

POL 35/325(1)

British government/S.F. talks

"I WAS INVOLVED IN DIRECT AND PROTRACTED TALKS"

DERRY JOURNAL 19/11/93
— McGuinness

Campbell Reynolds visit

Irish premier, Albert Reynolds, visited the city to meet the leader of the Derry City Council, Gregory Campbell, last night — a day when the Protestant community was welcomed to the same way as the Protestant community.

which represents most of Londonderry's Protestant community, I wish to place on record on the occasion of Mr. Reynolds' visit that we have looked at the demise of our co-religionists in his country, have experienced the same demise on the West Bank of Londonderry in our own country and are, therefore, entitled on that basis to treat with contempt any talk of 'joint action' on the part of the 'two Governments' to produce a peace initiative.

"Peace and stability are the right of all the people of Northern Ireland not as part of a package to be negotiated with murderers. If the price can be agreed in secret."

He concluded — "Our position within the U.K. is not at the behest of Mr. Reynolds' Government but is the freely expressed demand of the people of Northern Ireland."

standing year

to attend the meeting of Derry City Council to be held at Templemore will hear the report on the year.

year savings of £1.7 million net for the month period. Members also came amount, steady intake following the membership limit

to 20,000.

The meeting will be followed by the annual free turkey draw for 100 turkeys, and as it is not possible to provide entertainment and refreshments, members will instead be able to enjoy a free bingo session with prizes to the value of £1,000.

Members are reminded that membership pass books must be presented at the door to gain admission to the meeting and members must be present to win in the turkey and bingo draws.

DESPITE DENIALS from both Downing Street and the Northern Ireland Office, Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness was last night adamant that he had been involved in what he described as "direct and protracted contact and dialogue" with the British government. Mr. McGuinness claimed the contact was at an official level and no pre-conditions were set upon it. Mr. McGuinness had been named on Tuesday by the British Labour Party's spokesman on Northern Ireland, Mr. Kevin McNamara, as having taken part in talks with a leading member of the Conservative party. Both the N.I.O. and Downing Street have denied that any such talks have taken place.

Speaking yesterday in the House of Commons, British Prime Minister John Major denied that any talks had taken place and said the government were not prepared to pay any price for peace. A spokesman for the Northern Ireland Office said the government's position remained unchanged and they were not prepared to negotiate with those who sue or supported the use of violence.

He said he had been informed that Martin McGuinness had been directly involved in talks with the government. He said he believed that a senior member of the Conservative Party who was not a government minister, had been involved, allowing the government to deny that they were talking to Sinn Féin. He described the process as "that remarkable degree of British government deniability."

name his contact in the British government or state where and when meetings had taken place.

Mr. McGuinness said: "Sinn Féin is quite ready to engage in talks at any time to create the conditions in which a peace process can be constructed and a political settlement reached."

It is believed that An Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, who will visit Derry today for the North West Region Cross Border Group conference, has himself been involved in negotiations with the Republican Movement. Earlier this week, he said he had been involved in dialogue with people from all sides in the North in an effort to find a solution.

Commentators interpreted this as an indication that he may have already been involved in talks with Sinn Féin.

It is also felt that the Dublin government is now prepared to back the Hume/Adams process after seemingly abandoning it three weeks ago. It is thought that public opinion in the Republic which is firmly behind

the process, and grass root opinion in Fianna Fáil, were the factors which persuaded Mr. Reynolds to once again support the SDLP leader's peace efforts.

Mr. Hume said earlier this week that John Major's speech at the Guild Hall in London was welcome. Mr. Major caused outrage among unionists by stating that if the I.R.A. renounced violence, there would be a place at the negotiating table for Sinn Féin.

Mr. McGuinness was a member of an I.R.A. delegation which was flown to London in July 1972 for talks with the then Conservative government of Edward Heath. The talks which had been held during an I.R.A. truce, were ended when serious rioting involving the British Army and nationalists, broke out in Belfast.

£270,000 Burtonport Harbour

Mr. Pat The Cope Gallagher, T.D., Minister of State, has confirmed that the work on the dredging/blasting of Burtonport Harbour will commence within days.

Minister Gallagher has stated that these very necessary works, will ensure greater accessibility to the harbour. The works will be carried out by C & W Land and Marine.

OD QUALITY
CAN'T HAVE TO

NEWS *in brief*

□ MONAGHAN

Leisure enterprise

IRISH Prime Minister Albert Reynolds today officially opened a £2m hotel and leisure club in Monaghan. The International Fund for Ireland contributed £200,000 to The Four Seasons development. More than 20 jobs have been created at the hotel.

