

DRAFT REPLY FOR SECRETARY OF STATE
TO KEN MAGENNIS MP

MAZE ESCAPE: INQUIRY BY SIR JAMES HENNESSEY KBE CHG
HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PRISONS - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Your rang my office on 29 September asking for the terms of reference of the Inquiry by Sir James Hennessey.

Following a discussion with Sir James and with the agreement of my Rt Hon Friend the Home Secretary, I wrote to Sir James on 28 September asking him to conduct an inquiry into security arrangements at HM Prison Maze relative to the escape on Sunday 25 September 1983 and to make relevant recommendations for the improvement of security at HM Prison Maze.

I also asked Sir James to report to me as soon as possible. I have therefore nothing to add to what Sir James has himself said in his public statement on 30 September as to the timescale of his inquiry.

On the issue of publication I must reserve my position until I have Sir James' report. On the one hand I do not wish to commit myself now to publication of a report which may well contain sensitive security material which it would not be in the public interest to disclose while on the other I am conscious of the widespread public concern about the escape from HM Prison Maze and I can assure you of my intention to make public as full an



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Mr Mitchell
to see + PPH
Mrs Hildebrand
4/10/83

ScJ

3.10.83

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (MUFAX) (B & L)

MAZE ESCAPE:
SECURITY AND HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I refer to your minute of 29 September addressed to PS/Mr Scott asking for advice and a draft reply (if appropriate) to Mr Magennis.

2. Mr Magennis' request to know the terms of reference of the inquiry by Sir James Hennessey is entirely reasonable in the circumstances. If he was to put down a PQ in the House on its return Secretary of State would have to answer so a refusal now would only delay release of the terms of reference, lead to allegations of a "cover up", and exacerbate the present dispute with the Assembly Security Committee.

We know the DUP (and DUP) want a wider and different kind of inquiry and will continue to say so whether they know the precise terms of reference or not.

I conclude therefore that the balance of advantage lies in releasing the terms of reference now.

A draft reply is accordingly attached but before it issues it will be necessary to inform Sir James Hennessey of its contents as a matter of courtesy. I would be happy to take on this task if the Secretary of State is content.

Brian Palmer

B D PALMER

3 October 1983

cc PS/Mr Scott (B & L) M
PS/PUS (B & L) M
Ps/Sir E Bell
Mr Brennan M
Mr Bourn
Mr Buxton
Mr Angel M
Mr Merifield
Mr Gilliland
Mr Doyne-Ditmas
Mr Edis
Mr Reeve
Mr Boys Smith M

Mr Wood M
Mr Jackson
Mr Kerr
Miss Simmons
Mr Ginn

13 OCT 1983

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account as possible of the matter consistent with the future security of the prison.

3.10.83