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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



10
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
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Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

21 July 1981

Peer Michael

Prime Minister

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THE MAZE HUNGER STRIKE

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has asked me to send you this summary of events since the Prime Minister discussed the situation about the Maze hunger strike with him on the evening of 18 July.

2. The Secretary of State decided that evening that, since the channel had already been warned that a substantive message was on the way, it would be right to send down what was in essence the message sent on 7 July. The form in which the message finally went is explained in our tels nos MISC 001/003 of 19 July to Ottawa. The fuller words about clothes - the need for new prison rules, the specific statement that paramilitary type clothes would not be allowed - were inserted mainly with the Protestant community in mind. We know what "subject to the Governor's approval" means, but suspicious Loyalists would say that the Governor is merely an NIO official (which is true) and will do whatever he is told. So the detail would have been an important safeguard.

3. Although the channel was very free with his own advice, he had nothing acceptable to say about the attitude of the Provisionals and at about 19.00 hours on 20 July the Secretary of State gave instructions that the channel should be closed. The use of the channel has ensured that the Provisionals have been left in no doubt that our public statements are our true position, and not a negotiating gambit. This is likely to be a source of strength to us in coming weeks. The channel has also been a source of additional intelligence about the Provisionals' attitude which we could not get in any other way.

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4. While the channel was open there were other important developments. A Press statement from Republican sources which was said to be issued "from the PRO-H Blocks" on 18 July asked the International Committee of the Red Cross to withdraw and called on Britain "to initiate direct negotiations with the prisoners on achieving a settlement of our demands". The Secretary of State decided to issue a firm re-statement of our basic position without making a specific rejoinder to this demand (copy attached). During the evening of 19 July McFarlane, the Provisionals' "O/C", asked to see the Governor. He said that unless a Government official was prepared to negotiate there was no point in sending anyone in to clarify. If the official came in, the hunger strikers would only meet him as a group and with McFarlane present. This statement by McFarlane was reported to Dublin with instructions that it should be conveyed to the Taoiseach. At midnight on 19 July, an official from the Taoiseach's office conveyed, on instructions, a friendly if unrealistic message from Dr Fitzgerald saying that he appreciated the problems we were having with McFarlane but wondered whether we could persuade the prisoners to overrule him. He wished NIO the best of luck.

5. On Monday evening, 20 July, the parish priest of Lynch, one of the hunger strikers, told us that Lynch and Doherty's relatives wished an official to clarify the Government's position to Lynch and Doherty respectively on the same basis as before - ie without McFarlane present. Two officials went to the prison early this morning and initially met the relatives at their request. The senior officials then spoke individually to the five hunger strikers who are in the hospital. Each made it clear that they did not want to seek clarification unless McFarlane were present. (Lynch had indicated to the prison staff before the officials arrived that he would not insist on this. He appears to have been persuaded by one of his brothers to change his mind.) The official told the relatives and the hunger strikers that he was disappointed at their response and said he was willing to return at any time. The Dublin Embassy have been told about this visit.

6. There has been a marked slowing down in the deterioration of the two hunger strikers now nearing death. Doherty is expected to last at least another 48 hours and Lynch a little longer. The doctors find this puzzling but previous cases have been similarly unpredictable and there is no medical evidence that the prisoners have been fed anything. Their deaths will give rise to renewed disturbances on the streets, especially in the case of Doherty, who comes from West Belfast as well as being a member of the Dail. But the scale of such disturbances has declined since Sands' death in May and the security forces remain confident that they can contain them. We must not rule out the possibility, however, that PIRA will try to mount a "spectacular" incident associated with the deaths. HM Ambassador in Dublin has repeatedly warned us that the effect of Doherty's death on opinion in the Republic is likely to be severe.

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7. In summary therefore we have satisfied ourselves through the channel that the Provisionals are not prepared to accept our position about prison conditions; we have a clear acknowledgement from McFarlane (which we are already making use of) that the hunger strikers have no power to give up; and we have sent an official in to clarify our position to the hunger strikers and they have said that they do not wish to listen.

8. The Secretary of State considers that we have a firm position on which to rest and he is giving urgent consideration to the ways in which we can get the maximum benefit from it.

9. I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Roderic Lyne and Adam Wood (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours,
S. W. Smith*

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SUBJECT

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the original has
been extracted
and retained under
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Handwritten note: *Handwritten note*

From the Principal Private Secretary

8 July 1981

Dear Stephen,

THE MAZE HUNGER STRIKE

The Prime Minister met your Secretary of State at 0015 this morning to discuss the latest developments in the efforts to bring the hunger strike in the Maze to an end. Philip Woodfield and * were also present.

Your Secretary of State said that the message which the Prime Minister had approved the previous evening had been communicated to the PIRA. Their response indicated that they did not regard it as satisfactory and that they wanted a good deal more. That appeared to mark the end of this development, and we had made this clear to the PIRA during the afternoon. This had produced a very rapid reaction which suggested that it was not the content of the message which they had objected to but only its tone. The question now for decision was whether we should respond on our side. He had concluded that we should communicate to the PIRA over night a draft statement enlarging upon the message of the previous evening but in no way whatever departing from its substance. If the PIRA accepted the draft statement and ordered the hunger strikers to end their protest, the statement would be issued immediately. If they did not, this statement would not be put out but instead an alternative statement reiterating the Government's position as he had set it out in his statement of 30 June and responding to the discussions with the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace would be issued. If there was any leak about the process of communication with the PIRA, his office would deny it.

* said that it was thought that the revised statement based on the previous night's message would be enough to get the PIRA to instruct the prisoners to call off the hunger strike. He then outlined the procedures that would be followed, if the PIRA said that they would call off the hunger strike.

The meeting then considered the revised draft statement which was to be communicated to the PIRA. A number of amendments

* ~ * Names deleted and
retained under S.3(4)

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were made, primarily with a view to removing any suggestion at all that the Government was in a negotiation. A copy of the agreed version of the statement is attached.

The Prime Minister, summing up the discussion, said that the statement should now be communicated to the PIRA as your Secretary of State proposed. If it did not produce a response leading to the end of the hunger strike, Mr Atkins should issue at once a statement reaffirming the Government's existing position as he had set it out on 30 June.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Michael Arthur (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), David Heyhoe (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

Alfred Whitmore.

Stephen Boys-Smith Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

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PRIME MINISTER:

Northern Ireland: the Hunger Strike

1. Following the sending of the message which you approved last night, we have received, as you will know, an unsatisfactory response. That particular channel of activity is therefore now no longer active. At the same time the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (ICJP) have decided, contrary to their earlier intention, not to issue a statement to the press about their talks with Michael Alison.

2. There are however two good reasons why we should issue an early statement. One is to correct a rich crop of rumours circulating in the press about possible deals. The other - and the more important - is to straighten out the prisoners themselves who may have been misled by the zeal of the ICJP for turning general statements into particular examples.

...

3. I therefore attach for your approval the draft of a statement which I would propose to issue this evening. It is in two sections, and my intention is that the second part in particular should be given by the Prison Governor to each of the protesting prisoners, including the hunger strikers in an attempt to ensure - yet again - that they are in no doubt about our position and about the regime which is available to them when they start to conform. In drafting this document I have had to pay close attention both to the views you yourself expressed last night and to the need to safeguard Michael Alison's position with the ICJP, with whom he has spent many hours in detailed discussion. The words are therefore carefully chosen. I should be glad to know if you would be content with this.

4. I am sending copies of this minute and enclosure to the Home Secretary, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

H.A.

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STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Irish Commission for Justice and Peace have held a series of discussions with Mr. Alison, Minister of State in the Northern Ireland Office, at their request in order to clarify the Government's position on the prison regime in an effort to bring about an end to the current hunger strike in the Maze Prison. They have also visited the prisoners on a number of occasions. The Government ^{has} ~~have~~ not been in negotiation through the intermediary of the Commission. It was and remains grateful for the strenuous efforts which the Commission have made to contribute to a resolution of the prison protest.

2. I issued a carefully considered statement on 30 June on Northern Ireland Prison Regimes and nothing which has happened since then has led me to think that anything in that document should be changed.

3. The statement of 30 June made it clear that we cannot agree either that a particular set of prisoners should be given preferential treatment (and I welcome the indication in the prisoners' statement of 4 July that this is not now one of their demands) or that the Prison Authorities can abdicate control over how the prisons are run and how life goes on in them.

4. The statement also made clear that the Government, as its actions in the past have shown, will continue to maintain

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and where possible improve the present enlightened and humane regime with flexibility in its administration.

5. In the last 12-18 months, partly but not solely in response to certain criticisms contained in the Partial Decision issued by the European Commission of Human Rights in June 1980, the British Government has made a series of modifications in the regimes applicable to conforming and/or protesting prisoners, the most notable of which was the abolition, announced in October 1980 and implemented early in 1981, of prison uniform and its replacement by an issue of civilian-type clothing in various designs. Other changes (most of which have been rejected by the protestors) include additional letters and visits, extra association time and compassionate home leave. These adjustments of themselves constitute clear evidence of HMG's readiness to act flexibly over the question of prison regimes.

6. Despite all the efforts which Government has made since October 1980 and despite the Commission's own efforts I am persuaded by the Commission that there is still doubt in the minds of prisoners about what in practice would happen if they gave up the hunger strike. Some may doubt the Government's intention to be flexible and humane in applying the existing regime. Some may delude themselves that the flexibility is infinitely extendable into a mirror of the regime for special category prisoners. Both are wrong. I have therefore set out in very simple terms what we can and cannot do below and

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this has been given to all prisoners today by the Prison Governor.

7. In doing this we are setting out to the prisoners what is already available to conforming prisoners. The regime is administered flexibly. There is scope for further development but not under duress. The protestors' action, far from bringing about changes, has in fact rendered movement impossible. The only key to advance is for them to end the strike.

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE PROTEST ENDS?

1. Protesting prisoners have been segregated from the rest. Other prisoners are not segregated by religious or political or any other affiliation. If there were no protest the only reason for segregating some prisoners from others would be the judgment of the prison authorities, not the prisoners, that this was the best way to avoid trouble between groups.

2. Prisoners who give up their protest would get the association non-protesting prisoners now get. That is to say three hours each evening, all their weekends plus periods for exercise, physical education, games and meals. There is little immediate scope for expansion. The suggestions of the Commission for Justice and Peace that adjacent wings should share association in recreation rooms and exercise areas depends on satisfactory arrangements being made for supervising and controlling movement and it would take time to arrange the necessary physical facilities for this.

3. During association prisoners would have the privilege of wearing their own clothes. At other times they would wear civilian-type clothing of a non-uniform kind. By comparison with most other western countries this is a liberal regime, but we would not rule out the possibility of further development.

4. All prisoners are in practice as well as in principle liable for domestic tasks inside and outside the wings, eg for orderly duties and in the laundries and kitchens. No one will be excluded as of right from the liability to work in prison workshops. We will add to the range of activities so far as and

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as quickly as we can. The Commission for Justice and Peace have given us examples of such activities. We shall look closely at these but at the end of the day it will be for the prison authorities to decide what jobs a prisoner does.

5. Any prisoner who abides by the rules is already allowed 8 letters, 4 visits and 4 parcels a month. Those giving up their protest would get this straight away. And it is more than they have been asking for.

6. 50% remission is awarded for good behaviour. It is forfeited by those who breach prison rules by protesting. In practice prisoners who have given up their protest have had up to 1/5th of lost remission restored.

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IN DECADEL SECRET AND PERSONAL FOR DCI AND HAG

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SOON

1. OVER THE WEEKEND 4 TO 6 JULY, THERE HAVE BEEN EIGHT TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN SOON AND P 31/B (810996) IN ADDITION TO THAT COVERED BY LONDON'S TELS TO DECADEL 226 AND 227 OF 4 JULY: THE FULL DETAIL OF THESE CALLS HAS BEEN PASSED THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND TO HAG, AND PARTS TO DCI, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CALL NUMBER EIGHT. THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTS A DETAILED ACCOUNT IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THESE EIGHT CALLS.

BEGINS

CALL NO 1 - 2200-2312, 4 JULY

2. SOON REPORTED THAT A GREAT DEAL OF CONFUSION HAD ARISEN IN PROVISIONAL CIRCLES FROM THE IMPRESSION GIVEN BY THE ICJP /THAT...

THAT THERE IS EVERY INDICATION OF MOVEMENT BY HMG. SINCE NO CONFIRMATION HAS BEEN ISSUED ON THE SOON CHANNEL, THE PROVISIONALS TEND NOT TO ACCEPT THIS.

3. SOON THEN DESCRIBED THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ISSUE OF THE PRISONERS' STATEMENT OF 4 JULY. HE SAID THAT THE STATEMENT HAD BEEN ISSUED INDEPENDENTLY BY THE PRISONERS IN THE MAZE AND THE TIMING CAME AS A SURPRISE TO SENIOR PROVISIONALS OUTSIDE. THE CONTENT OF THE STATEMENT REPRESENTED A LINE PREVIOUSLY AGREED BETWEEN THE PRISONERS AND THE PROVISIONALS.

4. UNFORTUNATELY, THE TIMING OF THE RELEASE OF THE STATEMENT HAD CAUGHT THE PROVISIONALS UNAWARE. THE SENIOR MEMBERS, AND SOON CLAIMED THERE WERE EIGHT, WERE WIDELY DISPERSED. ONLY ADAMS AND O'BRYEN WERE READILY AVAILABLE. THEY WERE REGROUPING AND SOON'S PROVISIONAL CONTACT HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO STAND BY.

5. SOON SAW TWO IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. FIRSTLY, IN THE PERIOD FROM SATURDAY AFTERNOON TO MONDAY MORNING, THE PROVISIONALS WERE OUT OF CONTACT WITH THE PRISONERS. NORMALLY THIS WOULD NOT MATTER, BUT IT BECOMES IMPORTANT WHEN RAPID ACTION IS REQUIRED. SECONDLY, IF THE PROVISIONALS MAKE CONTACT THROUGH THE SOON CHANNEL, IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL FOR A GENERALISED RESPONSE TO BE AVAILABLE.

6. SOON HAD RUNG PRIOR TO A REQUEST FROM THE PROVISIONALS TO DO SO IN ORDER TO PREPARE HMG FOR THIS SITUATION. FIRSTLY, HE ASKED WHETHER ANY WAY COULD BE FOUND OF GETTING COMMUNICATIONS IN AND OUT OF THE PRISON IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN SATURDAY /AFTERNOON ...

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AFTERNOON AND MONDAY MORNING. SECONDLY, HE STATED THAT A MEETING OF THE SENIOR PROVISIONALS HAD TAKEN PLACE ON 28 JUNE AT WHICH WHAT THEY CONSIDERED REALISTIC CONDITIONS FOR THE ENDING OF THE HUNGER STRIKE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED. SOON BELIEVED THAT THE THINKING OF THE PROVISIONAL LEADERSHIP WAS AS FOLLOWS.

7. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ENDING OF THE HUNGER STRIKE, CONCESSIONS WOULD BE REQUIRED ON OWN CLOTHES, PARCELS AND VISITS. THIS, HE SAID, WOULD PROVIDE THE PROVISIONALS WITH A FACE SAVING WAY OUT. THE REMAINING DEMANDS DEALING WITH WORK AND ASSOCIATION COULD BE SUBJECT TO A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS AFTER THE ENDING OF THE HUNGER STRIKE. HE STRESSED THAT THE PROVISIONALS' POSITION WAS, IN HIS OPINION, REPRESENTED BY THE PRISONERS' STATEMENT. THUS, IF THE ARRANGEMENTS DETAILED IN THIS STATEMENT WERE ACCEPTABLE TO HMG AND IMMEDIATE CONCESSIONS COULD BE MADE ON CLOTHING, PARCELS AND VISIT, HE WAS OPTIMISTIC.

8. SINCE THE STATEMENT HAD CAUGHT THE PROVISIONALS ON THE HOP, THEY WOULD BE SUSPICIOUS THAT THIS HAD BEEN ARRANGED IN SOME WAY OVER THE WEEKEND TO AGGRAVATE THE POSITION. HE SAID THAT THE PROVISIONALS WOULD RING AND ASK FOR CLARIFICATION AND THAT IF NO ANSWER WAS AVAILABLE THIS WOULD HEIGHTEN THEIR SUSPICIONS.

9. HE LEFT US WITH TWO QUESTIONS. WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR A VISIT TO BE ARRANGED TO THE PRISON BY THE PROVISIONALS OVER THE WEEKEND, AND WHY HAD THE SOON CHANNEL NOT BEEN ACTIVATED TO CLARIFY THE SITUATION?

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CALL NO 2 - 0230-2500, 5 JULY

10. SOON BEGAN BY RESTATING THE PROVISIONALS' DISORGANISED POSITION. HE POINTED OUT THAT TO TAKE A DECISION OF THIS MAGNITUDE REQUIRED THE PRESENCE OF ALL EIGHT MEMBERS. THEY WOULD BE UNWILLING TO TAKE ANY DECISION WITHOUT A FULL COMPLEMENT.

11. THE ISSUE OF CLOTHING WOULD BE THE ONE AREA WHERE TESTING OF HMG'S INTENTIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE. THE MAJORITY OF THE REMAINDER OF THE CONVERSATION WAS TAKEN UP WITH HIS VIEWS ON HOW THE MECHANISM FOR ISSUING OF CLOTHING SHOULD OCCUR. HE PRODUCED TWO OR THREE SCENARIOS OVER A PERIOD OF AN HOUR, NONE OF WHICH WERE COMPATIBLE WITH THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE HUNGER STRIKE MUST BE CALLED OFF BEFORE ANY ACTION COULD BE EXPECTED. WE REPEATEDLY STRESSED THIS POINT. AFTER A LONG AND GENERALLY UNREWARDING DISCUSSION OVER THE MINUTE DETAILS OF THE ISSUE OF CLOTHING, WE SUGGESTED THAT THE PROBABLE LINE WOULD BE THAT THE EIGHT HUNGER STRIKERS WOULD BE ISSUED WITH THEIR OWN CLOTHES IMMEDIATELY ON TERMINATING THEIR PROTEST. THE REMAINING PROTESTING PRISONERS WOULD RECEIVE THEIR CLOTHES AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE.

12. THIS LED SOON TO POINT OUT WHAT HE CONSIDERED TO BE A GENUINE MISUNDERSTANDING BY HMG. HE SAID THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO SEPARATE THE HUNGER STRIKERS FROM THE REMAINING PROTESTING PRISONERS. HE SAID THERE WAS AN AGREEMENT THAT THE HUNGER STRIKERS ARE STANDING AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TOTAL PRISONER STRENGTH AND THAT THEY SHOULD NOT RECEIVE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT. IF IT WAS ONLY PRACTICAL TO ISSUE CLOTHING TO A SMALL GROUP AT FIRST, THIS SHOULD NOT BE TOTALLY COMPRISED OF HUNGER STRIKERS.

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13. HE SAID THAT ONE OF THE MAJOR DIFFICULTIES OVER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT AT THE END OF THE LAST HUNGER STRIKE HAD BEEN THE ATTITUDE OF SOME OF THE PRISON OFFICERS. HE SAID THAT THE PROVISIONALS BELIEVED THAT HMG HAD BEEN SINCERE IN TRYING TO IMPLEMENT THEIR SIDE OF THE AGREEMENT. THE BREAKDOWN HAD OCCURRED BECAUSE SOME OF THE PRISONERS HAD BEEN HARASSED BY SOME OF THE PRISON OFFICERS. HE, THEREFORE, REQUESTED THAT IN HMG'S PROPOSALS SHOULD BE INCLUDED AN INSTRUCTION TO THE GOVERNOR OF THE PRISON TO ENCOURAGE FLEXIBILITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY AGREEMENT. IN RESPONSE TO HIS TWO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE FIRST PHONE CALL, WE SAID THAT HMG WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE TO A VISIT TO THE PRISON BUT THAT WE HOPED THAT THE PROVISIONALS WOULD PROPOSE A REPRESENTATIVE WHO WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION ABOUT COMMUNICATIONS ON THE SOON CHANNEL WE EXPLAINED THAT WE HAD ONLY EVER INITIATED CALLS IN RESPONSE TO QUERIES OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION.

