUBSTANCE OTHER THAN THE PROPOSAL THAT THE 3 TDS SHOULD MEET THE PRIME MINISTER. UNIONIST OPINION WAS OUTRAGED THAT THE VISIT TO THE MAZE HAD BEEN PERMITTED AT ALL: BUT THE UNIONISTS HAVE KEPT FAIRLY QUIET SINCE IT TOOK PLACE ALTHOUGH BOTH MR. MOLYNEAUX AND DR. PAISLEY HAVE STATED PUBLICLY THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD NOT ACCEDE TO THE REQUEST FOR A MEETING.

THE OVERALL EFFECT (GIVEN THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION REMAINS, AND IS SEEN TO REMAIN, UNCHANGED) HAS BEEN TO PUT THE GOVERNMENT - PARTICULARLY VIS-A VIS THE MINORITY COMMUNITY, BUT ALSO NO DOUBT IN THE REPUBLIC AND IN THE USA - IN THE POSITION OF BEING SEEN TO HAVE TAKEN EVERY STEP SHORT OF SURRENDER TO SAVE THIS MAN'S LIFE: AND HMG HAS DONE THIS EVEN AT THE PRICE OF A UNIONIST PERCEPTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN DRAWN INTO A REPUBLICAN PROPOGANDA STUNT (AND ONE NOT UNCONNECTED WITH THE LIKELY FORTHCOMING ELECTION IN THE REPUBLIC).

UNQUOTE

THE NIO ADDED THAT:-

QUOTE

FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO ACCEDE TO THE REQUEST BY THE 3 TDS WOULD INFURIATE LOYALIST OPINION IN NORTHERN IRELAND BECAUSE -

- (A) IT WOULD BE SEEN AS TREATING WITH THE ENEMY:
- (B) IT WOULD BE TAKEN AS A SIGN THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S RESOLVE TO WITHSTAND TERRORISM WAS WEAKENING: AND
- (C) IT WOULD BE REGARDED AS CONFIRMATION THAT THE VISIT TO SANDS WAS PART OF A BACK-DOOR DEAL TO WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS A PARTY.

IF THE PRIME MINISTER DID SEE THE TDS, THE HOPES OF THE MINORITY COMMUNITY MIGHT BE GREATLY BUOYED UP: BUT SINCE HMG HAS NOTHING OF SUBSTANCE TO OFFER IN SUCH A MEETING, BEYOND THE PRISON REGIME ALREADY AVAILABLE, THE SUBSEQUENT LET-DOWN WOULD BE ALL THE GREATER.

THESE ARGUMENTS ARE STRONG: THERE ARE COUNTERVAILING BENEFITS LIKELY TO FLOW FROM SUCH A MEETING WHICH CAN BE SET AGAINST THEM.

THE SAME CONSIDERATIONS APPLY IN DIFFERING MEASURE TO ANY OTHER MINISTER (EG MR WHITELAW, AS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, OR MR ATKINS) SEEING THE THREE MEMBERS OF THE IRISH DAIL.

UNQUOTE

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OO ABU DHABI DESKBY 211230Z

GR 540

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FM FCO 211205Z APRIL 81

TO IMMEDIATE ABU DHABI

TELEGRAM NUMBER 121 OF 21 APRIL

FOLLOWING FOR ALEXANDER, PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY,

FROM SANDERS, 10 DOWNING STREET

MIPT:

NORTHERN IRELAND: SECURITY SITUATION

FOLLOWING IS THE NIO ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION THIS MORNING:-

QUOTE

WEEKEND HOOLIGANISM - STONE AND BOTTLE THROWING - HAS BEEN RUNNING IN LONDONDERRY FOR SOME MONTHS. IN THE LAST WEEK IT HAS TAKEN A TURN FOR THE WORSE. A FOCUS HAS BEEN SUPPLIED BY

SANDS' ELECTION - HE IS NOW A FOLK HERO - THE WEATHER HAS BEEN GOOD AND THE SCHOOLS ARE ON HOLIDAY. ADDED IMPETUS WAS PROVIDED BY THE INCIDENT ON SUNDAY IN WHICH TWO YOUTHS WERE KILLED BY AN ARMY VEHICLE.

