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cc to Comptroller
T. Russell
T. O'Connor
Secretary

22/6/88
R 1715

C330
22.6.88.

TO BELFAST FROM H.Q. (PART ONE OF TWO).

PA
6.5.

MARCHING SEASON

MSGE. FOR COLLINS FROM O'DONOVAN

1. ARISING FROM THE LAST CONFERENCE MEETING, I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD DISCUSS WITH THE OTHER SIDE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FORTHCOMING MARCHING SEASON. OUR CONCERNS ARE TWOFOLD - THE SAFETY OF PEOPLE ALONG MARCHING ROUTES AND THE AVOIDANCE OF PROVOCATION AND INCONVENIENCE TO PEOPLE IN NATIONALIST AREAS. SECRETARY OF STATE KING AND DOUGLAS HURD BEFORE HIM HAVE BEEN QUITE CLEAR THAT THE ESSENTIAL STANDARD TO BE USED IN DETERMINING THE ROUTE OF A PARADE OR, INDEED, THE DESIRABILITY OF ITS TAKING PLACE AT ALL, IS THE PARADE'S ACCEPTABILITY OR OTHERWISE TO A CLEAR MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE AREA THROUGH WHICH IT PASSES.

2. BEARING THESE POINTS IN MIND, THE FOLLOWING ARE PRELIMINARY COMMENTS REGARDING A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL MARCHES. FURTHER COMMENTS MAY BE FORWARDED AS THE PLANS FOR THIS YEARS MARCHING SEASON ARE FINALISED AND WE HEAR FURTHER FROM CONTACTS.

BELFAST

3. NORTH BELFAST: YOU WILL BE AWARE OF OUR CONCERNS (WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN EXPRESSED REGARDING THE ROUTE USING CLIFTONPARK AVENUE AND DUNCAIRN GARDENS) AND BISHOP DALY'S REMARKS AT THE TOTTEN FUNERAL. THE ROUTE HAS NOW BEEN USED TWICE IN RECENT WEEKS. FOLLOWING POPULATION CHANGES IN NORTH BELFAST, THE DUNCAIRN GARDENS ROUTE MARKS THE SECTARIAN INTERFACE OF NORTH BELFAST. IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR MARCHES ON THE ROUTE, THE SECURITY FORCES EFFECTIVELY SCREEN OFF CATHOLIC AREAS - A PRACTICE WHICH CAUSES STRONG RESENTMENT LOCALLY. I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD PLACE ON RECORD AGAIN OUR CONCERN ABOUT THIS ROUTE AND EXPRESS OUR VIEW THAT AS IT HAS BEEN MARCHED TWICE ALREADY THIS SUMMER, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ROUTING ANY FURTHER MARCHES THIS SEASON AWAY FROM DUNCAIRN GARDENS.

CO. DOWN

4. PORTADOWN: THIS IS TRADITIONALLY THE MOST IMPORTANT MARCH. THE DECISION TO PREVENT THE MARCH FROM ENTERING THE OBINS STREET (TUNNEL) AREA WAS WIDELY WELCOMED BY NATIONALISTS AND IS OFTEN QUOTED BY SOME COMMENTATORS (EG FR. FAUL) AS EVIDENCE OF AN ATTEMPT BY THE RUC AT MORE EVEN-HANDED POLICING OF PARADES. FOR THIS REASON, THE PORTADOWN MARCH HAS A PARTICULAR VISIBILITY AND ANY REVERSAL OF THIS DECISION WOULD, CORRESPONDINGLY, HAVE A SEVERELY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON NATIONALIST OPINION. THE USE OF THE GARVAGHY ROAD AS PART OF THE ROUTE HOWEVER CONTINUES TO BE UNACCEPTABLE TO LOCAL NATIONALIST OPINION WHO SEE IT AS A TOTALLY UNNECESSARY COAT TRAILING EXERCISE THROUGH AN OVERWHELMINGLY NATIONALIST AREA. WE WOULD URGE A ROUTE WHICH WOULD AVOID THE GARVAGHY ROAD.

5. CASTLEWELLAN: THE LOCATIONS FOR THE COUNTY DOWN PARADES ARE, WE UNDERSTAND, CHOSEN ON A ROTA BASIS. LAST YEAR MARKED THE FIRST OCCASION IN 15 YEARS THAT THE PARADE WAS HELD THROUGH CASTLEWELLAN - A TOWN WHICH IS ALMOST 100P.C. CATHOLIC. THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PARADE TO BE HELD AGAIN IN CASTLEWELLAN THIS YEAR.

