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Your reference

Our reference

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Date

Dear Tony,

BELFAST PEACELINES

I have attached a list of all the major peacelines in the Greater Belfast area which has been compiled following consultation with the local RUC Sub-Divisional Commanders and Mr Tommy Stewart who has a long history of involvement in the Civrep Organisation. I have also included some background information relating to the reason for the particular peaceline, when it originated and the current feeling of the communities on both sides of the divide.

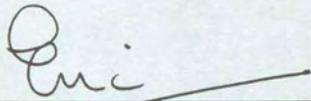
The peacelines can be divided into 3 main categories. Those dividing 2 communities of fairly equal numbers, where there is no significant population movement, and where both sides want a permanent physical barrier as high and as wide as possible. Peacelines in this category would include all those separating the Springfield/Falls community from the Shankill/Woodvale community.

The second category would cover those locations where there is a significant population shift on the Protestant side in particular and where the need for a divide will remain but where the divide will eventually be located is in doubt. The best examples of this would be Duncairn Gardens and Alliance/Glenbryn.

The third category are those areas which are completely surrounded by the opposite community and who have very real and understandable fear. The obvious locations in this category are Short Strand, Suffolk, Torrens/Heathfield.

Throughout all the peaceline locations it is very apparent that both communities are completely polarised and the vast majority have no desire whatsoever to mix with the other. They would want if anything higher walls and bigger fences. There is also the "not an inch" syndrome where particularly in loyalist areas the most important aspect of peacelines is territory. ("What we have we hold!")

It is a depressing scenario but nevertheless there does appear to be scope at some of the locations to at the very least "soften the effects of the peaceline". I hope this is helpful and I can discuss it further at the next meeting if you wish. I have copied this to Simon Marsh but not at this stage to any other members of the working group.



ERIC DALZELL

Principal Civil Representative

BELFAST PEACELINES

1. CUPAR WAY/BOMBAY STREET

This stretch of peaceline runs from Lanark Way along Cupar Way to Conway Street and is a mixture of wall and palisade fence. It was one of the first peacelines to be established in Belfast in the early seventies because of serious sectarian disturbances in the area. The position of the wall very close to Catholic housing results in continuing attacks from Cupar Way by youths from the Shankill Road area. There is space available to create a sterile area between the 2 communities and this, along with NIHE plans to redevelop the Bombay Street area, should provide the means to create a more effective and environmentally pleasing peaceline. Attitudes on both sides of this interface have hardened considerably and there is no chance whatsoever of a wall not being required at this location in the foreseeable future.

2. AINSWORTH AVENUE/SPRINGFIELD ROAD

The peaceline which stretches from Workman Avenue to Lanark Way along the Springfield Road is made up of palisade fencing and derelict housing. It was created in the mid-seventies following serious civil disorder in the area. Over the years a significant number of people have left the area and the houses became derelict and were eventually demolished. Again because of the proximity of the 2 communities there continues to be sectarian disorder at this interface particularly during the "marching season." There are plans to develop this area within the Springvale Project and this should have a considerable impact on the general state of this interface. The communities are totally polarised on each side of the peaceline and again there is no hope of it being made redundant in the near future. There is a slight hope that an adjoining development at Watermouth Street which is presently mixed will prove a success although realistically this is not likely to be a trend elsewhere along peacelines.

3. SPRINGFIELD PARK/SPRINGMARTIN ROAD

This peaceline stretching from Ballygomartin Road to Springfield Road has been created in bits and pieces beginning from the mid-seventies. It is partially wall with added lengths of palisade fencing. There has been continuous sectarian problems at this interface including serious rioting at the Springhill Avenue junction during the late 1980s. This was largely eliminated by the construction of a wall at the end of Springhill Avenue in 1990. Since then there has been little or no serious rioting but there have been at least 10 assassination attempts in Springfield Park by loyalist paramilitaries. This has understandably caused considerable tension and fear in the area and although the peaceline separating the 2 communities has been strengthened and added to over the years there is an urgent need to look at a more effective, permanent structure which will give both communities reassurance. This peaceline will be required for the foreseeable future and there is no hope of any reduction in the security requirement.

