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PA-292/95

FROM: J MCGIMPSEY
SECURITY POLICY AND OPERATIONS DIVISION
3 MAY 1996

UNDER/ SEC 257/5.
8 MAY 1996
CENT SEC

ASST/ SEC
-7 MAY 1996
C.C.R.U.

b5/s

Conf 10.5

- 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 Watkins - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Perry - B
- Mr Clarke - B

S. 13/5
L. Carver

1. Mr Steele [This was a constructive and not unfriendly meeting. The LOCC representatives (including Ms Rice and Gormley) accepted my analysis of the dangers of the present situation and also seemed to accept the need for some compromise on their part. They were to consider and get in touch with us again. But everything will depend on Sinn Fein's judgement as to the balance of advantage. sgd JMS 8/5]

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

M. Carver

Jan. 13/5

PARADES: MEETING WITH LOCC

Mr Steele and I met with the LOCC on the evening of 2 May at their location on the Ormeau Road to discuss the current situation on parades and to see if any positive movement was possible. It was agreed that the meeting was to be private with no media involvement. Overall it was an amicable meeting with a seemingly genuine desire to have the issue resolved.

2. The main features of the meeting were as follows:

- LOCC would consider agreeing to at least one (possibly more (2-3) parades) on the Ormeau Road perhaps subject to certain conditions eg no bands, no bad behaviour and no "hangers on". However they stressed they might have difficulties selling this to the community. Mr Steele told them that he had every confidence in their ability to provide leadership to the community!

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- Criticised heavy handedness of the RUC in the past but praised its current stance and DCC Flanagan's approach in particular.

 - LOCC's ideal would be a ban for 2 years on all parades in the lower Ormeau Road area. Reason being to let the dust settle over past problems and to allow time for everyone to re-think their position and start afresh. Mr Steele explained that parade organisers would almost certainly not accept such a proposal.

 - Accepted the need to communicate with parade organisers. They have re-considered the wording of previous proposals - will now be avoiding words like 'permit' marches, as they realise they are not useful when attempting to negotiate. Seemed to accept that they did not have an absolute right to veto parades.

 - They told us of constructive meetings they had with David Ervine PUP and were pleased by his attitude in recent weeks in appealing for calm and restraint.

 - Denied that Sinn Fein were manipulating them.

 - Were still speaking with Mediation Network.
3. Overall a useful meeting and a feeling of planting a seed in terms of seeking realistic proposals for accommodation. They undertook to re-consider their position with a view to speaking to us again.

[Signed]

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