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SECURE FAX NO. 199

IMMEDIATE

TO: HQ

FOR: A/SEC GALLAGHER

10 JULY 1990

FROM: BELFAST

FROM: JOINT SECRETARY

12 July

1. The British side (Mr. Bell, Law and Order Division, NIO) briefed us this evening on the latest state of play in regard to the 12 July marches. A very comprehensive RUC operational document was handed over in confidence. This has been sent by Mr. Gaffey to Mr. Farrell together with an up to date indication of police views of particular parades.

2. The British side said that the RUC anticipated no particular trouble anywhere "fingers crossed". They said that the guiding principle of the RUC would be to conduct affairs so as to ensure so far as possible the maintenance of the peace. They drew our attention to a written PQ reply by the Minister in response to Deputy Peter Barry on the question of the Garvaghy Road in Portadown, indicating concern that, following the terms of the reply, we seemed to regard the acceptability of parades in particular areas as "the over-riding principle" which should govern routing and policing.

3. We said that the reply had been given in a particular context where nationalists had indicated to us that the routing of the Orange Parade through Garvaghy Road was unacceptable to them. We said that as the lesser of two evils, Garvaghy Road was certainly a better alternative to Obins Street which thankfully was no longer the route for the Portadown Parade. The fact was, however, that Garvaghy Road was heavily nationalist and there was a shorter route to the Orange Lodge through Corcrain Street. In these circumstances, nationalists quite reasonably believed that there was a triumphalist

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intention in seeking the route. We said this feeling was reinforced by the fact that the RUC had turned down requests for a number of republican/nationalist parades in the area.

4. More generally, we said that the Minister had set out the principles which guided our view of parades in a parliamentary answer of 20 July 1989, i.e., the Government recognise the right of peaceful demonstration; they also recognise the difficulties facing the Northern authorities in maintaining public order at this time of the year and accept that progress has been made in the more effective and impartial policing of parades in recent years; but they also recognise the principle that parades in Northern Ireland should not go where they are clearly not acceptable and where, on the basis of past experience, there is a serious risk of disruption, disorder and damage to property.

5. We recalled in this context the parade on 22 June in the Duncairn Gardens area of Belfast which the British side had thought had gone on well but where it was clear there was deep nationalist resentment of police decisions as shown by Councillor Brian Feeney's correspondence with the RUC (which we had asked should be brought to the personal attention of the Secretary of State).

6. We said that the general principle that a parade should not go where it is not acceptable had been publicly supported by Secretary of State Hurd and Secretary of State King. It had not been repeated by the British Government in recent times which we regretted; and we hoped the present Secretary of State would take an opportunity to restate it. We said that while we fully understood the police preoccupation with the maintenance of public order, there was a risk that the constant repetition of that objective without mention of the other interlinked principles would cause nationalists to feel that their views were being disregarded.

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7. Paradoxically, such repetition might even encourage people to give physical effect to their resentment in order to make an impression on police thinking.

8. The police should plan ahead (as indeed Sir John Hermon had indicated to us that they would) to reduce over a period of time the level of aggravation to nationalist communities in their decisions on routing and policing.

9. Mr. Bell expressed some sympathy with our views. In response to his query, we said that the Minister would wish to review the 12th with the Secretary of State at the next Conference on 17 July (the item is on the agenda). The Minister's main concern would be the avoidance of riot and disorder, especially in nationalist areas, but we expected he would also touch upon the other points he had made previously in the Dail and which we had now repeated.



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CLLR. BRIAN FEENEY

27 June 1990
Mr Hugh Annealey
Chief Constable
Brooklyn
Knock Rd.
Belfast

Dear Mr Annealey

I wrote to you on 16 June about an Orange parade through contentious areas of North Belfast. I received a reply from Mr McAtamney on 22 June. I am writing again to you because I do not feel happy to engage in correspondence with old 'maximum firepower, speed and aggression' himself.