CALL NO 3 - 1045-1125, 5 JULY

14. SOON RANG TO SAY THAT THE PROVISIONALS WERE RAPIDLY REGROUPING AND THAT HE EXPECTED THAT THEY WOULD MEET BETWEEN 1200 AND 1500 THAT AFTERNOON.

15. HE THEN RETURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF THE PRISON VISIT. HE SAID THAT THE NUMBER OF SENIOR PROVISIONALS WITH A FULL GRASP OF THE SITUATION INCLUDING KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOON CHANNEL AND THE STATUS TO ENABLE THEM TO ACT AUTHORITATIVELY WAS VERY LIMITED. HE SAID THAT IF THE KEY TO ACCEPTING ANY AGREEMENT WAS PERSUASION, EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE, THEN THAT IS NOT AVAILABLE OUTSIDE THE VERY UPPER ECHELONS OF THE PROVISIONAL

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MOVEMENT. IT IS NOT EVEN AVAILABLE AS OF RIGHT TO THE ENTIRE PSF LEADERSHIP. HE SAID THAT THIS POSES A PROBLEM. IN RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST FOR SUGGESTIONS OF PROVISIONALS WHO WOULD FIT THIS DESCRIPTION, SOON PRODUCED MORRISON, ADAMS AND MCGUINESS AS THE ONLY THREE CANDIDATES. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH HAG, WE SAID THAT WE WOULD ACCEPT MORRISON BUT WOULD ON NO ACCOUNT ACCEPT EITHER ADAMS OR MCGUINESS. SOON SAID THAT THIS WAS UNDERSTOOD BUT THAT A PROBLEM WITH THIS WAS THAT MORRISON WAS RUMOURED TO BE IN THE USA. THE PROVISIONALS WERE, HOWEVER, TAKING STEPS TO TRY AND FIND HIM.

16. SOON THEN PROCEEDED TO OFFER THE PROVISIONALS' VIEW OF THE ICJP. HE SAID THAT DETERMINATION STILL EXISTED NOT TO LET THE ICJP ACT AS MEDIATOR. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THERE WAS A BODY OF OPINION WITHIN THE PROVISIONAL LEADERSHIP, WHICH WAS UNAWARE OF THE SOON CHANNEL AND, THEREFORE, TOOK A DESTRUCTIVE VIEW TOWARDS ANY CURRENT PROPOSALS SINCE THEY BELIEVED THESE WOULD INVOLVE THE ICJP.

17. SOON'S PROVISIONAL CONTACT HAD LED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT THE PROVISIONALS WOULD COMPARE THE STATEMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE PRISONERS TO FIND COMMON GROUND. THERE WOULD THEN NEED TO BE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION GIVEN TO DETAIL, AND SOON SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT THROUGH HIS CHANNEL BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS. HE SAID THAT IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO CONSIDER WAYS ROUND THIS EITHER VIA SOME WRITTEN COMMUNICATION DELIVERED TO SOON OR VIA A MEETING.

18. SOON SAID THAT AT 0800 THAT MORNING HE WAS FACED WITH THE STATEMENT BY THE PROVISIONALS THAT HMG WAS INSINCERE. HE HAD /REPLIED ...

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REPLIED THAT UNLESS THAT BELIEF WAS TOTALLY DISPELLED, HE WAS GOING ON HOLIDAY. HE ADDED THAT IF HE HAD NOT MAINTAINED HIS INDEPENDENCE FROM THE PROVISIONALS, THIS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. THE STRENGTH OF HIS REPLY HAD, HE SAID, WON THE DAY.

19. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT THE NEXT CONTACT WOULD BE BETWEEN 1600 AND 1800 THAT DAY AT THE EARLIEST AND THIS WOULD BE FOR PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ONLY.

CALL NO 4 - 1400-1403, 5 JULY

20. SOON MADE A SHORT CALL TO SAY THAT MORRISON HAD BEEN LOCATED AND HAD AGREED TO VISIT THE PRISON, BUT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THIS SHOULD TAKE PLACE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. SOON ALSO SAID THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT MORRISON SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO SEE THE HUNGER STRIKERS, MACFARLANE AND ANY OTHER PRISONERS.

21. AFTER RAPID CONSULTATION WITH HAG, WE RANG BACK AT 1430 TO SAY THAT THIS WAS ACCEPTABLE PROVIDED THAT MORRISON UNDERSTOOD THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO SEE MACFARLANE AND THE HUNGER STRIKERS TOGETHER. THIS WAS AGREED.

22. SOON THEN INDICATED THAT MCGUINNESS HAD JUST ARRIVED. HE SAID THAT TIME WAS OF THE ESSENCE AND ASKED WHAT THE CURRENT HMG POSITION WAS. WE EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT, BEFORE DRAFTING ANY DOCUMENT FOR CONSIDERATION BY MINISTERS, THAT WE SHOULD POSSESS THE PROVISIONALS' VIEW. SOON THEN UNDERTOOK TO SEEK CLEAR VIEWS ON THEIR POSITION, WHICH WOULD BE RELAYED TO US LATER AFTER DISCUSSION IN THE LIGHT OF MORRISON'S VISIT.

