

FROM: P N BELL
BRITISH SECRETARY
7 JULY 1998

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Mr Leach

ORMEAU ROAD DETERMINATION - THE IRISH RESPONSE

per elements

Colleagues may wish to see the Press Statement put out by the Irish Government in response to the Parades Commission determination. It is the best we could expect from the Irish. In particular, they have publicly accepted themselves, and urge others similarly to respect the operation of the rule of law on the Lower Ormeau - even when this rule is not operated, in the short run, in their favour as it is at Drumcree.

2. In my view, the restraint exercised here strengthens the case I made in my e-mail to you of yesterday (not to all), that Ministers, including the Prime Minister, should find a suitable opportunity to thank the Irish Government for their 'restraint and statesmanship' on this potentially, bitterly divisive issue. This is, partly, because they do deserve thanks; and partly because, on sound psychological principles, the more praise they get, the more such behaviours will be reinforced. The Secretary of State's dinner with Mr Andrews on 9 July would be a good place to start.

Signed:
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Release of Parade Determinations

Announcement by the Parades Commission, 6 July 1998

Press Statement

The Government note the determinations released today by the Parades Commission in relation to a number of contentious parades due to take place surrounding the Twelfth. In this regard, the application for a parade on the Lower Ormeau Road is widely and rightly seen as being very sensitive, in particular given the tense situation across Northern Ireland generated by the standoff at Drumcree and the absence of local agreement.

On this, as on all other contentious parades, the Government believe the local accommodation is the best outcome. While such an accommodation, disappointingly, has not proved possible the Government believe that the rule of law must be fully respected on the Lower Ormeau, as is the case on the Garvaghy Road. It must also, of course, be implemented by the authorities with impartiality and sensitivity. We also firmly hope that any public dissent from the Parades Commission determination will be carried out in a peaceful and dignified manner.

The Government urge the utmost calm and restraint by all sides at this sensitive time. All of us must keep constantly in mind that the genuine and long-term interests of all the people of Northern Ireland are best served through the institutions and potential of the Good Friday Agreement.