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DE... IMMEDIATE

FROM: ANGELA DULLAGHAN
PS/Michael Ancram
7 November 1996

UNDER/ SEC *mslu*
08 NOV 1996

AA-610/94

- cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L) - B
- PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- PS/Sir David Feill - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Stephens - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Hill - B
- Mr Perry - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Anderson, DENI

Mr. Carson
Don P. C.
S.
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HEAD OF THE N.I.
14954
-7 NOV 1996
CIVIL SERVICE

Mr. Walker
for info
W. C. R.

Mr Canavan
CCRU

MEETING WITH ARCHBISHOP BRADY

This note is to confirm that a meeting has been set up between Michael Ancram and Archbishop Sean Brady.

2. The meeting will take place in Stormont Castle on Tuesday 12 November at 6.00 pm. The Minister has indicated that officials are not required to be present at this meeting.

3. I should be grateful if you could provide briefing on Economic Boycotting to reach Stormont Castle by close of play on Monday 11 November.

4. If copy recipients have any information they feel the Minister needs to have please forward it to me by Monday also.

Signed

ANGELA DULLAGHAN
PS/Michael Ancram

ASST/ SEC *621"*
11 NOV 1996
C.C.R.U.

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BB/MOFS/11855

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cc PS/Secretary of State (B,L&T)
PS/Michael Ancram (DENI,L&T)
PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Steele
Mr Leach
Mr Stephens
Mr Bell
Mr Hill
Mr Perry
Mr Maccabe
Mr Corbett

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From: J A Canavan
CCRU

11 November 1996

To: PS/Michael Ancram (B)

MEETING WITH ARCHBISHOP BRADY

1. You requested briefing on economic boycotting for the Minister's meeting with Archbishop Brady on Tuesday 12 November. At the Minister's previous meetings on this subject with Unionist representatives (17 September) and with boycotted business people (24 October), the Minister undertook to convey to the Catholic Church authorities the serious concerns of the Protestant and Unionist community on this subject. This meeting offers an early opportunity to do so. The Secretary of State also suggested (PS/SOS minute of 28 October) that an approach to the Diocesan Bishops might be considered. It is proposed that, given the strongly hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church, the Minister's approaches should be confined, in the first instance, to the Archbishop, who would be best placed to influence Diocesan Bishops and parish clergy.

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Economic Boycotting

2. The use of boycott as a tactic of communal disapprobation is scarcely new in Irish history. In the course of the past twenty-five years, the tactic has been used at local level by both sides, but those boycotts have not tended to be persistent. After the Drumcree crisis of July, there was a series of spontaneous boycotts in the south and west of the province by local Catholics against retail traders with a Protestant/Unionist background, usually claiming the justification that the targets had been active in the Orange disruption. Though the media (particularly the Newsletter) focused attention on the subject, there was initially a general unwillingness on the part of the Government and representative business organisations to denounce the boycotts in the belief that they would cease in due course. The involvement of local Sinn Fein supporters, though without any evident central direction, together with the undoubted strong feelings of the Catholic community about Drumcree, account for the persistence of the boycotts in certain areas, notably Pomeroy, Lisnaskea, parts of South Down and South Armagh. As was evident from the Minister's meeting with affected traders, the boycotts are often the current manifestation of a local antagonism which has lasted for decades and has political, class and sectarian dimensions.

The Catholic Church and Boycotts

3. Economic boycotts have been condemned by the four Church leaders and undoubtedly Cardinal Daly had little sympathy for it. However, there is scepticism in the Protestant community as to how far down the Catholic Church organisational structure these views have permeated. As with clergy in all denominations, local priests often feel the need to identify politically with their flocks. There is also a tendency on the part of Protestants to over-estimate the political influence which the Catholic clergy can exercise over Nationalists. For instance, Mr Cedric Wilson at his meeting with the Minister on 17 September, claimed that the Catholic Church had the power through the pulpit to bring people back into local businesses. Some of the traders at the meeting on 24 October seem to believe that the Catholic Church was itself directing congregations to boycott Protestants.

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4. It is important that the Minister does not give the Archbishop the impression that he shares these extreme views of the political power of the Church. However, he can stress the moral dimension to the boycott issue - that it is poisoning community relations and is a form of oppression against a vulnerable local minority. The Minister might also refer positively to instances where local Catholic clergy have stood out against boycotts, eg the case of Father Quinn in Pomeroy (he might also mention the local Protestant perception that this curate was subsequently admonished by his parish priest).
5. The benefits of a clear stand by Catholic clergy at all levels are two-fold. First, it would strengthen the resolve of those Catholics who do not wish to participate in boycotts, but are sensitive to pressure from the rest of the community. Second, it would improve community relations by getting a clear signal to Protestants and Unionists that the Catholic community is not monolithically antagonistic to them.
6. The Belfast Telegraph of 8 November has reported that the Business and Professional People for the Union group had met with the SDLP to discuss the position of Protestant traders. Mr Alan Field was reported as wanting the Catholic Church and the SDLP to help remove "Sinn Fein - IRA's strangle-hold in certain areas". This may not be entirely helpful in terms of the Minister's approach to Archbishop Brady, as it might suggest an element of political manipulation .
7. Line to take for the Minister's use are attached.

[Signed: JAC]

J A CANAVAN

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Lines to take

Boycotts - General

- ♦ There has been a number of poisonous side-effects from Drumcree - residential intimidation; church blockades; football violence, etc. The Government has condemned all of these manifestations of sectarianism. However, the persistence of economic boycotts against Protestant traders in parts of the south and west of Northern Ireland has provoked particular concern. The Government initially did not want to highlight the issue, for fear of aggravating it. The matter has been raised with me, both by Unionist political representatives and some of the traders directly concerned. I am in no doubt that, in towns like Pomeroy and Lisnaskea, Unionist shopkeepers, often not involved in the Orange disruption of July, have been targeted and are in serious financial difficulty.
- ♦ The victims see boycotts as a continuation of violence directed at them during the IRA campaign. They perceive this as an attempt to force them out of areas where their families have lived for centuries. I undertook to convey their concerns to the Church authorities.

Catholic Church and Boycotts

- ♦ I recognise, of course, that the Church has no influence over the political activities of its members. But I would hope that the Church at all levels could make clear the moral dimension of this issue. Boycotts are doing real damage to community relations. Some would say they call into question the commitment of some Nationalists to a pluralist society, when they happen to be in the majority.
- ♦ Previous comments on boycotts by Cardinal Daly and more junior clergy were greatly appreciated. Can anything more be done to stress, both to Protestants and to those Catholics who find the boycott tactic repugnant, that the Church is wholeheartedly opposed to it?

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The law and boycotts (if raised)

- The criminal law only comes into play if violence is used to enforce a boycott (eg damage to the oil tank of a non-conforming Catholic in Pomeroy). Boycotted traders are not entitled to any Government compensation, as physical injury or damage is not involved.

Counter-boycotts (if raised)

- Though some publicity was given to counter-boycotts against Catholics in a few areas, there is no evidence that these have taken hold. Similarly, the well publicised claims of a business boycott of the ROI seem to have little foundation.