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PAGE EIGHT S E C R E T ADDRESSEE ONLY

CALL NO 5 - 1500-1620, 5 JULY

23. IN THE MIDDLE OF A DISCUSSION WITH HAG, CONCERNING THE CLASH OF VISITS BY MORRISON AND THE ICJP TO THE MAZE, SOON RANG BACK. WE BEGAN BY TRYING TO GET HIM TO DELAY MORRISON BUT HE SAID THAT IT WAS NOW TOO LATE TO DO SO. HE MADE THE POINT THAT HMG WERE CONSIDERED AS HAVING BEEN VERY, VERY HELPFUL IN ALLOWING THE VISIT.

24. SOON THEN SAID THAT IN THE OPINION OF HIS PROVISIONAL CONTACT, THE PROVISIONALS WOULD BE WORKING FROM THE PRISONERS' STATEMENT IN TERMS OF ASSOCIATION, REMISSION, VISITS, PARCELS AND WORK. IT WILL BE ALL IMPORTANT, HE SAID, TO GET THE CLOTHING AND TIMING RIGHT.

25. SOON BELIEVED THAT HE HAD NOW BEEN ABLE TO PERSUADE THE PROVISIONALS THAT HMG IS NOT INTERESTED IN ANY SETTLEMENT UNLESS THE HUNGER STRIKE IS CALLED OFF FIRST. HE WAS FAIRLY CONFIDENT THAT THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT A MAJOR PROBLEM WAS THAT IF PANIC SETS IN, THIS WILL BE THE FIRST POINT TO BE ABANDONED. THEREFORE, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THERE SHOULD BE BACKUP SYSTEMS.

26. WHEN WE QUERIED WHAT THIS MEANT, HE SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT IF A FURTHER STATEMENT WAS TO BE PRODUCED, IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IF THE PROVISIONALS COULD SEE IT BEFORE PUBLICATION. HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS COULD BEST BE ACHIEVED BY A HANDOVER AT A MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO ENDS OF THE SCON CHANNEL. HE SAID THAT GIVEN THE PROVISIONALS' WARINESS OF HMG'S POSITION, EVEN TRIVIAL SETBACKS COULD RESULT IN MAJOR DISASTERS. HE ASKED WHAT CONTINGENCIES WERE BEING CONSIDERED /ABOUT ...

PAGE NINE S/E C R E T ADDRESSEE ONLY

ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLOTHING AFTER THE HUNGER STRIKE IS CALLED OFF. WE REPLIED THAT ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE SOME IDEA OF WHAT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PROVISIONALS, THERE WAS LITTLE POINT IN CONSIDERING THIS WHILE THEIR VIEW ON THE NATURE OF A SETTLEMENT WAS UNCLEAR. NEVERTHELESS, SOON INSISTED ON SUGGESTING THE FOLLOWING POSSIBILITY.

27. WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR A SMALL NUMBER SUCH AS TEN TO TWENTY PARCELS OF CLOTHES TO BE DELIVERED TO THE PRISON IN ADVANCE AND STORED BY PRISON OFFICIALS SO THAT WHEN THE HUNGER STRIKE WAS CALLED OFF THESE COULD BE IMMEDIATELY ISSUED TO AN APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF PRISONERS. HE SAID THAT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLOTHING SHOULD BE SEEN TO BE OPERATING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE HUNGER STRIKE WAS ENDED.

28. IN THIS WAY, THE PROVISIONALS AND THE PRISONERS WOULD BE REASSURED OF HMG'S MOTIVES AND THIS WOULD PREVENT DISILLUSIONMENT AT AN EARLY STAGE.

29. SOON THEN SAID THAT IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IF THERE COULD BE SOME MENTION IN HMG'S PROPOSALS OF THE PRISON AUTHORITIES ALLOWING A GRADUAL RETURN TO NORMAL CONDITIONS. HE REFERRED AGAIN TO THE HARASSMENT OF PRISONERS MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 13.

CALL NO 6 - 1750-1817, 5 JULY

30. AT THE OUTSET SOON INDICATED BY A PREARRANGED CODE THAT HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PROVISIONALS. HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SUGGESTED THAT IN THIS SITUATION WE SHOULD /ADOPT ...

ADOPT A HARD LINE.

31. HE SAID THAT A MAJOR PROBLEM HAS BEEN THE MONITORING OF THE POSITION IN THE PRISON CURRENTLY BEING CARRIED OUT BY MORRISON. HE EXPLAINED THAT SINCE THE PROVISIONALS' REPRESENTATIVES WERE TRYING TO CONVINCE THE PRISONERS, THE PROVISIONALS SUPPORTERS AND THE RELATIVES, THIS COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS WHEN DELEGATED TO ONE MAN ALONE. IN ORDER TO EASE THIS SITUATION AND TO ENABLE ALL PARTIES TO BE SURE THAT THE POSITION TAKEN BY MORRISON WAS CORRECT AND PROPERLY INTERPRETED, HE CONSIDERED IT IMPORTANT THAT A SECOND REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD ACCOMPANY MORRISON.