THE RIOTING IN THE LAST WEEK HAS INCLUDED BOTH STONING AND THE FIRST USE OF PETROL BOMBS IN LONDONDERRY FOR TWO YEARS. LAST NIGHT 7 SHOTS WERE FIRED, THOUGH THIS WAS PROBABLY OPPORTUNISM ON THE PART OF PIRA AND NOT RIOTERS WITH GUNS. CASUALTIES SUFFERED BY THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN VERY LIGHT AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY HAS BEEN VERY MODEST.

THE FORECAST IS THAT THERE WILL CONTINUE TO BE TROUBLE IN LONDONDERRY UNTIL SANDS EITHER DIES OR COMES OFF HIS HUNGER STRIKE. BOTH THE RUC AND THE ARMY ARE CONFIDENT THAT THEY CAN CONTINUE TO CONTAIN THE SITUATION. THEY REGARD IT AS SIGNIFICANT THAT, APART FROM MINOR HOOLIGANISM, THE TROUBLE HAD NOT SPREAD TO OTHER PARTS OF NORTHERN IRELAND. THE SECURITY FORCES DO NOT WISH TO SEE ANY CHANGE IN PRESENT POLICIES.

IN SHORT, WHILE TROUBLE WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE IN LONDONDERRY, THE CONSIDERED ASSESSMENT OF ALL CONCERNED IS THAT THEY CAN BE DEALT WITH BY PRESENT TECHNIQUES AND POLICIES. UNQUOTE

FOLLOWING IS THE POSITION ON DOLOURS PRICE:-

QUOTE

ON SATURDAY THE CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HER ADVISED THAT HER CONDITION HAD DETERIORATED TO A POINT AT WHICH SHE WAS IN QUOTE IMMINENT DANGER UNQUOTE OF COLLAPSE AND SUDDEN DEATH AND ADVISED THAT SHE BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY. SECRETARY OF STATE HAS SIGNED A LICENCE FOR HER RELEASE ON CONDITIONS IDENTICAL TO THOSE APPLIED TO PAULINE MCLAUGHLIN EARLIER THIS YEAR. THE RESPONSIBLE DOCTORS HAVE BEEN TOLD THE POSITION IN CONFIDENCE. HER PRISON GOVERNOR WILL TELL HER OF SECRETARY OF

SANDS' ELECTION - HE IS NOW A FOLK HERO - THE WEATHER HAS BEEN GOOD AND THE SCHOOLS ARE ON HOLIDAY. ADDED IMPETUS WAS PROVIDED BY THE INCIDENT ON SUNDAY IN WHICH TWO YOUTHS WERE KILLED BY AN ARMY VEHICLE.

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THERE WILL BE LOYALIST CRITICISM ON THE LINES THAT HER ILLNESS, LIKE HER SISTER'S AND/OR THE MEDICAL ADVICE TENDERED ABOUT THEM, WAS CONTRIVED: AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY DELIBERATELY FAVOURS REPUBLICAN PRISONERS. THIS MAKES IT DESIRABLE THAT THE PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN THE SAME TIMESCALE. A PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT ON MISS PRICE IS BEING PREPARED. IT WILL MAKE THREE POINTS:-

- (1) THE DECISION IS IN CONFORMITY WITH EXISTING POLICY (THE LAST PRISONER RELEASED ON MEDICAL GROUNDS WAS A LOYALIST).
- (2) IT WAS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO UNSOLICITED MEDICAL ADVICE.
- (3) THAT ADVICE WAS UNEQUIVOCAL. UNQUOTE.

MIFT REPORTS ON THE EFFECT OF THE VISIT BY THE THREE TDS.

CARRINGTON

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ZZ ABU DHABI

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GR 200

CONFIDENTIAL
FM FCO 211200Z APRIL 81
TO FLASH ABU DHABI
TELEGRAM NUMBER 120 OF 21 APRIL

FOLLOWING FOR ALEXANDER, PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY, ON ARRIVAL
FROM SANDERS, 10 DOWNING STREET.

NORTHERN IRELAND: REQUEST BY THE THREE TDS

WE HAVE THE TEXT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS AT HER PRESS
CONFERENCE IN RIYADH. THE PRESS OFFICE ARE DRAWING ON THEM IN
RESPONSE TO QUERIES.

