

C O N F I D E N T I A L

UNDER/ SEC 335/15
9 MAY 1996
CENT SEC

FROM: J M STEELE
DIRECTOR (SECURITY)

9 May 1996

2. Carson...
300 file...
PA - 242/95
S. 20
5..

cc PS/Secretary of State (B & L)
PS/PUS (B & L)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Legge
Mr Watkins
Mr Maccabe
Mr Perry
Ms McGimpsey

14.5
McCarson
S. 20
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PS/SIR JOHN WHEELER (B & L)

FATHER BRIAN LENNON: GARVAGHY ROAD ETC

Earlier today I met Father Brian Lennon, Jesuit Priest who works part-time in the Garvaghy Road area, to discuss the prospects for the Drumcree/Garvaghy Road march on 7 July.

2. I began as usual by giving him my analysis of the dangers inherent in the present security/political situation in the Province and stressed the need for compromise all round on marches. He did not disagree but said that the only possible compromise from the Garvaghy Road residents was no march this year but possible negotiations with Orange Order about next year. The Garvaghy Road Residents' Coalition had been appalled by what happened last year and were determined that it would not happen again. I formed the impression that Father Lennon agreed with this stance.

3. He went on to say that an "imposed settlement" would not work as the residents were wise to the possibility of the RUC moving in during the night. The only course of action for the police, and the right one, was to face down the Spirit of Drumcree. He admitted the dangers of this and the possibility of read across to the Ormeau Road but still did not admit the possibility of a compromise from the Residents' Coalition.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

EPC/9855

ASST/ SEC 108/15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L

He told me that the residents are about to launch a publicity campaign on the issue and stated that they have wide support, including from the middle classes. A recent meeting was packed to over-flowing.

5. He did not rate Archbishop Eames' recent suggestion, or Archbishop Eames for that matter - "simply playing politics so that he would be in the position of having offered a way forward which was rejected". (I have some sympathy with this view.)

6. In the end he offered to arrange for me to meet the leader of the Residents' Coalition and I gratefully accepted, by that time having realised that Father Lennon did not have any personal influence on the situation, nor wished to have.

[sgd]

J M STEELE

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