

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code:	2022/76/68
Creator(s):	Department of Justice
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

e: See 5 Callaghan GI / Section + PA

Meeting with Mary Madden of the NIO on security-related matters

Belfast Secretariat, Wednesday 30 August 2000 cdl 13.9.00

COPY TO:
MR. O'LEARY
MR. FLAHIVE
MR. CALLAGHAN
MR. O'HARA

Present at the meeting:

Irish Side

Mr. Val O'Donnell (Secretariat)

Mr. Fergal Mythen (DFA)

Mr. George Hegarty (Secretariat)

British Side

Ms. Mary Madden (NIO)

Ms. Janice Wilkinson (Secretariat)

1. Val O'Donnell opened the meeting by outlining the issues which we wished to cover. These were:

   a. Sectarian attacks

   b. Incidents in Magharafelt (pipe-bombs and IEDs)

   c. Normalisation

   d. Security document finds

   e. The loyalist feud and the state of the mediation process

2. Madden proposed dealing with loyalist feuding first. The army presence in West Belfast was composed of three companies of Royal Greenjackets (300 men in all, working in three shifts of 100 men each) operating in support of the police in interface areas with the objective of containing the violence. While there was now an "uneasy peace", the feud was, however, spreading worryingly to other areas. This may, ironically, be due in part to the security saturation of the Shankill. On a more positive note, violence outside Belfast did not seem to be centrally orchestrated. In other words, there did not

©JUS/2022/76/68

appear to have been any intention to start the violence in the Shankill and to spread subsequently to other areas. However, the feud had provided an opportunity for the settling of old scores. The violence was essentially intra-community. She added that significant arms finds had been made in the Shankill area and that this was good news.

3. The situation in Larne was somewhat different, in that there appeared to be violence coming from both sides of the community. Before 19 August (the date of the UDA/UFF 'show of strength' on the Shankill Road), while the violence had not been entirely one-sided, attacks in Larne had been overwhelmingly directed against Catholic homes. After 19 August, attacks had been predominantly intra-protestant. On the previous night, a shotgun had been fired into a Protestant home and it appeared that the attack had been sectarian. Val O'Donnell noted that a unionist MLA for the area, Roger Hutchinson, had implied that this was not the work of organised Republican elements. Madden reiterated that the general view was that old scores were being settled, perhaps under the guise of the loyalist feud.

4. O'Donnell referred to criticisms that had been made of the police response to the displays of weaponry on the Shankill Road on 19 August. Madden argued that it would be virtually impossible to 'get' everyone who was in possession of a weapon but that the police do react where it is feasible to do so. McGimpsey added that one prime priority is not to inflame the situation. Madden emphasised the need for a 'breathing space' in order to allow mediation to take place. The most important thing was to prevent further violence. If mediation was to work, it would have to come from within the communities concerned. It was hoped that the planned UVF parade on the following Saturday would pass off peacefully. (At the time of the meeting there was little confirmed information about this parade, which, in the event, did not lead to further intra-loyalist violence.) The difficulty with the mediation process was finding a mediator whom neither side would regard as a 'puppet' of the other. A number of names had been floated (e.g. Jack McKee or Archbishop Eames) but nothing was as yet clear. O'Donnell asked whether there was substance in reports that an unofficial cease-fire

©JUS/2022/76/68

was in place. Madden replied that any reduction in the level of violence was probably due primarily to the army presence. It was to be hoped, however, that the shooting of an 11-year old girl in Coleraine would "bring people to their senses". In reply to a query as to whether there would be separate mediation processes for Belfast and outside Belfast, Madden said that Belfast was the issue. The rest was peripheral and was being caused by maverick elements. There should be no need for a separate mediation process. As things stood, mediation could not be described as being well under way. There was good work going on in the background by community activists such as May Blood but real engagement had not begun.

5. Fergal Mythen again raised the question of the policing of the parade on 19 August. Could the violence have been anticipated and prevented? Madden replied that there had been no reason to expect trouble. The parade was legal and expected. It took place within its own community's area. The violence that had occurred appears to have been spontaneous and unplanned.

