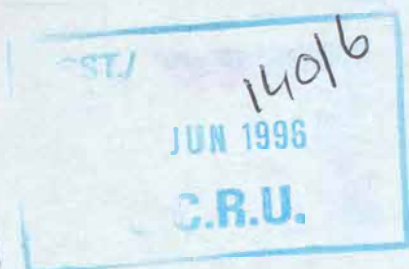


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FROM P JOHNSTON
PS/SIR JOHN WHEELER
18 JUNE 1996



cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L,B&DFP) - B/M
PS/PUS (L&B) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Clarke - B

Mr Auf 20.6

Miss McGimpsey

LOWER ORMEAU OPINION SURVEY

Mr Cooper S. 21/6..

The Minister was grateful for your submission of 17 June which reported on the outcome of the Lower Ormeau Opinion Survey.

2. Sir John agrees with your view that the survey has been a very useful exercise while not telling us anything new. Sir John agrees with your recommendation that option C is the only real option and would be grateful if you could proceed on that basis. Sir John has also agreed the line to take.

SIGNED

PA-327/96

Mr. Chasos..

Don f. te..

2

21

6..

Paul A Johnston
PS/Sir John Wheeler
OAB Ext 6498
18 June 1996

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WHEELER/HBY/3558

PA- 327/96

CONFIDENTIAL

From: J McGimpsey
Security Policy and Operations Division
17 June 1996

UNDER/
SEC
19 JUN 1996
CENT SEC

~~Mr. Carson...~~
Don file..
S. 2
6..

ASST/
SEC
16/3/6
20 JUN 1996
C.C.R.U.

cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Steele, o/r - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Clarke - B

PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B

LOWER ORMEAU OPINION SURVEY

As you are aware a survey was carried out on 5, 6 and 7 June on the lower Ormeau Road to get information from the residents on their opinion on marches. The purpose of the survey was to collect data in attempt to seek a way forward on the parades problem which presently appears to be at stalemate.

2. At Annex A is a copy of the document used, the final results and feedback from the interviewers.

Background

3. Local people in the area and others with an interest in the parades issue saw merit in carrying out such a poll and after consideration, and your approval, Coopers & Lybrand were commissioned to carry out a survey in the lower part of the Ormeau Road.

The Survey

4. The questions in the Survey are based on general and specific parades issues and were drawn up by Mr Steele and myself and fine tuned by Coopers & Lybrand. On Wednesday 5 June through to

Mr Carson
2/6..
In 6/206
Intimacy. No? I doubt
if the NO arrangement
a fine will remain
conceded.
8/3
19.6

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Friday 7 June a team consisting of 10 trained interviewers conducted the survey.

5. Out of 500 occupied homes in the designated area the team were able to conduct 452 interviews. No reports of intimidation or incidents were received, however within 40 minutes of the team arriving in the area, Gerard Rice (LOCC) made an appearance seeking information about the survey. He was told as per team briefing that the survey was independent and conducted by Coopers & Lybrand as a pilot study with a view to (maybe) selling the results to the media. (The interviewers were not informed that the NIO had commissioned the survey.) Mr Rice requested an interview, and on completion commented that it appeared to be fair. He asked for a copy of the final results and was told that it was not possible. He accepted this. He also contacted Colin McIlheney (our contact in Coopers & Lybrand) and was given the same information.

The Results

6. For ease of reference I have highlighted the significant points of the results and examined what the results mean in terms of usefulness in seeking a solution to the problem:-

(Question 1) 78% agreed that everyone should have the freedom to march. This is a high percentage which unfortunately is not collaborated in Question 2. However, it is worth bearing in mind for future occasions, ie meetings with those opposing marches.

(Question 2) A high majority, 92% indicated that marches should not be allowed to pass through areas where the opposite tradition are in the majority. This result bears out LOCC opinion at last week's meeting and clearly highlights the fact that on this point LOCC would appear to be speaking on behalf of the local people in the area.

