



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2021/44/75
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Information Note: Stevens Inquiry

In the aftermath of the leaks controversy which followed the murder of Loughlin Maginn on 25 August, the Stevens Inquiry was set up on 14 September 1989, to investigate the disappearance of security documents from Dunmurray RUC station.

Scope of the Inquiry

The flood of leaks resulted in the scope of the Inquiry being widened and, at the Conference meeting of 5 October, the Chief Constable indicated that the Inquiry will, following consultation with the Chief Constable, embrace any associated matter referred to it and that Stevens will make recommendations about the handling of security material both inside and outside the RUC.

Progress of the Inquiry

So far, over 30 people have been arrested and charged, apparently as a result of the Stevens investigation - perhaps the most dramatic occurrence being the arrest of 28 members of the UDR in the early hours of 8 October. (Four of these were subsequently charged.)

However, there was considerable controversy surrounding a further dramatic swoop on Loyalists by the Stevens Team on Monday 8 January when David McKittrick of the London Independent reported that he had phoned the Stevens Inquiry two days previously, on Saturday 6 January, enquiring about their planned swoop the following Monday. He had apparently learned of the impending swoop from a loyalist contact. The RUC subsequently attacked McKittrick's report of leaks from the Stevens Inquiry as "totally inaccurate and potentially damaging". However, McKittrick subsequently stuck to his story and alleged that many of those targeted by the Stevens Inquiry had received advance warning and had gone to ground.

Late in the night of 10 January, a fire broke out and destroyed the offices being used by the Stevens Inquiry. While no official cause appears to have been established for the fire, the official view is that the fire was caused accidentally. We were told that the fire would not affect the records of the inquiry, in that copies of all material are replicated and stored in two other locations as a matter of course.

Currently there is an emerging controversy surrounding the arrest of Brian Nelson, a former British soldier, and apparently a senior UDA figure, who has been charged with possession of information likely to be of use to terrorists. There have been a number of media reports to the effect that Nelson had in fact been working for the security forces (either Military Intelligence or MI5) and had been fed by them with sensitive security information for the past number of years.

The overall focus of the Inquiry is centred on the UDR and there are reports of very deep resentment among serving members of the both the UDR and the British Army, with allegations that the RUC is avoiding any responsibility in the matter of collusion by using the Stevens Inquiry to point the finger exclusively at the UDR.

Timing:

While we had been given to understand that the Inquiry would be completed in mid February, the fire has apparently delayed matters and the Inquiry is not now expected to be complete until sometime around mid March.

B. M. Mahon.

Anglo/Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs
29 January 1990

Leaks of Security Force Intelligence to Loyalist Paramilitaries

The Stevens Inquiry

In response to growing public concern, on 14 September 1989 the RUC Chief Constable announced the appointment of Mr John Stevens, Deputy Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire, to investigate the theft of a document listing IRA suspects from Dunmurry RUC station. The inquiry was also to embrace the current RUC investigations into the report by BBC journalist, Chris Moore, that classified RUC material had been shown to him by the UFF, and into the theft of a document from Ballykinlar UDR base. Since the appointment of the Stevens Inquiry, there has been a flood of further leaks bringing the total so far to over 20 reports of leaks involving some 500 IRA suspects. The scope of the inquiry has been broadened to include the subsequent leaks as they became known and on 28 September 1989 the number of staff working on the inquiry was increased from 15 to 19. A further twist was added to the controversy with the report in The Independent on 23 September 1989 by David McKittrick that details of 25 suspects living in the south had been delivered to him. To date over 30 people have been arrested and charged, apparently as a result of the Stevens inquiry. The following is a chronology of the reports of leaks from 28 August 1989.

29. 8. 89 BBC journalist Chris Moore reveals that he had been shown files (apparently RUC Special Branch files) which had come into the UFF's possession "because of a breach of security at security forces bases". He was also shown a video showing other IRA suspects, taken in what appeared to be a briefing room. The UFF showed the material to Mr Moore to justify the murder of Loughlin Maginn.
10. 9. 89 It is confirmed that a document listing 9 IRA suspects had disappeared from Ballykinlar UDR base.
14. 9. 89 It is announced that a photomontage of IRA suspects had been stolen from a locked cabinet in the RUC Station at Dunmurry with details of 12 IRA suspects. (See also entry for 19. 9. 89 below). The RUC also announce the appointment of Mr John Stevens, Deputy Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire, to carry out an investigation into the various leaks.
19. 9. 89 Mr Séamus Mallon tells a press conference that details relating to 18 South Armagh IRA suspects had been leaked from Tennent Street RUC station (Belfast) and had come into the possession of an SDLP supporter in August 1988. The details had been passed on to Newry solicitor, Mr Rory McShane.

The RUC announces that a second document had gone missing from the Dunmurry RUC station containing details of 17 suspects. Its loss apparently had not been noticed earlier.

21. 9. 89 It is reported that three letters had been received through the post in the Newry area containing what was described as "Newry FIRA Sighting List", with details of 10 people on it. There was also the message, "We got Maginn, you are next. (UFF)". Sinn Féin discloses a fourth person to receive the list.

