

# British 'gave SF death squad information'

INFORMATION on the activities of loyalist death squads was conveyed to Sinn Fein members by a British government representative, Derry republican Martin McGuinness has claimed.

During a lengthy press conference in Belfast yesterday, Mr McGuinness and Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams outlined an extraordinary series of events which could further damage the credibility of prime minister John Major and his government.

According to Mr McGuinness, communications have been passing between republicans and the British government for 20 years. These included meetings sanctioned by for-

mer prime minister Margaret Thatcher during the period of the two hunger strikes.

During one meeting, in April 1991, a government official charged with relaying messages between the two parties, is said to have informed Mr McGuinness that "loyalist death squads were about to announce a ceasefire for the inter-party talks."

From June to Christmas the same year, Mr McGuinness said, the contact had supplied Sinn Fein with detailed briefings on British government policy.

"The meetings took place both in the six counties and in London. The representative declared that it was his objective to ensure that

republicans knew the thinking of his government... We were assured that John Major had authorised the line of communication."

He said that Sinn Fein did not initiate any contact during that period and the party's response was merely to "note it."

Throughout 1992, said Mr McGuinness, the British government representative "became very active in briefing us," mainly on inter-party talks being held at Stormont at the time.

"Peter Brooke (then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) made a number of keynote speeches at this time and we were advised of these

in advance," he said.

Following the Westminster elections in 1992, Mr Brooke was replaced and the new Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew was claimed to be "fully on board" regarding the contacts.

"We were also being told that there was friction between the senior civil servants - in London and Stormont - and Mayhew. In October, we were provided with a two-page document on the progress of the talks under Sir Ninian Stephen."

During January to March 1993, he said, the official was in frequent contact, "on occasions on a daily

basis," suggesting that there was a possibility of meetings taking place between the government and Sinn Fein.

"At all times we stressed that there could be no preconditions to such a meeting and that Sinn Fein's electoral mandate was the basis for our engagement."

"The British government representative said there would be a need for the British Prime Minister to defend talks with us if these became public and this would be most difficult if the IRA campaign was continuing at a high level."

"He told us the British govern-

ment accepted that the IRA activity would only be halted as a result of negotiations," said Mr McGuinness.

Keynote speeches by himself and Mr Adams at Sinn Fein's Ard Fheis in February "triggered further intense responses" from the government.

"We were advised that we would shortly be in a situation in which a definite arrangement would be made for such a meeting. Suggestions were made that meetings could take place in various venues. They offered to arrange an aeroplane to fly us to Scotland, Norway or Denmark."

Each side would have three

delegates, accompanied by three advisors, his contact told him.

Mr McGuinness said he was then given the names of the British delegates but he refused to name them at the press conference.

"He (the government contact) also stated that he believed two weeks intensive daily meetings would suffice. I reported this to Gerry Adams. After a discussion with senior colleagues, the British request was passed to the IRA."

Relations soured around this time, he said, and "although the line was in regular use," the British moved away from their proposal and "refused to follow it through."

## SF challenge to official record of meetings

ANOTHER fierce attack was launched on government credibility last night when Sinn Fein produced documents alleging they were copies of its communications with British officials.

Party leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness accused the secretary of state of lying by stating he had placed on record in the House of Commons library "all consequent messages" between them.

They claim that:

- some documents are fakes, "never received or dispatched";

- messages between the party and government, which had been received and dispatched, were omitted from the British record;

- several documents contained in the official record have been "doctored to suit the British government's account of the contact";

According to Sinn Fein, the government had "created a new public record of its very own, with bogus messages, omitted messages and amended messages".

On February 22, the government said, it had received a message "from the leadership of the Provisional movement which stated that the conflict was over 'but we need your advice on how to bring it to a close. We wish to have an un-announced ceasefire in order to hold dialogue leading to peace. We cannot announce such a move as it will lead to confusion for the volunteers because the press

misinterpret it as a surrender'..."

Claiming no such communication was ever sent, Sinn Fein said its purpose had been to incorrectly suggest that Irish republicans were the initiators of the process, create divisions among them and provide a pretext to lay the ground for another bogus message on November 2.

A written message dated June 1 and claiming the Provisional leadership was "particularly dismayed" because it had not received a formal reply to an offer of a total ceasefire was also ridiculed by Sinn Fein: "No such message was ever sent."

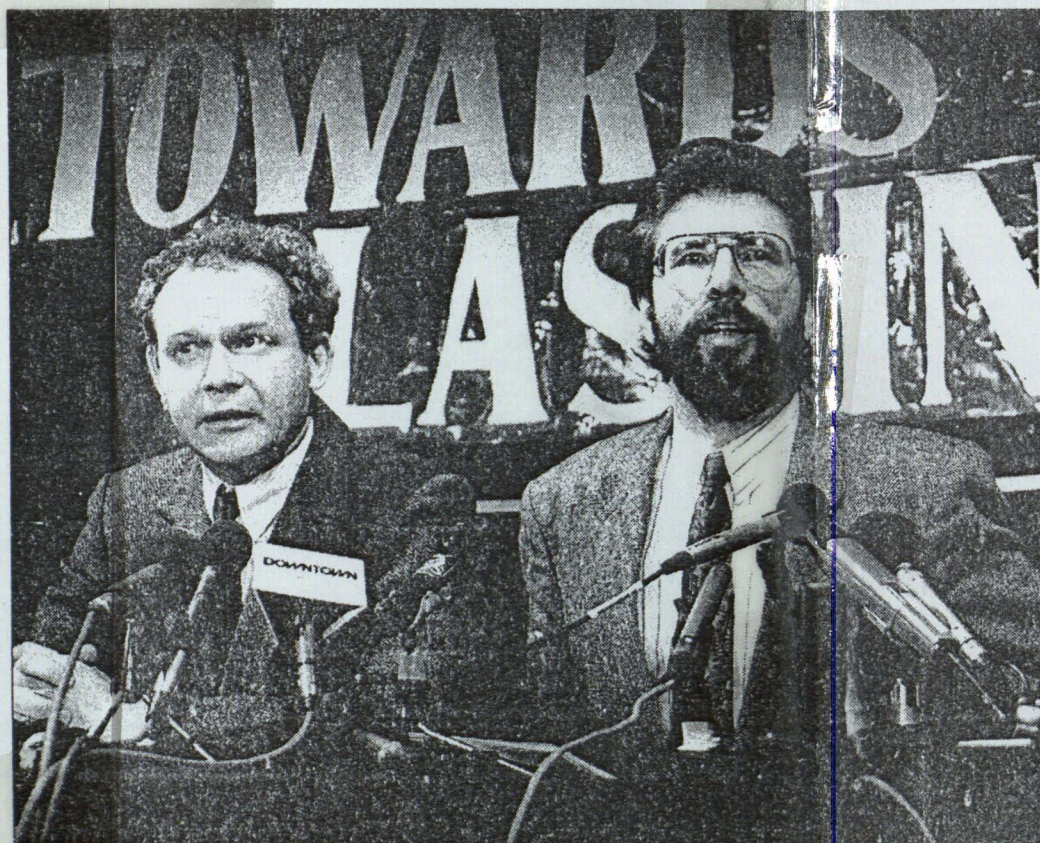
"Indeed, its terminology, the use of the term Provisional leadership, demonstrates that this message was not penned by an Irish republican."