(Question 3) Significant percentages favoured that parades should be re-routed away from the area although the percentage dropped when asked about St Patrick's Day parades (normally regarded as coming

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from the Nationalist tradition). Overall opinion in the area is decidedly that loyal institution marches are not welcome.

(Question 4) When given options of what might be acceptable in terms of numbers of parades, conditions etc, the results again showed that the majority did not want any type of loyal institution parade even if limited or with conditions imposed.

(Question 5) 61% thought that Orange leaders should voluntarily re-route the marches away from areas of potential conflict and another 21% stated that they (Orange leaders) should meet with residents and try and find agreement. This viewpoint is akin to Government opinion in that in meetings we have had with Orange leaders we have advocated that they obtain the moral high ground by voluntarily re-routing. The 21% wishing for dialogue is disappointing given HMG policy that compromise between each side is the only way forward, but see question 7.

(Question 6) When asked who should be responsible for defusing the situation in the event of protests, the responses varied between the Police, an independent commission and both sides. Only 27% favoured an independent commission (1% more than the RUC). The largest group - 36% - felt that representatives from the residents and loyal institutions should be responsible. While this idea might appeal in theory, the practicalities when tension is high are very difficult. These responses reflect the community's uncertainty as to where a solution might lie. There is also no great apparent faith in an independent commission which might be surprising given the idea's recent wide exposure in the media.

(Question 7) 73% indicated that those involved in both sides should reach the solution without outside involvement. 93% said that compromise between both sides is required and 93% that a clearer understanding of both sides' viewpoints is needed. This result is significant as it supports what both we and the RUC have been stating at every opportunity (though perhaps somewhat at odds with the response to question 5. There may well be merit in commenting publicly on this result once it is in the public domain. See Annex

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B. Despite this high percentage LOCC have appeared to have recently moved away from this attitude and this is something that HMG and the RUC should try and regain.

(Question 8) 80% said that the parades issue is a political problem and 91% said that it is a problem because of sectarianism. There is no doubt that the parades problem has escalated in size for many reasons, such as demographic changes etc; another reason is because of the instances of sectarian behaviour during marches in the area, eg the television pictures of Orangemen directing obscene gestures at Sean Grahams Bookmakers. It is clear also that because of the personalities involved in both sides, eg Paisley, Trimble etc, the problem is also viewed as political.

7. The feedback given by the interviewers has also provided us with useful information, for example, item 10 showed that many people in the area never had the chance before to take part in such a survey and felt that they had maybe come across badly on the media to date and wanted to air their views. This is important as despite the high media attention this area has had in recent times this survey is obviously the first time that every resident's opinion has been listened to and not just the voice of Mr Rice.

Additional Information

8. At my recent meeting with the LOCC Mr Rice mentioned the Survey. He commented that he felt the questions were of a compromising nature and that not every street was covered by the interviewers. On checking this with Coopers & Lybrand, I found this allegation to be untrue. This could well be an indication that he was keeping his options open pending the publication of the results.

Conclusion

9. This has proved to be an extremely useful exercise in gleaning a more accurate picture on specific issues surrounding the parades problem on the lower part of the Ormeau Road. While there are no earth-shattering surprises there are a number of points which

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could be helpfully drawn on to validate our view (and that of the RUC) that the only real solution to the problem is dialogue and that this is essential to achieve a situation where both parade organisers and local residents are satisfied. At the same time there was no real indications that the compromise approaches which the police are pursuing - fewer marches, imposition of conditions - would be acceptable to local people.

10. The survey highlighted that (at least for the present time) Loyal Institution parades are not welcomed by the majority of residents in that area and when LOCC publicly oppose such marches they are speaking with support. [This is not to say that their actions of protest are condoned by the residents.] The information will also be useful when we deal with members of the Loyal Institutions as it could be used to encourage them to deal with this issue in a more sensitive way than they have to date. If they are, as they say they are, mindful of others points of view, then it is clearly now time for them to show evidence of this.

