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OO UKMIS GENEVA

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FROM FCO 061740Z AUG 81

TO IMMEDIATE UKMIS GENEVA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 139 OF 6 AUGUST

INFORMATION ROUTINE TO NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

YOUR TELS 266 AND 267: ICRC AND NORTHERN IRELAND

1. WE AND NIO HAVE READ WITH INTEREST THE ICRC MEMORANDUM GIVING THE ESSENCE OF THEIR REPORT. PLEASE SPEAK TO THE ICRC ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES.
2. WHILE THE REPORT IS ENTIRELY A MATTER FOR THE ICRC, WE WERE A LITTLE SURPRISED AT THE ICRC'S VIEW IN SECTION 6 OF THE MEMORANDUM THAT THESE ARE ONLY MINOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RESPECTIVE POSITIONS OF HMG AND THE PROTESTING PRISONERS AS FAR AS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE FIVE DEMANDS IS CONCERNED. WE WOULD FIND IT USEFUL IF EITHER THE REPORT OR PERHAPS AN ANNEX TO IT CONTAINED AMPLIFICATION TO SHOW WHAT LED THE ICRC TO THIS CONCLUSION WHICH WE FIND HARD TO UNDERSTAND. WE REALISE THAT IF THE REPORT WERE TO CONTAIN THIS IT WOULD DRAW THE ICRC FURTHER THAN THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN DRAWN INTO MEDIATION OR ARBITRATION - WHICH THEY EXPRESSLY SAID THEY WOULD NOT UNDERTAKE. MOREOVER, OUR ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR OFFER TO INSPECT PRISON CONDITIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND WAS BASED ON A MUTUALLY ACCEPTED DESCRIPTION OF THE SCOPE OF THEIR INVESTIGATION. WHILE WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE TERMS OF THE REPORT, ITS PURPOSE SEEMS TO US AMBIGUOUS.
3. AS REGARDS GERRY ADAMS' VISIT TO HMP MAZE ON 29 JULY, YOU SHOULD BE GUIDED BY GUIDANCE TELEGRAM 110 OF 31 JULY. THE FACT THAT WE LET ADAMS INTO THE PRISON HELPS TO SHOW THAT HMG IS NOT THE INFLEXIBLE PARTY IN THE SITUATION. HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTION OF NIO OFFICIALS CONDUCTING ANY SORT OF 'NEGOTIATION' WITH GERRY ADAMS PRESENT. OUR OFFER TO CLARIFY HMG'S STATEMENT TO THE HUNGER STRIKERS REMAINS

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OPEN. WE REMAIN FIRMLY OF THE VIEW THAT HAVING EITHER MCFARLANE OR ADAMS PRESENT WOULD ONLY SERVE TO ENHANCE AN UNDESIRABLE PARAMILITARY COMMAND WITHIN THE PRISON AND PERPETUATE THE HUNGER STRIKE.

4. WE ARE NOT RELEASING THE TEXT OF THE MESSAGE OF 25 JULY TO SENATOR KENNEDY AND OTHERS BUT YOU MAY TELL THE ICRC THAT THE REFERENCE TO THEM WAS IN THE CONTEXT OF A LIST OF PERSONS OR ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING THE POPE'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, WHOSE EFFORTS HMG HAS BEEN WILLING TO FACILITATE.

GILMOUR

NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED

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