"The message purporting to offer 'a total cessation' has no bearing on any reality, public or private."

But the document which led to the breakdown of contacts between the government and Sinn Fein was said to be the now infamous paper of May 10, which republicans claim had been doctored.

Sinn Fein alleged the first sentence of its message to the government stated "We found our preliminary meeting with your representative valuable" but was deleted.

Further down the document, Sinn Fein said, the words "short duration" which referred to a cessation of IRA activity were removed to give a misleading impression that any ceasefire would be permanent.



● Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams at the press conference yesterday

Picture: Hugh Russell

## Primate pleads for an end to 'confusion' in solution move

By Fabian Boyle

ANY POLITICAL solution to the troubles must "acknowledge the deep feelings of both traditions", the Church of Ireland primate said last night.

"The path to peace is one of the most complex problems ever to face politicians. It is a path that requires the participation of all concerned, including the exhausted women, members

## Dublin rally backs peace initiative

From Mary Carolan in Dublin

HUNDREDS of people took part in a rally in support of the Hume/Adams peace initiative at Dublin's General Post Office last night.

They turned up to welcome a group of ten women from Derry at the completion of their gruelling week-long walk from Derry in support of the initiative.

process in the last 25 years which had resulted in significant progress and is the only one at present which points the way towards a just and lasting peace."

Mr Ballagh said the British government's response was tragic and said they would have to answer to history "for their continuing intransigence."

He said Taoiseach Albert Reynolds

## Reynolds challenged on self-determination

By Mary Carolan in Dublin

TAOISEACH Albert Reynolds was yesterday challenged over his statement that the issue of self-determination is separate from the issue of articles 2 and 3.

The right to national self-determination based on freely-given consent north and south, was one element being sought by him in a joint Irish-British declaration for peace.

But he denied that this declaration was in exchange for changes in articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution.

Government sources stressed the right to self-determination must be based on consent freely and separately given by people, north and south.

They accepted this gave the majority in Northern Ireland a veto over any change in the status of Northern Ireland.

The taoiseach said any changes in articles 2 and 3 would not be part of a peace declaration.

This was a separate issue and would be considered in the context of resumed talks among the political parties, he said.

Mr Reynolds' comments are consistent with his insistence that the moves to achieve a permanent cessation of violence and to resume political talks are separate but parallel elements of the efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement in Northern Ireland.

Government sources that people should not get "fixed" on the self-determination issue as a major aspect of a peace process.

This was only one element of a possible peace process, a source indicated.

But in the Dail yesterday Fine Gael leader John Bruton challenged Mr Reynolds to say how the issues of self-determination and articles 2 and 3 could be separated.



CONCERN  
WORLDWIDE



**By Vincent Kearney**  
Political Correspondent

**DOWNING** Street has rejected Sinn Fein claims that the party was briefed about Cabinet meetings as "fabrication".

The Government also dismissed claims by Martin McGuinness that it made the first move in the current talks

between the two sides, which Sinn Fein claims started in October 1990.

A statement issued last night accused Mr McGuinness of fabricating evidence in a document released to the Press in Belfast yesterday.

It rubbished Sinn Fein claims that it had been briefed about Cabinet meetings involving Prime Minister John Major and other senior ministers on May 17 and 18.

The Government confirmed that "a number of meetings" had taken place during the third week in May, but said the dates and accounts of the discussions produced by Mr McGuinness was "inaccurate".

According to Sinn Fein, Mr Major and his colleagues discussed an offer from the IRA of a 14 day ceasefire to facilitate talks.

But Downing Street dis-

missed the claims and accused Sinn Fein of trying to deflect attention from the fact that Martin McGuinness "acting for the Provisional movement, made the initial approach to the Government on February 22."

A spokesman repeated the Secretary of State Sir Patrick Mayhew's claim that, on this date, the IRA sent the message: "The conflict is over but we need your advice on

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# Westminster and Sinn Fein in war of words on talks

**By Vincent Kearney**

**CONFIDENTIAL** details of a Cabinet meeting to discuss the offer of a two-week IRA ceasefire were passed on to Sinn Fein, leading member Martin McGuinness has claimed.

He claimed Prime Minister John Major had been prepared to tell Parliament in May he was going to enter dialogue with "the Republican Movement".

At a Press conference in Belfast yesterday, the party also said it was regularly briefed on the progress of the inter-party talks.

Downing Street has dismissed the allegations and accused Sinn Fein of fabricating quotes claimed to have been made by Ministers.

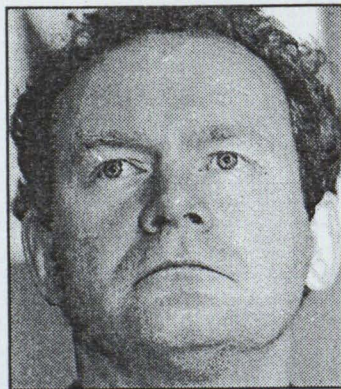
## Meeting

The claims were a clear attempt by Sinn Fein to refute Government claims that contacts between the two sides were simply a "channel of communication".

Speaking yesterday, party president Gerry Adams and Mr McGuinness dismissed the Government's version of events and the claim that the IRA initiated the talks.

They said the present contact with the Government started after an approach by a British intermediary in October 1990.

During a three hour meeting a Sinn Fein representative and the "contact" allegedly discussed current British Government policy and Anglo-Irish relations.



**Martin McGuinness:**  
Briefed.

Six months later, in April 1991, Mr McGuinness claimed the Government contact informed Sinn Fein that "the loyalist death squads were about to announce a ceasefire for the inter-party talks".

There was no contact after this until June of that year when a new Government representative was appointed and introduced himself with a letter allegedly signed by the then Secretary of State, Peter Brooke.

Between June and Christmas that year, the Sinn Fein man claimed a series of meetings took place in the province and London, which the party had been assured were authorised by John Major.

## Daily

This year, between January and March, he claimed there had been frequent contact, "on occasion on a daily basis".

But the most damaging claim for the Government, if it

proves to be true, was that Sinn Fein was briefed about Cabinet meetings on May 17 and 18 to discuss an offer from the IRA of a two week ceasefire.

Mr McGuinness claimed the IRA offer, which he said was in response to a Government request, was the subject of high level meetings.

He claimed these involved John Major, Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, Secretary of State Sir Patrick Mayhew and the then Home Secretary, Kenneth Clarke.

Also in attendance, claimed Mr McGuinness, were John Chilcott, permanent secretary at the Northern Ireland Office, and Sir Rodic Braithwaite, former British ambassador to Moscow and now the Prime Minister's foreign affairs advisor.

