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Reference Code: 2021/49/290

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Secure Fax

5 July 1995

To: Belfast

From: H. Q.

For: B. Callaghan

From: D. Kelleher

pl cc M. Mellett

Orange marches: Bellaghy

1. Further my fax of 29 June, a mini-Twelfth will take place in Bellaghy tonight at c. 8 p.m. In the past, according to local SDLP and clerical contacts, the parade has been seen as primarily a traffic nuisance, although SDLP contacts would ideally prefer that it not be routed through the village at all, and should be confined to suitable sites outside the village, and will say so if asked publicly. Sinn Féin have taken a particular interest in the event this year and the indications are that there will be a significant counter-demonstration. We are aware from local contacts that Sinn Féin have filed an application to have a counter-demo and it is likely that they will try to block the road by a sit-down.
2. We are also aware that the Orange parade may be larger than in previous years: 40 bands have apparently been invited from other areas. Sinn Féin counter-demonstrators are expected from e.g. East Tyrone.
3. In sum, and given the post-Clegg increase in the temperature, there seems to be potential for a flashpoint. Local clergy and SDLP contacts, for their part, have noticed a recent improvement in relations with the RUC in Bellaghy and worry that tonight could set matters back.

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Clearly, sensitive policing by the RUC will be at a premium at the event, as will strict control of the Orange marchers. According to local SDLP and clerical contacts, who are suspicious of Sinn Féin's approach to the parade, the local Subdivisional Commander (Clements) has worked to keep the Orangemen out of Nationalist estates and the SDLP are generally happy with the RUC's approach up to now. As of this morning, Orange arches had not yet appeared in the town but it is not clear if this is due to RUC pressure or Orange self restraint. Clements, apparently with an eye to the Francie Hughes Republican parade in August, is of the view that all sides should be allowed to walk. Ideally, as mentioned above, the SDLP would prefer that the Orange parade not take place through the village, because it is undoubtedly provocative, and blocks the road through the village including the main route to the local hospital, but their practical priority is to ensure that events go off peacefully.

5. Grateful if you would signal our interest in this parade to the other side and ask for thier assessment.
6. As discussed with Frank Boughton, I will attend the meeting on parades scheduled for 2 p.m. tomorrow.

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