32. WE SAID WE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT ON THIS MATTER AND WE ASKED WHO THE PROVISIONALS HAD IN MIND. SOON IMMEDIATELY REPLIED THAT MCGUINESS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE PRISON. WE SAID THAT WE WERE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THE POSITION OF HMG WOULD BE THAT THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE. WE POINTED OUT THAT THEY HAD BEEN AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE AT SHORT NOTICE TO ALLOW MORRISON TO ENTER AND WE EXPLAINED TO SOON THAT WHILE SENIOR PROVISIONAL PERSONALITIES COULD BE ACCEPTABLE, THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO CHANCE OF SENIOR PIRA PERSONALITIES BEING ALLOWED ACCESS.

33. THIS WAS NOT RECEIVED WELL. AFTER ESTABLISHING THAT IF A SECOND REPRESENTATIVE WERE TO BE ALLOWED THIS WOULD NOT APPLY TO THE VISIT TAKING PLACE THAT AFTERNOON, WE ALLOWED SOON SEVERAL MINUTES TO CONSULT WITH MCGUINESS. TO HIS CREDIT, HE MANAGED TO PERSUADE MCGUINESS OF OUR POINT OF VIEW AND RANG BACK WITH THE SUGGESTION THAT THE SECOND PERSON SHOULD BE EDWARD HOWELL. WE SAID THAT THERE WAS NO URGENCY /INVOLVED ...

PAGE ELEVEN S E C R E T ADDRESSEE ONLY

INVOLVED AND THAT WE WOULD CONSULT THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.

CALL NO 7 - 2300-2400, 5 JULY

34. SOON RANG TO SAY THAT THERE HAD BEEN A SERIES OF ALARMING REPORTS RELAYED BY MORRISON FROM THE PRISON. HE SAID THAT THE SITUATION WAS NOW SO BAD THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF ANY SETTLEMENT WAS SERIOUSLY IN DOUBT. THERE WAS A COMPLETE FEELING OF HOSTILITY AMONG THE PRISONERS TOWARDS THE ICJP WHO HAD BEEN IN AND OUT OF THE PRISON DURING THE DAY. THE ROLE OF THE ICJP HAD CREATED AN ALARMIST VIEW OF THE SINCERITY OF HMG, AND EVERY TYPE OF NEUROSIS IMAGINABLE WAS SURFACING WITHIN THE PROVISIONALS' LEADERSHIP. WE ASKED WHAT HAD CAUSED THIS SUDDEN DETERIORATION IN THE POSITION.

35. FROM AN APPARENTLY ENTHUSIASTIC POSITION, SOON HAD BEEN CALLED INTO AN ANGRY AND HOSTILE MEETING OF THE PROVISIONALS ALMOST VERGING ON A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN. THE PROVISIONALS' VIEW OF THE SITUATION IS THAT THE PRISONERS' STATEMENT HAD BEEN TOTALLY IGNORED BY THE ICJP. THERE HAD THEN BEEN MANY INCOHERENT ABUSES AIMED AT THE SOON CHANNEL, WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT THE TIME SPENT IN DISCUSSION ON THE SOON CHANNEL HAD BEEN A FRONT BY HMG TO ENABLE THE ICJP TO MANOEUVRE THE PRISONERS INTO AN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION.

36. WHEN SOON ASKED THE PROVISIONALS WHAT THEIR POSITION WAS HE WAS TOLD THAT ALL CONSIDERATION OF WORK AND ASSOCIATION WAS BEING IGNORED. THERE WAS A DEEP RESENTMENT IN THE PROVISIONAL LEADERSHIP AT WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF AS THE PRESSURING OF THE PRISONERS BY THE ICJP. SOON WAS TOLD THAT THE PRISONERS WOULD GIVE A VERY FIRM "NO" TO THE ICJP PROPOSALS AND THAT THE /ABUSE ...

PAGE TWELVE S E C R E T ADDRESSEE ONLY

ABUSE OF THE CHANNEL HAD CREATED A PREDISPOSITION TO DIS-
BELIEVE ANYTHING THAT SOON SAID.

37. SOON HAD, THEREFORE, BEEN TOLD THAT THE PROVISIONALS' VIEW WAS NOT AVAILABLE BECAUSE THEY WERE EXTREMELY UPSET AT THE "BULLY BOY" TACTICS OF THE ICJP. WE POINTED OUT THAT THE ICJP HAD VOLUNTEERED THEIR SERVICES INDEPENDENTLY AND THAT THEY HAD MET THE PROVISIONALS, THE DUBLIN GOVERNMENT, THE PRISONERS AND THEIR RELATIVES AS WELL AS HMG. WE ASKED WHY HMG WAS NOW BEING ASKED TO SHOULDER ALL THE BLAME FOR THE ICJP'S PROPOSAL? NO ANSWER WAS PROVIDED.

