

PRIME MINISTER FROM TIM FLESHER

BELFAST

THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE INCIDENTS IN BELFAST HAS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND HAS BEEN FUELLED BY MR PRIOR'S DOORSTEP INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE SAID THAT THE DECISION TO EXCLUDE GALVIN LOOKED LIKE A "BAD MISTAKE". HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN MISTAKES FOR WHICH HE TOOK FULL RESPONSIBILITY. THIS ASPECT OF HIS REMARKS HAS BEEN SEIZED ON BY THE MEDIA, MR

PRIOR HAS ALSO SPOKEN TO MR

BARRY WHO IS PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED WITH THE MILEAGE WHICH SINN FEIN HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAKE OUT OF THE INCIDENT. HE CONTINUED TO PRESS MR PRIOR FOR A PUBLIC INQUIRY. THIS CALL HAS NOW BEEN TAKEN UP BY MR KINNOCK WHO HAS WRITTEN TO YOU DEMANDING SUCH AN INQUIRY, BOTH INTO THE EXCLUSION OF GALVIN AND INTO THE RUC TACTICS. I HAVE ASKED NIO TO PRODUCE A DRAFT REPLY WHICH CAN BE TELEXED TO YOU. BUT WE SHALL NEED TO CONSIDER WHETHER SUCH A REPLY NEEDS TO GO QUICKLY, IE IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS, OR WHETHER BY DOING SO WE WOULD SIMPLY FUEL INTEREST. IT MAY BE BETTER TO LEAVE A REPLY FOR A WEEK OR SO.

THE ISSUES WHICH THE MEDIA HAVE IDENTIFIED ARE:

1. WAS THE EXCLUSION ORDER A MISTAKE?

MR. PRIOR SEEMS TO HAVE ADMITTED THIS (ALTHOUGH I AM NOT SURE WHY).

2. WHY DID THE RUC SEEMINGLY ABANDON THEIR NORMALLY RESTRAINED TACTICS AND WILL THERE BE A PUBLIC INQUIRY?

SIR JOHN HERMANN HAS ALREADY SAID THAT THERE WILL BE AN INTERNAL INQUIRY INTO THIS AND MR PRIOR FEELS THAT THIS HAS PRE EMPTED ANY MOVE SUCH AS DRAFTING IN A CHIEF CONSTABLE FROM THE MAINLAND. EQUALLY HOWEVER HE HAS SAID IN HIS INTERVIEW TODAY THAT HE "DID NOT RULE OUT A PUBLIC INQUIRY". WE SHALL HAVE TO SEE WHAT LINE NIO PROPOSE.

END OF MESSAGE
14 AUGUST 1984