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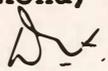
CONFIDENTIAL

Easter Monday Apprentice Boys' Parade, Lower Ormeau

1. I understand from local contacts that the decision by the RUC to reroute the Apprentice Boys parade was taken less than an hour before the parade was due to pass at 8.30 am on Easter Monday. This has been confirmed by the British side. See Secretariat's SF 474 attached.
2. The British side's initial response (on Good Friday) to the formal representations that we had made in the matter is attached - Secretariat's SF 470. The scenario sketched out by the British side in that response was similar in effect to last year's parade when the Apprentice Boys, ostensibly voluntarily and spontaneously, decided not to return along the Lower Ormeau.
3. I was contacted over the Easter weekend by Francie Molloy of Sinn Féin and, separately, by the Quaker mediators (Alan and Janet Quilley) with whom I have maintained confidential contact in the matter. I advised Sinn Féin/LORAG of the need to proceed with restraint and avoid overreaction e.g. to Dr. Paisley's Good Friday comments complaining about possible rerouting of the Easter Monday march. A dignified approach now would be of benefit in the context of the future unfolding and development of this issue. Molloy agreed and made clear that, while other Republican groups would have to rally to the support of LORAG, Sinn Féin wished to keep the issue firmly under control. I said that, if the parade should, as we wished, be rerouted, then LORAG should avoid any note of triumphalism or oneupmanship. Molloy called me shortly after the parade was rerouted to emphasise that he had reinforced this message to Gerard

Rice and co. in LORAG; and said that Rice had taken this advice on board.

4. The Quakers and Molloy told me separately on Good Friday that LORAG and the Orange Order had agreed to a face to face meeting later this week (probably Thursday). They felt that this was a positive development (although it remains to be seen if the nascent goodwill persists. The Quakers told me this afternoon that the meeting, in which LORAG wish to discuss the upcoming Orange march this weekend, could be a difficult one).

  
Declan Kelleher

18 April 1995