38. IN ORDER TO ATTEMPT TO BRIGHTEN WHAT WE SAW AS A DEPRESSING SITUATION, WE REVERTED TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER A SECOND REPRESENTATIVE WOULD BE ALLOWED INTO THE MAZE. WE SAID THAT WE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET AUTHORISATION FOR THIS, BUT WE HOPED THAT, GIVEN HOWELL'S NON-PIRA CONNECTIONS, THIS WOULD BE APPROVED. WE SUGGESTED THAT IF A SECOND VISIT WAS REQUESTED THE PROVISIONALS SHOULD APPLY FOR BOTH MORRISON AND HOWELL TO BE ALLOWED IN. SOON SAID THAT HE WOULD KEEP THIS IN RESERVE FOR THE TIME BEING.

39. AT THIS POINT SOON INDICATED THAT A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF PROVISIONALS HAD ARRIVED. WE SAID THAT TIME WAS PRESSING AND IT WAS NOW IMPERATIVE THAT WE HAVE A STATEMENT OF THE PROVISIONALS' POSITION. SOON UNDERTOOK TO TRY AND OBTAIN THIS AND RANG OFF.

CALL NO 8 - 0100-2117, 6 JULY

40. SOON RANG BACK TO SAY THAT HE HAD MANAGED TO PERSUADE THE PROVISIONALS TO PROVIDE THEIR VIEW, WHICH HE THEN DICTATED.

/IT ...

PAGE THIRTEEN S E C R E T ADDRESSEE ONLY

IT IS AS FOLLOWS.

41. "THE PROVISIONALS FULLY ACCEPT THE POSITION AS STATED BY THE PRISONERS, AND THAT IS THE ONLY BASIS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DRAFT PROPOSAL BY HMG. WHEN HMG PRODUCES SUCH A DRAFT PROPOSAL IT IS ESSENTIAL (LAST WORD UNDERLINED) THAT A COPY BE IN THE PROVISIONALS' HANDS BEFORE IT IS MADE PUBLIC. THIS IS TO ENABLE THE PROVISIONALS EITHER TO APPROVE IT OR TO POINT OUT ANY DIFFICULTIES BEFORE PUBLICATION. IF IT WERE PUBLISHED WITHOUT PRIOR SIGHT AND AGREEMENT THEY WOULD HAVE TO DISAPPROVE IT".

42. HAVING DELIVERED THIS, SOON SAID THAT THE PROVISIONALS WERE VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE TIME SCALE NOW INVOLVED. HE SAID THAT THE SITUATION WOULD BE IRREPARABLY DAMAGED IF A HUNGER STRIKER DIED AND HE URGED HMG TO ACT WITH THE UTMOST HASTE.

ENDS

COMMENT

43. WE APOLOGISE FOR THIS RATHER LENGTHY ACCOUNT OF THE WEEKEND'S ACTIVITY WHICH HAS BEEN DRAFTED QUICKLY. WE BELIEVE THAT ALL THE MAJOR POINTS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED AND THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A COMPLETE RECORD. WE HAVE RETAINED OUR NOTES, AND WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS WITH HAG ANY DISCREPANCIES.

44. WHILE WE APPRECIATE THAT IT HAS TAKEN A LONG TIME TO OBTAIN THE PROVISIONALS' VIEW, WE ARE CONVINCED THAT SOON HAS /PERFORMED ...

PAGE FOURTEEN S E C R E T ADDRESSEE ONLY

PERFORMED HIS TASK AS WELL AS POSSIBLE. WE WOULD ALSO POINT OUT THAT THERE IS LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FINAL VIEW AND THAT WHICH SOON PREDICTED EARLIER IN THE WEEKEND.

45. SOON STRESSED THAT TIME WAS RUNNING SHORT. WE BELIEVE THAT HE WILL PROBABLY RING SOME TIME IN THE NIGHT OF 6 JULY FOR, AT LEAST, A PROGRESS REPORT. WE WILL AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

46. COPIES OF THIS TELEGRAM AND OF LONDON TELS TO DECADEL 223 AND 227 WILL BE GIVEN TO DCI IN LONDON AT 2900 HRS TODAY.

GRS3000

NNNN

HUNGER STRIKE: MESSAGE TO BE SENT THROUGH THE CHANNEL

The British Government is prepared if, but only if, it would lead to an immediate end to the hunger strike, and protest to issue a statement which would include the following points:

- (i) The clothing regime in Armagh Prison would be applied to all prisons in Northern Ireland (i.e. own clothes subject to approval *of the Prison Governor.*
- (ii) Parcels, visits and letters would be made available on the same basis as for conforming prisoners at present;
- (iii) On work, association and remission the Government's position will be as set out in the Secretary of State's statement of 30 June. *However, emphasis will be laid on the Government's record of its readiness to administer the regime flexibly, and on the "scope for yet further developments".*

(iv) On work ~~remission~~ the Prison authorities must retain the right to decide what work shall be done. (v) On
If we receive a satisfactory response to this proposal by *11.00 a.m.* 9.00 a.m. on Tuesday 7 July we shall be prepared to provide you *very early* with an advance text of the full statement.

If the reply we receive is unsatisfactory and there is *the present* subsequently any public reference to this exchange we shall *possibly in* deny that it took place. Silence will be taken as an unsatisfactory *reply.*

6 July 1981

within that fundamental rule further work will be added to the schedule from time to time.