

Subject

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From the Private Secretary

16 March, 1984.

Northern Ireland

Your Secretary of State called on the Prime Minister today to discuss a number of matters.

He said that the Governor of the Maze Prison had told him recently of his fears that there was a certain amount of collusion between the prison officers and prisoners in the Maze with the result that control of the prisoners was probably not effective. Mr. Prior had commented that this was the first report he had received of such collusion, and he took a very serious view of it. Action must be taken to ensure that control was effective. The Governor had replied that for that purpose more prison officers would be needed. But prison officers were now frightened of being attacked both in the prison and outside it. There was evidence that prisoners were supplying outside contacts with the names and addresses of prison officers.

Mr. Prior said that he had asked Mr. Andrew to investigate this situation and report back within 2 weeks.

The Governor of Armagh Prison had told your Secretary of State that he was now not able to visit his home for more than a few hours in any given week because he was such an obvious target for terrorist attacks.

The general security situation in Northern Ireland was going through a bad phase. There had been 17 murders this year.

There was also a possibility of another hunger strike timed to coincide with the visit of President Reagan to London and the European Elections. The present plan was for committal proceedings for the 3 members of INLA concerned to be held around Easter. Your Secretary of State was trying to ensure that the trial was brought forward to July.

John Lyon, Esq.,
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