

GROUPS 220

**RESTRICTED**

RESTRICTED

FROM DUBLIN 161115Z JULY 11981.

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 246 OF 16 JULY

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O BELFAST

HUNGER STRIKE: MEDIA REACTIONS.

1. TODAY'S DUBLIN PAPERS GIVE A GUARDED WELCOME TO H M G'S DECISION TO ALLOW THE I C R C TO VISIT NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONS. THE IRISH TIMES REPORTS THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT "IS NOT HUGELY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT AN EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE H BLOCKS CRISIS" AS A RESULT OF THE INITIATIVE, AND AN EDITORIAL URGES THAT "THE OPTIMISM RAISED BY THE INTERVENTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS IN THE LONG KESH CRISIS MUST BE OF A GUARDED AND LIMITED KIND." HOWEVER, THE EDITORIAL GOES ON TO SAY THAT "IT IS NEVER TOO SOON TO HOPE," AND SPEAKS APPROVINGLY OF THE DECISION TO SEND IN AN OFFICIAL OF THE N I O TO READ MR ATKINS' STATEMENT TO THE PRISONERS. COMMENT IN THE (FINE GAEL) IRISH INDEPENDENT CENTRES ON THE NEW INITIATIVE AS BEING A RESPONSE TO THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPTS TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. THE EDITORIAL IN THE IRISH PRESS IS GRUDGING AND SUSPICIOUS OF THE MOVE, BUT CONCLUDES "IF THE NEWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COMMITTEE'S INTERVENTION MEANS THAT MRS THATCHER AND HER ADVISERS ARE AWAKENING FROM THE DELUDED VISION THAT MISLED THEM FOR SO LONG OVER THIS ISSUE, THEN IT IS TO BE GREATLY WELCOMED."

2. A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT LATE LAST NIGHT: "IN VIEW OF ALL THAT IS AT STAKE AT THIS MOMENT, THE GOVERNMENT FEELS THAT IT SHOULD REFRAIN FROM ANY COMMENT ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT OF WHICH IT WAS INFORMED EARLIER THIS EVENING BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT."

FIGG.

**NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED**

RID  
NAD  
INFORMATION DEPT  
WED  
MAED  
NEWS DEPT  
SECURITY DEPT  
PUSD  
PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/MR HURD

PS/MR RIDLEY  
PS/PUS  
SIR A ACLAND  
CHIEF CLERK  
MR ADAMS  
MR BULLARD  
LORD N G LENNOX  
MR BRAITHEWAITE

**ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION  
NORTHERN IRELAND**

**RESTRICTED**



GROUPS 275

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM DUBLIN 161250Z JULY 1981.

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 247 OF 16 JULY

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O BELFAST

HUNGER STRIKE: MY TELNO 245

1. PROFESSOR DOOGE ASKED ME TO CALL AT 1230 PM TODAY. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MR O'ROURKE. HE SAID THAT HE WANTED TO MAKE CLEAR WHAT THE TAOISEACH SAID AT OUR MEETING YESTERDAY EVENING. THIS WAS THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE PRESENT BRITISH INITIATIVE WILL DEPEND ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CLARIFICATION OFFERED BY THE OFFICIAL VISITING THE PRISON OF THE MOVEMENT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO MAKE AFTER THE STRIKE ENDS WOULD GO TO MEET THE POSITION SET OUT BY THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE. HE REALISED THAT OF COURSE THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF ALL THIS BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN THE OFFICIAL VISITED THE MAZE YESTERDAY. BUT THEY VERY MUCH HOPED ANOTHER VISIT COULD BE PAID VERY SOON. THEY WERE NATURALLY DISAPPOINTED AS NO DOUBT WE WERE THAT THE HUNGER STRIKERS HAD NOT TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE 8 JULY STATEMENT YESTERDAY. THIS MADE A FURTHER VISIT NECESSARY AND URGENT ESPECIALLY AS THEY THOUGHT DOHERTY MIGHT NOT LIVE THROUGH TONIGHT.

2. I SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF A FURTHER VISIT TO THE HUNGER STRIKERS WOULD PROBABLY DEPEND ON HOW A REQUEST WAS MADE. I SAID THAT I DID NOT THINK THERE WAS THE SLIGHTEST POSSIBILITY OF A FURTHER VISIT HAPPENING BEFORE THE RED CROSS VISITED THE PRISON AND WE WOULD NOT WISH TO GET THE TWO EXERCISES MIXED UP. ON BEING SPECIFICALLY ASKED WHETHER A FURTHER OFFICIAL VISIT MIGHT BE MADE IF THE STRIKERS WISHED TO ASK QUESTIONS THEY FAILED TO PUT LAST NIGHT, I SAID THAT I REALLY DID NOT KNOW. BUT IF THE REQUEST FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATION WERE CLEARLY GENUINE, I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE FAVOURABLY RECEIVED.

3. FINNALLY, PROFESSOR DOOGE ASKED THAT WE PUT OUR STATEMENT OF 8 JULY AND THE I C J P PROPOSALS TOGETHER AND SEE HOW A SOLUTION MIGHT LOOK ON THIS BASIS.

FIGG

NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION  
NORTHERN IRELAND

RID  
NAD  
INFORMATION DEPT  
WED  
MAED  
NEWS DEPT  
SECURITY DEPT  
FUSD  
PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/MR HURD

PS/MR RIDLEY  
PS/PUS  
SIR A ACLAND  
CHIEF CLERK  
MR ADAMS  
MR BULLARD  
MR FERGUSSON  
LORD N G LENNOX  
MR BRAITHEWAITE

CONFIDENTIAL



GRS 700

UNCLASSIFIED

FM DUBLIN 151345Z AUG 1981

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 297 OF 15 AUGUST

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O (BELFAST)

H-BLOCKS: R T E INTERVIEW WITH TAOISEACH

1. DR FITZGERALD GAVE HIS FIRST INTERVIEW AS TAOISEACH TO R T E TV ON THE EVENING OF 14 AUGUST. THE BULK OF THE INTERVIEW, WHICH WAS BROADCAST DURING THE "TODAY TONIGHT" PROGRAMME DEALT WITH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TO THE H-BLOCK HUNGER STRIKE.

2. THE INTERVIEWER BEGAN BY ASKING THE TAOISEACH WHETHER HIS GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS THE POSITION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON THE H-BLOCK DISPUTE. DR FITZGERALD REPLIED "AS FAR AS THE GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED, ANY QUESTION OF GRANTING POLITICAL STATUS IS SOMETHING WHICH WE HAVEN'T EVER PRESSED AND WOULDN'T EVER PRESS".

3. ASKED WHO WAS BEING INFLEXIBLE, THE PRISONERS OR H M G, THE TAOISEACH SAID: "INSOFAR AS A SOLUTION WAS ARRIVED AT BETWEEN MR ALISON AND THE I C J P, AND WE BELIEVE THAT IT EFFECTIVELY WAS, AND THAT IT WASN'T CARRIED THROUGH, AND THE VISIT TO THE PRISON THAT WAS PROMISED ON TUESDAY MORNING DIDN'T TAKE PLACE... THERE WAS A CHANGE OF POLICY OR INFLEXIBILITY THERE WHICH PREVENTED THE VISIT TAKING PLACE. BUT THE BASIC INFLEXIBILITY LIES ON THE SIDE OF THE PROVISIONALS THEMSELVES, AND THE ANSWER REALLY LIES THERE PRIMARILY."

4. DR FITZGERALD WENT ON TO SAY THAT ALTHOUGH THE INTERVENTION OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAD SO FAR BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL, "WHAT WE HAVE DONE IS TO RAISE THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS SUBJECT, ESPECIALLY POLITICAL OPINION". HE NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN REPORTS IN THE BRITISH NEWSPAPERS "OF DIVISIONS IN THE (BRITISH) GOVERNMENT AND THE FACT THE MANY GOVERNMENT MINISTERS WERE UNHAPPY AT THE SITUATION ARISING FROM THE FAILURE TO CARRY THROUGH WHAT HAD BEEN EFFECTIVELY AGREED."

5. ASKED WHETHER HE SHARED THE VIEW EXPRESSED BY THE TANAISTE ON 9 AUGUST THAT MRS THATCHER HAD BLOCKED THE I C J P PROPOSALS, THE TAOISEACH REPLIED: "WELL, WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSIDE WORKINGS OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND I DON'T THINK IT'S HELPFUL TO GET INVOLVED IN PERSONALITIES. MICHAEL O'LEARY

/ MADE



MADE THAT COMMENT WHEN HE HAD JUST HEARD OF THE DEATH OF TOM MCILWEE AND IT WAS A PERSONAL EXPRESSION OF A SENSE OF FRUSTRATION WHICH MANY OF US FEEL IN THIS SITUATION, BUT I DON'T THINK BRINGING PERSONALITIES INTO IT HELPS." IN RESPONSE TO A FURTHER QUESTION AS TO WHETHER HE AGREED WITH MR O'LEARY'S VIEW THAT IF SOMEONE ELSE HAD BEEN IN DOWNING STREET, THE PROBLEM WOULD HAVE BEEN RESOLVED, THE TAOISEACH ADDED, "I WOULDN'T PUT IT IN THOSE TERMS AND I DON'T THINK HE (MICHAEL O'LEARY) WOULD PUT IT IN THOSE TERMS IF THE QUESTION WERE PUT TO HIM AGAIN."

6. THE INTERVIEWER THEN ASKED DR FITZGERALD WHAT HE SAW AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION. THE TAOISEACH REPLIED: "I THINK IF THERE WERE A SHIFT OF OPINION WITHIN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OF WHICH THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE ... I THINK THERE IS A POSSIBILITY, IT MAY NOT COME FOR SOME TIME, FURTHER LIVES MAY BE LOST... BUT IT MAY BE THAT AFTER THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS REPORT HAS BEEN PRODUCED THAT THERE COULD BE SOME MOVEMENT THEN THAT COULD LEAD TO A SOLUTION ESPECIALLY IF THERE IS A RE-THINKING BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT -AND INDEED, IF ON THE PROVISIONALS SIDE THE RE-THINKING WHICH WAS EVIDENT ON THE PRISONERS' SIDE IN EARLY JULY IS REVIVED..."

