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Sec 2.2.1.

Meeting with Mr. Denis Haughey, SDLP

1 September 1988

Mr. Haughey referred to the killings of the IRA men at Drumnakilly during the week. In regard to Fr. Faul's report of an eye-witness account given by a local man, he said that this man had also been in touch with him. However, Mr. Haughey's view was that the man's account did not add anything conclusively new to what was already known. Even though he was relatively close to the scene (about 100 yards away), the man had not actually seen the incident. Secondly, regarding the man's claim that the gunfire came only from the security forces, Mr. Haughey greatly doubted the ability of a lay-man to distinguish accurately between the sounds of, say, an automatic rifle and a submachine gun. Thirdly, the fact that the car had gone past the truck did not conclusively prove that the security forces had opened fire only after it had done so. It could equally have been the case that the car's own momentum took it past the truck after the shooting had started or that the driver, realising that they were trapped, might have sought to escape by driving past.

*Fr Faul
confirmed
this to us
D*

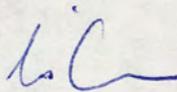
Mr. Haughey said that it was notable that the reaction to the shootings in the nationalist community seemed more muted than after similar incidents in the past. While people might be reluctant to say so publicly, there was a sense that "if you play with fire you can't complain if you get burned". The IRA unit in question were wearing masks, had hijacked a car, had hammered out its windows and sped off heavily ("that's not how you drive to a picnic").

A crucial question, he felt, was how the ambush was set up - how did the security forces know the IRA were going to be at that particular place in the middle of the countryside at that precise moment? Was the truck a decoy? He said that it had triggered off renewed speculation about a highly placed mole in the IRA in

East Tyrone. Such stories had also circulated after Loughgall last year and had never fully "gone away".

Mr. Haughey speculated as to what the IRA were up to at present. He thought that part of the recent upsurge had simply to do with the fact that, thanks to Col. Gadaffi, they had a very substantial amount of explosives on their hands. The temptation to use it, simply because it was there, must have been very strong. Sooner or later, therefore, they were going to let it go.

He believed that John Hume had struck a sensitive nerve within Sinn Fein and the IRA in his recent line on Catholic fatalities and the number of mistakes made by the IRA. He felt that some of the Provos were not impervious to reasonable argument and this was definitely a vulnerable area for them.


T. O' Connor
Anglo-Irish Section
2 September 1988

cc:  Mr. Gallagher, ~~Counsellors A-I~~, Secretariat, Section, Box.

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