

HOM/BEL 003/04

FROM: MR J T A HOWARD-DRAKE

TO: (PERSONAL FOR) MR H F T SMITH

340

SECRET

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF A MESSAGE FROM THE HOME SECRETARY TO MR FAULKNER WHICH THE HOME SECRETARY WISHES TO BE DELIVERED IMMEDIATELY.

'I SAID I WOULD SET OUT THE POSITION AS CLEARLY AS I CAN.

THE DECISION WHETHER TO PROCEED TO INTERNMENT IS YOURS TO MAKE UNDER THE CONSTITUTION BUT IT IS OUR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF UK FORCES, THAT SUCH A DECISION WOULD BE AGREED BEFOREHAND WITH US. YOU HAD YOURSELF OFTEN SAID, AND I HAVE SUPPORTED THIS VIEW, THAT YOU WOULD BE GUIDED BY THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES.

AS I UNDERSTAND IT THE GOC IS NOT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES RECOMMENDING INTERNMENT ON MILITARY GROUNDS. THIS OF COURSE IS THE BASIS ON WHICH HE WOULD ADVISE MINISTERS OF EITHER GOVERNMENT WHO WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECISION. IT WOULD BE FOR THEM TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH ARE NUMEROUS AND COMPLEX.

I UNDERSTAND THAT PRESSURE FOR INTERNMENT IS CONSIDERABLE AND I AGREE THAT IT MAY WELL BECOME NECESSARY. I HAVE STATED IN PUBLIC THAT WE WOULD RAISE NO OBJECTION TO INTERNMENT IF WE WERE SATISFIED ON THE ADVICE OF THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES AND AFTER CONSULTATION WITH YOU ON THE WIDER ASPECTS THAT THIS WOULD HELP IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE IRA. I HAVE FURTHER STRESSED THAT NO PRIOR ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE POSSIBLE OR DESIRABLE. THIS REMAINS OUR POSITION.

X WE MUST LOOK AT THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE APPRENTICE BOYS MARCH ON 12 AUGUST. IF INTERNMENT WERE INTRODUCED BEFORE THEN IT WOULD IN OUR VIEW BE ESSENTIAL TO PROCEED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE INDEFINITE BANNING OF ALL POLITICAL PROCESSIONS. I UNDERSTAND IT IS THE GOC'S VIEW ON MILITARY GROUNDS THAT HE WOULD NOT ADVISE THE BANNING OF THE PROCESSION. IF THE PROCESSION IS TO PROCEED IT SEEMS TO ME TO BE WISER TO POSTPONE ANY DECISION ABOUT INTERNMENT UNTIL AFTER IT HAS TAKEN PLACE WHEN WE CAN REVIEW THE SUTUATION AGAIN ON THE EXISTING PRINCIPLES AND WHOLLY WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO A DECISION EITHER WAY. AS SO MUCH ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID TO THIS MARCH ON 12 AUGUST ITS OUTCOME ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WILL BE OF CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE FOR ANY DECISION ABOUT THE FUTURE CONDUCT OF THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE TERRORISTS.

THIS IS THE POSITION AS I SEE IT. I SHOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL FOR YOUR COMMENTS. AS I SAID, I WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO SEE YOU IF YOU WOULD CARE TO COME AND DISCUSS IT HERE BUT I RATHER SHARE YOUR VIEW THAT THE PUBLICITY ATTENDING SUCH A VISIT WOULD INEVITABLY CREATE A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION.'

CJ T A HOWARD-DRAKE

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SENT AT 12.19Z/4 AUGUST 1971

RECD AT 0219Z GB