□ ARMAGH

Santa visit

A VISIT from Santa, face-painting and juggling are among the attractions at a Christmas craft fair at the Palace Stables Heritage Centre, Armagh, on Sunday (1-6pm).

Fares up

CAB users in Armagh will have to pay more from Monday, the first increase in six years. There will now be a £2 minimum for grocery runs and customers who make stops during their journey. The local taxi association blames the rise on local traffic congestion and rising insurance and fuel costs.

Sinn Fein insists 'secret talks' held



Martin McGuinness: Maintains 'talks' were held

By Vincent Kearney,
Political Correspondent

SINN Fein today maintained it can prove there were secret talks between the party and Government officials.

As the clamour for the party to produce evidence of the talks grows, a spokesman said the claims could be proved.

His comments came a day after the party's vice-president, Martin McGuinness, claimed he was directly involved in "direct and protracted contact and dialogue with the British Government."

"The contact was at an official level and no pre-conditions were set upon it," he told reporters after the peace rally in Derry's Guildhall yesterday.

"Sinn Fein is quite ready to engage in talks at any time to create the conditions in which a peace process can be constructed and a political settlement reached."

But he refused to give details about where or when the meetings took place or name the official he claimed to have met.

His statement followed claims by the Labour Party's Northern Ireland spokesman, Kevin McNamara, that the Sinn Fein man had been involved in talks.

While Downing Street and Secretary of State Sir Patrick Mayhew have vehemently denied the claims, Sinn Fein today stood by them.

But a spokesman declined to comment on calls for the party to produce evidence of documents allegedly exchanged during the discussions.

"All I will say is that neither Gerry Adams nor Martin McGuinness would have said what they have in relation to talks if it was not true and if they were not able to prove it," he said.

The Londonderry home of Martin McGuinness was deserted today following his revelations that he had been involved in "direct and protracted contact and dialogue" with the British Government.

McGuinness was a member of an IRA delegation which met with Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath in Downing Street in July 1972. An IRA truce was called at the time to allow the talks to take place.

Holiday post dates fixed

THE Royal Mail has announced details of postal arrangements for Christmas and the New Year.

The recommended latest posting dates for airmail letters going outside Europe is Wednesday, December 8, although for some countries, including the United States, the date is Monday, December 6.

Airmail letters for countries in Europe should be sent before Tuesday, December 14, although those for Gibraltar and Malta should be

posted three days earlier.

The recommended latest posting date for second class letters is Saturday, December 18 and for first-class letters Tuesday, December 21.

On Christmas Eve there will be one delivery and Saturday-style collections, with none on Christmas Day, and Monday December 27.

Nor will there be any deliveries on Tuesday, December 28, but there will be Sunday-style collections from Post Offices.

On Friday December 31, deliveries will be made as normal, with a 3pm collection from pillar boxes and a 4pm collection from Post Offices.

There will be neither deliveries nor collections on January 1 and January 2.

On Monday, January 3, there will be no deliveries but Sunday-style collections will be taken from boxes at Post Offices.

All services return to normal from Tuesday, January 4.

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IRISH
NEWS

Fri

19/11/93.

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News 3

n push for progress

and his party being left out
old.
Major had told them: "There
now be a chance that we
try to take.

There may be an opportunity for
us and we must explore it.
We do not succeed on this oc-
casion we must go back and keep
trying again and again."

The prime minister repeated his
offer that Sinn Féin could enter the
political arena if the IRA ended
violence for good.

"If they send such a message we
are ready to listen to them. It would
be irresponsible not to," he said.

"The violence must stop and be
seen to stop. Our chances improve if
we have the support of both sides of

the community, of all constitutional
parties and of the Irish government.

"But no party and no organisation
can exercise a veto on progress."

He said there was a palpable mood
for peace: "But there is also, among
some people, a feeling that the dead
must be endlessly avenged and that
any accommodation with the oppos-

ing viewpoint would betray those
who have died.

"The right memorial to the dead is
- surely - to make sure no one else
is killed."

Early next month, Mr Major will
have further talks over the problem
with the Republic's Albert Reynolds
in Dublin.



McGuinness says there were talks

By Garbhan Downey

LEADING republican Martin McGuinness yesterday confirmed that he recently took part in peace negotiations with British Government representatives.

Speaking after the ICTU peace rally in Derry's Guildhall Square the Sinn Féin Ard Comhairle member said: "I can confirm that I was involved in direct and protracted contact and dialogue with the British Government."

"The contact was at an official level and no preconditions were set upon it."

"Sinn Féin is quite ready to engage in talks at any time to create the conditions in which a peace process can be constructed and a political settlement reached."

