

DRAFT OF STATEMENT PROPOSED FOR RELEASE BY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY LAST NIGHT - MONDAY 6 JULY - IN RELATION TO DR HILLERY'S REPORTED VISIT TO THE FALLS AREA - MR BURROUGHS' DRAFT

Normally I would have expected Dr Hillery to inform me in advance of his intention to visit any part of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland; not to have done so, particularly in present circumstances, is a serious diplomatic discourtesy. Had he observed the ordinary form no doubt a visit could have been arranged. However, that may be, he had had an opportunity to see for himself the facts of the situation and will be in a position to assure his Government that there has been a great deal of misrepresentation. He will know that a very serious situation arose; a relatively small group of people, who are I believe described by their neighbours of the Falls Road community as lunatics, have embroiled the district in a situation which has led innocent people to suffer hardship. This, I am sure, Dr Hillery will have observed for himself.

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Although I understood that the above statement had been approved for immediate release by the Foreign Office it has not this morning been published in any newspaper.

Originally Mr Burroughs had proposed that a somewhat different draft of the statement should be issued by Major Chichester-Clark and he telephoned the Prime Minister at Castledawson to urge this course upon him. Major Chichester-Clark however took the view that he was not prepared to issue such a statement, particularly as it carried certain undesirable implications - first, that a visit by Dr Hillery might almost have been welcomed if the proper form had been observed, and secondly the suggestion it contained that although reports of "suffering" in the Falls <sup>might have been</sup> ~~might have been~~ "exaggerated" the use of this particular word rather suggested that there was a stratum of truth in the allegations. The general tone of the statement was not one which the Prime Minister felt able to endorse. The attached statement was issued instead at midnight.

WB

-x. attach DNL. cutting.

7 July 1970