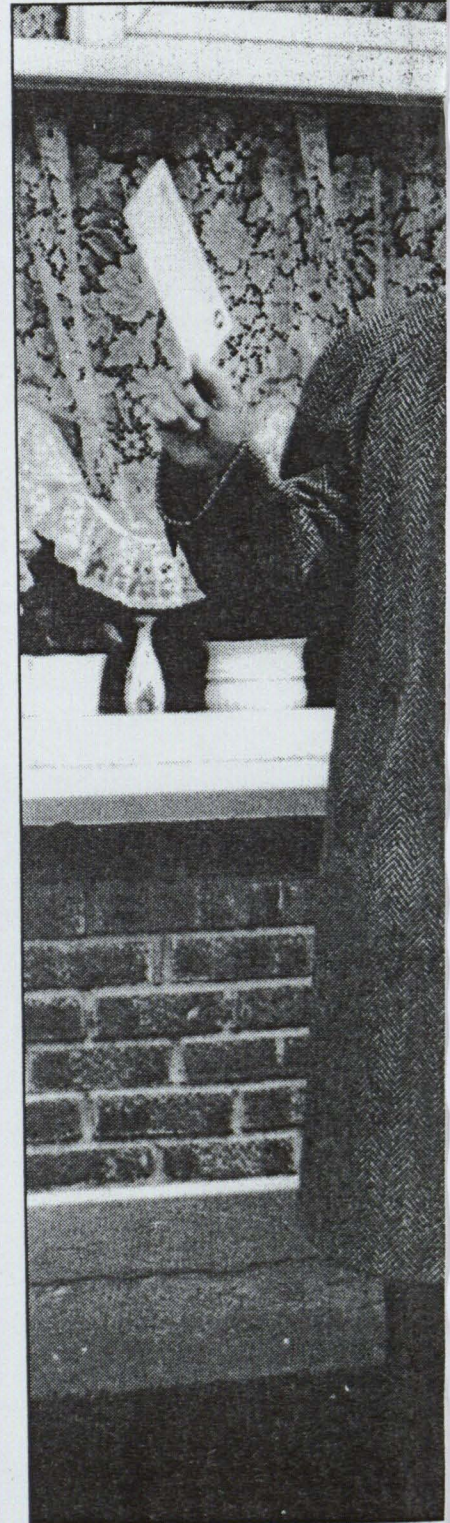
## Risky

According to Mr McGuinness, Mr Clarke told the May 18 meeting that public discussions with Sinn Fein was "too risky with the Government under seige."

Sir Patrick was described as "wobbling" between "pushing for acceptance and wanting a safer longer period of cessation".

Sinn Fein allege Mr Major instructed his secretary to draw up a programme for him to announce in Parliament "that he was instructing the Northern Ireland Office to enter into dialogue with the Republican Movement."

Mr McGuinness said he could prove his allegations, but refused to produce documentary evidence to support the claims.



## Paisley fires off p

**Major move:** The Rev Ian Paisley protest for Prime Minister John

# Garda incursion claim p

**By Mark Simpson**

yesterday that last Saturday,

not answerable in the UK to

fear



# SF claim on May 17 talks

IRISH PRESS FRI 3/12/93 PP 6.

POL 35/333 (3)

## Britain failed to follow through on peace pledge — McGuinness

JOHN MAJOR called a top-level "inner Cabinet" meeting last May to consider an IRA offer of a 14-day ceasefire for talks, Sinn Féin claimed last night.

Leading SF member Martin McGuinness claimed the Prime Minister met Ulster Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew, Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and two civil servants on May 17 and the next day the group was expanded to include the then Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke.

Mr McGuinness said he had been informed that "Clarke's advice was that the opening of public negotiations with us was 'too risky with the Government under siege'."

"Mayhew was wobbling between 'pushing for acceptance and wanting a safer and longer period of cessation'."

"John Major compromised by instructing his secretary to draw up a programme which he would be able to announce in Parliament ... 'that he was instructing the Northern Ireland Office to enter into dialogue with the Republican Movement'."

No such announcement was made, and Mr McGuinness said that from that point on, although the line of communication between him and the Government was in regular use, it was not used in a positive way.

"In fact, the British moved away from their proposal and refused to follow it through."

Mr McGuinness said he believed the reason the Prime Minister backed away was his "difficulties within his party and in the British Parliament, and his need to secure an alliance with the Ulster Unionist Party."

In documents released by Sinn Féin last night it is claimed that Mr Major had planned to tell Archbishop Robin Eames and Cardinal Cahal Daly of the plans 24 hours before he told Parliament that the Government proposed entering into dialogue with the IRA.

During a lengthy and detailed news conference in West Belfast both Martin McGuinness and Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams continued to insist that the



■ Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness at the news conference in Belfast where he repeated claims of the British government fabricating documents

Government was telling lie after lie about the communications between the two sides.

Mr Adams said the Government had acted and was acting "in bad faith and had actively abused our contact with it in order to sow dissension and confusion and to distract attention from the real issues."

He said that could only devalue the peace process which, he claimed, had been severely damaged by the actions of Mr Major and Sir Patrick Mayhew.

He added: "The behaviour of the British Government, the lies, omissions, falsification, forgeries, diversions and distractions are all proof of the British Government's opposition to peace in our country."

Asked about the possibilities of the IRA now calling a ceasefire, he said: "That is a matter for the IRA."

## Paper 'proved British were briefing SF'

BY HENRY McDONALD

THE LEAKED two-page document consists of an eight-point discussion on the talks which were chaired by Sir Ninian Stephen.

Mr McGuinness claimed the paper was handed to him during a meeting last year with a representative from the British government.

## Mayhew denial

● The Northern Ireland Office denied last night that Sir Patrick Mayhew attended the ministerial meeting to discuss the IRA ceasefire offer.

An NIO spokesperson pointed out that Sir Patrick had been in Northern Ireland that day. The spokesperson said Sir Patrick had a busy schedule on Monday, May 17, this year, which included a visit to a chicken factory in Dungannon, a speech at Methodist College, Belfast, a series of afternoon meetings at Stormont and a dinner appointment with the North's Industrial Development Board.

He said the document proved that British officials were briefing Sinn Féin about the talks at Stormont, despite the fact that the party was excluded from the negotiations between the North's other parties, and the British and Irish governments.

Point 2 of the paper handed out last night reads:

"On October 16 the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had a short meeting with the Irish. Both governments agreed that the best chance of progress lay in the proposal that Sir Ninian Stephen should invite all the talks participants to submit to him privately their individual suggestions for heads of Agreement across all three strands. It was a high risk strategy, but Sir Ninian appeared well aware of the extreme delicacy of the task, the importance of getting his synthesis right first time."

The alleged British paper illustrates suggestions that could be put into Sir Ninian's report on proposals for each strand of the talks.

Strand 2 "envisages co-operation between respective departments in the North and the South, the establishment of cross-border executive agencies by the respective legislatures North and South and remaining answerable to them, and the delivery of some all-Ireland executive functions by the body itself, subject to democratic approval and accountability."

The paper, allegedly leaked to Sinn Féin, outlining Sir Ninian's report, also elaborates on the constitutional status of the North.

In conclusion, the authors of the leaked document stress that the proposals "represent HMG's judgement of what it is possible to achieve, rather than its own sense of priorities in individual areas."

If the document is authentic it means that Sinn Féin had inside information on the progress of the talks at Stormont and British thinking on the negotiations despite being officially barred from the conference table.



**News**

**Widow shows no bitterness**

**Widow of UFF murder victim displays no bitterness over her husband's death**  
P3



**Press Gang**

**Genie gem**

A chance to see Aladdin is just one of the prizes to be won in this week's Press Gang inside



**Headlines**

- Ferry bosses talk to avert strike
- Bosnian carve-up draws near
- British 'helped SF death squads'
- Call for abortion rate action
- Tohill beats the Allstars ban

# Adams calls British 'liars and cheats'

AS Sinn Fein intensified their attack on the British government over disputed communications, it was claimed yesterday that prime minister John Major had discussed conditions for an IRA ceasefire. At a lengthy press conference in Belfast, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams and Ard Comhairle member Martin McGuinness presented a number of documents they said were photocopies of communications between republicans and the government. According to Mr McGuinness, the subject of a ceasefire was discussed at an inner cabinet meeting called by John Major in May this year. He said he was informed by a government official that the meeting, called to decide on a response to the IRA following ceasefire talks,

was attended by Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew and two named civil servants. Next day the group was expanded to include then Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke who advised Mr Major that public negotiations were "too risky with the government under siege." Mr McGuinness said the current round of negotiations with the government had been taking place regularly for three years and went back as far as 20 years. Sinn Fein, he said, had been briefed by government officials on a number of confidential reports ranging from the inter-party talks chaired by Sir Ninian Stephen, to Cabinet meetings. In April 1991, he said, his govern-

## Sinn Fein claims dialogue goes back over 20 years

ment contact told him that "the loyalist death squads were about to announce a ceasefire for the inter-party talks." "Throughout 1992, the British government representative became very active in briefing us. The major part of these briefings was taken up by reports of the progress, or lack of it, which was being made in the inter-party talks. Keynote speeches at the party's Ard Fheis in February "triggered further intense responses from the British government."

"The British government representative stressed that the British government believed that the end result of these talks would be that republicans would feel that there would be no need to go back to armed struggle." Documents released by Sinn Fein claimed that up to six messages between the party and the government were fabricated, doctored, or had sentences deleted. The Sinn Fein leaders criticised communications placed on record in the House of Commons library by Sir

Patrick Mayhew earlier this week. According to Mr McGuinness, a number of the documents were fabrications. "They were never received or dispatched. These messages are entirely bogus - fabricated by the British government. A number of messages which were received and dispatched are omitted from the British record." "The original texts have been amended by the British in important way to become the documents now lodged in the Library and Vote Office," he said. Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams launched an urgent plea to unionists to refuse to allow themselves to be used. In his appeal, Mr Adams said

republicans were not outraged by the conduct of British government ministers because "we expect nothing less." "But we do expect more from you. You and we, and the rest of the Irish people can build a common future together. The main cause of the division between us is the British government. You can have little confidence in British governments." "They will use you today and abuse you tomorrow and dump you the day after. You know that. It is time we stopped being used by liars and cheats who have no right to rule us," he said.

● Full story: P5



● Martin McGuinness at the SF press conference

## Peace chance will not be 'frittered away', says Dublin

By Mary Carolan

"summit", Dublin was pointedly call-



**In brief**

### Coffee jar attack on army base

THE joint army/RUC Station at New Barnsley in west Belfast came under bomb attack last night. A coffee-jar device struck the perimeter fence, but the explosion caused only superficial damage to the base.

## IRA admits 'border snip shot soldier'

By Joy Rolston

"People who are"



# Disbelief in Britain's words . .

THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY. 5/12/98. P0135/333(5)

## Mayhew stumbles, the documents don't match, and British credibility in Ireland reaches a new low

By David McKittrick Ireland Correspondent

THE OLD Sir Patrick Mayhew was a big, bluff character with a genial twinkle in his eye and a ready smile. Some in Belfast thought him perhaps a little patronising, but in general he was accepted as a man of rectitude and straight dealing, as indeed befits a former Attorney-General.

The new Sir Patrick Mayhew made his first appearance at a Stormont Castle press conference last Sunday. Pale, tense and unhappy, he stumbled through his explanations of why he had been in protracted contact with Sinn Féin and the IRA.

His audience was not a receptive one, for it consisted of journalists who had heard him repeatedly deny such contacts. Absolutely untrue, he had insisted. His press officer had scoffed at one such report from the journalist Eamonn Mallie: "It belongs more properly in the fantasy of spy thrillers than in real life."

Sir Patrick, asked by Mallie how he would react if somebody produced evidence of such contacts, had chortled condescendingly: "I should be very interested to see it."

The production of that evidence last weekend — by Eamonn Mallie — introduced

us to the new, grim, non-chortling Sir Patrick. The press conference was unimpressed by his performance. "We have witnessed you being extremely nervous," one woman journalist told him with Belfast directness. "I think we noticed you swallowing, and your syntax has gone to pieces several times." He made a hurried, graceless exit after his ordeal, leaving his glasses behind.

He was, by all accounts, deeply apprehensive about how the House of Commons would treat him the next day. As it turned out he need not have worried, for it was understanding and there was hardly a breath of criticism. For tactical or other reasons, Labour, the Ulster Unionists and the SDLP gave him an easy ride.

The only really outspoken critic was the Rev Ian Paisley, who was escorted out after calling the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a liar. Afterwards a Catholic woman doctor said: "I never thought I'd feel sorry for Paisley, but I did then. They threw him out for telling the truth."

Sir Patrick justified his actions by emphasising several key points. The context of the exchanges was that, in February of this year, Martin

McGuinness of Sinn Féin had contacted the Government with the message: "The conflict is over but we need your advice on how to bring it to a close."

The Government had a duty to respond to that message, he said, to loud support from the Conservative benches behind him. In the contacts that

followed there had been no talks or negotiations: messages had been sent in written form. There had been two meetings with Sinn Féin, but these were unauthorised.

Everything communicated in private had been consistent with the Government's publicly stated positions. To demon-

strate this, Sir Patrick said, he was placing in the Commons library all consequent messages received and dispatched by the Government.

Sinn Féin denied each of these substantive points at a series of press conferences where Gerry Adams's body language, radiating cool confidence, was

in marked contrast to Sir Patrick's edginess. Sinn Féin said the present series of contacts had begun not this year but in 1990; that Martin McGuinness had never sent such a message; that the meetings had been authorised; and that real negotiations had taken place.

But at this stage the issue seemed to be fading. Sir Patrick's secret contacts had been

actually came, was unexpected. Late on Wednesday night, too late for *News at Ten* or the first editions of the newspapers, Sir Patrick announced that a number of errors had come to light. There were 22 of these, which, he said, had been caused by typographical and transcription errors: 14 were in the key 19 March document and eight in the section mentioning

cies in the Government's documents.

The fact is that, even after 22 changes to them, these documents still do not fit of read of events. In a 10 May message to the Government, for example, the republicans state: "We wish now to proceed without delay to the delegation meeting."



Sir Patrick Mayhew: usually bluff, genial and patronising, he became pale and hesitant as he tried to give an explanation of Government contacts with republicans

Photograph by EDWARD SYKES



OBSERVER

PP 18.

VAP - KEY

TALKS AND THE TROUBLES

UBLES

# Truth lies and vitriol: Mark Rosselli reports on how revelations on contacts between the Government and the IRA turned a clandestine truce into an acrimonious war of words

As soon as *The Observer* reached the news-stands there were demands for the resignations of the Prime Minister and the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew. The row continued on Monday in the House of Commons when Ian Paisley was expelled for calling Sir Patrick a liar.

