

1 FEB 76 11/2 Dwy  
JW  
NEI  
JB

RECEIVED BY  
6 FEB 1976  
STATE OFFICE

Q. 1/12  
25

Miss Cook  
Mr. Leahy  
Mr. Craik  
Softs  
Mr. Welfe

NOTE OF A MEETING ON FRANK STAGG, HELD ON THURSDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY, 1976

cc  
Mr. Muddelme  
Mr. Templeton

[This shd have been MUFAXED]

Present: Home Secretary (paras. 1-6)  
Lord Harris  
Dr. Summerskill (paras. 1-6)  
Mr. Wright  
Mr. Armstrong  
Mr. Grant  
Mr. Morris  
Mr. Angel  
Mr. de Deney  
Mr. Phillips  
Mr. Farrington

JHGL/ 2414  
N.I.O.  
BELFAST  
DATE 10/2/76

and when

dy 10/12

1. The Home Secretary asked for an account of Stagg's present medical condition.
2. Mr. Morris said that Stagg was physically declining but remained mentally alert. He seemed entirely obdurate although his family were now united in urging him to come off his hunger strike.  
Dr. Summerskill said it was clear that Stagg could die at any time.
3. The Home Secretary asked for an account of the procedure that would be followed if Stagg died.
4. Mr. de Deney said that the body would remain in possession of the local coroner who would almost certainly require a post mortem examination. The coroner would probably retain it for between three and six days, although there might be a further slight delay if removal to Ireland was requested. The disposal of the body then rested with the executrix, who appeared in this case to be Mr. Stagg's wife, although he had not made a will.
5. Mr. Morris added that it was his understanding that while some of Mr. Stagg's family favoured burial in County Mayo, his wife might prefer a quiet burial in Coventry. However she would probably do as instructed by the rest of the family. Mr. Wright said that a funeral in Coventry, albeit intended to be a quiet one, might provoke demonstrations and was the worst option.

from the  
HS's  
viewpoint

CONFIDENTIAL

6. The Home Secretary said that it was highly important that there should be the closest liaison between all those responsible for the arrangements and, of course, there could be no question of public demonstrations in support of the I.R.A. at the funeral. This would be grossly offensive to public opinion.

7. Mr. Angel said that there were two statutes which might be invoked against such demonstrations. There were powers in the Prevention of Terrorism Act for the police to act against demonstrations in support of the I.R.A. There was also the wider power in the Public Order Act by which the local authority, on the advice of the Chief Constable, could apply to the Home Secretary for an order banning a particular demonstration. The former power had not previously been invoked and some chief constables might be unclear about its application: the latter required a meeting of the local authority which was a cumbersome procedure. Mr. Armstrong suggested that it might be possible to alert the relevant local authorities to the possibility of their making such a resolution at short notice, but Lord Harris felt that difficulties might be caused if such an approach leaked.

8. Lord Harris said that a decision on which power to use could not be made until there was a clear indication of the funeral arrangements chosen by the executrix and in particular the location of the funeral.

9. Lord Harris asked about the procedure to be followed in informing Private Offices both in the Home Office and the Northern Ireland Office of Mr. Stagg's death. Mr. Morris said that there would be the earliest possible indication to Ministers, the police and the army. The matter would no doubt quickly become public when Mr. Stagg's family were informed.

10. Lord Harris said that he was convinced that it was right for the Department to be legally represented at the inquest. Great care, however, should be shown in the selection of counsel. The question of hunger striking etc. was a highly sensitive and technical matter.

Private Office

6th February 1976

c.c. Mr. Mawer  
Mr. Caffarey  
Ms. Hyde  
Mr. Wright

Mr. Grant  
Mr. Gale  
Dr. Orr  
Mr. Angel

Mr. de Doney  
Mr. Morris  
Mr. A. Williams (N.I.O.)  
Mr. J. J. (N.I.O.)