The former Assembly member would not say who he had spoken to.

He also refused to specify where or when the meetings had taken place, and declined to comment on whether the negotiations were still ongoing.

The Sinn Féin man's statement followed the Labour Party's claim on Tuesday that a senior Conservative representative had held talks with McGuinness prior to the debate on the Maastricht Treaty in July.

The Labour spokesman on Northern Ireland, Kevin McNamara stated that the talks had taken place with the consent of the government.

He said the negotiations had been broken off after the Ulster Unionists agreed to support the Government in the Maastricht vote.

Former NIO minister Michael Mates yesterday dismissed claims that any talks took place at an official level.

Mr Mates did not rule out the possibility that one of his colleagues may have acted in a "freelance" capacity by talking to Sinn Féin, but he denied that any official negotiations had been held.

The Northern Ireland Office also refuted Mr McGuinness's claims.

A spokesman said the NIO position remained unchanged and that its representatives would not talk with those who used, or advocated the use, of violence.

Downing Street has also dismissed the Sinn Féin man's claims, but Gerry Adams said the government denials should be taken "with a pinch of salt."

Both Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams were part of the IRA delegation which met with British Government ministers at the home of Paul Channon in July 1972.

KEARNEYS

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20/11/93.

Hume + Adams

Issue 3rd joint statement.

GUNMEN' PLAN

By ADRIAN LITHGOW and CHESTER STERN

DETAILS of an astonishing blueprint for peace in Northern Ireland were revealed last night.

The far-reaching plan includes:

- Amnesties for IRA and loyalist terrorists if peace is achieved;
- Reducing the high profile of troops on Ulster streets; and
- Severing all Britain's links with the Province in perhaps 20 years' time.

Sources have told of a remarkable series of contacts between all sides in the conflict which has ravaged Ulster for 24 years.

The impetus for change now seems unstoppable, if not immediate.

The amnesty plan, under which 'reformed' terrorists on lesser charges would be first to be freed, would cause a massive political storm among outraged Tory and Unionist politicians.

A senior Downing Street source insisted: 'It's way down the track. There is not a piece of paper. Let us have peace and talks first, then we can consider it.'

But the question of the profile of the troops — what the Republicans see as an 'occupying force' — has already been put to the Provisionals in secret negotiations which began last year.

Conditional on a sustained end to IRA violence, troops would initially wear berets instead of battle helmets and women soldiers would wear skirts instead of battledress.

Later, patrolling troops would shoulder their arms instead of carrying them at battle readiness.

And armoured car patrols with guns overtly on show would gradually be phased out.

If peace continues, troops would be withdrawn to garrisons and would only be called on to the streets in emergencies at the request of police.

Under the plan Britain would eventually sever all links with Northern Ireland.

This process is now expected after about 20 years, by which time, Government statistics show, the Catholic community would form a majority of the population.

XXX Control XXX

Talks have taken place since last November between Government agents and clerics sympathetic to the IRA and a prominent Londonderry businessman who has links with the Northern Ireland Office.

They led to a 20-point British plan voted on by the Provisional IRA council which approved seven measures.

It is now expected that the IRA's traditional Christmas truce will be extended to ten days and, if it holds, the Provisionals are looking for a 'major announcement' from Downing Street.

But terror chiefs have specified that they will launch one attack a week in the Province until then to prove the extent of their control over the gunmen.

However, they realise they are incapable of defending their communities in the face of the Loyalist backlash since the Shankill Road bombing, although informal talks between the IRA and the

Continued on Page 2



Answer time for Sue

SUE LAWLEY has failed in her ambition to take over the BBC's Question Time chair. The final front-runners, Jeremy Paxman and David Dimbleby, took part in an extraordinary showdown yesterday to decide who wins one of TV's top jobs. Full story on Page 3.

Huge heat ball rips through Chunnel

By NICK FIELDING

DETAILS of a major safety failure in the Channel Tunnel have been uncovered by The Mail on Sunday.

It happened when an electrical fault left a 750-metre section of the £10 billion project a tangled and twisted wreck. Cabling and metal fittings melted in an intense electrical ball of heat ten miles from the English entrance at Folkestone in Kent.

Government safety experts are sifting through the wreckage to establish the cause.

Last night, TML — the tunnel contractors — insisted that the incident was caused by a faulty ceramic insulator, one of hundreds in the tunnel. But, according to TML inside sources, the potentially disastrous incident was caused by human error.

The insiders are adamant that the power surge happened when a workman left a metal bar, used to earth cables, attached to the main overhead power source.

