

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Reference Code:	2021/52/739
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PSM: PSMS: PSSG: Messrs. Murray, Teahon, Mannergh & Dalton: Ambassadors London & Washington: Joint Secretary: Counsellors A-I

Secure Fax: 136

6 February 1998 **No of pages including this one: 6**

To: HQ **From: Belfast**
To: Secretary Gallagher **From: Joint Secretary**

pm ① Confer ② LVF
pl. pa. 300. 5.3.1
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Subj: Assessment of current security situation

1. John Steele gave us a confidential assessment yesterday of current paramilitary activity and intentions, based on police and intelligence sources.

2. The UFF ceasefire is holding and the British Government see no grounds for concern. The intention seems to be to facilitate a UUP re-entry to the talks as soon as possible.

3. Although there has been a small degree of personnel cross-over (e.g. the two groups cannot be distinguished in mid-Ulster), the UFF and the LVF remain fundamentally separate organisations. There has also been no significant skills transfer between them.

4. The LVF are a sectarian, irresponsible and cruel organisation whose speciality is random sectarian attacks but who, Steele believes, do not have any wider paramilitary capacity. The barrage of public threats in recent weeks conceals a fairly limited capacity in real terms. (He gave us, incidentally, the full version of the recent press release from the LVF's "Ruling Army Council" - attached).

5. Despite their involvement in the sectarian violence of recent weeks, the British Government have not revised their basic threat assessment of the LVF. Steele was particularly dismissive of suggestions that they could mount attacks in the Republic. He mentioned, finally, that there is some hope of successful prosecutions of LVF members over the coming weeks.

6. The UVF have shown remarkable discipline, largely because of their unitary command structure. (In contrast, the UFF have constant difficulties with renegade

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battalion leaders).

7. Steele compared the INLA to the LVF in many respects. They are "cock-a-hoop" about the killings of Billy Wright and Jim Guiney and would carry out more killings of prominent Loyalists if they could.

8. The British view the CAC as particularly dangerous because of their access to large and viable bombs (such as the successful explosion in Markethill and the unsuccessful one in Banbridge). A bomb in, say, a Loyalist town which resulted in multiple deaths would have a very destabilising effect. (Comment: We noted conversely that there are many nationalist areas of Northern Ireland where there are fears of a large-scale Loyalist atrocity in the near future).

9. Finally, Steele mentioned that some elements in the security forces are very pessimistic of the IRA's ceasefire lasting beyond the next two to three months. (Comment: It must be said that prognoses of this kind from the intelligence community issued at regular intervals during the last IRA ceasefire as well). They cite increased targeting in recent weeks and a growing number of punishment shootings as distinct from beatings (so far this year there have been more of the former than the latter).

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PRESS RELEASE FROM RULING ARMY COUNCIL - L.V.F.

Note: This statement will be read once and once only. There will be no questions asked or answered - before or after the statement is read.

The Loyalist Volunteer Force was formed by the late Brigadier William Stephen Wright. It was formed because Billy Wright realised, before his Mid Ulster U.V.F. Unit was stood down, that the Progressive Unionist Party (P.U.P.) and the Belfast Leadership of the Ulster Volunteer Force were in the process of selling out the Ulster people.

The main democratic principles held by every true loyalist who had fought and died to maintain our British heritage; our Protestant faith; and our Orange cultural traditions - were being given away by a small but treacherous group of Marxists Socialists who, in their pathetic naivety, dreamed of entering an unholy marriage with Irish Nationalist Socialists and carving up a 32 County United Ireland between them.

Not many people know the real reason that the Mid Ulster Brigade of the U.V.F. was stood down. Billy's fearless Brigade was disbanded by the Belfast leadership because they refused to obey a direct order from that bunch of power-crazy Socialists: the order not to support the Orangemen in their right to march to the old Church at Drumcree! The Belfast leadership maintained that, "It is an Orangeman's problem and nothing to do with the U.V.F."

