



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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AN RÚNAÍOCHT ANGLA-ÉIREANNACH

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT

BÉAL FEIRSTE

BELFAST

30 June 1988

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

Meeting on Marches

Dear Assistant Secretary,

The Joint Secretary and I had a meeting yesterday evening with the Assistant Secretary in charge of the Law and Order Division of the Northern Ireland Office, Steve Hewitt, in relation to the forthcoming marching season. The British Joint Secretary also attended. We reviewed the situation in the context of the information available at present and we handed over an Aide Memoire (copy attached) based on material available from the various Nationalist towns and conveyed to us by the Department.

In general, the main trouble spots would appear to be Portadown, Ballinahinch and Limavaddy. We expressed serious concern about Portadown, in the sense that there are parades/bonfires there on three nights in a row, namely, 10, 11 and 12 July. We expressed particular concern that the parade to Drumcree Church (known as the Church Parade), which has taken place in recent years up to a week before the 12th July, is, this year, taking place on Sunday, 10 July and, therefore, running into the 12 July parade. We saw this as adding an additional dimension to the problems which have existed in Portadown in recent years. While no decision has been taken on routes as yet, it was clear that the main 12 July parade in Portadown will be allowed to take place on the Garvaghy Road. We stressed in particular, following our experiences last year, the importance of keeping the local SDLP representatives

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Mr Colledge m 8/17/88
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*cc Mr Nally
RRR
Mr Altham/ Mr Pearson
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OS et V*

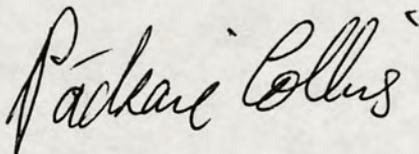
informed of the route (the local SDLP representative, Mrs. Brid
●gers, was unsure of the route of the Sunday parade last year
until about 4 hours before marching time).

The British side indicated that Ballinahinch (particularly on
the night of the 11th) and Limavaddy were marches that the
police were seriously concerned about. They confirmed to us
what the Chief Constable had told us in relation to these
marches, that is, that the intention is that the marches should
take place around 7 o'clock in the evening so that the marchers
will have dispersed by midnight. The relevant Assistant Chief
Constable, Blair Wallace, takes the view that marches taking
place late at night are certain to be provocative (the British
side confirmed that both Limavaddy and Ballinahinch had applied
to have marches at midnight).

We also expressed serious concern about the proposed march in
Newry. The British side, subject to confirmation, felt that
Newry was probably the main Co. Down location for marches this
year (this would mean, they thought, that there would be no
marches in Castlewellan). We said that, if Newry were to be
the main centre for Co. Down marches, it was likely to be one
of the major flashpoints and we asked that our particular
concern on this issue be noted.

We agreed that we would have a further discussion in relation
to marches next week with a view to having information on the
actual routes.

Yours sincerely,



Padraic Collins

Aide Memoire

The following is a summary of nationalist concerns (as conveyed to the Irish authorities) in relation to the forthcoming marching season:

North Belfast

The Cliftonpark Avenue and Duncairn Gardens route has been used twice in the past weeks for marches. Nationalists feel that a different route should be assigned to any further marches.

Portadown

The marches in Portadown remain a focal point, though the routing of the marches away from Obins Street/the Tunnel area has been welcomed by nationalists. Nevertheless, the new route (via the Garvaghy Road) is an overwhelmingly nationalist area and nationalists in the estates off the Garvaghy Road are confined to their houses for seven/eight hours on marching days.

Castlewellan

Castlewellan is a mainly nationalist town. We understand that the locations for the Co. Down parades are chosen on a rota basis. Last year was the first occasion that Castlewellan was used in 15 years. Nationalists feel that there is, therefore, no reason to have a march in Castlewellan this year.

Ballinahinch

This has been a troublesome march in recent years. Local concern relates, in particular, to the necessity to keep marches out of the Hillcrest Drive area - an almost exclusively nationalist area.

Kilkeel

There was trouble in Kilkeel in 1986 and it remains a potential flashpoint.

Rasharkin

The parades here in recent years have been provocative and have led to serious confrontation.

Dunloy

This village is now almost totally nationalist and could become a flashpoint.

Limavady

Limavady remains, despite a relatively peaceful march last year, a possible area for serious confrontation. Local nationalists feel that it would be helpful if the marches there were to take place during daylight hours rather than late in the evening as heretofore.

Garvagh

Nationalist homes were attacked during the march in 1987. Tension is already high this year, with the painting of kerbstones (including the kerbstones outside a local SDLP Councillor's home) having been carried out last weekend.

Kilrea

This has not been a major trouble spot in recent years. However, there is concern about possible trouble on the night of 12 July since the local police station is not now manned overnight. Local nationalists have expressed a desire to have it manned on the night of 12 July.

Clarehill (near Kilrea)

This has not been a controversial march in recent years - local nationalists have, however, expressed a desire to have an increased level of policing.

Coleraine

There have been fire-bombings of Nationalist homes in Coleraine in recent years. The feeling is that regular police patrols, especially in the Waterside area and during the marching season, would be helpful.

Castledawson

There is particular concern about a mixed estate (Parkview) where there has been trouble in recent years.

Bellaghy

The main trouble in recent years has centered on a mixed housing estate (Beatrice Villas at the junction with William Street) and the construction of an Orange Arch at the entry to the estate.

Maghera

The march here takes place up to the Catholic Church and, on occasion, when services are in progress.

Newry

We are informed that Newry may be one of the principal locations for this year's 12th July marches and it could well be a major flashpoint. Given the make-up of the population, the nationalist community in Newry feel that the routing of the march will be of particular importance and sensitivity.

Bessbrook

There was considerable tension in Bessbrook in 1987. Bessbrook now has a small Catholic majority. We have been informed that flags and buntings have already been put in place on the edges of nationalist areas.

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