

GARVAGHY ROAD RESIDENTS COALITION



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26 AUG 1998

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
POLICING AND SECURITY
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NIC DEPT

cc. PSJ/PUS

- Mr. Watkins
- Mr. Jeffrey
- Mr. Mc Cusker
- Mr. Maccaule
- Mr. Clarke

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CONFIDENTIAL
26/8/98

Dear Stephen - disappointing (on the Orange side,
Denis Watson was content with the draft).
I shall call a meeting shortly to discuss the
options.

Following receipt of your letter dated 21/8/98, the GRRC met and discussed the contents at length. We believe that the following issues remain outstanding, and need to be addressed prior to the release of any agreed statement.

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Any such agreed statement must recognise that there are three main parties to the conflict in Portadown; the Orange Order/Unionist community, the GRRC/Nationalist community and, most importantly, the British Government. By simply alluding to residents and marchers, the British Government is abdicating from its responsibilities and from the role it has actively played in the past in facilitating sectarian parades. Failure by successive governments to ensure that everyone was treated equally under the law has led us to the current situation.

As we have pointed out in previous meetings, the ongoing protests by members of the Orange Order and their supporters are not conducive to creating an atmosphere of trust. This is reinforced by the presence of the most senior members of Portadown LOI No 1 at these protests and by the applications for marches each Sunday right up to October 18 1998.

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The attitude of the authorities, and the RUC in particular, to the ongoing intimidation of Catholic families during these almost nightly protests merely reinforces the view held by people locally that there appears to be a complete lack of commitment to protect the rights of Portadown Nationalists at all times.

The reference to seeking "a lasting accommodation regarding parades in Portadown" would seem to suggest that the British government is again working

X The draft statement (as both sides in principle agreed) was designed to take the heat out of the current situation, hopefully reduce the loyalist protests, and facilitate more productive bilaterals. The residents seem to be resiling from this.
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to a pre-determined agenda which of necessity for them involves a solution which will result in an Orange parade on Garvaghy Road.

In the absence of an agreed statement, we see no reason to prevent a further round of bilateral talks.

Yours sincerely

Brandon Mac Cormaith