

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Counsellors A+I Section
Messrs. Teahon, Donlon & Dalton
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Secure Fax: 111 5.2

5 February 1997 **No of pages including this one: 1**

To: HQ **From: Belfast**
For: C O Floinn **From: K Dowling**

Subj: Harryville (ii)

1. Further to my secure fax 108 of this morning (copy attached), we have become aware that the Secretary of State had a personal conversation with the Chief Constable yesterday on the question of Harryville.

2. While we have no details of the content of the conversation, our understanding would be that the Chief Constable did not request that the Secretary of State consider using his powers to ban Saturday evening's band parade.

3. Further to our approaches to the British side on this matter, the NIO security section are this morning preparing a briefing note for the Secretary of State in preparation for the discussion of this item at the meeting with the Tánaiste this afternoon. While we are pressing the British side to give us some indication of what line the Secretary of State is likely to take, they are doubtful about being able to give us any such information in advance of the meeting.

4. Our best assessment would be that the Secretary of State will be disinclined to ban the parade but should be supportive in regard to encouraging the RUC to impose a condition whereby the parade should not be allowed to pass the church until well after the mass goers attending 6pm mass will have departed.

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Immediate Secure Fax: 108

5 February 1997 **No of pages including this one: 2**

To: HQ **From: Belfast**
For: C. O Floinn **From: K. Dowling**

Subj: Harryville

1. On foot of representations from Sean Farren of the SDLP and media coverage in relation to an application by Loyalists to hold a band parade in Harryville on Saturday night next, we raised the issue with the British side here yesterday morning.

2. The British side responded that they would take the matter up with the NIO security section (SPOB) and revert. They recalled however that at the meeting on policing issues/general security situation we had here in the Secretariat on 21 January, John Steele (see para 47 of Joe Hackett's report of 23 January) had suggested that any attempt by the Orange Order to stage a band parade as part of the protests at the Catholic church would be prevented by the RUC under the powers available to them under the Public Order Order.

3. We raised the matter again with the British side this morning, referring to disturbing media reports today citing "sources within the RUC" as indicating that, while no decision had as yet been taken, "Loyalists will be given permission" to hold the parade in question. The Chief Constable had been quoted in today's News Letter as saying that "our overwhelming responsibility is to preserve the peace and maintain order. We have a responsibility to those who want to go and worship... I am not saying that it means we are not letting it (the band parade) go ahead but, certainly, our desire would be to ensure that those who want to go to worship can do so unmolested".

4. We emphasised to the British side that, continuously since September, worshippers attending Harryville church had been subjected to obstruction, harassment, insults and abuse. Allowing the bandsmen to march in the area of the church on Saturday night would be a deeply provocative and dangerous act which would heighten sectarian tension and aggravate an already very difficult situtation. We hoped this would be prevented.

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5. Dr Paisley had been cited in today's Irish Times as appealing to the marchers to pass the church "quietly" or else to hold their rally after mass was over. While we hoped the parade would not take place at all, in the event of a decision in favour ultimately being taken, the parade, as an absolute minimum, should be prevented from coinciding with the mass or the arrival/departure of mass goers. However, even with such a condition there would still be a potentially very explosive situation as those participating in the parade would inevitably swell the ranks of the protestors who would be attempting to harass mass goers attending the church. The best option therefore would be for the parade not to proceed. In this respect, the Secretary of State would of course also wish to give consideration to using his own powers in regard to banning parades.

6. We have asked the British side for an early response in this matter, and this morning if possible.

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