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MUFAX

DUS/64/0688

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE

Copy to : PS/Mr Alison (B & L)  
PS/PUS(B & L)  
Mr Irvine ✓  
Dr Sloan  
Mr Jackson  
Mr Hamilton

RELEASE OF KIERAN NUGENT - FRIDAY 11 MAY

The Minister of State, Mr Alison, has approved the proposals in the attached note.

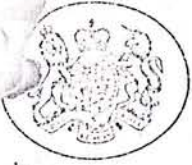
2. A further proposal for pre-emptive action was discussed with the Minister who approved it in principle, subject to the Secretary of State's decision.
3. The proposal is to allow an ITN team (including cameras) to visit Maze tomorrow, to see both clean and dirty cells; and to interview Nugent. Nugent may refuse but if he does so we expect this to be to our advantage. It would be just as effective in propaganda terms from our point of view. Discussions are now taking place with the Governor.
4. I seek the Secretary of State's concurrence.

9 May 1979

  
J. E. HANNIGAN

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6. Tomorrow morning, Thursday, Nugent will be bathed, and his hair trimmed, with a hospital officer in attendance. Minimum necessary force will be used to bath him, but if he shows a disposition to resist violently and there seems to be a risk of injury, the bathing will not be proceeded with. The prisoner will have his pre-release interview with Assistant Governor Chambers tomorrow, and will be visited by a Chaplain and a member of the Board of Visitors.

7. Tomorrow afternoon Nugent will also be offered a full medical examination, in his cell in the pre-release unit if he insists (a suitable light and necessary equipment will be brought from the prison hospital). If he refuses this, he will be asked to sign a statement to that effect which will be witnessed by the Medical Officer and attendant prison officers. Afterwards the prisoner will be photographed.

8. On the morning of Friday 11 May Nugent will have an early breakfast. He will then be given his own clothes. The Medical Officer will again be in attendance and will carry out a further visual medical examination. Release is expected to take place at about 8.30 am.

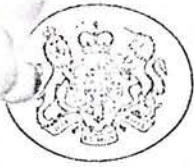
9. The prison have reported that Nugent was abusive and threatening to staff in the cell-block this morning. It seems clear that he is set on provoking a confrontation with, and if possible an attack by, staff. Staff are fully aware of the need for restraint in the face of provocation, and Nugent will be supervised at all times in the pre-release unit by an officer of at least Senior Officer rank.

PR

10. The media will already know that Nugent is to be released on Friday. This morning's Irish News carried three advertisements - copy attached - about pickets at a number of RUC stations in Belfast on Friday evening and a "victory march for the first blanket men" on Sunday 13 May.

11. Whether or not we give the media the exact time of release, reporters are likely to be at the prison gate at around 8.30 am on Friday morning since this is the same time as Deery was released on 26 April. Mr Gilliland proposes to talk to selected media representatives tomorrow, about Nugent's case generally.

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The next dirty protester due for release

12. Mark Gerard Hannigan, serving 2 years for membership of the IRA, is due for release on Tuesday 14 May. It seems unlikely that his release will attract the same amount of attention as Deery's or Nugent's; we have in mind that his release should be handled in the same way. Defensive briefing will be prepared but unless there are any unexpected developments in regard to Nugent it seems unlikely that we shall wish to say anything to the media about Hannigan's discharge.

Recommendation

13. Mr Alison is invited to approve the proposed arrangements in relation to Nugent's release.

E N BARRY

9 May 1979

CC PS/Secretary of State B&L  
PS/PUS B&L  
Mr Hannigan  
Mr Irvine  
Dr Sloan  
Mr Jackson  
Mr Hamilton

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