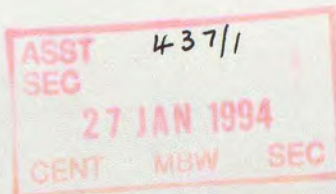
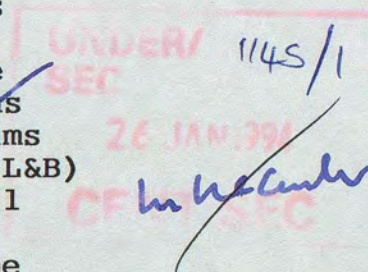


OM : R C WEST  
SIL DIVISION  
26 JANUARY 1994



*ms mpy* 17/94

cc PS/Secretary of State (B) - B  
PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B  
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B  
PS/PUS (L&B) - B  
PS/Mr Fell - B  
Mr Legge - B  
Mr Thomas - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Steele - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Williams - B  
Mr Wood (L&B) - B  
Mr Daniell - B  
Mr Leach - B  
Mr Maccabe - B  
Mr Marsh - B  
Mr Brearley - B  
Mr Caine - B  
HMA Dublin - B  
Mr Archer, RID - B  
(without enclosures)



1. MR BRAMLEY (SB 26/1)
2. PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L)

ANNIVERSARY OF BLOODY SUNDAY

1. In your minute to Mr Bramley of 25 January, you asked for lines to take and background material in anticipation of the 22nd anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" on 30 January.

2. I enclose a general line to take ; a line to take for Prime Minister's questions; a defensive speaking note for the Secretary of State's use if necessary at the IGC; a copy of the Widgery Report; and background material on "Bloody Sunday", including the Prime Minister's letter to John Hume of 29 December 1992.

(signed)

R C WEST  
SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL DIVISION  
26 JANUARY 1994

BM/SIL/22756



ANNIVERSARY OF "BLOODY SUNDAY"

Lines to Take

- All deaths during these Troubles are a matter of regret.
- The events of 30 January 1972 constituted a terrible tragedy; all are determined that the lessons of that day are not forgotten.
- It would not be right to seek to cast judgement on the events which took place in Londonderry on 30 January 1972 at this distance in time.
- In 1974 the Government issued a statement, in paying compensation to relatives of those who died, which sought to remove any imputation of guilt that they were killed while handling firearms or bombs. The Prime Minister reiterated this statement in a letter to Hon Member for Foyle (29 December 1992).
- The action of all concerned were fully investigated at the time.

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MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

"BLOODY SUNDAY"

Line to take

- It would not be right for me to seek to cast judgement on the events of "Bloody Sunday" at this distance in time, or retrospectively to comment on the guilt or innocence of any individual or individuals involved in those events. The actions of all concerned were fully investigated at the time.

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2018  
Hansards

## 22ND ANNIVERSARY OF "BLOODY SUNDAY"

### Background Note

1. The 22nd Anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" (in which 13 civilians were shot dead by paratroopers during a Civil Rights march in Londonderry) falls on 30 January this year. There have been calls for the findings of the Widgery Tribunal - which largely vindicated the Army's actions and suggested that some of those shot dead may have been handling guns or explosives - to be re-examined, in the light of apparently new forensic evidence. The Government has rejected calls for a new inquiry.

2. In paying compensation to the relatives of those killed on "Bloody Sunday" (in an out-of-court settlement), the Government in 1974 stated that, while the Army acted in self-defence, all of the deceased should be regarded as having been found not guilty of the allegations of having been shot whilst handling firearms or bombs. This reflects a conclusion in the Widgery Report which stated that "None of the deceased or wounded is proved to have been shot whilst handling a firearm or bomb." There is, so far as we are aware, no precedent for the re-examination of evidence given at the Tribunal held under the Tribunal Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921, and the Royal Commission on Tribunals of Inquiry in 1966 concluded that the findings of all such Tribunals should be treated as final.

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE : "BLOODY SUNDAY"

Lines to Take

- The events of 30 January 1972 constituted a terrible tragedy; that is indisputable. One of the aims of development of the Government's security and wider policies in Northern Ireland has been to ensure that, as far as is humanly possible, a tragedy like "Bloody Sunday" should never be able to happen again.
- The Prime Minister in a letter to John Hume of 29 December 1992, said that:

"The Government made clear in 1974 that those who were killed on "Bloody Sunday" should be regarded as innocent of any allegation that they were shot whilst handling firearms or explosives. I hope that the families of those who died will accept that assurance."
- The Government does not think it would be right to review or re-open the Widgery Tribunal. The Royal Commission on Tribunals of Inquiry concluded in 1966 that the findings of all such Tribunals should be treated as final. We know of no precedent for the re-examination of evidence presented to such a Tribunal.

[If pressed]

- The bulk of Lord Widgery's report dealt with the sequence of events on "Bloody Sunday" on the basis of the observations of a large number of witnesses (114 gave evidence) and of film and photographic material. As Lord Widgery himself observed in his report, he was, on certain

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critical issues, confronted with wholly conflicting evidence. It is very likely that a review of new inquiry would face very much the same difficulty.

To institute a new inquiry would inevitably generate intense expectations and rekindle old controversies. But whether it would be able to reach definitive conclusions or contribute to confidence in the process of justice, we frankly doubt.

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'BLOODY SUNDAY' : CHRONOLOGY

- 30 JAN 1972 - Members of the Paratroop regiment opened fire during an anti-internment march in Londonderry, killing 13 people. One person (John Johnston) who was injured died of a brain tumour some 6 months later and is sometimes included as a 14th victim.
- 1 FEB 1972 - Both Houses of Parliament adopted a resolution that "it is expedient that a Tribunal be established" to look into the events surrounding "Bloody Sunday". Similar resolutions were adopted by NI Parliament so that the Tribunal could extend to transferred matters.
- 2 FEB 19972 - Sir Reginald Maudling (Home Sec) appointed Lord Widgery to lead the Tribunal. Widgery interpreted the Terms of Reference as "essentially a fact finding exercise"; "its task was to try and form an objective view of the events and the sequence in which they occurred, so that those who were concerned to form judgements would have a firm basis on which to reach their conclusions".
- 18 APR 1972 - Widgery reported, largely vindicating the actions of the soldiers and stating that no deaths would have occurred had it not been for the illegal march. He also concluded that "None of the deceased or wounded is proved to have been shot whilst handling a firearm or bomb".

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- 1972 - Attorney General announced that he and the DPP had decided that there was no evidence sufficient to warrant the prosecution of any member of the security forces involved in 'Bloody Sunday'. The AG decided it was not in the public interest to proceed with the charges of riotous behaviour against certain civilians.
- 21 AUG 1972 - Open verdicts were returned in the inquests into the deaths of the 13 civilians. The Coroner is reported to have commented that "This was sheer unadulterated murder".
- 18/19 DEC 1974 - Settlement agreed with relatives of the dead in civil actions. A statement was also issued.

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