

Prime Minister 4
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UNCLASSIFIED
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TO IMMEDIATE CERTAIN MISSIONS AND DEPENDENT TERRITORIES
GUIDANCE TELEGRAM NUMBER 138 OF 2 OCTOBER 1981.

NORTHERN IRELAND

1. IN RECENT INTERVIEWS IN THE CORK EXAMINER AND ON RTE RADIO, DR GARRET FITZGERALD, PRIME MINISTER OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC, SET OUT HIS VIEW THAT THE REPUBLIC'S CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE CHANGED TO CREATE A NON-SECTARIAN STATE. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED ARTICLES 2 AND 3 WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN INTERPRETED AS CONSTITUTING A CLAIM TO TERRITORY WHICH WAS OFFENSIVE TO THE MAJORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. HE DECLARED HIS BELIEF IN A NON-SECTARIAN UNITED IRELAND AND ARGUED THAT THE REPUBLIC HAD ADOPTED A PARTITIONIST ATTITUDE WITH A CONSTITUTION, LAWS AND PRACTICES WHICH WOULD NEVER BE ACCEPTABLE TO UNIONISTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND. IF HOWEVER THESE WERE CHANGED RECONCILIATION WOULD BECOME POSSIBLE. DR FITZGERALD SAID THAT HE HOPED TO AROUSE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HIS VIEWS AND TO HOLD A REFERENDUM (WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION) ONCE HE FELT THERE WAS SUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR THE INITIATIVE.

2. ON 30 SEPTEMBER SENATOR DOOGE, FOREIGN MINISTER DESIGNATE OF THE REPUBLIC, IN A SPEECH TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY CALLED FOR AN END TO THE HUNGER STRIKE WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS A WEAPON USED BY PEOPLE WHO HAD SHOWN THE MOST RUTHLESS LACK OF CONCERN FOR HUMAN SUFFERING. HE ALSO REPEATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S PREVIOUS CALLS FOR HMG TO INTRODUCE UNSPECIFIED CHANGES IN THE PRISON REGIME IN ORDER TO DEFUSE THE HUNGER STRIKE WITHOUT YIELDING THE PRINCIPLE OF POLITICAL STATUS.

LINE TO TAKE

3. DR FITZGERALD'S CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS ARE ESSENTIALLY A MATTER FOR THE IRISH REPUBLIC, WHERE THEY ARE A MATTER OF

/CONSIDERABLE

CONSIDERABLE PARTY POLITICAL CONTROVERSY. YOU SHOULD NOT THEREFORE VOLUNTEER COMMENT. IF ASKED YOU SHOULD POINT THIS OUT, ADDING THAT IN SO FAR AS THE PROPOSALS AFFECT NORTHERN IRELAND THEY ARE WELCOME IN THAT THEY INDICATE THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S SENSITIVITY TO THE VIEWS OF THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. WE WELCOME SENATOR DOOGE'S CONDEMNATION OF VIOLENCE AND OF THE HUNGER STRIKE AS A WEAPON.

BACKGROUND

4. THE IRISH OPPOSITION PARTY, FIANNA FAIL, HAVE REACTED ANGRILY TO DR FITZGERALD'S PROPOSAL AND HAVE REAFFIRMED THEIR DETERMINATION TO RESIST ANY EFFORTS TO CHANGE ARTICLES 2 AND 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION. IN NORTHERN IRELAND THE INITIATIVE HAS BEEN WELCOMED BY SDLP AND THE ALLIANCE PARTY BUT 'LOYALIST' REACTIONS HAVE BEEN COOL AND GUARDED.
5. IN TV INTERVIEWS THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, MR PRIOR, POINTED OUT THAT THE PROPOSALS WERE PRIMARILY A MATTER FOR THE REPUBLIC BUT HE WELCOMED THEM INSOFAR AS THEY HAD ANY BEARING ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND SCENE.
6. THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL POINTS MAY BE OF INTEREST:
 - (I) HUNGER STRIKE: BERNARD FOX ENDED HIS HUNGER STRIKE ON 25 SEPTEMBER AFTER 33 DAYS ON BEING TOLD THAT WITHOUT URGENT TREATMENT HE MIGHT BE DEAD WITHIN A WEEK. LIAM MCCLOSKEY ENDED HIS STRIKE ON 26 SEPTEMBER AFTER 55 DAYS FOLLOWING A SIGNIFICANT DETERIORATION IN HIS CONDITION. BOTH PRISONERS WERE TRANSFERRED TO MUSGRAVE PARK HOSPITAL AND ARE EXPECTED TO MAKE A FULL RECOVERY. OF THE SIX REMAINING HUNGER STRIKERS, SHEEHAN (DAY 54) HAS WORSENERD SOMEWHAT AND IS SHOWING SIGNS OF JAUNDICE AND NAUSEA. THE CONDITION OF THE OTHERS GIVES NO CAUSE FOR CONCERN
 - (II) CONVICTION OF 'LA MON HOUSE' BOMBER: ON 28 SEPTEMBER A BELFAST MAN, ROBERT MURPHY, WAS GIVEN TWELVE LIFE SENTENCES FOR THE MANSLAUGHTER OF SEVEN WOMEN AND FIVE MEN WHO DIED WHEN A BLAST INCENDIARY

/BOMB WAS

BOMB WAS PLANTED BY THE PROVISIONAL IRA AT THE LA MON HOUSE RESTAURANT IN CO DOWN. THE BOMB EXPLODED WITHOUT WARNING BESIDE A WINDOW CAUSING THE INTERIOR IMMEDIATELY TO BECOME AN INFERNO. TWELVE PEOPLE DIED AND 23 WERE INJURED, THERE WERE OVER 300 PEOPLE IN THE BUILDING AT THE TIME. MURPHY PLEADED NOT GUILTY TO MURDER BUT GUILTY TO MANSLAUGHTER.

(III) RPG-7 ATTACK ON POLICE: AN RUC MOBILE PATROL WAS ATTACKED IN WEST BELFAST ON 28 SEPTEMBER BY PROVISIONAL IRA TERRORISTS USING AN RP7 (ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADE) OF EASTERN EUROPEAN ORIGIN. ONE CONSTABLE WAS KILLED AND ANOTHER HAD BOTH ARMS BLOWN OFF AT THE ELBOW. THE ROCKET LAUCHER WAS RECOVERED, SEVEN PEOPLE WERE DETAINED.

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