The Government churned out reams of documents detailing exchanges between itself and the IRA. One of the most significant revelations of the last week has been the exposure of the Government's previously private view that the IRA and Sinn Féin are one and the same thing. Sinn Féin, as the IRA's political wing, responded to publication of the Mayhew documents by accusing the Government of doctoring the papers. The embarrassed Government had to issue a number of corrections. Sinn Féin produced a further pile of documents, which it accused the Government of hiding or falsifying. The Government countered that the IRA was fabricating disinformation designed to destabilise relations between London and the Unionists and London and Dublin.

There followed a week of frenzied activity, but one that turned up very few nuggets beyond what *Observer* readers learned last Sunday morning: that the British Government had for years been secretly using go-betweens in an effort to explore the chances for peace with the IRA and that messages, questions and clarifications had passed backwards and forwards even while bombs blew apart the Baltic Exchange, Warrington and Bishopsgate.

The seven days since that fundamental revelation have produced two things. First, a sudden, public and ferocious row between the formerly secretive communicants. Second, the detail of the positions adopted by the two sides in their mutual fumbblings for peace over recent months.

The row began with the Government's assertion that it was the Republicans who first sought peace in the form of an unsolicited approach by Martin McGuinness, vice-president of Sinn Féin, with the message: 'The conflict is over but we need your advice on how to end it. We wish to have an unannounced ceasefire in order to hold dialogue leading to peace.'

This, according to Mr McGuinness, is a lie, the text a total fabrication. He stated last week that, on the contrary, it was the Government's representatives who in February made it plain that a peace dialogue was on the table for the taking. Neither side wants to be portrayed as a supplicant, weakly suing for peace. It is still unclear who is telling the truth.

The row then spread, with Sinn Féin accusing the Government of doctoring documents to bolster its image, of fabricating further exchanges and of omitting others altogether. The full list runs like this:

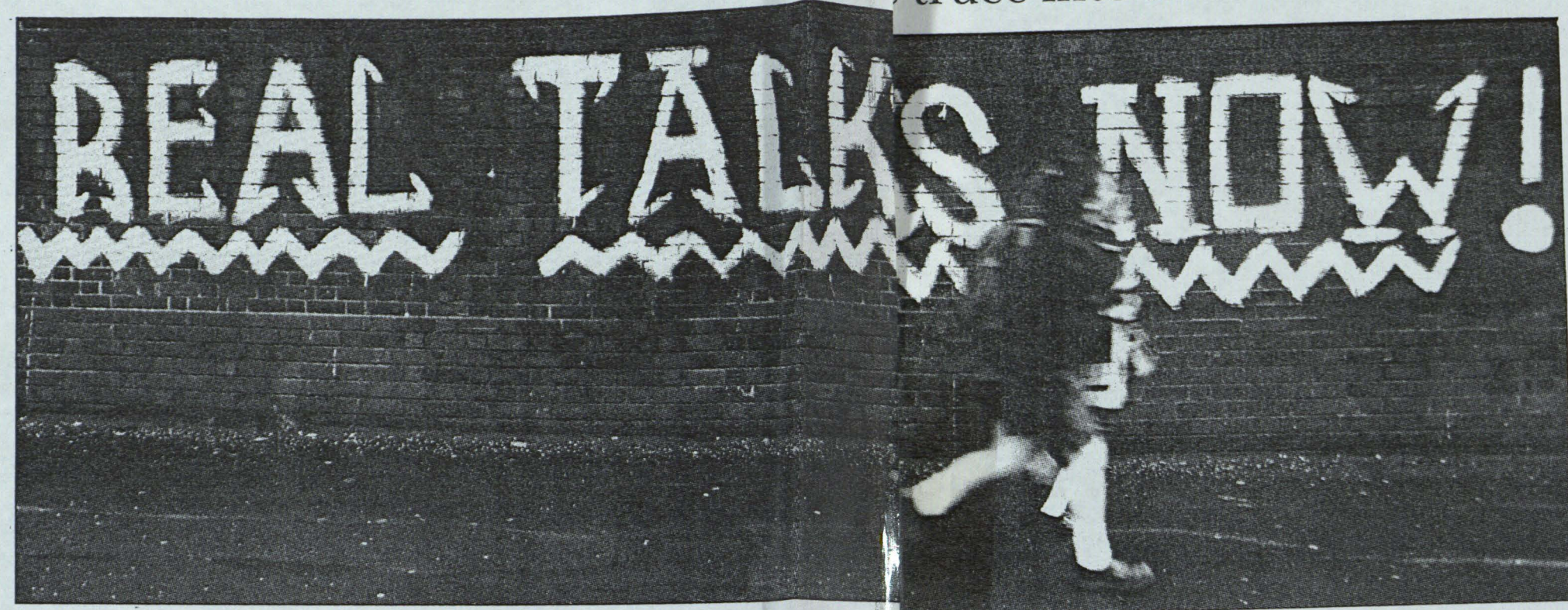
■ **22 February** [Source: Government. Denied by IRA]: Oral message from McGuinness asking for advice on how to end the conflict.

■ **26 February** [undisputed]: British message says a full position is being prepared.

■ **5 March** [undisputed]: Republican oral message proposes an exploratory meeting, and nominates two representatives, McGuinness and Gerry Kelly, another prominent Sinn Féin member.

■ **11 March** [undisputed]: British complain that delay in stating their full position is due to continuing acts of violence.

■ **19 March** [Source: Government. Doctored, according to IRA. Government issued new version according with IRA version]: Nine-paragraph note, reproduced below, sets out full British position. This key document states that a peace dialogue could only follow a formal end to organised violence, which it acknowledged by Government.



## Ulster foes exposed on secret path to peace

cepts would initially have to be unannounced. It also states peace talks could not begin with a predetermined political objective in mind, such as the reunification of Ireland, although it accepts that such an outcome might occur 'on the basis of the consent of the people of Northern Ireland'. An accompanying note warns the IRA that continuing atrocities will jeopardise peace prospects.

■ **22 March** [undisputed]: Republicans 'with total sadness' accept responsibility for Warrington bombing.

■ **23 April** [Source: IRA. No Government recognition of message]: British message asks for clarifications from Republican side. This is the first of a series of messages, written in a chummy, personalised style, that stands out from other British messages, using banking terminology as a cover — possibly because the messages were being faxed.

Britain becomes 'the Bank', peace talks become 'the loan'. The Government has not acknowledged the existence of any of these messages, so far.

■ **5 May** [undisputed]: British message complains of continuing violence and hopes that private assurances of a ceasefire will soon be forthcoming, but stands by position of 19 March.

■ **6 May** [undisputed]: British acknowledge IRA query as to whether peace dialogue should follow end to violence or vice versa.

■ **7 May** [undisputed]: British message confirms that dialogue must follow private assurance of end to organised violence.

■ **10 May** [Doctored by Government, according to IRA]: Republican message sets out full position. This key text is reproduced below. It asks for face-to-face meetings between delegations, says that Sinn Féin should enter the peace dialogue by right, and asks for clarification of the logistics of talks (who? when? where? etc.).

According to Sinn Féin, the text was offered against the context of a two-week ceasefire, which had been discussed at an earlier meeting with a British representative. Sinn Féin claims the text was doctored by the Government to remove phrase suggesting a ceasefire might be of 'short duration'.

■ **13 May** [Source: IRA. Not

acknowledged by Government]: Second 'banking' message from British reassures Republican fears about press leaks. Omitted from official record.

■ **17-18 May** [Source: IRA. Disputed by Government]: Sinn Féin claims the British representative told it that on these days John Major and senior Cabinet colleagues came close to agreeing terms with the Republicans and published details of the supposed ministerial arguments, which showed Ken Clarke (then Home Secretary) persuading Major against coming to terms.

The suggestion that secret Cabinet-level deliberations were leaked to the Republicans is devastating. Downing Street last week issued a categorical denial and said that Sinn Féin had totally fabricated the exchanges.

■ **1 June** [Source: Government. Denied by IRA]: Message from 'the Provisional leadership' complaining that there is as yet no formal reply to the 10 May position. This message, says Sinn Féin, is a British fabrication, designed as an excuse to carry this key sentence: 'The leadership is particularly dismayed because it had placed on the table the offer of a total cessation [of violence] which carried its hopes for the future of all the people in these islands.' According to Sinn Féin, they had agreed to offer a two-week ceasefire only.

■ **1 June** [Source: IRA. Not acknowledged by Government]: British message produced by Sinn Féin, but not published in the official record by the Government. It reads: 'The Government was working out a response which, because it was radical, needed careful crafting. This meant deliberate (but not artificially slow) work at the highest levels. One of the reasons why it was necessary to proceed so carefully was the recognition that any response must remove existing doubts, misconceptions and suspicions.'

Before that process could be completed renewed violence on a serious scale took place — with the inevitable consequence that that process itself had to be halted. Since then there have of course been changes in the Government. It would be possible for further considerations of this to be resumed after the Whitsun recess. The outcome will, as always, be affected by events on the ground. This is not a threat, merely a statement of reality.'

■ **3 June** [Source: IRA. Not acknowledged by Government]: Third and final 'banking' message from British, produced by Sinn Féin and not recognised or published by the Government last week. It is described as 'personal from me', and speaks of the 'depression and anger here at our failure to respond to your brave and straightforward offer', suggesting it is written by an intermediary or official, probably based in Northern Ireland, chafing at slow progress by the Government.

It claims that the 'National Chairman' — presumably John Major — has been made nervous by recent economic events or 'banking bold step', but adds that 'there is still on both sides to complete the loan and we must succeed'.

■ **11 July** [undisputed]: Republican message complains of leaks to press.

■ **17 July** [undisputed]: British message finally responds to Republicans' 10 May position, chides them for continuing violence, but says progress is still possible. It describes as unacceptable recent Sinn Féin speeches indicating that unless the Republican view of the way to peace prevails, a ceasefire would only be temporary.

It notes: 'The reasons for not talking about a permanent cessation are understood, but the peace process cannot be conditional on the acceptance of any particular or single analysis. Can you confirm that you envisage a peace process which is aimed at an inclusive political process and that a lasting end to violence does not depend on your analysis being endorsed as the only way forward?'

■ **July 22** [undisputed]: Republican reply (originally drawn up in April, not delivered until July) says they are imposing no preconditions, but questions whether the Government itself is hampered by an adherence to a Unionist veto. Promises to honour all rights of Unionists. [This message arrived as John Major did a deal with the Ulster Unionists to win the Maastricht vote in the Commons.]

■ **August 14** [undisputed]: Further Republican reply to 17 July

message accuses Britain of inflexibility, reminds Britain that a two-week ceasefire has been under discussion for some time and that the Government had 'asserted the belief that a two-week suspension to accommodate talks would result in Republicans being persuaded that there is no further need for armed struggle'.

It accuses the Government of dragging its feet for 'expedient, internal and domestic party political reasons'.

■ **August 30** [undisputed]: Republican message attacking continuing press leaks.

■ **September 3** (Sept 1, according to Sinn Féin) [undisputed]: British message reiterates that a peace dialogue is dependent upon an end to violence — it specifically rebuts the 14 August suggestion that Britain had endorsed a two-week ceasefire as being sufficient — and upon Sinn Féin accepting that its view of the political way forward might not necessarily prevail. Rider says press stories are due to authorised briefings.

■ **10 September** [Source: IRA. Not acknowledged by Government]: Republican message reinforces message of 14 August, attacks British refusal to acknowledge that its representative asked for and received the offer of a two-week ceasefire from the IRA; 'your present attempts to deny this aspect of the contact between us, can only be regarded with the utmost scepticism and must raise serious questions about your motives in all of this'.

■ **28 September** [Source: IRA. Not acknowledged by Government]: Terse Republican message, not published by Government last week, says they are still awaiting a reply, and pointing out that the Hume/Adams talks have 'moved the situation forward'.

■ **2 November** [Source: Government. Denied by IRA, which admitted however that an 'unauthorised' communication may have been sent]: Republican message saying the country is 'at the point of no return', and saying

'please tell us... as a matter of urgency when you will open dialogue in the event of a total end to hostilities'.

■ **5 November** [text undisputed]: British message referring to disputed 2 November 'message', saying that if there were a total end to violence and a declaration by Sinn Féin that it would abide by democratic political process alone, then the first meeting in a peace dialogue would take place 'within a week of Parliament's return in January'. The message states that a private assurance of an end to violence would, after it had been proved on the ground, be followed by a public Government statement that a dialogue was about to start.

■ **10 November** [Source: IRA. Not acknowledged by Government]: Sinn Féin says the Republicans sent a message angrily denying that they were the authors of the November 2 message. Not surprisingly, the official record published last week by the Government shows no trace of this message.

Sooner or later, the truth — probably some muddy middle path — will out. In the meantime, we can only look at the exchanges, and see how tantalisingly close the two enemies came to grasping the prize.

Light

a single candle. Five years ago, Charter 88 called for a constitutional revolution. Five years ago, there were 348 of us. Now, we are approaching 50,000. Join us. Dare to care. Dare to believe in the possibility of change. Better to light a single candle than curse the darkness. Charter 88 calls for a Bill of Rights, freedom of information, accountable government, a fair electoral system of proportional representation, a reformed House of Commons, a democratic Upper House, reform of the judiciary, redress for all state abuse, independence for local government, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments, devolution of power and a written constitution for all.

Together we can make it happen. Join us.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

I'd also like to help with a donation. I enclose £15 ☐ £20 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ £ other ☐

Please return this form, with your donation to: CHARTER 88, FREEPOST (ED0 5005), LONDON EC1B 1ZT

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### The full text of the key documents exchanged by the IRA and the Government

#### British note: March 19, 1993

1. The importance of what has been said, the wish to take it seriously, and the influence of events on the ground, have been acknowledged. All of those involved share a responsibility to work to end the conflict. No one has the monopoly of suffering. There is a need for a healing process.

2. It is essential that there should be no deception on either side, and also that no deception should, through any misunderstanding, be seen where it is intended. It is also essential that both sides have a clear and realistic understanding of what it is possible to achieve, so that neither side can in the future claim that it has been tricked.

3. The position of the British Government in dealing with those who espouse violence is clearly understood. This is why the envisaged series of events is important. What is being sought at this stage is advice. The position of the British Government is that any dialogue could only follow a halt to violent activity. It is understood that in the first instance this would have to be unannounced. If violence had genuinely been brought to an end, whether or not that fact had been announced, then progressive entry into dialogue could take place. The document originally published by Sir Patrick Mayhew read: 'We note that what is being sought at this stage is advice, and that any dialogue would follow an unannounced halt to violent activity.' Sir Patrick subsequently issued an amended text agreeing with the Sinn Féin version and said the key difference was a result of typing errors. Sinn Féin said the original intent was to deceive, making it appear that, instead of seeking advice from Sinn Féin, it was responding to Sinn Féin's request for advice. Other variations are subsequently corrected by Britain are set out in bold below.

4. It must be understood, though, that once a halt to activity became public, the British Government would have to acknowledge and defend its entry into dialogue. It would do so by pointing out that its agreement to exploratory dialogue about the possibility of an inclusive process had been given

because — and only because — it had received a private assurance that organised violence had been brought to an end.

5. The British Government has made clear that:

■ no political objective which is advocated by constitutional means alone could properly be excluded from discussion in the talks process;

■ the commitment to return as much responsibility as possible to local politicians should be seen within a wider framework of stable relationships to be worked out with all concerned;

■ new political arrangements would be designed to ensure that no legitimate group was excluded from eligibility to share in the exercise of this responsibility;

■ in the event of a genuine and established end of violence, the whole range of the responses to it would inevitably be looked at afresh.

6. The British Government has no desire to inhibit or impede legitimate constitutional expression of any political opinion or any (such — SF) input to the political process, and wants to see included in this process all main parties which have sufficiently shown they genuinely do not espouse violence. It has no blueprint. It wants an agreed accommodation, not an imposed settlement, arrived at through an inclusive process in which the parties are free agents.

7. The British Government does not have, and will not adopt, any prior objective of 'ending partition'. The British Government cannot enter a talks process, or expect others to do so, with the purpose of achieving a predetermined outcome, whether the 'ending of partition' or anything else. It has accepted that the eventual outcome of such a process could be a united Ireland, but this can be — SF only on the basis of the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. Should this be the eventual outcome of a peaceful democratic process, the British Government would bring forward legislation to implement the will of the people here. But unless the people of Northern Ireland come to express such a view, the British Government will continue to uphold the interests of Northern Ireland, in the interests of all its people, within the totality of

relationships in these islands.

8. Evidence on the ground that any group had ceased violent activity would induce resulting reduction in security force activity. We welcome to end, the British Government's overall response in terms of security force activity on the ground would still have to take account of the overall threat. The threat posed by the Republican and Loyalist groups which remained active would have to continue to be countered.

9. It is important to establish whether this provides a basis for a way forward. The British Government would answer specific questions or give further explanation.

Martin McGuinness to British representative: 10 May, 1993

We found our preliminary meeting with your representative valuable (Sinn Féin version). Published Government version omits this first sentence and starts as below.)

We welcome the face-to-face exchanges with your representative. Given the seriousness of this project we trust that this represents only the beginning of such meetings. We are concerned that the movement to further meetings has been delayed by your side.

It is important that we are frank with each other. Our seriousness in addressing this project should not be in any doubt but it is greatly tempered by the caution occasioned by the far from satisfactory experiences in 1972, 1975 and during the Hunger Strikes of 1980 and 1981. It will be wrong to minimise or underestimate the problems which these experiences have given rise to.

Having said that, we are responding directly to your request for advice recognising fully the sensitivity of any position, from you or us, which is committed to paper at this stage. Our response has been couched accordingly. But it is clear that we are prepared to make a crucial move if a genuine peace process is set in place.

You say you require a private assurance in order to defend publicly your entry into dialogue with us. We have proceeded to this stage without assurance. We wish now to proceed without delay to the delegation

meetings. In order to facilitate this step we sought and received a commitment which will permit you to proceed so that we can both explore the potential for developing a real peace process. This depends on agreement between us about the next stage and particularly about the seniority of your representatives. It is important that you understand how important a gesture this is (and how, even though it will be of a short duration — SF) it underlines the sincerity of those involved and their faith in us. We wish to stress that we will not be party to any dealings which would undermine this faith. To do so will serve only to damage our peace project and the overall quest for peace.

Democratic reasons clearly determine that Sinn Féin's right to represent its electorate and to promote its analysis should be accepted and acted upon. This is the basis on which we enter into dialogue.

We need to agree agendas and formats for meetings etc. We have appointed a small secretariat to assist in this task. We would like (you — SF) to nominate someone to liaise with Martin McGuinness on this.

We also have a number of questions. They have to do with the mechanics of the sequence outlined by you and they are:

(a) who will represent you?

(b) When will the British Government be politically represented in this process and by whom?

(c) We need clarification of the phrase 'progressive entry into dialogue'.

(d) when will this start?

(e) Where is the proposed venue? It would be more practical and quicker if these details could be agreed directly with Mr McGuinness. If this is not possible we ask that you proceed through the usual channel as soon as possible.

(Sinn Féin says by deleting the first sentence referring to an earlier offer to suspend the violence for two weeks, and by omitting the words 'short duration' later in the text allowed for the 'fabrication' of a claimed oral message from the Government on 1 June talking of an offer from the IRA of 'total cessation' of violence.)



# Contacts to stay open: Reynolds

By Michael Devine,  
Dublin Correspondent

**TAOISEACH** Albert Reynolds intends to keep open his contacts with the republican movement as he continues his search for peace in Northern Ireland.

The contacts will be through his special adviser, Martin Mansergh, he disclosed in the Dail.

He said: "My adviser will continue with the general policy of previous governments in relation to gathering information on all aspects of the shifting opinions among the communities in Northern Ireland."

## Met

Mr Reynolds said he believed that this was the course of action the people of Ireland would want him to follow — to use all the available information to enable him to make the right decision and right evaluation in going forward to try to find peace.

He assured the Dail that he had not met Sinn Fein or the IRA.

He said that there had been no change in the policy adopted

## Dail told of the Taoiseach's plan

by successive governments in relation to talks with Sinn Fein.

He added: "As during the period of the hunger strikes, for example, it is essential in times of high tension, or as at present when there is a serious prospect of a permanent end to violence, that the Government stay in close touch with developments in the thinking of all sections of the community in Northern Ireland."

The Taoiseach said that both the British and Irish governments were determined to reach a satisfactory outcome to their search for a joint declaration aimed at getting a cessation of violence.

He admitted that there were serious difficulties to be overcome, but he refused to reveal what they were. He said he and Prime Minister John Major had agreed that it would not be helpful to their resolution to have them debated in public.

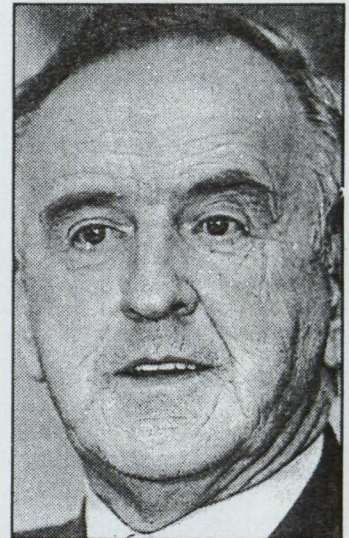
He added: "The prospects for peace will not be helped by speculation based on rumour or half-truths."

Mr Reynolds said he hoped that Northern Ireland and the Republic would have different futures after these negotiations and that the starting point would be a cessation of violence and an acceptance of the peace process and that they could then go on to talks process.

