



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2017/10/11
<b>Creation Dates:</b>	19 February 1987
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	3 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

516281

01 Harrison  
62

Weekly analysis of published Provisional IRA/Sinn Fein  
and UDA/UVF comment (w/e 15 February 1987) 20

Mr. M. C. Murphy  
mk  
~3/2/87

1. Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein and the General Election

Among the points of interest to emerge in the media coverage of Sinn Fein's General Election campaign were the following:

The Sunday Tribune of 15 February carried an interview with Adams in which he was asked if he supported "the killing of your political opponents in this election". His reply was that while violence in the Northern Ireland context - "conducted in a controlled way" - was "legitimate", it "plays no part in the 26 counties". However, on the question of whether he would accept the "verdict of the ballot box (in the General Election) and would adhere to democratic procedures", he fudged heavily. Indeed, in the view of the interviewer, Vincent Browne, his answer was "in essence 'No'".

The Financial Times of 14 February, in the course of an article on Sinn Fein's election campaign, also carried a number of quotes from Adams. He claimed that he could see no circumstances in which the "armed struggle would be compromised to increase electoral gains in the Republic or the North". Adams, however, agreed that there were difficulties about pursuing the "twin approaches of the gun in the North and socialism in the South": "there are contradictions in seeking popular support while being identified all the time with armed struggle. People don't vote for war".

2. Danny Morrison's Radio Ulster interview

Among the points made by Morrison in the Radio Ulster interview on 9 February were the following:

- He claimed that Sinn Fein and the IRA are "two separate, distinct organisations with separate constitutions and the relationship between them is that Sinn Fein is in solidarity with the struggle of resistance". (As the interviewer, Barry Cowan, was quick to point out, this seemed a step removed from the "armalite in one hand and the ballot box in the other". Morrison denied that there was any dilution involved).
- On whether he condemned the UFF firebombs in Donegal and Dublin, he said that it would be "a hypocritical position for me to take to actually condemn the use of force to achieve a political end".
- He availed of the opportunity to again attack Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act. (Re-echoing a constant theme of Sinn Fein's General Election campaign).

(Comment: The interview provided further evidence of the discomfiture of the present Sinn Fein leadership when pressed on the question of supporting/condoning/condemning the "armed struggle".)

3. Alleged IRA plan to assassinate Brian Mawhinney

"An Phoblacht" of 12 February carried a claim that the IRA had aborted a planned bomb attack against Mawhinney in Derry on 11 February, "because of the danger of civilian casualties". Surprisingly, the "Phoblacht" claim received little coverage in the wider media.

4. UDA/UFF

- (a) The "Irish News" of 11 February carried details of a "row" between Joe Hendron and John McMichael about the UFF fire-bombs in Donegal. McMichael claimed that he was "not in a position to speak for the UFF, nor do I have any direct influence upon the organisation". He did not condemn the UFF attacks.

(b) In an interview with Fergal Keane in the Sunday Tribune of 15 February, McMichael conceded, however, that, in the context of his "Common Sense" initiative, "further action by the UFF would make that ("selling the 'Common Sense' proposals") more difficult". However, he did not condemn the fire-bombings.

On the "Common Sense" initiative, McMichael said that the "time for talking is now, because when the summer comes and another marching season comes around, feelings will rise again and next winter we will have more polarisation and more tension and mistrust between the two communities".

On the question of "suspending" the Agreement while talks took place, McMichael said "I don't call it a suspension of the Agreement - just a freezing of it so that talks could get underway on something which would be more acceptable to both communities to replace it".

*to Conner*

T. O'Connor  
Anglo-Irish Section

19 February 1987

cc: PS Tanaiste  
PSS  
A-I Section  
A-I Secretariat  
Mr. R. O'Brien  
Mr. Mathews  
Mr. Magner  
Embassy London  
Embassy Washington

*in Nally*

2252m