

E.R.

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CONFIDENTIAL

HCS/3/32

cc PS/PUS (B & L)
Mr Stephens
Mr Buxton

PS/Secretary of State (B & L)

PROCESSIONS AND PARADES

The Secretary of State and others receiving copies of this minute will, I am sure, be interested to see the attached copy of a memorandum which I have received from Dr Eames, the Bishop of Down and Dromore.

I am seeking an opportunity to discuss this further with him at the earliest opportunity and will then, as promised, offer further advice in the matter.



K P BLOOMFIELD

11 March 1985

CONFIDENTIAL

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The Bishop of Down and Dromore (The Rt. Rev. Dr. R. H. A. Eames)

The See House, 32 Knockdene Park South, Belfast, BT5 7AB

Telephone 053973

MEMORANDUM FROM
THE RIGHT REVEREND

(Note: While purpo under

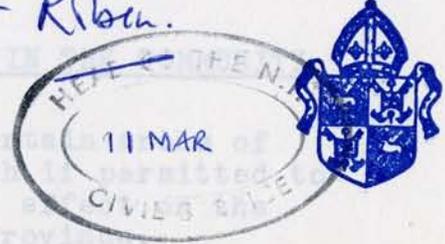
Ken Apologies for delay but I have been working under great pressure lately.

- Robin.

A. RELIE

11 March 1985.

WITH COMPLIMENTS



- I. It is acknowledged that tensions will continue in the future good.
2. The sources of such tensions are numerous but stem in the main from political/religious divisions which in their turn emanate from historical factors. The degree to which contemporary developments of a political nature heighten or lessen such tensions is debatable but no one doubts the joint cumulative effect of historical divisions and contemporary events.
3. It is in the interest of the entire community that such areas and sources of tension be minimised as far as possible.
4. While the question of parades and demonstrations is at present under review this question cannot be separated from other factors. Parades, etc., are merely a manifestation of other community issues which cannot be disregarded or minimised in such analysis.
5. Examination of parades, etc., in recent years indicate certain trends and characteristics. Such factors must be acknowledged before suggestions for reform are properly considered:
 - (a) A distinction must be drawn between the traditional parade (e.g. Twelfth of July) and ad hoc local parades or demonstrations which by their nature can be extremely provocative.
 - (b) The connection between public parades and what is commonly called "community identity" cannot be over-emphasised. This factor is often evidenced by talk of "rights" and "historic duties".
 - (c) The value of such demonstrations as community "safety-valves" is immense.

MARCH 1985

MEMORANDUM FROM THE BISHOP OF DOWN AND DROMORE,
THE RIGHT REVEREND DR. R.H.A. EAMES, TO MR. K. BLOOMFIELD:

(Note: While the following points are geared for discussion purposes within N.I.O. they are written on the understanding of restricted circulation)

A. RELIEVING PRESENT TENSIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

- I. It is acknowledged that there are certain areas of tension within Northern Ireland which if permitted to continue will have grave detrimental effect on the future good of all sections of the Province.
2. The sources of such tensions are numerous but stem in the main from political/religious divisions which in their turn emanate from historical factors. The degree to which contemporary developments of a political nature heighten or lessen such tensions is debatable but no one doubts the joint cumulative effect of historical divisions and contemporary events.
3. It is in the interest of the entire community that such areas and sources of tension be minimised as far as possible.
4. While the question of parades and demonstrations is at present under review this question cannot be separated from other factors. Parades, etc., are merely a manifestation of other community issues which cannot be disregarded or minimised in such analysis.
5. Examination of parades, etc., in recent years indicate certain trends and characteristics. Such factors must be acknowledged before suggestions for reform are properly considered:
 - (a) A distinction must be drawn between the traditional parade (e.g. Twelfth of July) and ad hoc local parades or demonstrations which by their nature can be extremely provocative.
 - (b) The connection between public parades and what is commonly called "community identity" cannot be over-emphasised. This factor is often evidenced by talk of "rights" and "historic duties".
 - (c) The value of such demonstrations as community "safety-valves" is immense.

