

ASST/ SEC 265/11
2-DEC 1996
C.C.R.U.

FROM: TOM CLARKE
Security Policy and Operations Division

29 November 1996

- cc: PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram, DENI, (B&L) - B
- PS/Sir David Fell - B
- Mr Carville, DENI
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Holmes, DENI
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Canavan - B 2.1
- Mrs Collins - B
- Mr Jordan, DENI
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Perry - B
- Mr Palmer, DENI

7. *son.*
PA - Cliftonville
Don Allen
S. 2
12.

MR COLIN JACK, DENI

SECTARIAN VIOLENCE AT FOOTBALL MATCHES

Mr Gisset
S. 2
12.

Thank you for sight of your note of a meeting between Michael Ancram and Don Allen of the Sports Council on 24 October 1996. The purpose of this minute is to bring you and colleagues up to date with developments on the security front, especially in relation to proposals for security work at the Oval, and to register our interest in keeping abreast of what is happening between DENI officials and the Sports Council.

2. There are two points of interest in relation to forthcoming matches involving Cliftonville Football Club. Firstly they are "away" to Coleraine this Saturday, 30 November. In order to minimise the potential for trouble at this game, the kick-off has been brought forward to 2.00 pm on RUC advice. Clearly however, while trouble is not expected, the potential for further difficulties at this game remains. Secondly, following the results in this week's County Antrim Shield Competition, Cliftonville have to visit the Oval on 17 December to play Glentoran in the next round. The other games in the competition are scheduled for 3 December, but I understand the game has been moved to 17 December

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as the RUC have invoked a "7 day notice" ruling, which is connected to the organisation of RUC over-time.

3. You will also be aware that NIO proposes to undertake security work at the rear of Harkness Parade, which leads to the turnstiles used by "away" fans going to the Oval. At present there is a path at the back of these properties which is bounded on both sides by palisade fencing. On the side nearest to the houses, a cantilevered wire mesh screen has been erected to stop missiles being thrown at these houses. The latest proposal is to upgrade the level of security by spanning a wire mesh roof between the two palisade fences, thereby creating a "cage" effect, not dissimilar to that used by Cliftonville fans when passing Olympia Leisure Centre on their way to Windsor Park.

4. It is hoped to have this work completed by mid-January 1997 in time for the next scheduled Irish League fixture between Glentoran and Cliftonville at the Oval. It will not however, be ready for the recently organised fixture on 17 December. Prior to work commencing, we agreed to consult with local residents to ensure they were content with what was being proposed. That exercise will begin shortly through the auspices of the Civil Representative Organisation.

5. During the meeting between Oval residents and Sir John Wheeler, they made it very clear that they saw the cage proposal as a short-term solution at best. They are insistent that the foot-bridge proposal is the only acceptable long-term solution. We also have a number of concerns about this, not least the uncertainty as to whether Glentoran Football Club will remain at the Oval. The Minister however agreed that a feasibility study would be carried out into the proposal and we have tasked DOE engineers to look at the problem. We hope to receive a preliminary report by the end of December, but it is already clear that the foot-bridge is a difficult engineering task and the preliminary estimate for the work is some £500,000. I will keep you informed as matters progress.

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6. Finally I am sure that you are already aware that the IFA are responsible only for International fixtures and the Irish Cup. It is my understanding that it is the Irish Football League who actually run the domestic league on a day to day basis. Therefore Mr Boyce's suggestion may not necessarily hold sway with them; I understand relationships between those responsible for football in Northern Ireland is not always totally harmonious.

7. I understand from our telephone conversation today, that your Minister is hoping to have dinner with Mr Allen shortly. This background information may therefore be of some use. I would however be grateful if you can keep us informed of any new initiatives emerging from your end in order to ensure there is no conflict between these and our proposals in relation to security.

signed

TOM CLARKE

SHA Ext 27017

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FAX TRANSMISSION

To: Mr Corbett From: Mr J Palmer

Date: 21/11/96 Number of Pages: 7
S. 26
(including this one)

Message:

For attention please

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I have no substantive changes to suggest.

a have accepted ~~text~~ to say no. for file.

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01243-421615
01727-779100

FROM: J Palmer

20 November 1996

**To: Mr McCartan (SCNI)
Mr Canavan (CCRU)
Mr Corbett (CCRU)**

COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN FOOTBALL

I attach a draft note of the meeting at the House of Sport on 13 November and should be grateful for any comments/amendments by return.


J PALMER

DRAFT**NOTE OF A MEETING AT SCNI ON 13 NOVEMBER TO
CONSIDER COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN FOOTBALL**

Present: Mr Jordan DENI (Chairman)
Mr McCartan SCNI
Mr Bowen IFA
Mr Quinn IFA
Mr Canavan CCRU
Mr Corbett CCRU
Mr Palmer DENI

1. Mr Jordan began by referring to the discussion which the Minister had with Don Allen, Chairman of the Sports Council on 24 October about possible ways of addressing the issue of sectarianism in Irish League football. The Minister had on that occasion asked that officials in DENI, CCRU and the Sports Council explore with the IFA proposals for tackling the immediate and longer term problems and that the outcome be reported to him. The purpose of the meeting was therefore to initiate a discussion on the issues with a view to agreeing a basis for a report to the Minister in due course.

2. It was recognised that the problems associated with football reflected the Northern Ireland situation at large. There were indications that tensions were easing and meanwhile everything possible would be done in the short term to contain the situation by measures such as bringing forward the time of certain matches, introducing ticket only arrangements and liaising closely with the RUC. The Glenavon V Cliftonville match on 16 November would be an indicator of progress towards more normality. (This match, staged at the earlier time of 2.00pm, passed without incident.)

3. Much of the discussion focused on what might be done in the longer term. In this context Mr McCartan referred to the work being undertaken by the Sports Council on Community Relations in Sport. A working group had been established to assist the Council in drawing up a CR strategy and a proposed strategy would be considered by the December meeting of the Council.

4. In the context of such a strategy, Mr McCartan and Mr Bowen have had preliminary discussions about the specific needs within football. Mr Bowen stated that he was confident that the IFA would adopt an anti-sectarian strategy as part of its overall approach to the promotion of fair play. The aim would be to get clubs to sign up to the strategy once adopted by the IFA members. Mr Bowen saw the need for the engagement of a Community Relations Officer to refine and implement the strategy following endorsement by the IFA. Mr McCartan was confident that assistance for such a post could be available via the Sports Council.

5. In support of the CR post the IFA see a role for a Security Officer to work with clubs and liaise with the RUC in the planning of matches. In support of proper planning Mr Bowen emphasised the need for higher standards of stewarding which would improve the management of fixtures. There was some discussion about resources for both the security and stewarding requirements and to enable the resource implications of these to be addressed Mr McCartan and Mr Bowen undertook to consider what needed to be done, draw up an estimate of costs and present their proposals by mid-December.

6. It was recognised that the steps to be taken by the IFA with the help of the Sports Council should be within the overall framework of proposals for legislation to improve Safety at Sports Grounds and to control behaviour on the way to fixtures and within grounds.

7. It was agreed that a report on the steps to be taken would go to the Minister after the IFA and Sports Council have presented proposals for improving security and stewarding. The aim would be for an announcement early in 1997 on the way forward.

J PALMER