

L.R.

Please RUFAX — Desk IMMEDIATE

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HCS/3/39

cc PS/PUS (B & L) M
Mr Stephens
Mr Buxton

PS/Secretary of State (B & L) M

PROCESSIONS AND PARADES

1. You will recall that I spoke briefly to the Secretary of State on 12 March about the memorandum from Bishop Eames which I sent you under cover of my minute of the previous day. I have this morning seen Dr Eames again, and it is the purpose of this minute to record the gist of our discussion and to suggest how matters might now be taken forward.
2. The thrust of the Bishop's written advice, it will be recalled, was that:
 - (a) a direct appeal should be made to all organisations stressing the dangers to the RUC at the present time and appealing for a "minimising" of situations in which the police could be placed in unnecessary danger;
 - (b) that the Secretary of State should approach the leaders of those organisations associated with traditional and ad hoc parades to seek their co-operation in lowering the temperature by an avoidance of flash-points and sensitive areas.

He made it clear that he would be prepared personally to back up such an approach and that from confidential soundings he had already taken there could be a positive response from the leadership of the Orange Order. He emphasised that the best hope of success would lie in a strategy giving the organisers the opportunity to be seen in public as volunteers rather than as people responding to government pressure.

3. In our discussion this morning, Dr Eames clarified a number of points arising out of his memorandum. It is his judgement that a direct private approach to the Orange and Black leaders, couched in the right terms and mounted at the right time, could meet a positive response. He bases this in part on a recent private conversation with Mr Molyneaux in which the latter agreed that everything possible ought to be done to lighten the burdens falling on the RUC (although the Bishop made it quite clear that they did not discuss the stance of the Orange and Black organisations as such). The right terms would have to avoid obvious pitfalls, such as provoking a response that government was trying to save money in policing and was prepared to

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prejudice traditional rights in the process of making economies. Such an approach would have to smack of sustained firmness in security policy, rather than appearing to be an ad hoc response to particular events. The right time would have to be fairly soon, if one hoped to influence this year's "marching season". On the other hand, it would be inopportune to launch such an initiative in the wake of some further tragic event. In his view the aptness and timing of an initiative would have to be considered literally from day to day. The Bishop expressed great concern about the reaction in the protestant community to what they regarded as the most extreme and unhelpful remarks recently made by Cardinal O'Fiaich. On present plans the Cardinal was to be involved this Sunday in a St Patrick's Day service in Bishop Eames own diocesan cathedral in Downpatrick. He was under pressure not to be present with the Cardinal in the aftermath of the latter's remarks. He did not intend to yield to such pressure; but we should not discount the possibility of some form of demonstration against the Cardinal on Sunday. Dr Eames himself is clearly very worried about the Cardinal's attitude and approach. He saw this as exemplified by the Cardinal's decision to be represented by Fathers Faul and Murray in a briefing session for representatives of the Council of Europe.

4. If we are to make headway on this front, and bearing in mind the passage of time towards the "marching season" and also the Secretary of State's forthcoming absence from Northern Ireland for a period, I would suggest for consideration the following steps:
 - (a) Firstly, PUS (to whom this is copied) might urgently discuss the prospect of useful action on this front with the Chief Constable. We must be very careful not to take any steps, however excellent their source or motivation, without making sure that he would find them helpful. This is particularly the case if we propose to associate the RUC in any way with any public or private statement. However, the Chief Constable himself has previously asked for support for a firmer RUC line on this front, and I hope it will be possible to persuade him that the line of approach suggested below is worth a try.
 - (b) Assuming clearance as above, the Secretary of State should issue (assuming no obviously unfavourable circumstances) an early statement which would provide the occasion for an approach to the Orange and Black leadership. This would be a generalised appeal to which, if all worked well, those leaders

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would "voluntarily" respond. I attach a form of words at Annex A. It would, in my view, be preferable to use any such words in the course of a wider speech rather than to issue them as a bald statement standing on their own. The motive would be to create a peg upon which a direct approach, as discussed below, could be made.

