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OO DUBLIN DESKBY 020900Z  
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DESKBY 020900Z  
FM FCO 301910Z OCT 81  
TO IMMEDIATE DUBLIN  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 166 OF 30 OCTOBER  
INFO PRIORITY NIO BELFAST  
MIPT : THE PRISON PROTEST AT MAZE : NEXT STEPS  
TEXT BEGINS

- '1. THE SITUATION IN MAZE AND THE OTHER PRISONS CONTINUES TO BE QUIET. THE CHANGES ANNOUNCED ON 6 OCTOBER HAVE PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY. ALL BUT 3 OF THE PROTESTING PRISONERS IN MAZE HAVE RECEIVED THEIR OWN CLOTHES AND ARE WEARING THEM. ALL WHO HAVE THEIR CLOTHES ARE TAKING THEIR DAILY EXERCISE AND THEIR MEALS IN THE DINING ROOM.
2. THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE ITS POSITION ON ALL ASPECTS - CLOTHING, EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY FOR ASSOCIATION IN THE H-BLOCKS AND PARTIAL RESTORATION OF LOST REMISSION - ABSOLUTELY PLAIN IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS. THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR SUGGESTIONS THAT THE PRISONERS ARE UNCLEAR ON ANY POINT.
3. A CONSIDERABLY REDUCED SCALE OF PUNISHMENTS IS TO BE INTRODUCED ON MONDAY, 2 NOVEMBER, FOR PRISONERS WHO CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO MAKE THEMSELVES AVAILABLE FOR THE FULL RANGE OF PRISON WORK. IT WILL INVOLVE THE LOSS OF HALF OF THE NORMAL REMISSION AND ASSOCIATION AVAILABLE TO FULLY CONFORMING PRISONERS AND THE LOSS OF ONE VISIT IN FOUR.
4. THE GOVERNOR HAS TOLD PRISONERS THAT THE NORMAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES WHICH ARE OFFERED TO ALL PRISONERS ON COMMITTAL TO MAZE WILL BE OFFERED TO ALL PROTESTING PRISONERS BEGINNING ON TUESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER. PARTICIPATION BY PRISONERS IN THESE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES IS VOLUNTARY AND IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE PURPOSES OF ASCERTAINING PRISONERS' NEEDS AND APTITUDES IN RELATION TO THE WIDE RANGE OF EDUCATIONAL, TIVING AND WORK FACILITIES AVAILABLE: AND IN DUE

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COURSE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALLOCATING PRISONERS TO WORK.  
5. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE RESULT WILL BE. THE PROTEST MIGHT  
END. OR THE PRISONERS MIGHT FIND IT CONVENIENT TO REFUSE WORK  
AND ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENT LOWER LEVEL OF PUNISHMENT, ON THE  
BASIS THAT IT SAFEGUARDS THEIR PRINCIPLES TO CONTINUE TO  
PROTEST IN THAT WAY. IF SO, THAT WOULD NOT CHALLENGE OUR  
PRINCIPLES. OR, AS IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE, THEY MAY FIND A PRETEXT  
FOR ESCALATING TENSION. FOR THAT REASON, AND BECAUSE WE DO NOT  
WANT TO MAINTAIN INDEFINITELY THE PRESENT LEVEL OF PRESS INTEREST  
IN DAY-TO-DAY EVENTS IN THE PRISON, THE ARRANGEMENTS DESCRIBED  
ABOVE WILL NOT BE THE SUBJECT OF ANY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT. WE  
WISH NONETHELESS THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD KNOW OF THEM  
IN ADVANCE, ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS.'

TEXT ENDS

CARRINGTON

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PS/MR RIDLEY  
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MR FERGUSSON  
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MR BRAITHWAITE

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NORTHERN IRELAND

NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONSBackground Note

1. The following alterations are being made to the regime in Northern Ireland prisons:-

- (i) Clothing. All prisoners are being allowed to have sent in and wear at all times items of own clothing. Inter alia none of the permitted items of clothing will be allowed to resemble that worn by members of the prison staff, security forces or be of a paramilitary type. All laundering and dry cleaning is to be undertaken in the prison or under arrangements made by the prison authorities. About half of the prisoners already have items of their own clothing and further items, which prisoners' visitors have been able to bring in since 12 October, are in the process of being issued.
- (ii) Association. Prisoners are already able to associate with one another at meal times, work, exercise or during periods of association each evening and at weekends. However, because of the physical layout of the H Blocks at Maze prison, prisoners may presently only mix within their own wings during association periods. In future, during such periods, prisoners will have an opportunity to mix with others from the adjacent wing in recreation and exercise areas. This will, however, require the construction of new security grille gates, which are in the course of construction.

(iii) Remission. A scheme for the restoration of lost remission has been introduced with effect from 16 October for all prisoners who have lost remission other than as a result of violent acts against prison officers or other prisoners. Remission will be restored up to a maximum of 60% of that lost, but the scheme will not apply to loss of remission imposed for breaches of the Prison Rules committed after 1 November 1981.

2. A new booklet is in the course of preparation to take account of the announced changes to the Prison Regime. It is hoped the booklet will be available shortly.