7. THE INTERVIEWER ASKED DR FITZGERALD WHETHER THERE WOULD BE AN INCREASE IN PRESSURE ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT BY HIS ADMINISTRATION AS FORECAST BY MR O'LEARY. THE TAOISEACH SAID "WELL IT'S OUR JOB TO KEEP OTHER GOVERNMENTS INFORMED OF THE POSITION AS WE SEE IT ... THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE BEEN SUSTAINED IN TAKING UP A POSITION OF SOME INFLEXIBILITY BY A BELIEF THAT IT WAS SUPPORTED BY ONE OR TWO OTHER HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WHO PERHAPS DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THAT THE WHOLE THING WAS A BIT MORE COMPLEX THAN HAD BEEN PUT TO THEM. OUR JOB IS TO ENSURE THAT THE COMPLEXITIES ARE UNDERSTOOD... BUT I DON'T WANT TO START A MAJOR PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BRITISH IN OTHER COUNTRIES. IT WOULD NOT HELP THE SITUATION: INDEED, IT COULD ONLY LEAD TO A HARDENING OF ATTITUDES."

8. BEFORE LAUNCHING INTO A DISCUSSION ON THE ECONOMY, DR FITZGERALD EXPOUNDED COALITION POLICY ON THE JOINT STUDIES IN STANDARD TERMS, SAYING THAT THE TALKS WITH H M G WOULD CONTINUE. HE ADDED THAT AS A RESULT OF THE NEXT MEETING WITH MRS THATCHER HE HOPED THAT A CLEAR STATEMENT OF WHAT THE INTER GOVERNMENTAL TALKS WERE ABOUT WOULD BE MADE, SO AS TO REDUCE FEARS IN THE NORTH.

FIGG  
NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION  
NORTHERN IRELAND

RID  
NAD  
INFORMATION DEPT  
WED  
MAD  
NEWS DEPT  
SECURITY DEPT  
PUSD  
PS  
PS/IPS  
PS/MR HURD

PS/MR RIDLEY  
PS/PUS  
SIR A ACLAND  
CHIEF CLERK  
MR ADAMS  
MR FERGUSSON  
LORD N G LENNOX  
MR BRAITHWAITE



GRS 270

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FM DUBLIN 151800Z JULY 1981

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 244 OF 15 JULY

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O (BELFAST)

YOUR TELNOS. 112 + 113 : H BLOCK

1. I SAW PROFESSOR DOOGE AT 6.30 PM ON 15 JULY FIRST AND HANDED OVER THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY.

2. THE TAOISEACH JOINED US SHORTLY AFTERWARDS. HE SAID THAT HE WAS GLAD TO HEAR OF OUR NEW INITIATIVE BUT THAT OBVIOUSLY HE WOULD HAVE TO SUSPEND JUDGEMENT ON ITS WORTH UNTIL HE SAW ITS RESULT. WHATEVER HAPPENED IT WAS CLEARLY WORTH DOING BUT IT WOULD BE MUCH MORE WORTHWHILE IF IT WERE CROWNED WITH SUCCESS.

3. BOTH HE AND PROFESSOR DOOGE REFERRED TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (E C H R) AND SAID THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE E C H R HAD BEEN ON STANDBY ALL DAY FOR CONTACTS. WAS THIS I C R C INITIATIVE A SUBSTITUTE FOR MOVEMENT THROUGH THE E C H R? I SAID THAT IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE E C H R CASE COULD NOT BE PURSUED WITHIN THE NECESSARY TIMESCALE. DR FITZGERALD REITERATED THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO LEAVE THE E C H R WITH THE FEELING THAT THEY WERE BEING NEGLECTED.

4. THE TAOISEACH ALSO SAID THAT WHEN HE HAD MET THE FAMILIES OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS, HE HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY THEIR APPARENTLY SINCERE WISH TO URGE THE HUNGER STRIKERS TO CEASE THEIR FAST ON THE BASIS OF THE I C J P PROPOSALS EVEN THOUGH AT THAT TIME THE FAMILIES HAD NOT KNOWN WHAT THOSE PROPOSALS WERE. HE THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO GIVE THE FAMILIES FACILITIES FOR VISITS AGAIN THIS TIME. THE TAOISEACH ASKED TO BE KEPT CLOSELY INFORMED OF ANY FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS, PARTICULARLY ON THE RESULTS OF THE OFFICIALS VISIT TO THE MAZE.

FIGG  
LIMITED  
RID  
PS  
PS/HP  
PS/PUS  
MR BULLARD  
MR FERUSON

COPIES TO:  
~~PS/No 10 DOWNING STREET.~~  
PS/ N. I. O. (LONDON)

CONFIDENTIAL