- (c) As soon as possible thereafter, and before his departure for America, the Secretary of State should seek to contact Mr Molyneux and the Rev Martin Smyth. This contact would preferably be made face to face, but if it were for any reason not possible to arrange a meeting with them, the Secretary of State could write. In any event, the draft letter attached (Annex B) indicates the line which I would recommend the Secretary of State to take with the leaders.



K P BLOOMFIELD

14 March 1985

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ANNEX A

DRAFT STATEMENT

I have been further reviewing the security effort with the Chief Constable, having regard both to the very important successes registered by the RUC in bringing terrorists to justice, and to the heavy burdens which a sustained campaign against terrorism places upon the members of the force. The responsible public understand very well the hazards to which members of the RUC are exposed, and the sacrifices they make to preserve order in this community.

Government will continue to do all that it can to support a force which has grown in numbers, in weight and diversity of equipment, and in professionalism to meet an exceptional challenge. I would like also, however, to ask for the maximum support throughout the community to ensure that the successes of the police are sustained and increased, and the risk to members of the RUC minimised. I would ask all who have the interests of the RUC and the good of Northern Ireland at heart to co-operate with the force to the maximum extent in avoiding situations which expose them to unnecessary danger, increase the heavy burdens upon them, and tend to heighten rather than to lower tension in the community.

All who wish to see the defeat of terrorism, and who therefore want to support a firm and sustained effort to bring terrorists to book under the law, have a very real contribution to make in extending maximum co-operation to the RUC at this time.

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ANNEX B

DRAFT LETTER TO REV MARTIN SMYTH MP AND RT HON JAMES MOLYNEAUX MP

I expect you will have seen my brief statement of _____ on the need to support the RUC, as it makes a concerted effort to deal with the terrorists, by presenting it with the minimum of distraction in coping with other, and sometimes avoidable, "public order" obligations. However, for convenience I enclose a copy of it.

I am now writing to you and to [Jim Molyneaux] [Martin Smyth] in total confidence to seek your help in deploying your very substantial influence, not just as political leaders in the majority community, but as leaders in the Orange and Black organisations. I emphasise that this approach is in total confidence, and that I do not intend to refer to it publicly in any circumstances or at any time.

I am frankly anxious, and so is Jack Hermon, about the risks to which the police can sometimes be exposed in dealing with processions and parades which pass through or close to particularly difficult or sensitive areas. Such risks may accrue particularly where events are ad hoc or occasional rather than traditional. Like myself, I am sure you would not want to see a single policeman exposed in current circumstances to an avoidable risk, and on the other hand we do want to see the security forces concentrating their efforts to the maximum possible extent upon a sustained drive to bring terrorists to book.

In all of this, I can assure you that I appreciate the importance which the members of your organisations attach to events which have long been part of life in the Province, and that the manifestation of traditional loyalties can often be a safety-valve which we would close down at our peril. I have no thought of bringing this about or of suggesting it to you, or, through you, to the organisations which you lead. I do, however, ask you to consider

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deploying in the current situation all your influence, both with your own organisations and with the Apprentice Boys, to ensure that as far as possible processions and parades avoid flash-points and sensitive areas. In particular, I hope that organisers will respond in an understanding way to any suggestions from the RUC that avoidance of a particular location or route would lighten their burden and lessen their risks.

Such a response would, in itself, be a very gratifying and useful outcome of this approach to you. But if you were minded to do more - and in particular if you felt able to declare openly your intention to approach forthcoming events in this particularly responsible way - I believe you could do much to enhance the prestige of the organisations concerned and to show leadership to the wider community. I do not suggest for a moment that those organisers have, in the past, failed to discuss matters with the RUC in an understanding and supportive way. But I am anxious to go further if we can, so that we can concentrate all available effort and resources upon the defeat of terrorism. I am determined to maintain the pressure upon the terrorists steadily and unremittingly.

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