

## New evidence of collusion in Dublin and Monaghan bombings

Sunday, February 04, 2007 - By Colm Heatley

A former UVF man claims to have fresh evidence that the British army colluded in the Dublin and Monaghan bombings.

The McEntee Inquiry wants to interview the man, who could shed new light on the bombing that killed 33 people in May 1974.

The convicted UVF man claims that he worked for the Military Reconnaissance Force (MRF), a clandestine British army intelligence unit, in the 1970s, and that his MRF contact told him "something big was going down" in Dublin shortly before the bombs exploded.

The man, who uses the pseudonym 'John Black', claims that he and 30 other loyalist paramilitaries were given military training by the MRF at Palace Barracks, outside Belfast, from 1971 until the mid-1970s.

Black told The Sunday Business Post that, during the 1974 loyalist Ulster Workers Council strike, called to prevent power-sharing, his MRF contact gave him advance warning of "something big" happening in Dublin.

"He told me that something big would be happening in Dublin and it would help the strike," Black said.

"They were his words to me, and at the time it was good news as far as I was concerned," the former UVF man said. "A short while later, the bombings happened and it was obvious that this was what he had meant.

"I was a bit shocked at the scale of it, but at the time it was seen as a strike against the enemy."

If accurate, Black's claims would significantly strengthen the view that the bombs were the result of British collusion with loyalists.

This week Paddy McEntee government to investigate the bombings, was trying to contact the former UVF man, who said he would co-operate with McEntee's inquiry, which will be presented to the government on February 14.

McEntee told The Sunday Business Post that a number of fresh sources had emerged in recent weeks, but none was prepared to stand over their evidence. Black said: "If Paddy McEntee gets in touch with me, I am prepared to tell him what I know I have no problem with that." Black claims that his contact with the MRF began in November 1971, when he was approached by an MRF member in a loyalist bar in north Belfast. He was later taken to Palace Barracks, Co Down, along with other loyalist paramilitaries and given weapons training.

He said his MRF handlers were aware of loyalist "romper rooms" in Belfast, where Catholics were tortured before being murdered. "They wanted us to hit Catholics, to put pressure on the IRA to stop. They encouraged the romper rooms and sectarian killings in general," he said.

"When 'jobs' were going down, we would sit in with the MRF guys and listen in on the radio as they put in 'out of bounds' calls to the local military and police. That meant the UVF could get in and out of Catholic areas and be assured they wouldn't be stopped. I was really part of a militia."

The MRF was wound down after the IRA attacked and killed an undercover MRF operative in west Belfast, in October 1972. However, it continued to operate in various guises until the mid-1970s. Margaret Urwin, spokeswoman for Justice for the Forgotten, a campaigning group for victims of the Dublin-Monaghan bombings, said that, if the claims were true, they were extremely significant.

"If what this man is saying is true, then clearly it is of huge importance and it needs to be investigated," she said. "There is already a hugely substantial body of evidence, which strongly points to collusion between the British and the bombers."

McEntee was asked to investigate the bombings after many years of campaigning and the 2003 publication of a report into the bombings by a Supreme Court judge, Mr Justice Henry Barron.



Barron found that allegations of a cover-up involving security forces in the North and the gardai and government in the Republic had not been proved, but could not be ruled out.

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