WE NEED TO SEND A FORMAL REPLY FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE
THREE TDS. THE NIO SUGGEST THAT THIS SHOULD BE DONE THROUGH OUR
AMBASSADOR IN DUBLIN, WITH THE TEXT BEING MADE PUBLIC AT THE
SAME TIME.

THE NIO DRAFT REPLY IS: QUOTE THE POSITION OF THE BRITISH
GOVERNMENT ON THE HUNGER STRIKE IS CLEAR AND ON THE RECORD. A
SOLUTION TO THE STRIKE HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN THE HANDS OF THE STRIKERS.
AGAINST THAT BACK-GROUND I CAN SEE NO PURPOSE IN THE MEETING
PROPOSED UNQUOTE. ARE YOU CONTENT WITH THIS VERY SHORT REPLY,
OR DO YOU WANT TO ADD ANYTHING TO IT?

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN ULSTER AND A
REPORT ON DOLOURS PRICE ARE IN MIFT. THEY DO NOT AFFECT THE
TERMS AND TIMING OF THE REPLY TO THE THREE TDS. THE NIO AND
FCO ARE WHOLLY CONVINCED THAT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO AGREE TO SEE
THEM.

MESSAGE ENDS.

CARRINGTON

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*Those who are
on ~~the~~ strike.*

NNNN

*If you wish to see an end to the strike
you should ~~the~~ ~~the~~
Those who
~~the~~ wish to see an end to the strike
concentrate on persuading
the hunger
strikers ~~to~~ to change their minds about from
their present course.*

File No.
Department 10 DOWNING STREET
Drafted by (Block Capitals) N J SANDERS
Tel. Extn. 01-930-4433

OUTWARD
TELEGRAM

Security Classification
CONFIDENTIAL
Precedence
FLASH
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FOR
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Despatched

(Date)
(Time) Z

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PREAMBLE

(Time of Origin) Z(G.M.T.) (Restrictive Prefix)
(Security Class.) CONFIDENTIAL (Caveat/Privacy Marking)
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Distribution:-

[TEXT]

Following for Alexander, Prime Minister's party, on arrival from Sanders, 10 Downing Street.

Northern Ireland: Request by the three TDs

We have the text of the Prime Minister's remarks at her Press Conference in Riyadh. The Press Office are drawing on them in response to queries.

We need to send a formal reply from the Prime Minister to the three TDs. The NIO suggest that this should be done through our Ambassador in Dublin, with the text being made public at the same time.

The NIO draft reply is: "The position of the British Government on the hunger strike is clear and on the record. A solution to the strike has always been in

/ the

sent
22/4.

Copies to:-

those who are on strike. Those who wish to see an end to the hands of [the strikers] Against that background I can see no purpose in the meeting proposed." Are you content with this very short reply, or do you want to add anything to it?

The strike should continue or persuading the hunger strikers to desist from their present course.

An assessment of the security situation in Ulster and a report on Dolours Price are in MIFT. They do not affect the terms and timing of the reply to the three TDs. The NIO and FCO are wholly convinced that it would be wrong to agree to see them.

MESSAGE ENDS.

MS

Everyone must realize the situation is not what we hope it can be. It is a matter of time for our present course.

It is for them to desist from their present course; I hope they will do so.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

TO BE RELAYED TO PM'S PARTY, RIYADH ON 21 APRIL

NIO SUGGESTIONS FOR PRIME MINISTER'S HOLDING LINE ON NORTHERN IRELAND IF IT ARISES AT THE SAUDI ARABIA PRESS CONFERENCE

1. No compromise on political status;
2. It was right to let the three Irish MPs visit in the hope that they might convince Sands of the futility of his hunger strike;
3. Sorry that this did not succeed;
4. Government remains committed to the maintenance of law and order in the Province (relevant to Londonderry as well);
5. There can only be hope for the community as a whole if both sides work together;
6. Restate the guarantee but link it tightly with resolve to continue relationship with Dublin.

(This is also likely to be passed to Bernard Ingham direct from the NIO).

Telephoned 6.50am. to Riyadh.

R.