6. Val O'Donnell asked if there was any idea as to how long the army would remain deployed. Madden replied that it was difficult to say. The army's main function was to prevent an intra-community problem from spilling over into an inter-community one. This was why the army was positioned at the interfaces with the police operating inside the Shankill area. At the present time, it would be "criminally irresponsible" to remove the army.

7. Fergal Mythen asked whether Johnny Adair's reincarceration had calmed the situation. Madden was careful to emphasise that SOSNI's decision on this case had been taken on the basis of a breach of his release conditions and *not* as a tactical move to calm things. If it helped the situation on the ground, this was a side effect. On the question of whether SOSNI was considering any other licence revocations, Madden replied that she was not aware of any specific cases but that SOSNI has made it clear that he will act on information provided to him on breaches of conditions. Adair's solicitors have

©JUS/2022/76/68

signaled their intent to challenge the decision but the legal process was not yet underway. In Madden's opinion, nothing could begin until the Sentence Review Commission had ruled on SOSNI's decision. McGimpsey confirmed that Adair was currently in integrated accommodation in Maghaberry and had not requested a move.

Normalisation

8. On normalisation, the Chief Constable's statement in May had led to the current phase of scaling down. The assessment of the current situation will lead to action as appropriate. The aim of the British Government is to move ahead as far as possible but this depends on the security advice which they receive. The main problem at the moment is dissident activity on both sides but principally republican dissident activity. RIRA is seen as a serious threat. It is anticipated that the Chief Constable will be going to SOSNI in the near future (September) with an updated assessment arising from his commitment to review normalisation measures after a further three months. O'Donnell asked whether the Chief Constable will be going to SOSNI with concrete proposals for the reduction of the security presence. Madden replied that this would, hopefully, be the case.

9. **Log Cases**

a. I/69: Security document finds. (21/08/00) Information was currently being sought on this log case and it was still to early to provide a reply. Val O'Donnell drew particular attention to reports that a number of the documents involved were post-Stevens Investigation report. If this was the case, were the Stevens protection procedures adequate? Replies were also awaited for log cases I/60 (28/07/00) and I/63 (04/08/00). Madden added that the investigation into the wallet handed to Michelle Gildernew MLA (I/35 - 13/06/00) was nearing completion.

b. I/43: Security activity in East Tyrone. (02/06/00) Further information on the exact location would have to be supplied if an answer was to be provided. This

©JUS/2022/76/68

is being pursued from Headquarters in Dublin.

c. I/66 (14/08/00); I/68 (16/08/00): Sectarian attacks and intimidation. Responses were awaited on these cases. Madden expressed the view that the security presence in Belfast would help alleviate the problems faced by Catholic residents in certain parts of the city. O'Donnell pointed out that a number of serious incidents, including attacks on SDLP members, had occurred since these logs had gone in.

d. I/61: Alison Gilchrist case. (01/08/00) A number of people had been sent Ms. Gilchrist's letter. It was as yet unclear whether the Chief Constable had replied. We asked that any reply to our log would include a copy of any reply given by MOS Ingram to Ms. Gilchrist.

e. I/59: Flying of sectarian flags. (18/07/00) A reply was being awaited from the police.

f. I/65: Alleged intimidation and assault by RUC members. (11/08/00) A reply was still being awaited on this case.

10. **Other matters**

a. Incidents in Magherafelt: A number of incidents during August involving pipe-bombs and other IEDs in the Magherafelt area had been claimed by a group calling itself the 'South Londonderry Volunteers'. O'Donnell asked whether there was any information on this group and on who they were. Madden noted our request, with a view to future response.

b. Fisher and Wright: In reply to a query from Fergal Mythen as to whether there was any update on the case, Madden replied that there was nothing yet. The

©JUS/2022/76/68

importance of this case, and the protracted delay in concluding it, in terms of public confidence was stressed strongly to the British side.

c. Alleged incursion by civilian helicopter into Northern Ireland: The British side indicated that the army were in possession of video evidence proving that an incursion had taken place. This has been denied by the pilot and ESB observers on board the helicopter. They await our response.

George Hegarty
5 September 2000

©JUS/2022/76/68