

MR. ALEXANDER

Ireland Maze Prison

Clive rang today re the lead story in the British Press this morning concerning a report that 3 MPs from the Irish Republic are going to see hunger striker Bobby Sands. The request to see the 3 MPs came from Sands himself. It was referred by the Governor of the Maze to the Northern Ireland Office. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland consulted the Home Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary yesterday. They decided that there was just a chance the 3 MPs—who are Mr. Blaney (who was possibly involved in gun running some time ago), Miss de Valera, and Mr. O'Connell, might persuade Sands to come off his hunger strike. At the time it was thought the MPs themselves didn't know why Sands had asked to see them. There has of course been strong reaction from the Unionists. A telegram has been sent to the Prime Minister from Willie Ross, M.P., in Jim Molyneux's name, demanding that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's decision to let the 3 MPs see Sands should be reconsidered, and that Irish MPs should stop acting on behalf of HMG. The Unionist MPs have also said they want a meeting with the Prime Minister as soon as she gets back. The NIO have issued a statement to reassure the Unionists that there has been no change in Government policy towards political prisoners, and that they had taken this opportunity of allowing the 3 MPs to see Sands, who is deteriorating fast, in order to ^{try to} save his life. Jim Molyneux is seeing David Mitchell, who is the duty NIO Minister, this morning. All steps have been taken to reassure the Unionists. The visit by the 3 MPs therefore is still to go ahead, soon because of Sands' condition.

S.J. Pike

18 April 1981

Registry No.
DEPARTMENT

* Date and time (G.M.T.) telegram should
reach addressee(s).....

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Top Secret
Secret
Confidential
Restricted
Unclassified

PRIORITY MARKINGS

Flash }
Immedlate }
Priority }
Routine }

(Date)

Despatched

PRIVACY MARKING

In Confidence

[Security classification
—if any]

En Clair.
Code
Cypher

[Privacy marking
—if any]

[Codeword—if any]

Draft Telegram to:—

Addressed to

No.

telegram No.....(date)

(Date)

And to

And to:—

repeated for information to

Saving to.....

Repeat to:—

FOR ALEXANDER, PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY, FROM SANDERS
NO. 10 DOWNING STREET.

OFFICIAL UNIONIST PARTY REQUEST TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

Request urgent meeting and explanation of reasons
for authorising three extreme Republican T.D. to visit
Robert Sands in Her Majesty's prison, Maze. Essential
that immediate public assurances be given that:-

Saving to:—

1. The decision will be reconsidered;
2. The T.D. stop acting on behalf of Her Majesty's Government;
3. No change in Her Majesty's Government's stated position of present regime;
4. Request meeting with yourself (i.e. Prime Minister) earliest possible moment after your return to the UK.

Distribution:—

This request is from Mr. Molyneaux, as the Party
Whip, and Mr. William Ross, M.P.

Copies to:—

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Not sent.
under CAW
advise
R. N. 10 deady