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19 June 1990

ccd A/Sec. Gallagher

Mr Collins (on Refuse)

CONFIDENTIAL FAX

To Belfast

From HQ

For P. Collins

From B. McMahon

Subject: Marching Season

With reference to the forthcoming meeting on the Marching Season, the following is an update on various locations during the forthcoming season. As you know, the over-riding concern underlying the comments below is the principle that parades should not take place in an area or along a route where they are not welcome - a principle clearly enunciated by the Secretary of State in his remarks in the House of Commons as far back as 19 June 1986.

Overall this year, the most serious potential problem areas appear to be Belfast and Portadown.

Belfast:

Duncairn Gardens: I have already separately sent you very detailed material on this parade route - one which passes through the sectarian interface of North Belfast and which is potentially the most serious flash-point for this years marching season. This march is, I understand scheduled for 22 June.

Lower Ormeau Road:

The lower Ormeau Road (that section from Lagan Bridge to the railway bridge is an area which has changed in recent years and is now entirely nationalist. This is a dangerous potential flash-point and consideration should be given to using an alternative route. An additional and important feature of the problem in this area which should be highlighted with the other side is that, given the make-up of the area, the UDR should not be used in a policing capacity - particularly during the marching season.

Portadown

While it is generally accepted that the situation has improved since the Obins St. / Tunnel confrontations of a number of years ago, nonetheless the routing of contentious Orange parades through the heart of the nationalist area along the Garvaghy road remains a potentially serious flash-point. (A map of Portadown is attached for ease of reference.)

The parades in question are:

- The parade to and from Drumcree church on the Sunday before the twelfth (8 July this year).
- The parade on the morning of the Twelfth itself which last year consisted of local bands on their way to the Railway station to catch buses for Keady. (They were not allowed to parade through Garvaghy road on their return last year.)

While there may be some justification for the parade to Drumcree church, which is located on the nationalist side of the town, there is a far less controversial route available -viz- along Charles St. and via the Dungannon Rd. which would at least skirt around the nationalist area rather than go right through it as at present.

The parade to the railway station on the 12th requires a considerable diversion (the most direct route is through the centre of town) and it is regarded as pure coat-trailing. The local nationalist community feel very strongly that it should be re-directed along a more direct and less provocative route.

A further point which you might wish to raise with the other side is that the UDR should not be deployed on policing duties in respect to the Portadown march. [You will recall that one or two UDR officers were spotted last year among the security force presence in Portadown.]

The parades passed off peacefully last year but only at the cost of widespread and deep resentment on the part of the nationalist community which was subjected to day long security restrictions. (The actual parades pass by in a matter of a few minutes.) A massive police presence (at least 70 landrovers) was needed to keep last year's parades "peaceful". A counter protest in the form of a "tea party" was organised by the Drumcree Faith and Justice Group which includes, among others, Fr. Brian Lennon of the Portadown Jesuit community which is based in the nationalist Churchill Park estate, just off the Garvaghy road. The "tea party" passed off without serious incident and will be held again this year.

Fr. Lennon has informed us that the Drumcree Faith and Justice Group will be writing to the Minister about the parades issue shortly, to seek his assistance in keeping pressure on the British authorities to ensure that parades are only allowed where they are welcome. They will also try to highlight the issue in the media. They were very grateful for the Minister's positive response to their letter last year and they appreciate our continuing interest in the issue.

The Jesuits and others have made repeated representations to the RUC at local level to have the Church parade re-routed around rather than through the heart of the nationalist area. The Faith and Justice Group has had correspondence with the Chief Constable on the matter and while his tone has been cordial, Fr. Lennon does not hold out much hope of any concessions in this, the Tercentenary year. The local RUC indicated some years ago that

progress in re-routing the parades away from nationalist areas would have to be gradual, but apart from the fact that there has been very little "gradual" progress in recent years he feels that this is the wrong approach and that the RUC should take the bull by the horns and deal effectively with the problem once and for all. He accepts that there would certainly be some very vocal opposition, but he is convinced that the Protestant business community in the town would not stand for another bout of disturbances like those which occurred during the "Tunnel" era.