Recommendations

11. As I see it, we have three options

- (a) Do nothing
- (b) Release some of the more useful results
- (c) Publish the full results

(a) Do nothing

This defeats the purpose of getting the information in the first place and would mean suppressing information which may be of use to us and the RUC when arguing the case for dialogue and compromise.

(b) Release some of the more useful results

The danger in releasing only some of the results may be that questions could be asked of Coopers and Lybrand by the locals as to why the responses to some important questions were not released.

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This could put the organisation in the difficult position of defending the reasoning behind such action (while a very awkward problem, it is not insurmountable).

(c) Publish the full results

Overall the findings are much as anticipated with perhaps a greater degree of compromise being evident. The release of the full response would mean that no-one could lay claim to the fact that the results were suppressed. As I see it the drawback is that some of the results when read by eg the Loyal Institutions, it could reinforce their opinion that locals want all the parades banned in their area and/or re-routed and this could exacerbate the problem by creating even more tension. The release of the full results will provide "independent" verification to the Loyal Institution that parades in such areas are unwelcome by the significant majority of the people living there. At best the leaders of such organisations may begin to appreciate that some degree of willingness on their part to reduce the scale of the problem is essential.

*a huge +
implausible
move.* 12. The fact that the NIO are responsible for this survey is confidential and will need to remain confidential to ensure its independence. By retaining its confidentiality the NIO can continue to argue its policy free from criticism against the results.

13. In anticipation of your agreement to Option (c) I discussed the practicalities of the release with Colin Ross from the Press Office. If your approval is given on or before Wednesday 19 June Coopers & Lybrand will be informed immediately and will in turn let the Sunday Tribune have the poll in time for release on 23 June.

14. No attribution will be made to the NIO.

15. If agreement is given, I have prepared some lines to take at Annex B in the event of a request.

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16. My favoured option is (c) - Publish the full results and this is also the view of the Press Office for the reasons outlined above.

(Signed)

J McGIMPSEY
SHA Ext 27032

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ANNEX A

OPINION POLL

Carried out on 5, 6 and 7 June 1996 in the lower part of the Ormeau Road.

Numbers interviewed = 452

Good morning/afternoon, my name is from Coopers & Lybrand. We are conducting a survey into people's opinions on marches. Can I assure you that the views and opinions you express will be maintained in strict confidence.

Note: Do not accept "don't know" as an answer

1. Do you think everyone should have the freedom to march?
Circle one box only
Do not accept don't know

Yes	78
No	22

2. Do you think marches should be allowed to pass through areas where the opposite tradition are in the majority?
Circle one box only
Do not accept don't know

Yes	8
No	92

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3. The following list outlines some of the different types of marches which take place in Northern Ireland. If any of these marches were to be routed through areas dominated by the opposite religion do you think they should be allowed to pass through, re-routed or banned altogether?

SHOWCARD A

	Allowed through	Re-routed	Banned
Orange Order marches	6	80	14
Apprentice Boy marches	5	78	17
Black marches	6	79	15
Easter marches	12	77	11
Bloody Sunday marches	18	72	11
St Patrick's Day parades	36	58	6
Catholic church marches	26	66	8
Protestant church marches	16	73	11

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4. I am going to read out a list of statements, and for each one can you tell whether you agree or disagree. All of these refer to parades in the Lower Ormeau area.

SHOWCARD B

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
All marches should be permitted	4	9	14	29	44
A limited number of parades should be permitted	3	23	14	24	36
No marches should be permitted	32	22	15	23	8
One annual parade only should be permitted	5	12	17	29	37
One from each of 3 Protestant organisations (Orange Order, Black Marches and the Apprentice Boys) should be permitted	1	10	9	29	51
Bands should remain silent when marching	24	27	19	15	16

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5. Thinking specifically about the 'Orange' marching season which **ONE** of the following options do you think the Orange leaders should adopt when facing opposition to their proposed route?

