



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Weekly analysis of published comment from Provisional
IRA/Sinn Fein and Loyalist paramilitary sources
(w/e 4 March 1988)

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LHX
by B. Murphy

1. Glover and King statement on the IRA

On Monday, 29 February 1988, a BBC Panorama documentary entitled "The Long War" examined the British security response to the IRA campaign. It included an interview with Sir James Glover the former Commander of Land Forces in Northern Ireland who said that the IRA could not be defeated militarily and that the British Army's role was to help create the conditions whereby a full democratic, peaceful, political solution can be achieved. He said that "The Long War" will continue as long as the Provisional IRA has the stamina and the political motivation "and so long as there is a divided island of Ireland".

Asked to comment on the remarks Secretary of State Tom King said that "we are going to defeat terrorism, but it is not going to be done by military means alone. It is going to be done by political developments, by sensible co-operation, by improved community relations throughout the Province and by strong support for the security forces in defeating the men of violence as well".

An Phoblacht's editorial makes much of Glover's remarks in the context of the death of Burns and Moley and IRA sources are reported in the Irish News on 3/3/88 as saying that Glover's and King's remarks "proved the truth of its belief that the armed struggle improved the overall position of nationalists" and that "without its campaign of violence, the British Government would not have been forced or influenced by constitutional nationalists to examine their grievances".

An Phoblacht's editorial also noted Sir John Hermon's remarks in the Panorama programme that "I know that members of Provisional Sinn Fein and particularly local elected members are encouraged - I use the word carefully-encouraged to be volunteers in the Provisional IRA". It accused Hermon of attempting "to set up Sinn Fein elected representatives". Danny Morrison is reported in the Irish News (29/2/88) as saying that "it is part of the ongoing attempt by Hermon to prepare the ground for the political repression of Sinn Fein".

2. Crossmaglen Explosion

As expected "An Phoblacht" led with what it describes as the tragedy of the deaths of Volunteers Brendan Burns and Brendan Moley when a bomb, which was being transported prior to an attack on a military installation in South Armagh, prematurely exploded on Monday 29 February. The back page is devoted to the usual "hero" profiles of the two men. The London Times carries a statement from the IRA "that this was the biggest loss to the organisation in South Armagh for a decade".

An Phoblacht also accused the "crown forces" of causing maximum suffering for the families of the two men by being "obstructive and abusive to both families" in answer to queries and allegedly refusing to release the bodies or inform the families when the bodies would be released.

3. Shooting of Aidan McAnespie at Aughnacloy

An Phoblacht also reported on the Garda inquiry into the killing of Aidan McAnespie. It says that "inspite of serious reservations, Sinn Fein has withheld judgement on the Haughey-inspired initiative until all the information has been gathered". The report also suggested that it appears that the Northern Pathologist cut away McAnespie's upper right rib cage before releasing the body for burial, and that this part of the body would, along with the clean entry and exit wounds on his chest and back, expose the 'ricochet' explanation as a lie designed to cover up the murder. The paper also reported that McAnespie's family lawyers have also requested that the fatal weapon should be made available to the Garda inquiry.

In the report, Alex West also made much of the Sinn Fein decision, "after careful consideration", to give an account of the ongoing harassment to which McAnespie had been subject to Deputy Commissioner Crowley. The report noted that Deputy Commissioner Crowley had been "directly responsible for co-ordinating RUC/Garda collaboration".

The report concluded with the suggestion that the McAnespie family "insist that they have co-operated with the 26-county inquiry on the strict understanding that it would not be given to the RUC".

4. Hume/Adams talks

An Phoblacht makes no reference to the "brief and informal" get together that took place between Hume and Adams and was revealed on 29 February, at which arrangements were discussed to meet again for talks within the next few weeks.

Adams is reported in the Irish News of 1/3/88 as saying that "having listened to each others views, we are now going to advance that process of persuading each other of our respective view points". Adams added that from his own point of view he felt that the events of the past few weeks had vindicated a lot of things he said at the first meeting. "The SDLP position is based upon the view that this state can be reformed and that the British Government can be persuaded to do certain things to facilitate this process. The Republican view is that it is this state which is the problem and recent events have underlined that".

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4 March 1988.

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