NORWEERN IRELAND: ADVANCE COPIES

18 TIMPHEDIATE

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- SIR R ARMSTRONG

DIO

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

RISTERE

00 NIO (BELFAST)

GRPS 300

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

FM DUBLIN 29:1345Z APRIL 1981

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELECRAM NUMBER 120 OF SO APRIL

TELEGRAM NUMBER 132 OF 29 APRIL 1981
AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)

IMMEDIATE

HUNGER STRIKE

- 1. YOU MAY FIND IT USEFUL TO HAVE MY ASSESSMENT OF THE LIKELY IMPACT IN DUBLIN OF SANDS' DEATH.
- PEOPLES MOOD WOULD CHANGE DRAMATICALLY IF THERE WERE TO BE A DEATH.

 I DO NOT THINK THAT THAT IS LIKELY TO BE TRUE THIS TIME ROUND

 BECAUSE PUBLIC INDIFFERENCE IS MUCH MORE MARKED NOW. (BUT I WOULD

 BE LESS CERTAIN OF CONTINUING APATHY IF FRANCIS HUGHES ALSO DIED.

 SOME PARALLEL MIGHT BE DRAWN WITH THE WAY IN WHICH THE EXECUTION OF

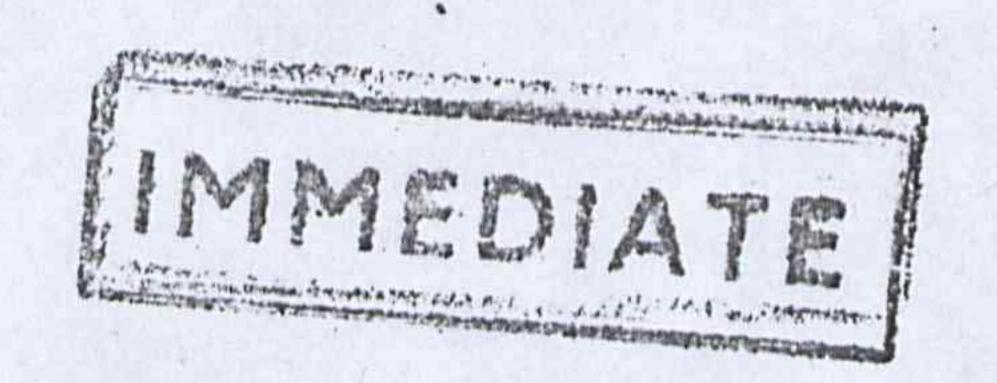
 THE 1916 LEADERS OVER A PERIOD AROUSED PUBLIC OPINION.)
- 3. WHILE I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT SANDS' DEATH WILL HAVE MUCH IMPACT ON ANGLO-1818H RELATIONS, IF REACTIONS IN THE NORTH TO ANY DEATH

ON ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS, IF REACTIONS IN THE NORTH TO ANY DEATH ARE VIOLENT AND SUSTAINED THERE WILL BE AN INEVITABLE KNOCK-ON EFFECT DOWN HERE. THE TAOISEACH TOLD ME LAST TIME I SAW HIM THAT HE FEARED A PROTESTANT PARAMILITARY CAMPAIGN IN THE SOUTH. ALSO HE WOULD FEEL BOUND TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO US IF THE MINORITY COMMUNITY IN THE NORTH WERE TO BE ATTACKED BY THE PROTESTANTS.

4. SHORT OF SERIOUS PROBLEMS ON THESE LINES, MR HAUGHEY HAS
LITTLE OPTION BUT TO CONTINUE WITH THE GENERAL LINE HE HAD BEEN
PURSUING UP TILL NOW. SOME OF HIS CRITICS MIGHT POINT OUT THAT HIS
MUCH VAUNTED 'UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP' WITH THE PRIME MINISTER HAS
NOT BEEN ABLE TO SAVE SANDS. AND OF COURSE WHAT MUST BOTHER
HIM IS THAT THE HUNGER STRIKERS HAVE INTERFERED WITH HIS ELECTION
PLANS. AS REGARDS THE JOINT STUDIES, I AM SURE HE WOULD WANT THEM
TO CONTINUE, AS MR O'ROURKE MADE CLEAR WHEN I CALLED ON HIM ON
MONDAY FOR A GENERAL CHAT.

FIGG

MNNN



SENT AT 29:1414Z CB RECD AT 29:1414Z APH