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31 MAY 1996  
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From: PS/Sir John Wheeler  
31 May 1996

ASST./ SEC 16/6  
-4 JUN 1996  
C.C.R.U.

- cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
- PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B
- PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- PS/Sir David Fell - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Perry - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mrs Collins - B
- Mr Clarke - B
- Ms McGimpsey - B
- \*attachment to follow

~~Mr. Garsos...~~  
Mr. P. Ke...  
S. 4 / 6..

in Conference  
with without  
Mr Garsos  
S. 4 / 6..

MR STEELE - B

SIR JOHN WHEELER'S DINNER WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE THREE LOYAL INSTITUTIONS: 29 MAY 1996

The Minister was grateful for the briefing provided by Jackie McGimpsey for his dinner with representatives of the three Loyal Institutions which took place in Stormont House on 29 May.

2. The guests were: Alistair Simpson (Governor of Apprentice Boys), William Moore (Deputy Governor of APD), Jeffrey Donaldson (A/Grand Master, Orange Order), The Reverend Brian Kennaway (D/Grand Chaplain, Orange Order), The Reverend Victor Ryan (Royal Black Preceptory), and William Logan (also RBP). Official support was provided by Mr Steele, Mr Maccabe and Ms McGimpsey.

3. It was an extremely positive dinner which gathered the leading and influential members of the Loyal Institutions together for a discussion of the forthcoming marching season and the handling of parades. There were a number of mixed signals; on one hand seeking further compromise and, on the other a feeling that they had already compromised enough without reciprocal movement from Residents' groups. The detail of what was said was along fairly familiar

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lines; the Minister and officials stressing the need for compromise, warning of the trap being set by PIRA/Sinn Fein to give them an excuse to return to violence in Northern Ireland, the need for the Loyal Institutions to take the moral high ground and make sure they publicise it. The representatives of the Loyal Institutions indicated that they were seeking compromise but were dealing with people who simply pocketed concessions; the "Sinn Fein dominated residents groups" would discuss principles but still did not move from their bottom line that no marches would be permitted to go through their area.

4. Perhaps more important than the detail of what was said was the mood of the guests. The representatives of the Loyal Institutions gave the impression of people who were (a) confronting their own prejudices (b) under pressure from hard-liners within their movement (c) aware of the "no win" trap which was being set by Sinn Fein to draw them into conflict with the RUC (d) deeply suspicious that Maryfield approved parade routes.

5. One very positive aspect of the dinner was the tone struck by Jeffrey Donaldson who was clearly under instructions from David Trimble to attempt to find a compromise at Drumcree. It was apparent that the sort of deal which the Minister had mapped out during his recent meeting with Trimble, had been put to the Portadown Orangemen. Mr Donaldson reported a meeting in which they had favoured the following ~~a~~ compromise in Portadown; (1) the 12 July parade would re-route so that it did not go down the Garvaghy Road (2) the Drumcree Church Service would only involve local orangemen thus excluding David Trimble and others (3) the parade would be silent with no bands. Mr Donaldson indicated that he had taken on board the need to win a PR victory over the unreasonable position of the Sinn Feiners who had infiltrated the residents' groups and the Portadown Orangemen intended to call a press conference closer to the time announcing their compromise up front. What Mr Donaldson feared was that having brokered a very significant compromise on the part of the Orangemen the RUC might still re-route the parade under threat of a law and order breach from those who wished to block the

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parade. The result of such a re-routing would be explosive. It was emphasised to Mr Donaldson that the public order position must be a judgment for the RUC but they would no doubt take into account those who had gone out of their way to ensure a secure public order environment.

6. Jeffrey Donaldson also warned of the dangers of accumulative re-routing. The Orange Order leadership had managed to maintain dignified protests on the Ormeau Road on the basis that these were not crunch points. However if every parade down the Ormeau Road was refused, then the leadership could not, with credibility, calm the hotter heads in their movement.

7. What seems impossible to dispel is the perception that the RUC are re-routing under political direction and the political direction is coming from Stormont under pressure from Maryfield. The Minister and officials attempted to dispel this myth and explain that HMG listen and take note of what the Irish have to say on the parades issue, but then emphasise that routes are operational decisions for the RUC. Mr Donaldson, the most progressive dinner guest, pointed to the re-routing which occurred after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement as evidence that the RUC did not operate in a political vacuum.

8. Also worthy of note were the principles put forward in a report by a sub committee of the Presbyterian Church on the parades issue, produced by the Reverend Kennaway and attached at Annex A.

9. There was also a recognition of the offence which a minority of Orange followers cause ie the obscene gestures while parading by the site of the massacre at Sean Graham's bookies. The Orange Order had and are taking action to suspend troublemakers but this gets very little media coverage.

10. There was much bemoaning of Sinn Fein's PR prowess. Alastair Simpson, the Governor of the Apprentice Boys, pointed out that he had made one statement after last year's march on Derry Walls which

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had been to thank the overwhelming majority of people in the Bogside who did not turn out to protest. However, the media were more interested in conflict than compromise. All the dinner guests recognised the need for a positive public image.

11. The extent of threat from hard-liners within the movement was brought home by the Reverend Kennaway. He had been at a meeting in the Ulster Hall where there had been inflammatory "Fascist" speeches and members of the "Spirit of Drumcree" group had hackled that Reverend Martin Smyth should be shot.

#### Conclusion

12. This group largely gave the impression of people who were trying desperately to find a compromise without being humiliated in the eyes of their respective organisations. They saw no hope of the "Sinn Fein dominated residents groups" accepting a compromise but indicated that they would do their best to deliver sensible positions; in return they would hope that the RUC would permit non provocative parades. Some prejudice was apparent and a culture dedicated to celebrating a victory is clearly wrestling with the concept of compromise. Nonetheless these leading Orangemen/Apprentice Boys appear to be prepared to do about as much as one could hope for to avoid confrontation. Much will depend on the rank and file, the Resident's Groups (particularly Sinn Feins agitation of them) and the RUC's approach.

SIGNED

PAUL A JOHNSTON  
PS/Sir John Wheeler

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