4. STEWARTSTOWN ROAD, SUFFOLK

This peaceline runs from Lenadoon avenue to Suffolk Road and apart from a small section of 3.7 metre palisade fence at Kells Avenue is fairly low key. There are a number of NIHE fences and planting which provide limited security and this along with the close presence of the Woodbourne RUC Station gives reassurance to both communities. There have been recent sectarian clashes but it is hoped to avoid having to provide any further major walls or fences. The Protestant Suffolk estate has a number of empty properties and I understand that the NIHE would be keen to attempt some form of redefining the community borders. This is of course extremely sensitive and would necessitate a shifting of the peaceline and a perceived "giving up" of ground.

5. CRUMLIN ROAD

This peaceline stretches from the Holy Cross chapel to ^{Cambrai} Cambria Street/Flax Street on both sides of the Crumlin Road. It was perhaps where the first instances of sectarian violence began in the late 1960s and for many years both sides of the road were separated from each other by a mixture of derelict buildings and corrugated iron fences. In the late 1980s this was replaced by the Housing Executive with environmentally friendly walls and planting. With a few exceptions this has proved an effective and reasonably attractive peaceline. Both communities are completely polarised and there is no hope of any reduction in the need for these measures.

6. TORRENS/HEATHFIELD

This peaceline largely surrounds a small Protestant area in the Oldpark area of North Belfast and is a mixture of walls, fences, open ground which have developed piecemeal as the surrounding area changed. The presence of the nearby Oldpark RUC Station provides the small community with a degree of perceived security but the area has the potential for continuing sectarian disorder. Both communities are completely polarised and although the Protestant community is declining in numbers there will be considerable reluctance to give up ground. The need for security measures will remain for as long as this community exists at this location.

7. DUNCAIRN GARDENS

This peaceline stretches the full length of Duncairn Gardens and separates the New Lodge Road and Tigers Bay communities. It has developed since the mid-seventies with a shift in population and is made up of derelict buildings, fencing and walls. The whole area has been allowed to degenerate and what was in the past a thriving shopping area is now almost non-existent. Sectarian tension in the area remains high and although a significant number of properties on the Protestant side are empty there will be considerable reluctance to give up ground. The proposed Northgate development will hopefully provide an opportunity to improve this area although the need for security between the 2 communities will remain for the foreseeable future.

8. ALLIANCE AVENUE/GLENBRYN

This peaceline stretches along Alliance Avenue from Deerpark Road to Berwick Road and was established in the mid-seventies following serious sectarian rioting in the adjoining Ardoyne area. It was originally a series of corrugated iron fences but this was replaced in 1990 with an NIHE wall and corridor. As in other areas the Protestant community has declined considerably and although the Glenbryn area has a lot of empty houses there is a great reluctance to give up ground. If the Protestant community remain in this area there will continue to be a need for physical security measures between the communities.

9. NORTHUMBERLAND STREET/ARDMOULIN PLACE

This peaceline runs along Beverley Street and separates the Lower Falls/Lower Shankill. It is made up of walls and palisade fencing and because of the close proximity of housing to both sides of the divide there has been sporadic instances of sectarian violence at this location. Both communities are polarised and the likelihood of walls and fencing being removed or reduced is slim.

10. RODEN STREET/WEST LINK

This peaceline stretches from Roden Street to Donegall Road and was created when the West Link was opened in 1985. The presence of the motorway and the adjoining Royal Victoria Hospital provides space between the 2 communities and this plus a number of palisade fences have provided a reasonably effective and unobtrusive peaceline. The need for security will remain for the foreseeable future.

11. SHORT STRAND

The Catholic community of Short Strand in East Belfast is provided with protective security measures by a mixture of walls and fencing and the careful redevelopment of the area leaving large open spaces to be used as roads between communities. The need for these measures, albeit unobtrusive, will continue for the foreseeable future.

12. MANOR STREET

This relatively new environmentally friendly security wall runs from Clifton Park Avenue to the Rosapenna Street area. While it does not physically stop the movement of people from one community to the other it does provide the perception of a dividing line and has been welcomed by both sides. This area has been the subject of serious sectarian disorder and the need for this peaceline will remain for the foreseeable future.

OCTOBER 1993