

① Mr Bell
 ② PDL WJ
 12/5. 131/5

E.R.

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cc PS/SOS(L)
 PS/PUS (L & B)
 PS/Mr Bell ✓
 Mr Blelloch
 Mr Wyatt OR
 Mr Palmer
 Mr Moriarty
 Mr Ranson
 Mr Blatherwick
 Mr Hall

Mr Marshall:

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN NO 10 DOWNING STREET AND
 THE TAOISEACH'S OFFICE

Michael Alexander at No 10 telephoned me at lunch-time to report a conversation he had had with Dermot Nally in the Taoiseach's office. The Taoiseach is concerned that the population of Fermanagh is "completely under the control of the Provisionals" and that in any early election in the Republic up to six seats could go to Provisional sympathisers. Circumstances could arise where such a group held the balance of power.

The Taoiseach had been thinking about the attempts, which so far were fruitless, to persuade one of the hunger strikers or another protesting prisoner to make a complaint to the ECHR to provide them with a pretext for calling off the hunger strike. Since this now seemed unlikely to happen, the Taoiseach thought the British Government should themselves try to involve the ECHR, by saying to the Commission that we gave undertakings at the end of the previous hunger strike which we were being accused of failing to honour; and that we should welcome an investigation by the Commission of whether we had kept our word.

Michael Alexander tells me that he made suitably discouraging noises, but this request amounts to a personal message from the Taoiseach and he has therefore asked for urgent advice on the terms in which he should reply, given that Hughes could die virtually at any moment.

I should be grateful for advice as soon as possible.

RATH...
 R HARRINGTON
 Private Secretary
 12 May 1981

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