The Taoiseach said he had pointed out to Mr Major that it was his responsibility to keep James Molyneux and other unionists informed of developments because of their continuing reluctance to meet with the Republic's Government.

## Discussion

He confirmed that the process of intensive consultation and discussion between officials aimed at bridging the gap



Albert Reynolds:  
Speech

between the two governments was under way.

He said he and Mr Major would review the situation at their meeting in Brussels next weekend.

"In the light of this review, we will then decide how best to proceed in our work to develop a joint statement," he added.

## OBITUARY

### Long-serving teacher dies

**BILLY Walker**, one of the longest serving teachers in the history of Foyle College in Londonderry, has died in England.

Mr Walker joined the French department in September, 1929, just months before his 21st birthday, remaining on the staff for the next 40 years until his retirement in 1973.

Born in Manchester and a graduate of Manchester University, he was precise in manner, meticulous in dress and in his conversation. He was

A man of many interests he enjoyed badminton, table tennis and tennis, playing the latter until last year. The other love of his life was hill walking and he spent numerous weekends in the Donegal hills.

On his retirement he moved to Wakefield in Yorkshire, making occasional visits to Northern Ireland. The most recent of these was in June when, on visiting the school, he taught a French lesson to a second form class — 60 years after he started

# Nation

# a



words of a recent British Labour Party report: "An independent Northern Ireland in present circumstances could rap-

more than it produces. According to a recent cross-border report commissioned by the International Fund for Ireland,

Spending on public services — the latest available comparable figures — was £2,177 per head in the

highest in the country, squeezed out of the North

SUNDAY INDEPENDENT 12/14/93 PP 4. POL35/333(8)  
There was a chance for peace 16 years ago — but a leak sank it

# The diary of a thwarted Northern peace process

**A**T home in Killegar (Co Leitrim) I heard by chance a broadcast on Radio Eireann by Sean MacBride in which he spoke . . . of negotiations that had been in progress when Bloody Friday put an end to them. He made it clear that he would be prepared to act again but would not himself take any initiative.

It seemed to me possible that the paramilitaries on both sides might also be willing to act but not to take any initiative; and that possibly I might be one of very few people — having a contact with Sinn Féin as well as with the British government through my membership of the Lords — who could initiate action.

That night I went to see John Joe McGirl (veteran Sinn Féin councillor in Leitrim who ran a pub in Ballinmore) and in the course of a long discussion in the bar conducted in a most amicable atmosphere with a very great deal of mutual understanding I put over my proposals, in particular that if I were to make overtures to the three parties involved (ie: Sinn Féin, the loyalists and the British government to whom I had direct access as a member of the Lords) I could make it clear to all that I had acted purely on my own behalf as an "honest broker" without having been requested to do so by any of them.

The paramilitaries on each side would have a spokesman or delegate who would not himself be a member of a paramilitary organisation. The names of MacBride and Desmond Boal (both SCs) were discussed.

McGill agreed as a matter of urgency to put up these suggestions to the Provisional leadership.



In 1977, loyalist and republican terrorists were on the verge of a permanent ceasefire based on a British troops withdrawal. The talks foundered when their meetings were made public. In his diary, **Lord John Kilbracken**, veteran journalist and talks broker, reveals those details for the first time.

## FEBRUARY 17:

**P**HONE call from Ruairi O Bradaigh (the then President of Provisional Sinn Féin) suggesting a meeting next evening in Dublin. I agreed.

## FEBRUARY 18:

**M**EETING in Dublin's Mount Herbert Hotel with Ruairi O Bradaigh and his aide Joe Cahill. Extremely friendly but at first so intransigent that I felt nothing would come of it. No question of ceasefire before talks take place. General discussion along the lines of reactivating plans aborted by Bloody Friday with same names mentioned but they made no positive suggestion and gave the impression of being so opposed to negotiations that I did not like to suggest any.

Eventually R very tentatively asked me if I was thinking of going to see MacBride. I at once replied that I would be glad to do so or to take any other action (appearing to be on my own initiative) if they thought it could be productive. At once a useful discussion began as though almost all opposition had suddenly melted away.

We agreed that the next step should be for me to ask MacBride if he would be interested in meeting them and me for discussions.

## FEBRUARY 19:

**M**ORNING meeting with MacBride at his home in Clonskeagh. Extraordinarily sympathetic. Whilst not prepared to represent Provisional movement at any meeting he would speak on their behalf. In general he and I were in very complete accord.

Met R and J at 6.30 pm in Chapelizod. They were clearly pleased with progress.

## FEBRUARY 23:

**A**N extremely satisfactory three hour meeting in which we were all basically *ad idem* — Sean dominated the meeting and was exceedingly clear-headed and forceful. R and J taking the viewpoint (probably very much justified) that they couldn't act without consulting "the leadership" but completely agreed with next three steps: (a) that they should put the whole proposal to "the leadership;" (b) that loyalist ULCCC should then be approached through channels they (Sinn Féin) have available to obtain reaction; (c) that next meeting should be between us four (ie no question of loyalist participation yet) when Sean next available, after his return from New York on March 11.

I myself had expressed the hope that perhaps this

meeting could also include loyalists (names of Desmond Boal and John McKeague mentioned). But others strongly felt that this would be premature.

Next step (not possible till after Sean's return from Zambia on March 13) would depend upon sanction from leadership and loyalists but, if both favorable, would involve my approaching one of three suggested three British statesmen who might agree to meet with Sean and ULCCC "delegate". The hope would be that paramilitaries on both sides would agree to total ceasefire provided: (a) British troops withdrawn to barracks; (b) Declaration of intent by British to withdraw troops.

In this atmosphere it was hoped that prolonged discussions could take place towards a long term solution.

## MARCH 11:

**E**vening meeting with R and J and Sean very satisfactory. Ruairi had obtained go ahead from "leadership". First overtures to loyalists had been turned down but loyalists had later approached them (Sinn Féin).

Meetings had taken place at which a wide measure of agreement had been reached. In particular both sides had agreed to Sean and Boal being the respective spokesmen. Moreover

at an allegedly "chance" meeting between Boal and "one of our people" Boal had expressed willingness to act in a capacity of this kind.

Afterwards a very pleasant journey from Dublin to London with Sean. He felt our travelling by mail boat (because of Aer Lingus strike) was good luck — reminiscent of Treaty days.

## APRIL 1:

**M**ADE contact with R and arranged to meet him in Shelbourne Rooms about 8.30. Good meeting. Talks had continued between two sides and opinion now moving in favour of extended talks between Sean and Boal to reach considerable degree of consensus before even approaching British.

## MAY 16:

**I** have heard nothing for a month. Tonight the World In Action story broke that "peace talks" were taking place in Paris between Sean and Desmond Boal. This was followed a furor in the Dublin press.

My name, as previously agreed, was not mentioned. The contact and initiation were attributed to divers churchmen (unnamed) of both denominations. The reports were wildly divergent and largely based on speculation.

The stories broken at almost the earliest possible time, just as the collapse of the loyalist strike and just before murder of Captain R. Nairac.

The bling of this story led denials all round especially on the loyalist side and immediate ending of talks.

**P**ROSCRIPT in 1991 took no further action.

## Nelson Mandela: statesman a