TML confirmed last night that a video film was taken of the damage, but the consortium was not able to release it. The damage, which will cost at least £600,000 to repair, will close

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REVEALED: THE BLUEPRINT FOR ULSTER PEACE

IRA 'is set to extend truce'

From Page One

Protestant UDA have failed to achieve a breakthrough.

Moves have already been made to appease the IRA's demand that their prisoners have special political status.

Almost unnoticed in recent months, several convicted terrorists in mainland jails have been moved to prisons in the Province.

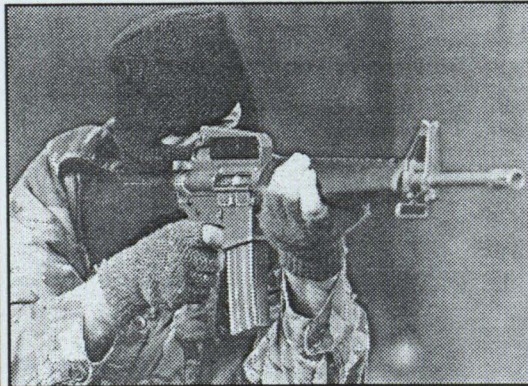
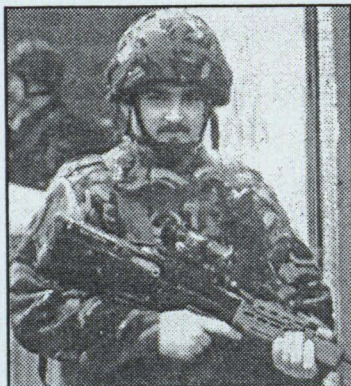
While satisfying IRA demands, this also has the advantage for the Government of denying it the propaganda claim that they are held as 'prisoners of war' in a foreign country.

However, it is inevitable that if a peace accord is reached the question of the continued imprisonment of terrorists will have to be considered.

There are 480 paramilitaries held in the Maze prison outside Belfast and 280 on remand in the city's Crumlin Road jail.

They include some of the most violent criminals ever dealt with by the British justice system.

Those who would be likely to be released first would be those who are considered 'reformed'



CONFLICT: Troops may withdraw from streets if terrorist violence ends

and are held in the lower security Maghaberry prison.

Already, captured IRA terrorists are being told by the IRA that those who plead not guilty will be among the first to be released under an amnesty as their cases are unlikely to come up for a considerable time.

Pursued

Those convicted of more serious offences will be last to be freed. They will be released on licence, meaning they can be re-arrested at any time.

A weapons amnesty in Ulster is also on the agenda, but wanted bombers and killers will

be pursued until a wider settlement can be reached.

The RUC is already making contingency plans to disband some of its specialist squads dealing with terrorism.

Other concessions already made include Ulster road signs in English and Gaelic.

Whitehall strategists have also calculated the effects of a Protestant backlash should an agreement be reached.

They have told the Prime Minister it could be very bloody indeed, but brief, and containable by the security services who have infiltrated hardline Loyalist paramilitaries. A bigger worry is the extent to

which rogue elements within the Army and police might join forces with renegade Loyalists in the event of what they are bound to see as a sell-out.

It is understood that in private talks, unofficial Government representatives have offered long-term constitutional status for Sinn Fein, with a place at the conference table to decide Ulster's future and possibility of direct talks with the IRA.

Interest

Coded messages of encouragement to the IRA's ruling Army Council have been passed in speeches from various Ministers, including one by Ulster Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew at the University of Colrairie last autumn. He said Britain had 'no strategic interest in remaining in Northern Ireland'.

He is backed in this by American President Bill Clinton, whose Irish Ambassador, Jean Kennedy Smith, has travelled to Londonderry several times to be present at unofficial discussions exploring ways forward.

New Hume-Adams talks

LAST night SDLP leader John Hume and Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said they were convinced their initiative could lead to peace.

They confirmed they have had a fresh round of secret talks to discuss the British and Irish governments' responses to their proposals. The statement followed the leak of an apparent Dublin government plan on

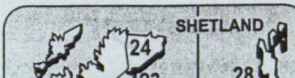
Ulster's future involving the Republic giving up its constitutional claim to the North in return for British recognition of a united Ireland as a 'legitimate goal'.

Irish Premier Albert Reynolds speedily distanced himself from the plan and Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew said London knew nothing of the document. It was stressed the 30-point plan was one of several being drafted in London and Dublin.

Regional Forecasts

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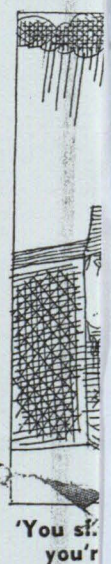
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