



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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PA Parades 194,
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Dr.

ILAC 11/26/94

PA Dr.

Parades
Speaking Points

Pa Orange Parades
95.

Key Point: to flag our interest, before the marching season, in ensuring that incremental progress be maintained.

- I thought it would be useful, before the summer marching season gets under way, to touch on this question;
- We acknowledge the efforts of the RUC and we understand the dilemmas and challenges which they face in a difficult policing situation;
- Common sense indicates that parades should not take place, or proceed along a route where they are not welcome, or where the possibility of confrontation attracts Loyalist paramilitaries and camp-followers. The Whiterock Road parade last June, at which a UVF grenade exploded, is an example. I think that many in the Unionist community share this view;
- It would be worthwhile to emphasise publicly before the marching season the twin principles which govern our joint approach: that the right to demonstrate should be exercised with respect for the rights and sensitivities of others and with regard for the maintenance of public order;
- It is clear that where the demographics of an area have changed, so-called traditional parades are often no longer welcome. Lower Ormeau, where a wise decision to reroute was taken last year, is one example;
- Another is Duncairn Gardens in North Belfast, which is now essentially nationalist, and a potential flashpoint in a volatile and vulnerable area;
- I suggest that, as in previous years our officials meet to review schedules and flashpoints for the coming marching season and that we revert to this issue at a future meeting.

D.

Parades
Background Note

1. An area of measurable and continuing progress under the Anglo-Irish Agreement has been RUC handling of parades. The progress is by no means automatic however, and requires discussion each year at Conference level and our detailed input through official level exchanges with the British side in the run-up to the full marching season.

2. Our assessment of the 1993 marching season is that, on the whole, it went reasonably well. Several advances were recorded, but points of concern remain. The main features of 1993 were:
 - the mini-Twelfth parade (on 7 July) on the Ormeau Road (which led to major disturbances and arrests in 1992) was rerouted away from the Lower Ormeau. The smaller "feeder" parades on the 12th July and at the end of August continued along the Lower Ormeau but with little controversy;

 - a contentious parade to the Whiterock Orange Hall in West Belfast on 26 June 1993 was rerouted in a way which minimised exposure to nationalist areas. The violent Loyalist response to the rerouting (in which a UVF member blew himself up) and opportunistic references to "Dublin's interference" by Unionist politicians and Orange Order functionaries raised the temperature for the marching season. Fortunately the aftermath did not spill over into large scale violence despite locally orchestrated riots by Loyalist paramilitaries. It is unfortunate, however, that, despite our entreaties that no concessions or retreats be made by the RUC in the face of the threat of Loyalist violence, a subsequent "feeder" parade on 12 July was allowed by

the RUC to use the objectionable route not permitted on 26 June;

- we found it unfortunate also that the RUC, during a major Orange parade in Dungannon which passed a nationalist estate, felt it necessary to charge into a nationalist house to remove a single tricolour, while hundreds of Union Jacks were being carried by marchers in the parade.

3. In discussion at the Intergovernmental Conference on 3 November last, the Chief Constable laid emphasis on the fact that only one parade (Whiterock) led to disorder, pointed to effective policing by the RUC and said that he continued to favour the "incremental approach" to controlling marches.

Priorities for 1994

4. We insist on the general principle that parades should not take place in an area, or along a route where they are not welcome - a principle which was reflected clearly in former Secretary of State King's remarks in the House of Commons on 19 June 1986: "How does it benefit anyone to march through an area where the inhabitants do not support the views being expressed by the marchers and where the only result is to exacerbate communal tensions?". We are aware of the Chief Constable's view that decisions on the routing and handling of parades are, in the final analysis, matters for the judgment of the local RUC Commander, but this view must not obscure the principle referred to above, or the objectives of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The Joint Statement issued after the 27 April 1992 meeting of the Conference noted that "the right to demonstrate should be exercised with respect for the rights and sensitivities of others and with regard for the maintenance of public order".

5. The legal basis for the RUC's power to ban or reroute a parade is found in the 1987 Public Order Order. We are concerned that the Chief Constable has tended to prioritise one desideratum of the Order (that is, maintenance of public order before and during a parade, which is often achieved at the cost of bottling up nationalist residents), over the power, enjoyed by senior police officers, and explicit in the Order, to reroute parades where they may result in "serious disruption to the life of the community" or "intimidation" (Art. 4 of the Order). In addition, the Secretary of State has the power under Article 5 of the Order to ban a parade.

6. The RUC's approach should take full account of areas where demographics have altered the balance in the community. Lower Ormeau Road is one example. Another is Duncairn Gardens in North Belfast, a volatile and vulnerable area which is now essentially nationalist. Previous marches along Duncairn Gardens (which take place every two or three years, including this year) have been a focus for rioting. We have precise suggestions to make on rerouting.

7. Last year, apparently on the Secretary of State's instructions, we were not given a copy of the RUC's internal booklet containing the schedule of parades over the Twelfth. The importance of this booklet to us should not be overestimated: we normally receive it from the British side only two or three days before 12 July, by which time we have established the principal parades and flashpoints through our own contacts. It serves a useful purpose as a checklist however. Refusal to share the booklet with us is an unhelpful gesture which we hope to see reversed this year.

Anglo-Irish Division
20 April 1994

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