

Ref. A05109

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Nally rang from Dublin at 3.45 this afternoon. He said he had been asked by Mr. Haughey to speak to me.

2. The message was as follows.

3. The situation in Dublin is difficult, and is going downhill. The more things are suppressed in the North, the more they break out elsewhere.

Contacts are being established and systems are being set up which are destabilising and make the situation not a happy one.

4. Against this background the Taoiseach feels that the present lull before the next death of a hunger striker might be a time to get other things moving.

He has two factors particularly in mind:

(a) there is at present some tension in relations between the parents of hunger strikers, the hunger strikers themselves and the Provisional IRA controllers outside, which could be exploited;

(b) if there is a change of Government in Dublin, the new Administration may not be as apparently sympathetic as the present, and that may make the Provisional IRA more amenable.

5. The suggestion is that we should consider whether there is any possibility of "getting back to what had been talked about last December", not so much in substance as in presentation. The suggestion is that we should once again find some way of drawing attention to the fact that what is already on offer is not very far removed from what is demanded, perhaps by issuing a comprehensive restatement of the position, of the kind issued by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland last December.

6. If we thought there was something in this, Dr. Kennedy (the Irish Ambassador in London) would be prepared to come and see you (or me or anyone else you named) to discuss it; or the Taoiseach would send across Mr. Nally himself.



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7. Mr. Nally added that he thought that this suggestion was made in a spirit more of opportunism than optimism: there was a lull in the procession of deaths of hunger strikers, and we ought to see if we could use it.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

18th June, 1981

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