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AN RÚNAÍOCHT ANGLO-ÉIREANNACH

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ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT

BELFAST

CONFIDENTIAL

10 July, 1991.

Mr. Dermot Gallagher,
Assistant Secretary,
Anglo-Irish Division,
Department of Foreign Affairs.

*cc ps w
Mr. Bell: P
Mr. Rogers: P
Gallagher P
J. Mc Donogh*

Dear Assistant Secretary,

We had the promised briefing session here today on the subject of this year's parades. It was provided by Peter Bell accompanied by Simon Rogers of the NIO and Ian Maye of the Secretariat. Declan O'Donovan, myself and David Donoghue from the Department were present on our side. The RUC planning document for the parades was handed over and it was emphasised that this must be dealt with in considerable privacy and discretion (e.g. it should not be quoted in public statements, Dail replies etc). A copy is going down separately.

The following points emerged from the discussions.

General: The background to this year's exercise has been the careful consideration given by the RUC to the basic objective of handling the parades so as to optimise the maintenance of public order. This year they had to take into account the political talks. By and large it was not a year for new initiatives; that might risk "rocking the boat". Nevertheless they had not lost sight of the long term objectives of incremental advances in the general situation and could point to improvements. (Two were mentioned i.e. the policing of bonfires and the tactic of switching parades to arterial routes).

Hot Spots: The RUC document and background information available to the NIO do not disclose any places where trouble is expected this year but the following places were mentioned as giving rise to "scratching of heads":-

Pomeroy: (P. 74 of document). Here a crowd of some 16,000 may land on a village of 600 people largely Nationalist. We queried the rationale of the selection of Pomeroy since this is not a traditional annual parade. It appears that it is simply the turn of Pomeroy's local lodge to have the Cookstown regional parade this year. The concern of the RUC is mainly related to the risk to its own members - the field is behind the RUC station. Proceeding (apparently to challenge the decision to allow the parade by way of judicial review) are in the High Court here today. If "allowed" in an a.m. application the action will be heard this afternoon.

Ballycastle (P. 38) No specific risk is perceived but there is an awareness of a recent killing in the town (which is, of

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course, largely Nationalist) which gives rise to a feeling of alertness.

Garvagh (P. 30) Again there is no specific expectation of trouble but word has apparently gone out to prevent annoyance to local communities.

Belfast - Lower Ormeau Road We raised this one in the light of representations received. The NIO seems to be happy that the RUC general tactic of opening up arterial routes like this one is working better than banning parades or closing them off. The objective is to "neutralise" them and make them available for parades by the two sides. The tactic has been used in Derry and in Cookstown. The example was given of a recent Nationalist parade into the Diamond in Derry which passed off without trouble - something that would have been inconceivable some time back. The same was true of allowing the use of Garvaghy Road in Portadown although early morning timing of the recent Church parade which went off without any problems was also a factor. We made the point that arterial routes were not necessarily "neutral", e.g. Garvaghy Road which was overwhelmingly Nationalist.

Killyleagh/Shrigley We raised this in the light of yesterday's note from Conor Barrington. Again the response was that in their professional judgement no problems were expected. Ballynabinch (P. 62 of RUC Document) was in the same category. However in the light of our concerns these two parades would be checked further.

Yours sincerely,



Cathal Crowley