

C O N F I D E N T I A L

COPY

NH/56/5

FROM: NIGEL HAMILTON
US CENT SEC
DATE: 17 JUNE 1991

cc: PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Ledlie - B

Mr McConnell - B
Mr Walker

PEACE LINES

1. You are aware that a new committee has been established, under the chairmanship of the Paymaster General, on which all other Junior Ministers sit, together with representatives from NIO and Central Secretariat, to consider the security, economic, and community relations aspects of security policy (SECRASP).
2. At its first meeting, the Committee identified a number of subject areas on which papers have been commissioned. One of these topics is "Peace Lines in Belfast" and Central Secretariat has been charged with producing a relevant paper. You are aware that this is an area in which the Minister of State has a strong personal interest, believing firmly that we need now to give serious consideration to ways and means of removing Peace Lines, particularly walls.
3. The purpose of this note therefore is to ask Mr McConnell, in the first instance, and with suitable input from Mr Walker, to draft a paper from his knowledge of these

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areas. I attach a copy of the tribal map on which I have marked in blue the peace lines known to me. The objective of this exercise is:-

- (a) to set down on paper the facts as known to us about the peace line, the surrounding area, potential land uses etc;
 - (b) to consider how we might tackle a number of peace lines to have them removed; and
 - (c) to identify 2 or 3 specific cases which, in our view, might be possibilities for successful action.
4. I think that what we need is a short paragraph for each peace line. The paragraph would summarise the following:-
- (a) the reason for the existence and construction of the peace line, in terms of adjacent communities, history of conflict;
 - (b) the nature of the peace line (permanent brick wall/ bricked-up houses/wire netting etc);
 - (c) any imminent land use changes on either side of the wall (eg the proposals for Duncairn Gardens, recently published);
 - (d) our assessment of the feelings of the adjacent communities about the wall, including a consideration of the ability of local community organisations to work together and achieve a replacement of the wall.

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5. We should also include in the paper summaries of previous successful attempts either to remove a wall or to prevent its erection. I think here of the Short Strand/Albertbridge Road interface and the re-zoning of Lower Oldpark/Lower Crumlin Roads from housing to commercial activities and acting now as neutral territory.
6. For what it is worth, my personal view is that we might be able to move forward in some areas, for example, by the construction of small business units to which both sides of the community would have access. Possibilities in this category would be:
- Suffolk, at Oranmore
 - Argyle Street (in light of surrounding developments in Shankill/Falls)
 - Manor Street, (since we are looking for a site for a North Belfast Enterprise Agency)
 - Duncairn Gardens (because DOE have specific proposals in mind)
 - Springfield Road (because of the Springvale Project)

There are of course other areas which are particularly difficult and where I would see little prospect of success in the short term.

7. I would like to work to having a first draft of the paper by 25 June so that we could discuss its shape and content before I go on leave.

(Signed: NH)

NIGEL HAMILTON

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R E S T R I C T E D

490/6

18 JUN 1991

FROM: J McKERVILL
Security Policy and Operations Division
18 June 1991

Mr Hamilton - B

SECRASP

We spoke. As discussed, I attach an Annex showing terms of reference and membership of SECRASP.

(signed)

J McKERVILL
SH 2296

R E S T R I C T E D

TRG/14199