6. BALLINAHINCH: OUR CONCERN HERE IS FOCUSED ON THE SAFETY OF THE LOCAL NATIONALIST POPULATION. THE TRADITIONAL PROBLEM WITH THE MARCH HAS BEEN ATTEMPTS BY 'KICK-THE-POPE' BANDS TO ENTER HILLCREST DRIVE - AN ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY NATIONALIST AREA. WE WOULD ASSUME THAT THE RUC OR ARMY (AS HAS BEEN REQUIRED) WILL CONTINUE TO DENY THEM ACCESS TO THAT AREA.

7. KILKEEL: THIS WAS A FLASHPOINT IN 1986. LAST YEAR HOWEVER THE PARADE PASSED OFF WITHOUT MAJOR INCIDENT. IT IS NONETHELESS AN AREA WHICH WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL HANDLING THIS YEAR IN ORDER TO FORESTALL ANY POSSIBLE ATTACKS ON LOCAL NATIONALISTS.

CO. ANTRIM

8. RASHARKIN: OUR CONCERN HERE IS WITH THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF NATIONALISTS LIVING IN THE AREA. THERE WERE VERY SERIOUS DISTURBANCES IN RASHARKIN ASSOCIATED WITH LOYALIST PARADES IN JULY AND AUGUST OF 1986. WHILE THINGS WERE RELATIVELY QUIET LAST YEAR, IT IS NONETHELESS ALWAYS A POTENTIAL FLASHPOINT. THE BALANCE, IN WHAT WAS A PROTESTANT VILLAGE, HAS BEGUN TO CHANGE IN RECENT YEARS AND THE BALANCE IS NOW APPARENTLY 60P.C. IF NOT 55P.C. PROTESTANT. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE MAIN NORTH ANTRIM PARADE WILL BE HELD HERE THIS YEAR. I UNDERSTAND THAT SEAN FARREN OF THE SDLP WILL BE IN CONTACT WITH THE LOCAL RUC REGARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PARADE.

9. DUNLOY: THIS IS AN ALMOST TOTALLY NATIONALIST VILLAGE. THE LOCAL ORANGE HALL WAS BURNT DOWN 2 YEARS AGO AND I UNDERSTAND THAT A NEW ONE MAY BE OFFICIALLY OPENED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. GIVEN THE LOCAL MAKE-UP, THIS EVENT WILL REQUIRE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE HANDLING BOTH FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE SAFETY OF THE LOCAL NATIONALIST POPULATION AND IN TERMS OF AVOIDING UNNECESSARY PROVOCATION TO THE LOCAL NATIONALIST POPULATION. SEAN FARREN (SDLP) WILL CONTACT THE RUC REGARDING LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS.

CO DERRY

CO. DERRY

10. LIMAVADY: WHILE LOCAL NATIONALISTS WERE REASONABLY HAPPY WITH THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS LAST YEAR WHEN THE MARCH PASSED OFF PEACEFULLY, THERE WERE DISTURBANCES IN LIMAVADY IN 1986. OUR CONCERN IS CENTRED ON THE NEED TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE LOCAL NATIONALIST POPULATION. THE OTHER SIDE TOLD US LAST YEAR THAT THE LOCAL ORANGE ORDER HAD A HARD ELEMENT WITH A POTENTIAL TO CAUSE TROUBLE. LOCAL NATIONALISTS FEEL THAT ANY MARCH SHOULD BE HELD DURING THE HOURS OF DAYLIGHT RATHER THAN LATE IN THE EVENING AS HERETOFORE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE SENIOR SDLP LOCAL COUNCILLOR (ARTHUR DOHERTY) WILL BE MEETING THE LOCAL RUC COMMANDER LATER THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS.

11. GARVAGH: THIS TOWN IS 30P.C. CATHOLIC. THERE HAVE BEEN OBJECTIONS IN THE PAST BY LOCAL NATIONALISTS TO THE PAINTING OF KERBSTONES, LAMP-POSTS ETC. THERE HAVE BEEN PROBLEMS IN THIS VILLAGE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AND LOCAL NATIONALISTS HAVE EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH LAST YEARS' POLICING AND REPORT THAT A 'KICK-THE-POPE' BAND REGULARLY ATTACKED CATHOLIC HOMES ON THE NIGHT OF THE 11TH. LOCAL NATIONALIST LEADERS SUBSEQUENTLY HAD A MEETING LAST YEAR WITH THE LOCAL RUC CHIEF SUPT. IRWIN WHO IMPLIED THAT INCREASED POLICE RESOURCES WOULD BE DEVOTED TO GARVAGH THIS YEAR IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE LOCAL NATIONALIST POPULATION.

