

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



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TO HQ
FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY NELIGAN
MMAQWER

FROM LONDON
FROM P DEMPSEY

PAPAL ENVOY
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EYERS (FCO) HAS PHONED TO INFORM US ABOUT THE MEETING YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AT LONDON AIRPORT BETWEEN THE POPE'S REPRESENTATIVE, FR. JOHN MAGEE, AND TWO BRITISH MINISTERS, MR. PETER BLAKER OF THE FCO AND MR MICHAEL ALISON OF THE N10. THE BRITISH HAD BEEN ASKED BY THE VATICAN YESTERDAY MORNING IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE POPE TO MAKE A PERSONAL VISIT TO SEE MR SANDS AND TO MEET A BRITISH MINISTER IF POSSIBLE. THE MEETING WITH THE MINISTERS WOULD ORDINARILY HAVE TAKEN PLACE AT THE FCO BUT TO AVOID ANY DELAY THE MINISTERS HAD GONE TO LONDON AIRPORT WHERE A DISCUSSION FOR HALF AN HOUR HAD TAKEN PLACE. EYERS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE MAIN POINT MADE BY FR. MAGEE HAD BEEN TO ASK WHETHER FURTHER CONCESSIONS ON CLOTHING WERE POSSIBLE. THE MINISTERS HAD EXPLAINED THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED AND SAID THAT MANY OF THE CONCESSIONS DEMANDED WERE ALREADY AVAILABLE. THEY SAID THAT IF SANDS CAME OFF THE HUNGER STRIKE THEY COULD SEE HUMANITARIAN IMPROVEMENTS TAKING PLACE BUT THERE WOULD BE NO POLITICAL CONCESSIONS. I ASKED WHETHER A FURTHER MEETING WITH MINISTERS, HAD BEEN ENVISAGED, DEPENDING ON THE OUTCOME OF FR. MAGEE'S VISIT TO SANDS. EYERS REPLIED THAT THE BRITISH DID NOT SEE FR. MAGEE AS A MEDIATOR. EYERS WAS NOT AWARE OF WHETHER FR. MAGEE HAD GIVEN ANY INDICATION TO THE MINISTERS OF THE LINE HE WOULD PROPOSE TO TAKE WITH SANDS.

END

RB  
PD 29/04/81  
TIME: 11.47

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