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UNDER/ SEC 36215.  
14 MAY 1997  
CENT SEC

FROM: S J LEACH  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR POLICING AND SECURITY

13 May 1997

ASST/ SEC 90/5.  
15 MAY 1997  
C.C.R.U.

- cc PS/Mr Ingram (B & L)
- PS/Mr Murphy (B & L)
- PS/PUS (B & L)
- PS/Sir David Fell
- Mr Steele
- Mr Thomas
- Mr Stephens
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Bell
- Mr Wood (B & L)
- Mr Maccabe
- Mr Smyth
- Mr Hill
- Mr Perry
- Mr Brooker
- Mr Priestly
- Mr Clarke
- Mr Webb
- Mr Woods
- Mr Warner (B & L)

*North Legat file, please*

*to Lapham 15.5  
my earlier scribble  
refer.  
13.5*

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B & L)

**QUEEN'S SPEECH: POSSIBLE PRESS RELEASE ON PARADES BILL**

Mr Lindsay's note of 5 May recording the Secretary of State's reaction to my submission of the 2nd on the Parades issue suggested that I might review Annex C to the submission (the draft statement) to see if it required amendment.

2. I have now done this, and attach a revised version for the Secretary of State's consideration. If she is content with the draft, there could be an early

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opportunity to deploy it, since the inclusion of the Parades Bill in the Queen's Speech tomorrow would provide the chance for a fuller exposition of the policy. The statement has accordingly been drafted in the form of a Press Release which could be issued tomorrow following the Speech.

3. On a point of detail, the draft refers to the Chief Constable seeking the views of the Parades Commission on a regular basis as the summer proceeds. I had a word about this with Mr Flanagan at Constable Bradshaw's funeral this afternoon: he confirmed that he would be entirely happy with this formulation and would indeed be having regular liaison with the Commission over the summer.

4. I should also add that, following SPM's endorsement yesterday of the SCM paper on Objectives for the 1997 Marching Season, advice on the "route map" leading up to the July marches (which the Secretary of State requested) will be submitted shortly.

[sgd]

**S J LEACH**

**Ext: 27012**

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EPC/7

191

[14] May 1997

DRAFT

## SECRETARY OF STATE SETS OUT POLICY ON PARADES

Commenting on the inclusion in the Queen's Speech [today] of a Bill aimed at reducing tensions over parades in Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State, the rt hon Dr Mo Mowlam MP, said

"I well understand the depth and sincerity of the views which are held on the parades issue by many people across Northern Ireland. And I also understand, and am heartened by, the very widespread feeling that we **must not see again** the severe public disorder witnessed last summer - which did such damage, not only to lives and property, but also to the confidence of the community and the image of Northern Ireland abroad.

The Labour Government is therefore committed to help all those concerned to make a **fresh start** on parades. We want to encourage and facilitate **local agreements**.

The Queen's Speech included a commitment to bring forward legislation on parades. Among other things, this will provide a statutory role for the Parades Commission which reflects the analysis in the Report of the Independent Review of Parades and Marches headed by Dr North.

I know that many in the Loyal Orders see the North recommendations as threatening to their freedom to parade peacefully. In a parallel way, many Nationalists lack confidence that the current arrangements adequately take into account their concern about the true impact of parades on local communities, particularly where they have not been organised on the basis of consensus.

I believe that the North Report was a genuine attempt to bring a degree of fresh thinking to this controversial area; in particular in its central recommendation that more needs to be done to encourage the local accommodation of differences about parades.

I am therefore determined, in taking forward legislation to provide new powers for the Commission and a new framework for handling parades, to take into account the fears and sensitivities which these issues arouse on all sides. That is why the Queen's Speech announced that the legislation would be by way of **Bill**, to enable our proposals to be subject to the fullest possible scrutiny by Parliament.

In addition, since it is not possible - now that the marching season is already under way - to have new arrangements in place for this summer, we shall be ensuring that, when legislation **is** introduced later this year, it will benefit fully from the experience of this marching season, **and** the views of all

those involved, to achieve **any enhancements which are possible** to the new measures.

I shall myself be discussing these issues with elected representatives, the Loyal Orders, and representatives of communities affected by contentious parades. The Government will be **genuinely open** to serious proposals for enhancing the chances of local agreement and the workability of new arrangements. And the **Parades Commission** will be undertaking their own activities, including the development of **guidelines, procedures** in respect of their new statutory role, and a **Code of Conduct** for participants in a parade and protesters.

That is the way ahead for the future. For this year, I believe that the **Parades Commission** are developing a real insight into the issues involved in contentious marches in Northern Ireland. The Chief Constable (with whom the power to set conditions on parades will remain until the legislation is enacted) will be seeking their views on a regular basis as the summer progresses.

For my part, I am committed to doing **everything I can** to ensure that we do not witness a repeat of the appalling events of last year. As Archbishop Eames has said, history will not easily forgive anyone who seeks to bring about such a repetition. I am convinced that the best way of making

progress is through **dialogue** leading to accommodation and agreement at local level. As the Queen's Speech indicates, the Government will take steps to establish a comprehensive and even-handed approach to encourage this. This year, I urge all who are working to achieve accommodation to redouble their efforts. They have the full support not only of the Government, but I am sure also of the vast majority of people throughout Northern Ireland."

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*Mr Brown*  
*I'm not sure when this originated, + don't  
know the re-emergence of, in fact, further  
consultation will please SDS.*

[14] May 1997

DRAFT

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*HW*  
*14.5*

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