

6113/94 JK 13-10-94, 11/10

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cc SOS

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FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B)  
11 October 1994

PS/Mr Smith (DOE)

- cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
- PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L) - B
- PS/Baroness Denton (DHSS, DANI&L) - B
- PS/Mr Smith (DED&L) - B
- PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- NI Perm Secs
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Daniell - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Hamilton
- Mr Mackenzie
- Mr Canavan - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Marsh - B
- Mrs Collins - B
- Members of the Peacelines Working Group

cc Mr McVeigh  
Mr Gibson  
+ file

*Handwritten notes:*  
Mrs Ryan  
Mr Mella  
To see - a  
"non-meeting"  
Mr Tansler (cov)  
To see + WPB

PEACELINES

The Secretary of State was grateful for Mr Smith's submission of 11 September, which they discussed briefly yesterday, together with Sir John Wheeler, Mr Fell, Mr Legge, Mr McKenzie, Mr Maccabe and Mr McCusker.

2. Mr Smith explained that there were 15 locations in Belfast which had a wall or fence identified in the Working Group Report and the conclusion they had come to was that all were necessary for the time being. In the long term the intention would be to remove the peacelines but the reality at present was that they were required to provide confidence to those living on either side. Mr McCusker said that there would be a review in the autumn in relation to the physical structures and the possibility of softening them, together with work with local communities to try and build greater trust between them. There was no single approach to this, though he explained that he had spent part of the day with John Thompson,

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enlisted by HRH Prince of Wales, on the specific problem of improving them. There was ongoing consultation through the Action Teams and the Community Relations Council.

3. Sir John Wheeler suggested that, once the sectarian or security justification had diminished, there may well be an argument in crime prevention terms to keep the walls and have a defensible space. At that stage we may wish to carry out a crime prevention analysis, as has been done in some areas in England. Mr McCusker said that this would be taken on board as the police were directly involved in the working group.

4. Mr Fell agreed that it was premature to talk of dismantling the walls just now and the first step was to build bridges between the communities. Then, after taking community views and, if things went well, look at the future of the walls and at that stage consider any crime prevention dimension. Another factor which had to be remembered was that there was an increasing demand for RC housing and a reducing demand for Protestant housing and so, in some areas, Protestants may see removal of the walls as a threat to their areas.

4. It was agreed that the long term objective was to remove the walls, but in practice building bridges between the communities would have to be the medium term objective. The Secretary of State looked forward to receiving the results of the review in the autumn.

Signed

W K LINDSAY  
Private Secretary

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