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Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the 10

at Venlo 9/10 May.

The Minister had a lengthy informal conversation with Lord Carrington regarding the situation in Long Kesh. The Minister told me afterwards that the following points arose in their discussion:-

- (a) Lord Carrington reiterated the British position that no concessions would be made to the hunger-strikers. The British do not appear at this stage to be reassessing their position;
- (b) Lord Carrington felt that the second hunger-striker would continue his hunger-strike to the death. There appears to be some hope on the part of the British that the international attention will diminish and that the other hunger-strikers will not continue when no concessions are made;
- (c) Lord Carrington expressed great concern at the international attention which the hunger-strike had achieved;
- (d) He confirmed that the British Government would cooperate with and would be quite happy to see the European Commission of Human Rights involved in reassessing the prison conditions in Long Kesh;
- (e) Lord Carrington also indicated that he fully understood the Irish Government's concern and was not critical of our request (which the Minister reiterated) for greater flexibility in the administration of the prison.

The Minister said that most of his colleagues (especially the West German Foreign Minister) questioned him about the situation in Northern Ireland and our attitude to the hunger strike. Finally, Lord Carrington indicated that he would convey the Minister's views to Mrs. Thatcher whom he is meeting this morning prior to the Anglo-German Summit at Chequers.

Martin Burke

10.5.1981

c.c. PSM
PSS
Mr. Nally
Mr. Neligan
Ambassador, Washington
Ambassador, London.