

E. R.

WA 5/4043/RE

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PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) (M)

ASSESSMENTS OF PROSPECTS FOR 12 JULY

6812.  
cc: PS/Mr Scott (L&B)(M)  
PS/PUS (L&B)(M)  
PS/Mr Bloomfield 3/2  
Mr Brennan (M)  
Mr Ferneyhough  
Mr Bell (M)  
Mr G Hewitt  
Mr Stephens  
2 Dec/11.

1. You asked Mr Stephens for advice on the prospects for the period around 12 July.

2. The broad position is as follows.

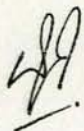
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- a. The marching season is now underway. A substantial number of parades have already taken place, many with potential for disruption. They have however so far been relatively trouble-free, with the exception of minor incidents in Sandy Row and Dee Street in Belfast, principally caused by loyalist hooligans. A sensitive parade through the centre of Downpatrick last weekend went off peacefully and successfully.
  - b. While a large number of forthcoming parades throughout the province cannot be ignored, and some - eg at Dunloy, and Dungannon, where a new Catholic housing estate has been built across a traditional route, are sensitive, Portadown remains the greatest single potential flashpoint.
  - c. The organisers of the church parade in Portadown on 6 July have asked for the same route as last year - ie through the tunnel to the church, and back along Garvaghy Road (both strongly nationalist areas). The Chief Constable has today instructed his sub divisional commanders to have further discussions with the organisers, but I do not know on what basis. The Chief Constable is expected to reach a decision on tactics tomorrow (3 July) and RUC Headquarters have undertaken to inform me before any public statement is made.
  - d. Notification has been received of a proposed counter demonstration by Sinn Fein-sponsored nationalists, with two bands, in the same area at the same time. This is obvious and deliberate provocation.

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- e. The organisers of the two subsequent parades in Portadown (12 and 13 July) have expressed the wish to use the same contentious route, but have already been left in no doubt by the RUC that others will not be permitted (ie as last year).
- f. On parades in general, a fair degree of co-operation is being offered to the RUC by members of the Orange Order and the Black Preceptory (the Orange Order issued a statement expressing regret that the police came under attack at marches in East Belfast). But they are under pressure from the hard men: Alan Wright (Ulster Clubs) is particularly active in relation to Portadown (which is his base). NIIR 300 686/R/09 which is currently available gives further background.
- g. Although Portadown (at the instigation of Alan Wright) have called for support from other Lodges, other voices are emphasising that the centre of county Orange activity this year is in Armagh City.
- h. HQNI are in the picture about RUC plans. The RUC had a company on standby in the Downpatrick march, but had no need to call on them. Troops will similarly be on standby in Portadown for this weekend.



W J A INNES

2 July 1986

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