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 FM THE HAGUE
 TO DESKBY 161300Z FCO
 TELNO 27
 OF 161715Z JANUARY 86
 INFO IMMEDIATE DUBLIN

OUR TELNO 020 AND TELECON HALL/HAND (NEWS DEPARTMENT):
 ARREST OF SUSPECTED IRA TERRORISTS IN AMSTERDAM

1. STORY BROKE IN PRESS HERE AT 1445Z FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY POLICE SPOKESMAN IN AMSTERDAM, WHO GAVE DETAILS OF OPERATION LEADING TO THE ARREST OF THE THREE MEN AT 5:00AM THIS MORNING. HE ALSO GAVE DETAILS OF ARMS SEIZED. WE ARE STILL TRYING TO GET AN AUTHORITATIVE ACCOUNT OF STATEMENT BY THE DUTCH POLICE: BUT APPARENTLY SPOKESMAN ALSO STATED THAT POLICE HAD ACTED ON A TIP-OFF FROM THE BVD (DUTCH SECURITY SERVICE) AND THAT AN EXTRADITION REQUEST HAD BEEN RECEIVED YESTERDAY (15 JANUARY) FROM 'NORTHERN IRELAND' IN RESPECT OF TWO OF THE MEN WHO HAD, ACCORDING TO THE SPOKESMAN, ESCAPED FROM THE MAZE IN THE MASS BREAKOUT IN 1983. SPOKESMAN ALSO GAVE THE INITIALS OF THE TWO CONCERNED. ALL ABOVE IS BASED ON A VERBAL ACCOUNT OF POLICE STATEMENT GIVEN TO US BY LOCAL WRITERS CORRESPONDENT.

2. PRESS (REUTERS, BBC, DAILY TELEGRAPH AND AFP) HAVE NATURALLY BEEN TRYING TO ESTABLISH THE NAMES AND IDENTITIES OF THE THREE MEN, ESPECIALLY THE TWO FOR WHOM EXTRADITION HAS BEEN REQUESTED. INFORMATION OFFICER HAS STUCK TO THE LINE THAT WE CAN MAKE NO COMMENT ON IDENTITIES UNTIL THESE HAVE BEEN RELEASED BY THE DUTCH, WHICH IS UNLIKELY TO HAPPEN UNTIL THE MEN ARE CHARGED. WE UNDERSTAND THE MEN WILL APPEAR BEFORE THE AMSTERDAM PUBLIC PROSECUTOR TOMORROW MORNING (FRIDAY 17 JANUARY). IO ALSO STATED THAT HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF AN 'EXTRADITION REQUEST FROM NORTHERN IRELAND'.

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ARREST OF SUSPECTED IRA TERRORISTS IN AMSTERDAM

1. IN CONNECTION WITH THE ARREST OF 3 SUSPECTED IRA TERRORISTS IN AMSTERDAM IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THIS MORNING (DETAILS KNOWN TO REPUBLIC OF IRELAND DEPARTMENT AND PUSD) WE SHALL BE TAKING THE FOLLOWING DEFENSIVE LINE WITH PRESS ENQUIRIES:

(A) WE HAVE HEARD OF THE ARRESTS FROM THE DUTCH POLICE. AS THE CASES ARE BEING DEALT WITH BY DUTCH AUTHORITIES AND WILL PRESUMABLY COME BEFORE DUTCH COURTS, IT WOULD BE IMPROPER FOR ME TO COMMENT AT THIS STAGE. THE BRITISH CONSUL-GENERAL IN AMSTERDAM HAS BEEN INFORMED BECAUSE THE ARRESTED MEN MAY HAVE BRITISH PASSPORTS.

IF ASKED HOW THE DUTCH POLICE CAME TO KNOW ABOUT THE ARRESTED MEN:

(B) THERE ARE, OF COURSE, CLOSE LINKS BETWEEN POLICE FORCES IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF ANTI-TERRORISM.

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