12. KILREA: WHILE POLICING HAS BEEN SATISFACTORY IN RECENT YEARS, THERE IS SOME CONCERN LOCALLY THAT NOW THAT THE LOCAL POLICE STATION IS LEFT UNMANNED OVERNIGHT, THERE COULD BE PROBLEMS ON THE NIGHT OF THE 12TH. A POLICE PRESENCE OVERNIGHT DURING THE MARCHING SEASON WOULD HELP TO ALLAY LOCAL FEARS OF POSSIBLE ATTACKS ON THE LOCAL NATIONALIST POPULATION.

13. CLAREHILL (NEAR KILREA): LOCAL NATIONALISTS FEEL THAT POLICING HERE COULD BE IMPROVED TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE LOCAL NATIONALIST POPULATION.

14. COLERAINE: LOCAL NATIONALISTS FEEL THAT REGULAR PATROLS DURING THE MARCHING SEASON, PARTICULARLY IN THE WATERSIDE AREA, WOULD HELP TO FORESTALL INCIDENTS DIRECTED AGAINST LOCAL NATIONALISTS LIKE SOME OF THE FIREBOMBINGS IN PREVIOUS YEARS.

15. CASTLEDAWSON: THE LOCAL SDLP WILL HAVE A MEETING WITH THE LOCAL RUC SHORTLY. THEIR CONCERN IS FOCUSSED PARTICULARLY ON THE SITUATION IN A LOCAL COUNCIL ESTATE (PARKVIEW) WHICH IS MIXED AND WHERE GRAFFIFI PAINTING, TAUNTS ETC ARE COMMON. LAST YEAR THE BONFIRE WAS LIT IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THIS ESTATE CAUSING RESENTMENT AMONG LOCAL NATIONALISTS.

16. BELLAGHY: IN RECENT YEARS AN ORANGE ARCH HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED AT A MIXED HOUSING ESTATE (BEATRICE VILLAS), AT ITS JUNCTION WITH THE MAIN STREET (WILLIAM STREET) AND HAS ACTED AS A FOCAL POINT FOR THE MORE EXTREME ELEMENTS RESULTING IN STONE THROWING INCIDENTS ETC. LOCAL NATIONALISTS CONSIDER THAT THE ARCH SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED IN THE SAME LOCATION THIS YEAR. IF HOWEVER, IT IS TO BE ALLOWED THEN BETTER POLICING OF THE ROWDY ELEMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO KEEP THEM NEAR THE ARCH AT THE LOWER END OF THE ESTATE.

17. MAGHERA: IN RECENT TIMES THE MARCH HAS BEEN COMING UP AS FAR AS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH - EVEN AT TIMES WHEN SERVICES ARE TAKING PLACE. LOCAL NATIONALISTS FEEL IT SHOULD BE RE-ROUTED ELSEWHERE. THERE HAVE BEEN STONE THROWING INCIDENTS WHICH LOCAL NATIONALISTS FEEL HAVE NOT BEEN PROPERLY CONTROLLED IN THE PAST.

CO. ARMAGH

18. NEWRY: WE UNDERSTAND THAT NEWRY MAY WELL BE ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL LOCATIONS FOR THIS YEARS' MARCHES ON THE 12TH. GIVEN THE MAKE-UP OF THE LOCAL POPULATION, SENSITIVITY WILL BE REQUIRED IN THE ROUTING OF THE MARCH IN ORDER TO AVOID THE PROVOCATION OF LOCAL NATIONALISTS AND IN ORDER TO FORESTALL ANY INCIDENTS OR ATTACKS ON NATIONALISTS.

19. BESSBROOK: THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE TENSION OVER FLAGS AND BUNTING LAST YEAR. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AS OF 21/6 THERE IS AGAIN TENSION IN THE AREA OVER FLAGS AND BUNTING BUT IS "MANAGEABLE" AT THE MOMENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT CATHOLIC HOUSEWIVES HAVE TAKEN TRICOLOURS IN ONE ESTATE. DEMOGRAPHIC MOVEMENT IS AT THE BACK OF TENSION. BESSBROOK NOW HAS A SMALL CATHOLIC MAJORITY.