- (d) Too often a public demonstration may be a "safety valve" for one section of the community while provoking genuine fear and apprehension in another. This then leads to retaliation, etc.
 - (e) The element of provocation in such events is frequently a result of speeches, crowds following a parade, action by elements not directly involved in the event, etc.
 - (f) There is evidence that while organisers of such events claim to exercise responsibility in crowd control, etc., such control is impossible and impracticable. Sometimes insufficient emphasis is placed by government, etc., on this point, viz., the responsibility of "bringing people on to the streets at times of tension", etc.
 - (g) Why is the parade phenomena so prevalent in Northern Ireland even though demonstrations such as miners on strike, CND, etc. do take place in U.K.? Historic links between a demonstration of numerical strength and support and "ideals" explain only part of the picture.
6. Examination of media reports of main parades over the past five years suggest certain facts:
- (a) Community tension before and after parades is directly connected with events in political and social arena high-lighted before parade takes place, e.g. political speeches in Republic of at Westminster, terrorist levels of activity, assassination levels, etc.
 - (b) Media reports of parades tend to high-light violence occurring along route, etc.
 - (c) Content of speeches at demonstrations are predictable and evidence tends to suggest such speeches have minimal overall effect on tensions as they generally repeat views already expressed elsewhere.
 - (d) Media reports have tended to underline "marching season" in terms of a natural right of communities to hold such demonstrations.

7. Any appeals for a restriction in the organisation of parades must take account of certain factors:
 - (a) Distinction between traditional and ad hoc parades.
 - (b) Local feelings (e.g. Apprentice Boys Parade in Londonderry).
 - (c) The importance stressed in 5 (c) of allowing community tensions to be relieved by such events.
 - (d) Sufficient attention being paid to the long-term reactions to such restrictions on the part of Orange organisations.

8. Recent events in Newry and reaction to them are a text-book example of the background necessary for the suggestion which follows in this memo. Tragic circumstances such as the attack on Newry Police Station does allow opportunity for careful Government reaction. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case and I would plead for greater sensitivity when dealing with apparently reactionary speeches at parades. One example of this was during the period of James Prior when a Government spokesman reacted to remarks made on the Twelfth of July - remarks which in my opinion, should have been ignored.

B. SUGGESTED ACTION

- I. The climate is now right for sympathetic consideration of the role of the R.U.C. provided that
 - (a) It is not misinterpreted as 'playing politics' with the situation.
 - (b) It is not linked in any way to financial cutbacks which have been the subject of recent political comment.
 - (c) Care is taken to ensure that no-one can interpret such action as being a response to "Republican type" propaganda of late.

2. A direct appeal should be made to all organisations (not only semi-political but organisers of social and festive events involving police deployment) stressing the dangers to the Force at the present time and appealing for a "minimising" of situations in which the Police could be placed in unnecessary danger. Emphasis should be placed on need to make as many men available as possible to "defeat terrorism".

3. So far as the traditional and ad hoc parades are concerned, the Secretary of State should take immediate action to call Leaders together to explain his wish to lower the temperature and suggest that a genuine effort be made by the organisers of such events to avoid flash-points and sensitive areas. This, it could be explained, would show the Orange Orders willingness to join in the campaign against the terrorist and increase their credibility in the eyes of the community as a responsible organisation.
4. If an appeal could come from N.I.O. in the terms mentioned in B (2) above then leaders in the community could respond. However, such an appeal would have to be couched within a more general appeal to the community at large, otherwise the response of the Orange leadership would be negative.
5. I would be prepared to back up this approach by arranging confidential meetings with influential people in those organisations but the official approach would need to come first.
6. I have already taken confidential soundings and I believe there could be a positive response from Orange Leaders if it can be seen that they are acting "with responsibility and leadership at this serious juncture in our history".

C. SUMMARY

While tensions can be raised by parades it is submitted that they are only part of a larger process and should not be allowed to be taken out of proportion. Certainly they can contribute to tension but are symptoms rather than root causes of the problem. There is sufficient evidence that certain leaders would respond to the above approach provided they were given the opportunity in public to be seen as initiators of the policy rather than responding to Government or political pressure.