

File
From: Rachael Reynolds

Date: 7-Jul-96

PRIME MINISTER

Rachael
cc John

Edward

POSITION ON MARCHING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

You may like to be aware of the current situation on the re-routed Loyalist march in Northern Ireland.

Basically there is a mainly peaceful standoff at present. Ronnie Flannagan is present and is in discussion with Trimble, Smyth and Paisley, all of whom are there. Trimble is being extremely unhelpful, saying more or less that he and his followers will stay for as long as necessary. Smyth in contrast is trying to keep things calm.

There are about 800 peaceful marchers and 200 people gathered in the town centre, some with paramilitary connections. It is this group which is worrying the police most at present. The RUC and the army are there in force and are confident they can contain any difficulties.

There have been minor scuffles and one arrest. There are also unconfirmed reports of trouble in other areas

Ian Paisley has just called me to say he is very concerned that attempts are to be made this evening to remove the protesters from the church by force and that if that were to happen he could not be answerable for the consequences. There would be serious civil commotion.

The NIO assure me that there will be no attempt to take on the people in the church. It is private property and they have every right to be there. I have asked the NIO to convey Paisley's concerns to the police and to reassure Paisley.

Paisley also asked for a meeting with you as soon as possible to stop 'the situation' getting out of hand. His main focus for concern appeared to be

that he had been promised by the Chief Constable that no razor wire would be put down around the church but that that had been done under cover of darkness last night. This sort of lying (sic) did not help.

SECRET IMMEDIATE

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Rachael

cc: PS/Secy - 1 (100)
PS/Secy - 1 (100)
PS/Michael Amos - 1 (100)
PS/PUR (100) - 1 (100)
PS/Dir David Hall - 1 (100)
Mr Legg - 1 (100)
Mr Thomas - 1 (100)
Mr Jones - 1 (100)
Mr Watkins - 1 (100)
Mr Ray - 1 (100)
Mr Stephens - 1 (100)
Mr Hill - 1 (100)
Mr Perry - 1 (100)
Mr Marshall - 1 (100)
Mr Wood (100) - 1 (100)
Mr Gidd, Colwyn station (100) - 1 (100)
Mr Nelson, St. 10 (100) - 1 (100)

NA 10000 - 1 (100)

MEMORANDUM

This note summarizes the outcome of the meeting about the Secretary of State and with the Chief Constable and Lord Gifford on the question of Drunkenness and former conversations with Lord Gifford last night.

Chief Constable

The Chief Constable, accompanied by Sir John Plangon, came to see the Secretary of State in the afternoon of 3 July. The Secretary of State was accompanied by Sir John Wheeler, M.P. and Mr. Gifford. The Chief Constable and Mr. Plangon gave a detailed account of the prospects for the Drunkenness search on Sunday 7 July. The key factors influencing their assessment of the prospects were as follows: