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Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries

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I had a meeting in Belfast on 7 April with my usual contact.

The following are some of the points which arose:

UVF

The UVF in Northern Ireland was dormant for several months after the killing of John Bingham last year. Recently, however, two new leaders have emerged: Billy Marchant and Trevor King. The former, who is in his forties, is a long-time UVF activist. His nephew, "Budgie" Allen, turned supergrass, some years ago and (on the basis of having accompanied Marchant on various operations) implicated numerous UVF people. Marchant and King are believed to have organised the killing of Lawrence Marley. There is considerable satisfaction inside the UVF with the organisation's success in locating and killing a Provo (as opposed to the random victims whom they have previously killed in North Belfast).

UDA

My contact is not aware of any current UDA plans to strike at targets in the South.

He mentioned that discontent has surfaced in the ranks recently over the increasingly opulent lifestyles of the UDA's main racketeers, Jim Craig and his deputy Artie McFee. Craig and McFee have been making enormous profits from protection rackets in Belfast and have made little effort to conceal this. The view is that Andy Tyrrie (to whom Craig reportedly gave a "Christmas present" of £2,000 - £4,000) must be "in, on it" somehow. There is also lingering unease over the plot by Craig and Davy Payne a couple of months ago to kill Tommy Lyttle (West Belfast Commander).

My contact understands from UDA sources that Hume has met McMichael three times to discuss the UDA's "Common Sense" document.

UDA raid on UDR base (22 February)

My contact gave me the following account of events based on a mixture of RUC and UDA sources.

The idea originated with two UDR men in the Coleraine base who approached Davy Payne, North Belfast Commander and also the UDA's procurement officer. Payne offered a "share" in the haul to John McMichael (who, though technically no longer the UDA's Military Commander, remains in charge of the South Belfast Brigade). Nothing came of this - McMichael insisted on having the weapons immediately whereas Payne wanted to conceal them for a few months. Eddie Sayers, Mid-Ulster Brigade Commander, was also offered a "share" but turned it down.

Some days before the raid, two of Payne's North Belfast associates were picked up in connection with the Dublin fire-bomb attacks. A day or so later, Payne's Military Commander in North Belfast was also picked up. Despite the likelihood that these associates would be "singing" in police custody about Payne's current operations, Payne not only went ahead with the raid on the UDR base but participated in it personally (due to the enforced absence of his Military Commander). On the night of 22 February, he and three or four others arrived at the base. He was driving his own car and his colleagues had a van. The two UDR men met them at the entrance and took them inside in the boot of a UDR vehicle. When the driver of the van (waiting outside) suddenly panicked and drove off, the others had to load the weapons onto a UDR van parked inside the base. Payne drove off in his own car while his colleagues followed about half a mile behind in the UDR van. At about 4.15 a.m., not far from the base, Payne was stopped by traffic police who had noticed that his car had an out-of-date number plate. They established his identity and his

destination (a relative's house in Glengormley) and then let him proceed. A few minutes later they stopped the UDR van, found the weapons in the back and arrested the two UDA men driving it. Payne has subsequently arrested at the house in Glengormley. The UDR accomplices were also arrested. While Payne was later released (as there was no hard evidence to link him to the raid), the others are still in custody.

'Day of defiance'

My contact has gleaned something of Molyneaux's thinking in relation to the 'day of defiance' (Saturday).

Molyneaux suggested to an aide some days ago that a rumour might be spread around to the effect that a rally would take place in Hillsborough on Saturday afternoon. The rally would not, therefore, be 'organised' as such; rather, it would be "whispered into existence". There would be no 'organisers' to prosecute and the attendance (unaware of what precisely would take place in Hillsborough) would also be immune from prosecution.

In the meantime Molyneaux has settled on a less far-fetched plan. An 'open-air meeting' (as distinct from a demonstration) will be held in Lisburn on Saturday - to be addressed by a single speaker, Molyneaux. Advance notice of such events is not required (though, according to the aide, Molyneaux has already briefed the police on his plan anyway). Molyneaux has no plans for Saturday other than to address this Lisburn meeting.

Westminster elections

My contact understands that neither Paisley nor Robinson favour the policy of contesting OUP seats - the former because he does not wish to divide Unionist ranks, the latter because he fears a threat to his position from Jim Allister, and Sammy Wilson.

Stalker affair

My contact mentioned that he attended a dinner hosted by the Chief Constable recently. The Deputy Chief Constable (McAtamney) and the three Senior Assistant Chief Constables were also present.

The Stalker affair was a major topic of conversation. Asked whether the RUC's actions amounted to a conspiracy to obstruct the course of justice, McAtamney replied: "There's no law in the land against telling lies". Hermon (who had earlier praised his deputy as "the person in whom I have the greatest confidence") explicitly supported him on this. In subsequent conversation, the RUC officers engaged in a sustained character assassination of John Stalker, saying that he had not done detective work since the Moors killing twenty years ago and that he was a shameless publicity-seeker who had left all the hard work to his deputy, Thorburn. A particular criticism was that Stalker had revealed to the media the existence of MI5 bugging devices (an allegation rejected by Peter Taylor, who told my contact that it was Jim Prior who had accidentally revealed their existence).

My contact understands that the Home Office have been briefing journalists in London to the effect that they are "very impressed" by the two parts of the Report which they have seen so far.

Provisional IRA

Danny Morrison made it clear to my contact on Monday of this week that the Provos were very pleased with the controversy which had developed over the police handling of paramilitary funerals and intended to "keep the pot boiling". He said that, while the Provos had come in for "a lot of flak" in nationalist circles over the killing of the two RUC men in Derry, there had been remarkably little nationalist condemnation of the Roselawn cemetery bomb attack. They saw this as evidence that

many nationalists feel the police "have it coming to them" because of their insensitive handling of paramilitary funerals.

Morrison dated the RUC's policy of "swamping" Republican funerals to a funeral (unspecified) in December 1983. Prior to that the RUC had kept a discreet distance from the coffin and mourners. Since then, Morrison had counted 25 funerals (both Provo and INLA) at which there had been a much more obtrusive police presence. It was not until the Logue funeral in Derry, however, that any shots had been fired by the paramilitaries - despite a steadily rising police profile at these funerals. Morrison intimated that Martin McGuinness had been personally involved in the planning and execution of the Derry incident.

My contact sees the funerals issue as a godsend for Gerry Adams, who will be relying for his re-election on the "floating vote" of people undecided between the SDLP and Sinn Féin and who needs an emotive issue with which to capture this vote.

King

My contact understands that the reason given by King for blocking an attempt by Scott, and "all the civil servants" to have the internment provision deleted from the Emergency Provisions Bill was that he feared this would undermine RUC morale. In conclusion, my contact mentioned that at a meeting which he had with King recently (at which the latter was noticeably more confident and relaxed than he had been in the past), the Secretary of State described himself as "the first British Minister in years who really understands Irish Ministers".

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10 April, 1987.

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