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APPRENTICE BOYS PARADE IN DERRY, 1988

1. I raised with Mark Durkan of John Hume's office in Derry this afternoon (he had been absent in Belfast when I was in Derry last week) the question of the Apprentice Boys parade in Derry around the 12th of August. The parade is usually held on the Saturday closest to the 12th. The 12th itself falls on a Friday this year. It thus looks as though the parade will be held on Saturday the 13th.

2. Firstly Durkan said that he hoped that there would not be the same media pressure on the event as last year. The fact that there were no major incidents last year should help in this direction. The SDLP itself would try to restrain its Councillors from being alarmist. Durkan was insistent that there should be no question of not allowing the march to come across the river (from the Waterside) and continue on within the walls to the Apprentice Boys' Hall. It had always done so and to attempt to stop it now would carry the implication that the city within the walls is somehow a nationalist preserve - which is undesirable. It would also be impossible to achieve without major trouble.

3. Durkan felt that the policing was quite effective last year. However, he said that there were two areas where improvements could be made.

(a) There should be little or no policing in the nationalist areas of the Bogside and Creggan. Last year's heavy police presence was a major irritant (leading to comments of the order that "they're parading and we're being policed") and, if it takes place again, could provide a ready excuse for those who wish to cause trouble.

(b) Pedestrians would normally pass into the Bogside through Butcher Street which is inside the walls and runs from the main square (the Diamond) down towards the walls. Last year police had screened off the Bogside end of the street but were allowing people through after searching them. Durkan

felt that there should be no searching this year since it simply provides an excuse for trouble. The screening off of the end of the street is sufficient precaution.

4. Durkan said that, in fairness to the organisers of the march, the bands had stopped playing music when they were parading around the Diamond. The official reason for this was respect for the war memorial, which is in the centre of the square, but many observers felt that there was also a wish to be less provocative.

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27 June 1988