

CONFIDENTIAL

Ireland

OO ABU DHABI DESKBY 211230Z

GR 540

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 211230Z

FM FCO 211205Z APRIL 81

TO IMMEDIATE ABU DHABI

TELEGRAM NUMBER 121 OF 21 APRIL

FOLLOWING FOR ALEXANDER, PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY,
FROM SANDERS, 10 DOWNING STREET

MIPT:

NORTHERN IRELAND: SECURITY SITUATION

FOLLOWING IS THE NIO ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION THIS MORNING:-

QUOTE

WEEKEND HOOLIGANISM - STONE AND BOTTLE THROWING - HAS BEEN RUNNING IN LONDONDERRY FOR SOME MONTHS. IN THE LAST WEEK IT HAS TAKEN A TURN FOR THE WORSE. A FOCUS HAS BEEN SUPPLIED BY

SANDS' ELECTION - HE IS NOW A FOLK HERO - THE WEATHER HAS BEEN GOOD AND THE SCHOOLS ARE ON HOLIDAY. ADDED IMPETUS WAS PROVIDED BY THE INCIDENT ON SUNDAY IN WHICH TWO YOUTHS WERE KILLED BY AN ARMY VEHICLE.

THE RIOTING IN THE LAST WEEK HAS INCLUDED BOTH STONING AND THE FIRST USE OF PETROL BOMBS IN LONDONDERRY FOR TWO YEARS. LAST NIGHT 7 SHOTS WERE FIRED, THOUGH THIS WAS PROBABLY OPPORTUNISM ON THE PART OF PIRA AND NOT RIOTERS WITH GUNS. CASUALTIES SUFFERED BY THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN VERY LIGHT AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY HAS BEEN VERY MODEST.

THE FORECAST IS THAT THERE WILL CONTINUE TO BE TROUBLE IN LONDONDERRY UNTIL SANDS EITHER DIES OR COMES OFF HIS HUNGER STRIKE. BOTH THE RUC AND THE ARMY ARE CONFIDENT THAT THEY CAN CONTINUE TO CONTAIN THE SITUATION. THEY REGARD IT AS SIGNIFICANT THAT, APART FROM MINOR HOOLIGANISM, THE TROUBLE HAD NOT SPREAD TO OTHER PARTS OF NORTHERN IRELAND. THE SECURITY FORCES DO NOT WISH TO SEE ANY CHANGE IN PRESENT POLICIES.

IN SHORT, WHILE TROUBLE WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE IN LONDONDERRY, THE CONSIDERED ASSESSMENT OF ALL CONCERNED IS THAT THEY CAN BE DEALT WITH BY PRESENT TECHNIQUES AND POLICIESMM UNQUOTE

FOLLOWING IS THE POSITION ON DOLOURS PRICE:-

QUOTE

ON SATURDAY THE CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HER ADVISED THAT HER CONDITION HAD DETERIORATED TO A POINT AT WHICH SHE WAS IN QUOTE IMMINENT DANGER UNQUOTE OF COLLAPSE AND SUDDEN DEATH AND ADVISED THAT SHE BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY. SECRETARY OF STATE HAS SIGNED A LICENCE FOR HER RELEASE ON CONDITIONS IDENTICAL TO THOSE APPLIED TO PAULINE MCLAUGHLIN EARLIER THIS YEAR. THE RESPONSIBLE DOCTORS HAVE BEEN TOLD THE POSITION IN CONFIDENCE. HER PRISON GOVERNOR WILL TELL HER OF SECRETARY OF STATE'S DECISION TOMORROW. SHE WILL REMAIN IN HOSPITAL FOR THE TIME BEING, WHICH ONE FOR THE CONSULTANT TO RECOMMEND.

THERE WILL BE LOYALIST CRITICISM ON THE LINES THAT HER ILLNESS, LIKE HER SISTER'S AND/OR THE MEDICAL ADVICE TENDERED ABOUT THEM, WAS CONTRIVED: AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY DELIBERATELY FAVOURS REPUBLICAN PRISONERS. THIS MAKES IT DESIRABLE THAT THE PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN THE SAME TIMESCALE. A PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT ON MISS PRICE IS BEING PREPARED. IT WILL MAKE THREE POINTS:-

- (1) THE DECISION IS IN CONFORMITY WITH EXISTING POLICY (THE LAST PRISONER RELEASED ON MEDICAL GROUNDS WAS A LOYALIST).
- (2) IT WAS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO UNSOLICITED MEDICAL ADVICE.
- (3) THAT ADVICE WAS UNEQUIVOCAL. UNQUOTE.

MIFT REPORTS ON THE EFFECT OF THE VISIT BY THE THREE TDS.

CARRINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNNN