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Mr Kirwan.
No earlier time more available than those
rep ort in my note below. If meeting is on
Friday, you & I
could be away, but Mr M Gorry
& Mr Ni Chonghaile would be available
could cover – agree
have informed Dr. Mansergh
Mr Kirwan – agree
3.9.99 – I will mark Diary
3/9/99

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Oifig/Office

To: Taoiseach

From: W. Kirwan, Assistant Secretary

Request for meeting from Mr Breandán Mac Cionnaith and delegation from Garvaghy Road Resident's Coalition.

Wall

Please check back with me about dates when Jon came to speak – to Foreign Affairs.

1 You have previously seen the attached reports which refer to this request. As you know, there is a question of a meeting between Prime Minister Blair and Breandán Mac Cionnaith, which, now that the Prime Minister is back at work will presumably not be long delayed. You are also aware of the suspicion of the Garvaghy Road people that Mr Blair may already have privately promised the Orange Order a march down Garvaghy Road this autumn, in the context of a wider package, including an economic package for the Portadown area. We would tend to share this suspicion.

2 Mr Mac Cionnaith wishes to meet you before his meeting with Mr Blair. At times in the past, Dr Mansergh and I have tended to share the view that Mr Mac Cionnaith's access at Head of Government level should be rationed, on the basis that we should avoid building up too much a person who seems to lack any constructive disposition. However, in the context of the wider political and peace process at present, with a rather bad atmosphere in the republican constituency, a march down the Garvaghy Road by the Orange Order could have very adverse effects. It seems unlikely, on the other hand, that allowing such a march will have any very significant positive effect on unionist supporters of the Good Friday Agreement or waverers - their concerns are with other issues. If this analysis is correct, we should do all we can to head off Prime Minister Blair from facilitating any early march on Garvaghy Road. These considerations argue that you should, on this occasion, grant Mr Mac Cionnaith's request for an early meeting. It may be necessary, following such a meeting, to send signals to Mr Blair, probably through remarks to the media, to indicate that the Irish Government is opposed to a march on Garvaghy Road this autumn.

Bw
3/9/99

3 A study of some recent remarks by Mr Alistair Graham, Chairman of the Parades Commission, tends to suggest that the Commission is not part of a choreography, orchestrated by No. 10 Downing Street, to facilitate a march. It was of course, very ill-judged for the Commission to be seen publicly to have met Prime Minister Blair only a few days before their determination re the Lower Ormeau Road in July.

meeting
WK
3.9.99

Note
I spoke to the Private Secretary. Possible date/time for the Taoiseach are 10 a.m on Thursday 9 Sept or on Friday, 10 Sept. I pointed out that Ms Alma Rodgers (Private Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs) had requested that her Minister be informed when he is due to meet Mr Blair. She felt that Mac Cionnaith would be more comfortable if he were accompanied by a delegation of some

4 I have discussed this whole issue with Secretry-General Teahon, Dr Mansergh and the Department of Foreign Affairs and all agree that you should accede to the request to meet Mr Mac Cionnaith and a Garvaghy Road delegation soon. If you agree, I shall ask Foreign Affairs to explore suitable early dates for a meeting.

2 September, 1999

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(2) 5's entered in Book & filed.

23 AUG 1999

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AN RÚNAÍOCHT ANGLA-ÉIREANNACH
BÉAL FEIRSTE

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT
BELFAST

cc 4/1

Secure Fax No: 2497

SEEN BY TAOISEACH

Date: 20 August 1999 **No. of pages (including cover):** 2

To: Gary Ansbro
Anglo-Irish Division

From: Bill Nolan

Taoiseach
You will note A
page 2. This requires
careful consideration.
I am chasing whether
any direct approach has been
made to your office
or to this
Department.
here
25-8-99

Subject: Conversation with P. Drinan

I spoke with above following this morning's court appearances by Gerard Rice and others. Nine persons were charged with various offences, including standing in a public place, hindering the lawful procession of a parade and with disorderly behaviour. All were remanded on bail until 15 October next. P. Drinan understands that there may be further arrests today in connection with last Saturday morning's events on the Lower Ormeau Road.

The RUC Press Office is on a media offensive here today with regard to the 'balance of arrests' as between Loyalists and Nationalists (the note from the other side which I forwarded to you refers). P. Drinan is very angry about this. She said that there were 38 illegal parades in Portadown in the period July 1998 and February 1999. There have been 8 prosecutions only in Portadown arising from these parades and none was successful.