Fr. Lennon argues that there is great potential for better relations between the nationalist community and the RUC in Portadown but that an improvement cannot come about while the parades issue poisons the atmosphere. He claims that the RUC fails to appreciate the potential for better relations with the nationalist community and sees the parades issue in a narrow public order context. He says that the RUC told him on one occasion that the Portadown parades would only be re-routed if they presented a threat to public order. He is infuriated by this attitude because it implies that the RUC will respond more readily to the threat of violence than to the representations of the law abiding community.

He acknowledges that the RUC have made efforts to reduce the aggravation by restricting participation to local bands and seeking undertakings that provocative "kick the Pope" tunes are kept off the repertoire. However, he claims that the bands have ignored the musical undertakings and he gave as an example of petty coat-trailing the way that the participants were re-organised last year to march two abreast (instead of the normal four) so that the parade would take longer to pass by. He would regard the 'improvements' claimed by the RUC as mere cosmetic tinkering with the fundamental problem which is that parades which are provocative in themselves are allowed to go where they are not welcome.

Councillor Brid Rodgers, who is familiar with the situation in Portadown, would broadly agree with Fr. Lennon's assessment although she would see the "tea party" approach as being a silly counter-provocation.

Bonfires:

You might wish to raise the general question of the policing of bonfires. As you will have seen from Press reports, concern on this matter is not confined to the nationalist community.

Cllr Rodgers has raised what she has described as the provocative placing of the 11th bonfire in an area near the Obins St flats. She has taken the issue up with Craigavon Council where some Unionist councillors have expressed concern about the danger the bonfire poses to a nearby Orange hall. However, the accumulation of material at the site has progressed to a point where there can be no question of re-locating it, but Cllr. Rodgers asked that we raise it with the British as a potential trouble-spot.

Lurgan

Councillor Rodgers welcomes the general decline in the number of loyalist parades in the Lurgan area in recent years but a number of problems remain.

There have been parades and band "practice" marches in Lurgan which have closed off the centre of the town roughly once a week since early May causing serious inconvenience and annoyance to the nationalist community. The attached sketch map illustrates the usual route taken by these marches. Even though most of the parades do not go through nationalist areas, the present route is regarded as provocative because it involves major traffic detours for people wishing to travel from one nationalist area to another. The fact that this is an almost weekly occurrence from May onwards makes it more difficult for the nationalist community to put up with it. An element of petty coat-trailing arises where the bands deviate by a few yards from the authorised route to go around the far side of a traffic island at the top of nationalist William St. thereby "stealing" a few yards into nationalist territory. The provocation is usually compounded by the parade pausing for a "kick the Pope" tune at that point. Brid Rodgers suggests that the situation would be greatly improved if the parades were turned around at the Cenotaph rather than allowed proceed around the church.

There are occasional parades through Charles St. (nationalist) to a protestant estate which are provocative and unwelcome. Twelfth parades also go through Charles St. en route to the Railway Station, but they are brief well-conducted affairs which have passed off without incident in recent years.

Kilkeel

SDLP councilors in the Kilkeel/Annalong area (Emmett Haughian and Austin Crawford) have expressed criticism of the handling of parades by the local RUC. They acknowledge that the number of parades has declined in recent years and they welcome this trend, but nevertheless they complain strongly that loyalist marchers are given the run of the town in July and August each year without due consideration for the sensitivities of the nationalist community. Particular annoyance is caused by provocative "practice sessions" which continue long into the night. They have complained repeatedly to the RUC about these matters but with little success. They would particularly like to see a time limit on night time band practices and they would welcome our support for that position.

East Derry & West Antrim:

While he did not have a list of planned marches. the following locations in East Derry and West Antrim were mentioned by Councillor Dallat as areas where some problem might arise:

Rasharkin -
(W. Antrim)

2 communities in one village; has been trouble in past years arising from the influx of marchers from Cullybackey. Asks that there be adequate policing and that

proper control be exercised over access to and exit from the area.

