

NORTHERN IRELAND: ADVANCE COPIES

18

IMMEDIATE

PS
PS/LPS
PS/PUS
MR BULLARD
MR FERGUSSON
HD/RID
HD/PUSD (2)
HD/EPD
HD/NEWS DEPT

N IRELAND OFFICE -

PS TO SEC OF STATE
RM 66 A/2 GGS

N IRELAND OFFICE

[4 copies]

SIR K STOWE
MR MORIARTY
MR MARSHALL
MR BUXTON

CABINET OFFICE

SIR R ARMSTRONG
DIO

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

~~RESIDENT CLERK~~

OO 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

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.
2. DURING THE LAST HUNGER STRIKE WE WERE REPEATEDLY TOLD THAT 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-IRISH RELATIONS, IF REACTIONS IN THE NORTH TO ANY DEATH

3. WHILE I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT SANDS' DEATH WILL HAVE MUCH IMPACT 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

NNNN

IMMEDIATE

SENT AT 29:1414Z CB

RECD AT 29:1414Z APH