

UNCLASSIFIED

FM DUBLIN 051055Z OCT 1981

PS TO PM. NO 10 DOWNING STREET.

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 346 OF 05 OCTOBER

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O (BELFAST)

F C O PLEASE PASS SAVING TO WASHINGTON AND B I S NEW YORK

MY TELNO 345: END OF HUNGER STRIKE: IRISH MEDIA REACTIONS

1. THE END OF THE HUNGER STRIKE AND THE PROSPECTS FOR PRISON REFORMS ARE FRONT NEWS IN TODAY'S DUBLIN DAILIES, WHICH ALSO CONTAIN EDITORIAL COMMENT. THE GENERAL THEME OF THE REPORTING IS ONE OF RELIEF THAT AN UNHAPPY EPISODE HAS ENDED, AND HOPE THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL NOW INTRODUCE REFORMS THAT WILL RESOLVE THE DISPUTE ONCE AND FOR ALL.
2. A FRONT PAGE REPORT IN THE IRISH TIMES CONCENTRATES ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT LORD GOWRIE WILL SHORTLY MEET THE PROTESTING PRISONERS, INCLUDING BRENDAN MCFARLANE, IN ORDER TO DISCUSS PRISON REFORMS. THE REPORT STRESSES THAT ANY SUCH MEETING WOULD BE REGARDED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS BEING WITH "INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS" RATHER THAN "REPRESENTATIVES", BUT SUGGESTS THAT LORD GOWRIE'S WILLINGNESS TO MEET MCFARLANE REPRESENTED "A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT" IN THE HANDLING OF THE PRISON CRISIS. INSIDE THE NEWSPAPER, TWO WHOLE PAGES ARE DEVOTED TO A CHRONOLOGY OF THE H-BLOCK PROTEST, TO THE FULL TEXT OF THE PRISONERS' WEEKEND STATEMENT, AND TO THE REACTIONS OF POLITICIANS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND H-BLOCK ACTIVISTS. GERRY ADAMS IS QUOTED AS HAVING TOLD THE IRISH TIMES: "A VERY REASONABLE AND COMMONSENSE MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE CONDITIONS OUTLINED BY THE PRISONERS ON JULY 4TH AND AUGUST 6TH ... WOULD PERMANENTLY END THE PRISON PROTEST ... " AN EDITORIAL COMMENTS APPROVINGLY ON THE FACT THAT MR PRIOR AND LORD GOWRIE RETURNED TO THEIR DESKS OVER THE WEEKEND AND URGES, "WHATEVER REMEDIAL PROPOSALS THEY HAVE IN MIND SHOULD BE QUICKLY PUT INTO ACTION."
3. UNDER THE HEADING "BLUEPRINT FOR PEACE IN MAZE," THE IRISH INDEPENDENT SUGGESTS THAT MR PRIOR WILL OUTLINE "RADICAL PRISON REFORM" LATER THIS WEEK WHICH WILL "ALMOST SATISFY THE FIVE DEMANDS." THE REPORT SUGGESTS THAT SOME OF THE NEW CONCESSIONS WOULD BE A "WINK AND NOD KIND OF AGREEMENT WHERE THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES ... WILL BEND THE RULES TO ENSURE THE REMOVAL OF ALL POTENTIAL CAUSES OF FRICTION WITHIN THE PRISON SYSTEM." IT GOES ON TO IMPLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE WILLING TO IMPLEMENT CHANGES WITH REGARD TO CLOTHING, SEGREGATION, FREE ASSOCIATION, PRISON

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WORK, LETTERS AND PARCELS, AND THAT MR PRIOR WOULD GO AT LEAST SOME OF THE WAY TO MEETING THE DEMAND FOR THE LOSS OF FULL REMISSION. AN EDITORIAL SHARPLY ATTACKS THE PROVISIONAL I R A FOR THEIR DOUBLE STANDARDS, AND URGES THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE REFORMS NOW THAT THE STRIKE IS OVER.

4. AN ARTICLE ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE IRISH PRESS REPORTS THAT THERE IS A GENERAL EXPECTATION IN BELFAST THAT THE PROPOSED PRISON REFORMS "WOULD BE IN ACCORD WITH THE SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS WHICH THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE PRODUCED," I E OWN CLOTHES , ASSOCIATION WITHIN THE WINGS, A MORE LIBERAL DEFINITION OF PRISON WORK AND ONE FIFTH OF LOST REMISSION TO BE RESTORED. AN EDITORIAL SUGGESTS THAT THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE SECRETARY OF STATE RETURNED TO HIS DESK MAY INDICATE THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS LEARNT FROM THE MISTAKES MADE WHEN THE PREVIOUS HUNGER STRIKE ENDED, AND THAT REFORMS WILL FOLLOW IN MATTER OF DAYS.

TATHAM

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