- Cullybackey - Cullybackey is a village on route of
(West of Ballymena) holidaymakers going to Larne. Last year a number of cars passing through were attacked by bonfire mobs. Culprits were later charged. Asks for adequate policing to prevent such incidents.
- Kilrea - In recent years the policing has been very
(East Derry) effective. Asks that it be maintained.
- Garvagh - Notwithstanding substantial policing in
(East Derry) recent years a number of Catholic housing estates have still been attacked by a late night self-styled "Kick the Pope" band. Asks that these louts not be allowed to run amok in the town.
- Clarehill - Is a small housing estate near Garvagh; due
(East Derry) to past intimidation few Catholics left. Asks that police maintain vigilance over this estate.
- Macosquin - Again few Catholics left; history of past
(East Derry) intimidation. Asks that police maintain vigilance.
- Castlerock - Castlerock is a coastal village north of
(East Derry) Coleraine which has in the past suffered from provocative painting of slogans (on roads and kerbstones) during the marching season. Asks that police prevent this happening.
- Coleraine and - Police did a good job here last year
Limavady (especially in Waterside area of Coleraine) and asks that it be maintained.
- Aglivey - There has been trouble here in past years due
(East Derry) to the hanging of bunting around places of work - in particular around the Lovell and Christmas Bacon Factory. Police have been reluctant to intervene in the past. Asks that provocative hanging of bunting beside places of work be prevented.

Finally, Dallat mentioned that some recent Tercentenary parades have led to considerable traffic disruption in Kilrea. On these occasions the RUC have completely closed off the town for the duration of the parade and traffic is forced to take alternative routes away from and around Kilrea which add many miles to the journey. Dallat believes that the commitment of greater RUC

manpower resources could allow for a more controlled re-routing of traffic through slip-roads in the town which would avoid the inconvenience of lengthy detours around Kilrea.

Fermanagh

This year's main parade will be in Enniskillen. There have been no particular difficulties in Fermanagh in recent years and no major problems are foreseen in regard to this year's parade either.

Derry

Derry has also been relatively trouble-free for recent Twelfths. You will be aware, however, that an ongoing source of annoyance is the practice of "saturation policing" of nationalist areas such as the Bogside and the Brandywell on the Twelfth and indeed in the run up to it. John Hume's office fear a repeat of this practice this year and that, as a result, tensions will be unnecessarily raised in these areas. On the other hand, Hume's office also pointed out that the atmosphere in Derry is good at present and that the recent ceremonies organised by the City Council to mark the Tercentenary of the Apprentice Boys will undoubtedly have been helpful in that regard.

Limavady

A major parade is planned again for Limavady. The RUC have told Arthur Doherty (SDLP Councillor) that they expect little trouble and that their plans for the policing of the parade are well advanced. Limavady had been a serious Twelfth trouble-spot, but in recent years the situation has much improved. According to Doherty, the atmosphere so far in the town is "relatively relaxed".

Magherafelt

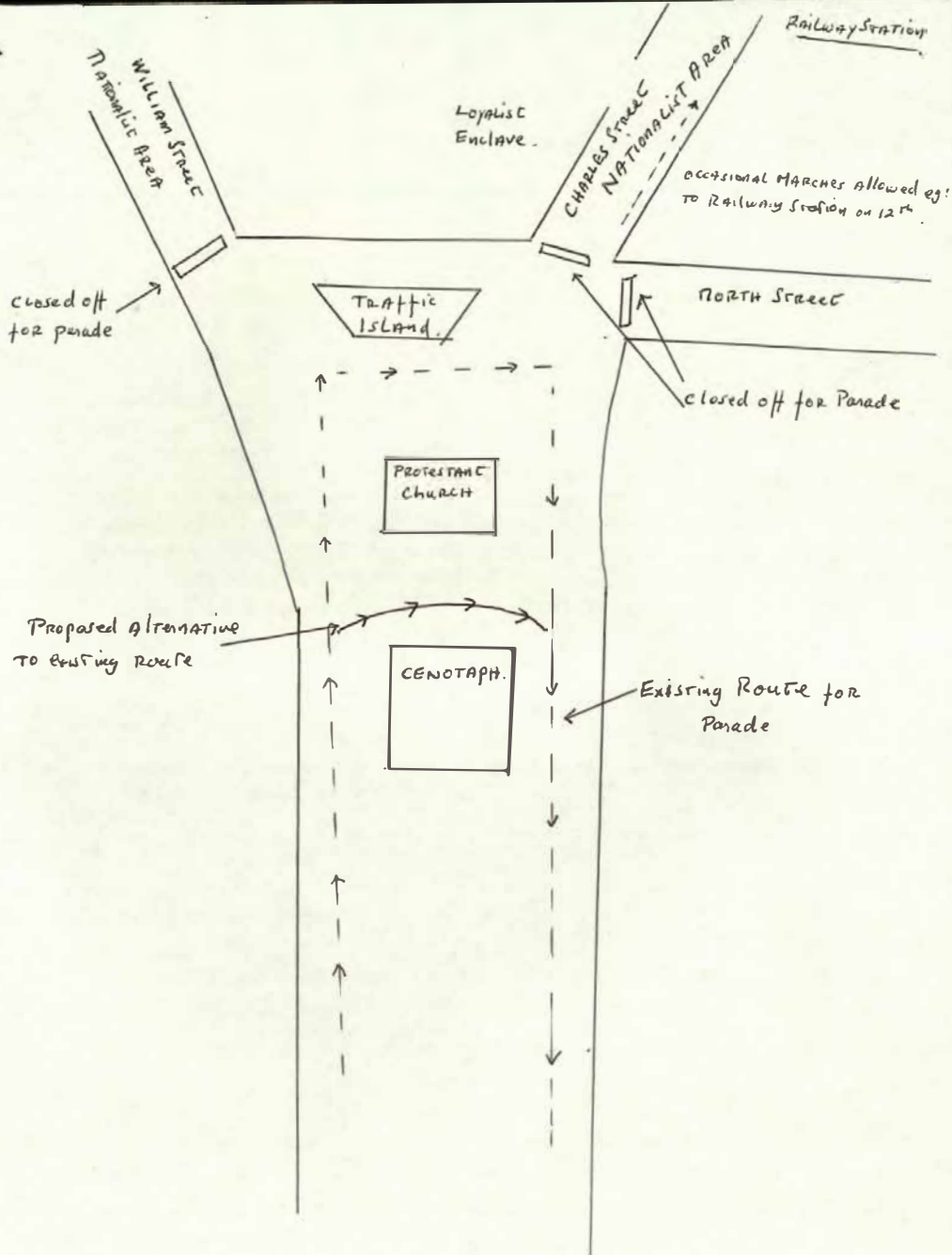
Pat Kilpatrick (recently appointed SDLP Chairman of Magherafelt District Council) has expressed concern about the disruption caused by a number of Orange parades in the town over recent weekends which have involved effectively blocking off the centre of the town. This has caused inconvenience and annoyance to the local nationalist community. He has raised the matter with the local RUC. There is concern that this pattern will be maintained in the run-up to the Twelfth. There is no parade in Magherafelt itself this year but bands attending Limavady may cause disruption going to and coming from that parade. [You will have seen my recent telex regarding the recent stoning of Mr Kilpatrick's house - an incident which while not strictly "Twelfth-related", may indicate a need to "keep an eye" on Magherafelt this year.]

Castledawson (South Derry)

There has been trouble here in the past in relation to bonfires. Patsy McGlone understands from the RUC that the location of the bonfire is being moved this year and that the new site should be more satisfactory.

Tyrone

Neither Denis Haughey (Cookstown) nor Vincent Currie (Dungannon) had any intimations of any difficulties in their areas. The parade will be in Stewartstown and according to Mr. Haughey, Orange parades have been held frequently in Stewartstown in the past and there has been no history of any particular difficulty there.



LURGAN