Portadown

As you already know, PM Blair spoke at some length with B. MacCionnaith of the Garvaghy Road Residents yesterday (Thursday 19 August). According to P. Drinan, Blair made it plain that he wants the Drumcree standoff cleared up as soon as possible and that he sees a dignified parade coupled with a dignified protest by residents as the way to do it. MacCionnaith apparently told him that the residents would be unable to participate in any

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further meetings unless he (Blair) stated publicly beforehand that no preconditions exist and that no guarantees have been given to the Portadown Orange Lodge in relation to an early parade on the Garvaghy Road.

P. Drinan asked me to let Dublin know that the Garvaghy Road Residents wish to have another meeting with the Taoiseach as soon as it can be arranged to (1) bring him up to date on recent developments and (2) make him aware of their extreme concern at this time that the Portadown Orange Lodge have been promised a parade by PM Blair in the near future

A -

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SEEN BY TAOISEACH

So instead - filed

Confidential

25 AUG 1999

Visit to Garvaghy Road, Portadown

1. Yesterday afternoon I met with Breandán Mac Cionnaith, Séan Dunbar and Pauline Campbell

Taoiseach
This is a useful update briefing 25-8-99

Drumcree Parade

2. MacCionnaith said he feared that an Orange march on the Garvaghy Road was a prerequisite to an overall package on the implementation of the GFA. The decision of the Parades Commission on the Apprentice Boys march on the Ormeau road was disturbing . The recent change in the Parades Commission procedures, which he believes now take into account "the process of communication", would make it easier for the Loyal Orders to succeed in future parade applications.

3. No progress had been made on the issues of the Civic Forum and the economic package in the absence on holidays of T. McCusker. An economic strategy for the area needed to be worked out and implemented. The promise of substantial investment would not ensure an Orange march.

4. He wondered if the September timing of the meeting with Tony Blair implied a connection with the GFA review. I said I had no sense that the march issue was in any way tied to the review. I felt that the meeting with Blair would go ahead and would be regarded as the end of the current process. MacC. said that the future direction of the process would be determined by the outcome of the Blair meeting. He suggested that a meeting with the Taoiseach beforehand would be useful.

5. He would see no difficulty with Powell or Howarth chairing talks after his meeting with Blair as long as the process was genuine and without precondition. Proximity talks were a dead issue as they were fundamentally degrading given the Orange side's attitude to the residents.

6. MacC pointed out that the area between the Garvaghy road community and Drumcree Church would almost inevitably be developed as an extension of the Nationalist area. What was needed was a long-term solution to the parades issue guaranteeing access for the Orange side to Drumcree but by the outward route which they currently use.

7. Currently the Garvaghy Community finds itself vilified by the Orange side, discriminated against by the local authorities, generally insecure and under attack at the interface with the loyalist community and in the town centre. With this as background an Orange Parade through the centre of the estate would completely humiliate the community and confirm their status as second class citizens.

8. Security considerations touched on the absence of a twenty-four hour police presence at the Craigwell Estate interface, RUC failure to take complaints seriously, failure to charge anybody with "non-compliance" with Parades Commission determinations, failure to discipline police relative to the Robert Hamill affair and inability to access

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recreational and educational facilities in Portadown. MacC suggested that in the transition period, while the Patten report is being implemented, an International Monitoring Body could be established to spot-check police activities and maintain standards.

9. MacC said that the community which accounted for 10% of overall unemployment in the Bann Westminster constituency had been starved of investment by the Craigavon Industrial Centre (no referrals of business investment to the local Mayfair centre over a three year period), received less than adequate EU funding via Craigavon Council , and been subject to a discriminatory loan and grant scheme and a failure to develop the Obin St. derelict area.

Comment

10. In sum the Garvaghy Road community feels isolated, discriminated against and under threat. They would view a decision to allow an Orange Parade down the Garvaghy Road as a last straw symbolising their (perceived) worthlessness as a community. There is obviously no prospect that they would agree voluntarily to a Parade in the short or medium term. What is required now is effective action on the economic and security fronts to restore a substratum of dignity to the community. That, coupled with the implementation of the GFA, might radically alter the atmosphere and set the scene for some form of reconciliation with the local Orange Order and the wider unionist community.

Gary Ansbro
Justice and Security Section
24 August 1999

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