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Mr. Hill

S.H. 1.6.95.

Tu-visit

*We are having trouble
with the garden on the visit*

cc PST

(27)

PSS

P Tede

F Murray

S Dale

T Dalton

SECRET

Meeting with Sinn Féin representative, 24 May 1995

1. The following is a report of the main points of my meeting yesterday afternoon with Francie Molloy and Fr. Reid.

Visit of Prince Charles

2. We had a lengthy discussion on this point. I set out again in detail our views, concerns and our regret that Sinn Féin intend to go ahead with protests, including the march from the GPO to Iveagh House. Fr. Reid noted that Martin McGuinness had made it clear that it is not in Sinn Féin's interests to have anything to do with confrontation or disruption. He (McGuinness) had floated internally the idea of issuing a statement to this effect. (The idea does not seem to have progressed thus far). Rita O'Hare had told Fr. Reid the previous day that the problem area is primarily Sligo/Donnegal, as distinct from Dublin. She spoke in terms of having full advance liaison with the Gardaí.

3. Molloy said that Sinn Féin feel that they cannot just walk away from the visit. Other groups will demonstrate in any event and Sinn Féin cannot afford to be upstaged by Republican Sinn Féin in particular. The Sligo/Donnegal elements who, Molloy said, are RSF in orientation, along with elements in Galway and Roscommon, are a problem in this regard and he signalled Mullaghmore, were it to be visited, as a particular problem venue. I said that I was not privy to the details of the programme. I queried why Mullaghmore should be such an issue of concern, given the reality of what happened in 1979 to the visitor's close relatives there. Molloy said that the Sligo/Donnegal elements, particularly Joe O'Neill, have focused on Mullaghmore in particular.

4. I asked what other groups, apart from Bloody Sunday relatives, and as I understood him RSF, ere expected to



make their presence known. He mentioned the Irish National Congress (Robert Ballagh's grouping, who are generally close to Sinn Féin), the Socialist Workers' Party, the Irish Freedom Movement (a leftist group apparently based in England) and another far-left group (Red Impact?). The Galway branch of the SWP are taking a particular interest in the visit. Prominent among this group is Niall Farrell, brother of Mairéad Farrell (Gibraltar). Farrell, he added, is not amenable to Sinn Féin influence. He referred also to a strong wish within Dublin Sinn Féin to proceed with the demonstration, and recalled that, as the Ard Fheis had shown, there were elements in the Dublin organisation with strong views. I strongly argued against allowing problem members to act out a profile in relation to this visit. He said that the Sinn Féin element would be strictly controlled. The organiser of the Dublin demonstration is Joan O' Connor (note: one of the two women who alleged SB harassment, raised with us by Des Mackin of Sinn Féin). The organiser of any Mullaghmore demonstration by Sinn Féin will be McManus of the Sinn Féin delegation to Stormont.

5. I repeated our regret about Sinn Féin's wish to persist with demonstrations. The Derry riot was an object lesson on the way in which groups and individuals could coalesce into an uncontrollable fiasco. Molloy said that Sinn Féin would not object to being fenced off some distance away from Iveagh House. This could be agreed with the Gardaí. An internal Sinn Féin meeting on the visit, in the margins of a meeting of Ard Chomhairle members which Molloy is attending, is to take place in Dublin today (Thursday). He intends to be in touch after that meeting.

Beatings

6. I emphasised our concerns at the turn which beatings had taken in recent days, and in particular the emergence of weapons: any weakening of the taboo against guns is worrying at every level, as is the possibility that at

some stage one of these guns may be used. Molloy rehearsed the Sinn Féin line (they are opposed to these beatings, but there is heavy local support for them etc.). The bulk of the beatings is related to drugs. Efforts to evolve non violent alternatives are not progressing quickly. He could give no specific reason for the recent apparent upsurge, particularly in the Derry/Strabane area but recalled that hoods are becoming increasingly adventurous. As for the reported carrying of weapons, he suggested that some of this reporting may be RUC-inspired black propaganda. I said that that allegations had been quite specific. In at least one recent case (in Derry on 6 May) charges of possession and membership had reportedly resulted. He commented that in Strabane there may be a potential problem dating from the activities of "Beano" Casey, the onetime IRA Quartermaster turned Supergrass. According to Molloy, it may be that a small number of weapons under his former control (and which, Molloy said, had been tagged by the RUC) could be circulating. He referred also to a situation some time ago where a pistol was "floating" in Dungannon: urgent efforts were made (successfully) to locate the weapon and put it under secure IRA control. I said that it is crucial that Sinn Féin do everything possible to bring beatings to an end, and that there be no repetition of the appearance of weapons of any sort. (Comment: Mark Durkan told me, in relation to the Derry beatings of recent days, that Sinn Féin are sending out mixed signals i. e. they are, at local level, explaining beatings to families. On the other hand, some beatings by the IRA are being denied. He said that there is a perception in Republican circles that what was a fall-off in beatings (until the recent upsurge) was being capitalised on by hoods (who are increasingly defiant of the IRA) and the RUC. Durkan is however encouraged by the more upfront attention given to beatings at a recent local community conference on policing in the Creggan and the restrained silence with which Sinn Féin members

(O'Hara and Crumley) reacted to criticism of beatings at Derry City Council earlier in the week).

Parades

7. Lower Ormeau residents (including Gerard Rice) recently met with an Orange delegation, under Quaker auspices. This is the first face to face meeting. One encouraging development is that the Orange Order indicated that they would not, as had been implied some weeks ago, seek to route their main combined parade on the 12th (to the Edenderry field) through the Lower Ormeau. (The problem of the Lower Ormeau feeder remains).
8. The Sinn Féin parade from Coalisland to Dungannon on 20 May went off quietly. Molloy commented that the RUC had been cooperative.
9. I queried Molloy about a reported Republican parade scheduled for Castlederg this Sunday. (Comment: this looks like an attempt to create a precedent for Republican parades in Castlederg). He confirmed that one would take place, involving Sinn Féin, GAA and cultural groups. The point is to highlight the RUC's decision (a) to deny access to a Saoirse parade several weeks ago; (b) to highlight the RUC's subsequent permission to allow an Orange parade to march through the town. I counselled restraint. Confrontations with the police at this time should be avoided.

Monitoring the ceasefire

10. In brief, high levels of RUC checkpoints and surveillance continue in Cappagh and surrounding areas of E. Tyrone, and in South Co. Derry (e.g. Bellaghy). In South Armagh, he reported an increase over the last week in ground activity by the security forces (notably night-time and early morning Army patrols in Crossmaglen).


Declan Kelleher
25 May 1995