I was glad to discover on 22 June that the parade was on 22 June. Since the people who took the decision are not all stupid the contents of his letter can only be regarded as arrogant, contemptuous and full of the insolence of office.

First the route: I measure the outward leg at 2.2 miles, of which exactly one mile is through the majority Catholic area. Of course if you double it up you arrive at 5 miles most of which distance is irrelevant. But it is the absurdity of the argument that is exasperating and insulting. The logic, for want of a more appropriate word, is that it would be acceptable, for example to force a march from the Shankill to Ballysillan through Ardoyne because Flax St. and Etna Dr. would only be 400 metres of the total march! It's not the distance through the Catholic area that is relevant but the fact that it is forced through at all. The insult, humiliation and injustice felt by the Catholic community because of this seems to remain eternally beyond your grasp.

Second the duration: the parade did not take 20-25 minutes to pass. It arrived at the Antrim Rd at 8.05pm and the camp followers straggled past at 8.40pm. The Antrim Rd. at the New Lodge was sealed at 7.35pm and reopened at 8.45pm. It took longer to pass along Duncairn Gardens because several bands were allowed to pause at Halliday's Rd. for specially thunderous drumming, to stamp and jeer and for their supporters to chant obscenities. This display of power had the desired effect. Some of the Catholics in the 230 numbers knelt and prayed, some of them stood with buckets of sand or water, one

man with three teenage daughters trapped in the house wept with rage and impotence. They would all hate me for telling this.

The 'objective [was] to minimise the disruption to the life of the community'. I have to tell you there are two communities. If you are not sure where they live I would be glad to take you on a tour of the interfaces separating them, the last of which was erected less than one month ago to facilitate the policing of this parade. It is because one community seeks to impose its domination on the other that these parades take place in such a way as to give maximum offence. In contrast to the provocative behaviour at Halliday's Rd. my watchers on the Crumlin Rd., where the parade was in a Protestant area, tell me the bands played tunes such as Over the Rainbow, and were pleasant to listen to.

// In these circumstances I find it hard to believe my eyes when I read the phrase, 'in the absence of a more tolerant attitude'. Tolerance by whom? By the Orangemen or their victims? How can I convince you that you are deciding to perform the equivalent of leading the National Front through Golders Green or Southall? I don't say leading the Ku Klux Klan through Harlem. Equally you wouldn't try to put a march through Ardoyne. Why are Ardoyne and Harlem different from Golders Green and Duncairn Gardens? Because the people in these latter places are relatively weak. They can be insulted and ridden over. Ardoyne and Harlem could look after themselves. A society is measured by how it treats minorities. Talking about one community means you don't recognise the existence of two: that helps explain the decision.

It also helps explain the responses of the police at the roadblocks on the Antrim Rd. I received a number of complaints from people who had tried to ask for directions and got no help. One woman in particular who was trying to reach a 12 year old in St Malachy's College and, being a Catholic of course did not know what was happening, worked her way round the periphery of the seal asking police how to reach St Malachy's College. Funny enough no policeman knew where St Malachy's is. She was furious. I told her to write to you because you were responsible, but I gave her my personal assurance nothing would be done.

213 // Your decision also demonstrates the ineffectualness of legitimate politicians (I prefer that description to constitutional) to the people of Catholic working class areas. You took your decision in full knowledge of the damage to community relations in north Belfast where over 540 people have died violently and in contempt of the majority in the lower Antrim Rd. and all proper representations. The police in 'D' (with whom I have good relations) tell me this parade sets back all their efforts at building relations.

It is clear to me and my colleagues that in practice you have no concern for developing community relations and certainly no interest in improving relations with the Catholic community.

They may be the majority in the Antrim Rd, but the Orangemen own it and you are their guarantor. When the police in Hillman St. turn their backs on the screens and interface fences and point their rifles at the few residents who venture onto their own street, Supt. Foster's local liaison committee becomes as irrelevant as me at a meeting with a senior policeman.

Yours sincerely,


Brian Feeney.