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NEWS RELEASE

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10th JULY, 1975.

STATEMENT FROM A UNIONIST SPOKESMAN

O'CONNELL ARREST

*Clear
For general file
on 4.9.75
ML*

The arrest of I.R.A. leader David O'Connell would provide a suitable spectacle for a comic opera or a Brian Rix farce if it were not within the deadly context of the Ulster situation.

This sort of transparent performance by the Eire Government no longer holds any credibility with those at whom it is aimed - presumably the people of Northern Ireland, particularly when it is well known that O'Connell could have been lifted at any time.

This stage stodge arrest, significantly at a time when the British Government has almost completed introduction of the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill and the I.R.A. are resuming their activities in Northern Ireland in an attempt to create tension before the '12th celebrations; can be seen as no less than an undiplomatic diplomatic sop. We will be watching the Eire Government closely to see whether in a few days time, their token gesture made, they will shamefacedly release this terrorist leader, or present him with some pathetic minor charge in an attempt to appease those who have suffered from his nefarious activities, without antagonising hard liners, particularly in Dail, where this rocky coalition government hangs on by the skin of its teeth.

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