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FROM: S J LEACH
APDL
9 July 1996

DESK IMMEDIATE

cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - F
PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (L&B) -B
PS/Sir D Fell -B
Mr Thomas -B
Mr Legge -B
Mr Bell -B
Mr Ray -B
Mr Steele -B
Mr Watkins -B
Mr Hill -B
Mr Lavery -B
Mr Maccabe -B
Mr Perry o/r -B
Mr Stephens -B
Ms Checksfield -B
Ms Harrison -B
Mr Whysall -B
Mr McKervill -B

LR

I have
severe doubts
about this.

A

WDC

> BINA
We now know
why Mr L is "Grade 3" TA

PS/Sir J Wheeler (B&L) - B

KEN MAGINNIS: HANDLING OF PARADES

1. The Minister met Ken Maginnis MP this afternoon with Mr Thomas, Mr McKervill and me in support. Mr McKervill will be producing a note of the meeting, but it may be worth recording in advance of this Mr Maginnis' views on Drumcree and the future handling of parades.

(please in the
pain of office)

2. Mr Maginnis commented (not without a certain schadenfreude) that David Trimble was in a position of considerable difficulty, and the sooner a compromise solution to the Drumcree stand-off was produced, the sooner the UUP would be able to resume constructive engagement in the talks process. (He believed that Peter Robinson and even Nigel Dodds of the DUP also at base wished to make further progress with the negotiations.) Ideally a compromise was needed no later than tomorrow (Wednesday), to allow passions to cool before the 11th night, which would otherwise be extremely dangerous. The substance of his proposed compromise was that representatives of the three Portadown Lodges should be allowed to walk down the

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Garvaghy Road without bands or any other panoply, on the lines of last year's arrangement. The RUC had changed their minds last year and had to do the same this time round, and the sooner the better. «Interestingly, Sean O'huiginn observed at a meeting which the Minister had later with the Irish side that a re-run of last year also seemed to him to be the only solution, provided that the locals could be guaranteed that it would not be misrepresented as a victory for the Orange Order, as happened in 1995.]

3. Maginnis also suggested, with more originality, that one component of a compromise solution at Drumcree should be the enunciation of a **broader** policy on marches which would have the aim of defusing the issue for the future. This broader policy would have the characteristics that:

- i. No arterial route (he appeared clearly to include the Garvaghy and Ormeau Roads in this category) would be regarded as "off limits" because of the religious character of the adjoining population;
- ii. all traditional marches would in general be allowed, but with the police strictly enforcing a restriction that only genuinely local groups could participate;
- iii. applications for non-traditional marches would be judged on their merits, with the aim of achieving broad acceptability and avoiding or minimising public order difficulties.

4. Maginnis commented that he had urged a policy on these lines on Ronnie Flanagan for some months, and believed that he had seen its virtues; but he had, alas, been overruled by the Chief Constable. But it was now up to the **Government** to take a lead in defining a policy on these lines as a contribution to calming the atmosphere.

5. Maginnis stressed that his proposal was intended to be, and to be seen as, even-handed; thus, Sinn Fein would in principle be as

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entitled to march down an arterial road to the centre of Lurgan as the Orangemen would be to march down the Garvaghy Road.

Nonetheless, the policy would in practice doubtless be seen as loaded in the Unionist direction: the bulk of existing marches are Orange ones, which would therefore be regarded as traditional and allowed to continue, while proposals for new marches from the Nationalist side would be "non-traditional" and therefore subject to a more rigorous scrutiny.

6. Nonetheless, although there may be flaws in this particular formulation, the concept of a general statement of policy on parades as one element of a package to defuse the Drumcree confrontation does seem potentially valuable, and might well merit further urgent consideration. (A not incompatible variant might be a Royal Commission or other vehicle of enquiry into the parades issue generally, which would be invited to recommend on the general principles which would be applied to parades in the future. I believe that Mr Lavery is separately working up a proposal on these lines.)

(Signed)

S J LEACH

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