Billy Wright therefore told the Socialist leadership to, "Get lost!"; he backed the Portadown Orangemen - and helped them achieve their cultural victory: the freedom to march to Church as they have done for two hundred years.

Billy informed us that the road ahead would be hard and frought with treachery, danger and betrayal; that the P.U.P.; the Belfast leadership of the

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U.V.F.; and a weak-willed British Government would set out to murder him. How correct his prediction was!

The P.U.P. and a small group of the Belfast U.V.F. leadership knew then that Billy was eventually going to expose them for the traitors they are - and that is what is now happening. The rank and file of the loyal U.V.F. did not agree with their leadership's Socialist stance nor the road they were being forced to travel. However, until recently, many were afraid to speak out against such a treacherous Marxist regime. To do so almost certainly leads to a murderous attempt on ones life.

Billy Hutchinson of the P.U.P. was recently heard to say at a Community Forum in Ardoyne: "I am not, I repeat, not a Protestant! I am in fact a Socialist and a Communist!"

How can such a traitor to Protestantism ever speak out for the rights and the cause of the Protestant people?

The first traitorous move the P.U.P. inspired was to sentence Billy Wright to death if he did not leave the country within 72 hours. Again Billy Wright refused to be cowed by such cowards - further exposing them for the foul traitors that they most definitely are - and proving that his political analysis of the so-called peace process was the correct one. The peace process cannot deliver true and lasting peace - only further bloodshed and eventual Civil War.

Certain gutter newspapers, already bitterly hostile to Billy Wright and Loyalism, were then employed by the P.U.P./U.V.F. leadership as they attempted to denigrate and demonise him. However, the Ulster people are not dull nor stupid - they could discern truth from lies - therefore the P.U.P. newspaper smear campaign utterly failed. That one of the gutter rags used was reknowned for its consistent attempts to set up and discredit Loyalists is just one more further proof of the lengths the P.U.P. Communists are prepared to go in order to achieve power

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over the Protestant people. But a more vicious act of treason against Loyalism was soon to be perpetrated by the P.U.P. Stalinist leadership.

Four weeks prior to Billy Wright's being framed and sent to prison - i.e. he received eight years imprisonment for an alleged verbal threat on a woman who had been associated with British Army personnel since she was 16 years old - David Ervine of the P.U.P., during a political meeting at Downing Street, forcefully requested that the Prime minister, "Take care of the Wright problem!". The P.U.P. were acknowledging the fact that their small group of U.V.F. co-conspirators in Belfast were incapable of doing it themselves.

In the face of such traitorous opposition, Billy Wright formed the Loyalist Volunteer Force to be the conservative army of the Ulster Protestant people in their time of greatest need. For his undying loyalty to Ulster and her people - Billy Wright was brutally slain within the confines of what is reputed to be, ". . . the most secure prison in Europe . . ." But Billy Wright dead, shall be an even greater thorn in the side of Ulster's enemies - this we will maintain.

Therefore, the Ruling Army Council of the L.V.F. demand the following:

1. The Irish Republic must drop its illegal Articles 2 & 3 from their Constitution - Ulster is ours!

2. The Irish Government must cease its interfering in the internal affairs of British Ulster.

3. Cross-border bodies with executive powers, leading to joint Sovereignty, and eventual Irish Unity will not be tolerated.

4. The Irish Republic as a FOREIGN COUNTRY must respect the democratic wishes of a million Protestants to maintain our British identity -

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until the majority decide, if ever, to change their identity, the Irish Government would do well to leave Northern Ireland alone.

5. The L.V.F. are NOT against a true and lasting peace - but will not accept a spurious peace at the cost of Protestant liberty.

6. In conclusion, the Loyalist Volunteer Force wish to state that we are sincere in issuing this statement - but warn that the days of pandering to Republicans and seeking to bring about a United Ireland by stealth are OVER.

Ruling Army Council - Loyalist Volunteer Force

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