



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Meeting with Paddy McGrory, Belfast, 4 January 1988

He had a meeting scheduled for the next day with the Belfast Sinn Fein Councillors whom he will be representing in a court case against the City Council who have been trying to exclude Sinn Fein from the Council's decision-making process. He thought they could have a reasonable chance of success in this case.

He was generally downbeat on the prospects for 1988. Overall, there was a feeling in nationalist circles of being let down by the Dublin Government in that the Agreement appeared to be preoccupied with British security concerns - in this he pointed to the security sweep in the South, extradition etc. He said that many nationalists (and not just Sinn Fein supporters) now felt there was a real possibility of internment North and South and that quite a number of the Provo leadership were taking precautions with this possibility in mind.

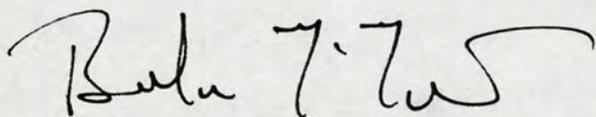
Like many other observers, he saw strains within the Provos as between the armalite and ballot box strategies with a tendency on the part of some volunteers to diverge from Army Council policy. His own impression from speaking with people like Adams, McGuinness and Masky was that they were strongly opposed to the strategy of car-bombing and favoured a more defensive posture by the Provisional IRA. Whether they will succeed in persuading the more militant rank and file remains to be seen.

In that context of a defensive posture, he thought the McMichael assassination was "a popular kill among nationalists". He had doubts whether it was carried out with the connivance of elements within the UDA. While he thought that it may have been true, his instinct was to dismiss stories of that type as the usual security force black propaganda. He was amazed at the statement by Cardinal O Fiaich and Austin Currie after the killing implying that McMichael was somehow a reasonable man. (He reported Hume as being very annoyed with Currie on this). Everyone knew that McMichael was most definitely implicated in the attempted assassination of Bernadette McAliskey and it was common knowledge that he was the actual trigger man in the shooting of Mrs. Miriam Daly. Desmond Boal in a recent conversation described

McMichael as being a very unstable character who could veer from one extreme (shoot all Catholics) to another (power-sharing) within the same 24 hour period. He knew that John Hume had met with McMichael sometime ago and thought McMichael was probably setting up a meeting with Cardinal O Fiaich which he thought might explain the Cardinal's statement. He couldn't understand this contradiction that people would meet and discuss issues with someone like McMichael but not with Adams.

He was delighted with the resignation of Drew Donaldson from the County Court. Donaldson's motivations, according to McGrory, were based firstly, on money, secondly, on his disagreements with Lowry and, thirdly, on security. This last issue provided "a respectable reason popular with many at the Bar". His own assumption is that Bob McCartney's attacks on Hermon on the inadequate security being provided for Judges, were carried out with the agreement, if not at the instigation, of senior members of the Bar.

On a replacement for Donaldson, he understood that the Lord Chancellor during his recent visit made it clear to the Bar Council that if no barristers were to volunteer then future County Court judges would be drawn from the ranks of solicitors (which apparently is in accordance with practice in the UK). The current rumour is that Donaldson's replacement will in fact be a solicitor, Roy Kerr, who is presently the most senior deputy County Court judge. He described Kerr, who is a Protestant, as being a very fair-minded man and he would support his appointment though it still meant that there was only one Catholic in the ranks of the County Court judges.



Brendan McMahon,  
First Secretary,  
7 January 1987.

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