



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Note on information from Belfast sources on paramilitaries

11/5/88

1 Since the departure of Andy Tyrrie, the UDA continue to be in a state of some disaray. The full story regarding Stone (the attacker of the funeral in Milltown Cemetary) is still emerging. Apparently he has operated for a number of years as leader of a 4 man group of assassins who allowed particular UDA leaders like Tyrrie and McMichael to claim responsibility for their actions . The UDA leadership are apparently quite nervous that the IRA will exact revenge from them for Stone's actions. This helps to explain the precipitate action of the West Belfast UDA Commander, Tommy Lyttle, who jumped out of a window in the top story of his house to avoid what he thought was an IRA assassination squad but which, in the event, turned out to be a pair of quite innocent callers. Lyttle is still recovering in hospital.

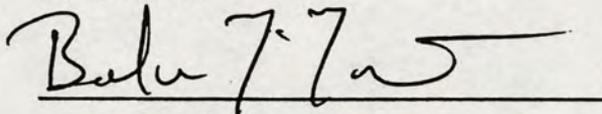
The source for the major shipment of arms which the loyalist paramilitaries received last January is still reported to be intact though there are apparently no plans at the moment to arrange for a further shipment. A significant portion of the UDA's 1/3rd. share of that shipment comprised of about 100 rifles and handguns was seized by the RUC in Lisburn along with the North Belfast UDA Commander , Davy Payne, who is currently being held on remand. Notwithstanding this seizure, the UDA are reported to still have sufficient weapons available for current requirements. By contrast the UVF's 1/3rd. share of that shipment is still largely intact, while the third share of that shipment purchased on behalf of a new group called " Resistance" is totally intact.

Little information is yet available on : "Resistance " though they are thought to be a type of "doomsday organisation" - holding their weapons in store for a later day. Their leader is rumoured to be a local businessman and DUP councillor in Portadown.

There are indications that a significant debate took place within the Provisionals in recent months on future strategy - with two schools of thought emerging. While there was some support for a major escalation in the campaign, the dominant group, which apparently won out in the debate, favoured a more measured stepping up of the campaign. There is a sensation that a major escalation could well trigger a major security response from the British Government which could include internment. (Recent speculation in the British media on the advisability of the use of internment could well reinforce these concerns.)

There is a perception that internment, far from solving the problem, would only serve to trigger a further escalation of violence in Northern Ireland. There are a significant number of older men who have served their time in the Provisionals over the years but, for one reason or another, have dropped out of active involvement. Internment would lead to their immediate reinvolvement and these experienced men would be joined by an influx of nationalist youths.

Sources within the RUC are apparently saying that they feel that they are beginning to get on top of the Provisionals in both Belfast and Derry. (note: at first glance there would appear in recent times to have been some decrease in Provisional activity in both Belfast and Derry and some indications of success for the security forces . However, whether this is a pure reflection of the RUC "getting on top of the Provisionals" or whether might also be an element of a deliberate de-escalation by the Provisionals to allow for political developments, remains to be seen.)



Brendan McMahon
Anglo/Irish Division
12/5/88
cc A/Sec Gallagher
Counsellors A.I.
Secretariat
Box