

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2014/32/1827
Creation Date(s):	2 March 1984
Extent and medium:	3 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
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Meeting with Fr Raymond Murray, 29 February 1984

1. I met with Fr Murray, who is the chaplain in Armagh Women's Prison, at his home in Armagh on 29 February.
2. Fr Murray was appreciative of the Government's response to the Thatcher and Prince Philip visits to Drumadd Barracks. He thought those visits had not helped in making the security forces more acceptable to the minority community.
3. Though the harassment of Catholics by the UDR continues it is on a much lesser scale. Fr Murray has had two meetings with the local English UDR Commander, Nicholson. The first was to present him with the evidence which led to the arrest of 8 UDR men and the second was to make representations about UDR behaviour. As previously reported, certain Catholics, and this was not limited to those with suspected paramilitary links, were being singled out by the UDR and harassed to the extent of frequently being made take off their shoes or overcoats in the rain. This has now to all intents and purposes been stopped and Nicholson has issued detailed written instructions, which Fr Murray has had sight of, stating that persons should be treated properly when they are stopped and questioned. In addition, full-time RUC men are now more in evidence on the street and there seems to be a significant reduction in the number of UDR searching operations. The tension in Armagh has lessened as a result. He is, however, concerned that some RUC men might start to harass local Catholics now that the UDR are constrained from doing so.
4. Fr Murray spoke at length about the shooting of Seamus Grew and Roddie Carroll on 12 December 1982. He gave me the attached confidential note (which seems to have been prepared particularly for me) which states that a Special Support Unit of the RUC, set up by Sir Maurice Oldfield, was responsible for these killings, and also for the killing of Michael Tighe and the wounding of Martin McCauley near Lurgan on 24 November 1982. Interestingly, he states that Toman, McKerr and Burns were shot dead in Lurgan by a different group within the RUC - a District Mobile Support Group.
5. Fr Murray claims the Special Support Unit consists of about 20 men, picked by computer about 4/5 years ago and trained by the SAS in Hereford. He says they operate throughout Northern Ireland

and are attached to RUC HQ, unlike the District Mobile Support Groups which operate out of the District HQs. He says that there is considerable dissatisfaction within the higher echelons of the RUC with the Special Support Unit as the latter like to see themselves above the law. Those who are in favour of the Unit are also annoyed because its members are not guaranteed immunity. They believe the SAS has immunity in practice. Fr Murray added that the SAS, unlike the Special Support Unit, would have ensured that they left guns with those they shot thereby clouding the issue of whether or not the men were armed. Fr Murray also said that the SSU thought McGlinchey was in the car in which Grew and Carroll were shot.

6. Fr Murray said there had been three previous attempts to kill Grew. On 14 March 1974 three Lisburn loyalists, McCullough, O'Hara and Flynn were found guilty in the Special Criminal Court of attempting to kidnap Grew, who was at that time living in Co. Monaghan. McCulloch had been a member of the British Army for 9 years and O'Hara a champion boxer in the British Territorial Army. They were sentenced to 5 years each. Grew was shot through the throat in Northern Ireland in 1976 and was charged with possession. He was found guilty and released from the Maze in 1982. There was another attempt to kill him at his home in Armagh after he had been released. One of the eight UDR charged with murder is now charged with that attempt on Grew's life. He was clearly believed by the local security forces to be a known active republican paramilitary.
7. Fr Murray, in confidence, gave me the autopsy reports on both Grew and Carroll. Carroll was hit by seven to nine low velocity bullets, most of which appeared to have come from behind and to his right. Grew was hit by seven bullets most of which could have come from behind and to his left. There was nothing to indicate that either had been shot from close range. Fr Murray also gave me a copy of the statement made by a Catholic RUC constable, McBride, who lived close by where the shooting took place. I understand that it is his evidence which will be central in any trial. He also told me that INLA had threatened to kill McBride but that he (Fr Murray) had let it be known that McBride's evidence is important. He has therefore remained safe. McBride has since retired from the RUC, having reached the normal pensionable age. (These statements are confidential.)

3. Fr Murray said that the UDR Sergeant, Walter Roleston, who was released on bail, though charged with murder/ ^{along with the other 7 UDR} was put on administrative duties in Drumadd as soon as he had been released. Nicholson, the English Commander, had told Fr Murray he was powerless to expel Roleston from the regiment (as would have been the case in a regular Army regiment) because "of Paisley and McCusker". Roleston has since had the charges against him dropped as Bell has withdrawn his evidence against Roleston was in charge of the UDR unit which it is believed carried out the killing of Adrian Carroll (and for which the 8 UDR men were charged with murder).
9. Fr Murray is certain that Rolston was the organiser for a number of years of UDR involvement in sectarian killings in the Armagh area. He had been charged on the evidence of Noel Bell who withdrew his evidence according to Fr Murray because of pressure put on him by the UVF into whose section in Crumlin Road Gaol the UDR men were placed when they were arrested. Some of them have since been charged with other crimes and one, Geoffrey Edwards, has been charged with six murders (attempted murder, including that on Seamus Grew's life in 1982).
10. Fr Murray says that the struggle between the loyalist paramilitaries (based on UVF/UDR) and the republican paramilitaries (IRA/INLA) in the Armagh area continues. The Bairnsweir factory was burned as a signal to the loyalist paramilitaries that the capability remains with the republicans. It was done despite the fact that its workforce is about 50/50 Catholic and Protestant and the manager is a Catholic.
11. He says that the situation in Armagh Gaol remains tense over the strip searching issue but is not as bad as it was a year ago. He and Fr Faul have put out a very strong statement because of inadequate responses (in their view) to their appeals.

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D. Ó Ceallaigh

2 March 1984

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