SHOWCARD C

attempt to go ahead with the proposed route irrespective of the consequences	0
attempt to go through the proposed route but with the bands remaining silent in the conflict areas	3
heed the advice of the police and avoid confrontation	15
voluntarily re-route the marches away from areas of potential conflict	61
meet with residents and try and find agreement	21

6. If protests are made about the proposed route of a march who do you think should be responsible for diffusing the situation?
Circle **ONE** box only

The police	26
An independent Commission	27
Representatives of the groups involved (residents and loyal institutions)	36
Clergy from both sides	7
Local politicians	2
other (please specify)	2

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7. Below are a list of statements, please indicate whether you agree or disagree?

Circle one for each statement

Do not accept don't know

SHOWCARD B

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
People can't always agree on everything	63	34	2	1	-
Those involved on both sides should reach the solution without outside involvement	45	28	7	14	6
Compromise between both sides is required	59	34	3	2	2
A clearer understanding of both sides' viewpoints is required	59	34	2	3	2

8. Finally, I am going to read out 3 statements with regard to the parades issue in Northern Ireland. For each one can you tell me whether you agree or disagree.

SHOWCARD B

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The parades issue is a cultural problem	30	22	8	28	12
The parades issue is a political problem	46	34	5	12	3
The parades issue is a problem because of sectarianism	60	31	5	4	-

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9. **Classification**
Please record:

a. Sex

Male	45
Female	55

b. Age - Record exact age and code

18-24	23
25-34	28
35-44	22
45-59	11
60+	16

c. SEG: What is your occupation? (Record)

ABC1	16
C2DE	84

THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE

I declare that this interview was conducted within the Market Research Code of Conduct and according to instructions and that the respondent was unknown to me. I understand that all information given to me must be kept confidential.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

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Feedback from the Interviewers

1. The area is not one homogenous bloc there are shades of opinions with some streets notably more "hard-line". Also younger element keen to elaborate on their views. They have no real memory of when things went smoothly.
2. Other main issues which arose and were not directly covered by questions:-
 - (a) it is the "hangers-on" with the parades who are a real problem - drunken mob;
 - (b) feeling of being hemmed in - even if parade only takes ½ hour they are "locked up" for 12 hours;
 - (c) why would people want to march through an area where they are in such a minority - "would the Shankill road welcome a St Patrick's Day march?".
3. The bands silence is not so much an issue - number of people commented on the futility of having a band present if they don't play.
4. Suggestions of marches walking up the Ormeau Road and getting a bus to their destination or across to Stranmillis - no point anymore walking the old route - apart from to make a point.
5. Widespread support for police standing firm on last couple of occasions - Mr Flanagan named by a large number of individuals that they would trust him to stop the marches. They had a belief the last few times that a "they shall not pass" decision had been taken and that the police would stick to it.
6. Some Protestants encountered in the area - also some interaction, some visitors to houses in area from "above the bridge".

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7. No intimidation of the interviewers from any organisations - refusal rate low, no attempt by community organisations to influence results.

8. Widespread recognition that the area has totally changed demographically over the years and that this should be accepted.

9. Disruption of normal life commented on - eg shops closed, businesses on the front of the road losing money.

10. People very happy to take part in the survey; many felt that they had never had the chance before, plus they felt that they maybe came across badly on the media to date and wanted to air their views.

11. Bookmakers incident and the scenes at a parade following this really made an impact - absolutely no way anyone would contemplate going back to that.

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ANNEX B

Line to Take

- I welcome the publication of the poll in the Sunday Tribune.
- I read the results with interest and was particularly impressed with the realisation by many people in the lower part of the Ormeau Road that the key to the parades problem is through dialogue and compromise with parade organisers. This is exactly what both the Government and the RUC have been advocating all along.
- I trust all those with influence will agree that a peaceful solution to this problem is necessary.
- It is essential therefore that all those involved show a willingness to ensure commonsense prevails and avoid becoming embroiled in confrontational scenes which could do untold damage at this particularly sensitive period in the peace process.
- The results of this independent survey may help inform all those engaged in discussion about parades in the lower Ormeau Road area and form a basis on which an agreement based on compromise may be reached.

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