The Sun newspaper receives a letter with 9 people from Derry identified on it.

RUC contact 10 people in Cookstown to inform them that their names, addresses and photographs may have fallen into the hands of paramilitaries. [SDLP's Denis Haughey speculates that a montage containing the names may have been seized in a house search of suspected loyalists earlier in the month].

22. 9. 89 RUC approach a number of people in the Shantallow and Bogside areas of Derry to warn them that their photographs appear in unspecified leaked documents.

Mr Hugh Torney of IRSP tells a press conference that he has received a photomontage of 13 men, with the words, "Remember FitzPatrick, you are next, UVF".

Document containing photographs and details of 60 people (25 of them living in Co. Donegal) delivered to David McKittrick of The Independent

Shankill Road youth, Stephen Hill(17), charged with possession of documents relating to UDR and IRA suspects. [In court it is alleged that Hill is a member of the UDA]

24. 9. 89 RUC admit that police documents, including a montage of suspects, stolen from a car in Derry on 24 July.

25. 9. 89 Belfast Telegraph reports the Stevens inquiry is to investigate report that British army soldier sold or gave a security document to loyalists in Derry in January.

26. 9. 89 Former soldier who had served in the North sends to Scottish Daily Record photomontage of 50 suspects from Belfast marked "Southern TAOR".

28. 9. 89 Daily Record receives another photomontage with ten people on it headed "Ardoyns Sighting List, May 1980".

Mr John Stevens announces that a soldier serving in West Germany is to be brought to Northern Ireland to answer questions about leaks to The Sun newspaper.

The investigation team headed by John Stevens is to be increased by four to nineteen.

30. 9. 89 Shaun Robert Cunliffe, a British soldier serving in West Germany, charged with unlawful possession and communication of documents.
2. 10. 89 The Irish News alleges existence of organisation called Inner Circle consisting of former and serving members of RUC dedicated to destroying republican terrorism and the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The group claims to be in possession of highly detailed files and documents on 233 terrorists and political activists, 64 of them living south of the border.

Sinn Féin Councillor produces photomontage relating to 49 people at meeting of Monaghan County Council.

The Northern Echo of Darlington reveals that it had received photographs and details of 156 alleged IRA and INLA members issued between 1976 and 1984 from an ex-serviceman.
3. 10. 89 The Irish News carries a report of claim by SDLP Councillor, Joe Hendron, that a photograph of Gerard Slane, published last year in a loyalist paramilitary magazine shortly after he had been shot dead by the UFF, had been taken five years previously in Castlereagh Holding Centre.
4. 10. 89 Bristol Western Daily Press carries report that it has received details of 40 IRA suspects from County Tyrone and Armagh.

File and photographs found outside British Army's Intelligence Corps' HQ in Ashford Kent. A spokesman later said that the material was used for training purposes.
5. 10. 89 Irish defence forces documentation posted in Coleraine is received by newspapers and other media organisations. On one of the pages appeared the handwritten message, "UVF: Some of the material given by former friends who murdered Brian Robinson."
8. 10. 89 28 members of UDR arrested and questioned by detectives involved in Stevens inquiry. A number of photomontages and some ammunition was also seized in the operation. 4 men subsequently charged with firearms offences (Daryl James Chapman, William Stuart Casement, Leslie David Wheeler, John Robert Thompson).
11. 9. 89 William James Smyth of Magherafelt charged with possession of photographs likely to be of use to terrorists (a photomontage of 20 IRA suspects) and with conspiring with others to procure arms for the UVF.
13. 9. 89 At a special court in County Tyrone Robert Woods Henry of Magherafelt was charged with conspiring to murder

Sinn Féin Councillor John Joe Davey. He was also charged with conspiring to procure guns for the UVF, as was Victor John Nelson of Cookstown.

10. 10. 89 Séamus Mallon hands over to Stevens inquiry a document containing photomontage of 17 people and a list headed "top PIRA vehicles" of 24 names with details of their cars. The document had been posted in Dungannon earlier in the week to a weekly newspaper.
12. 10. 89 An Phoblacht claims that it has documents relating to an MI5 operation to infiltrate the Irish community in Germany. Details of these documents were apparently leaked simultaneously to a German newspaper. The story is also carried in the Sunday Tribune of 15. 10. 89.
13. 10. 89 Two UDR members, Private James Neill(46) and Private Edward Stewart(32), charged with possession of weapons with intention of endangering life.
14. 10. 89 Two UDR members, Private Steven Harris(20) and Lance Corporal Wallace Francis Andrews(25), charged with stealing two photomontages from Dummurry RUC station on 12 August.
26. 10. 89 Army confirm that all regular soldiers serving in Northern Ireland and all members of UDR have been given deadline of Wednesday, 1 November to surrender any photomontages or any other security material illegally in their possession. Similar instructions have been issued to British soldiers elsewhere who have served in Northern Ireland.
1. 11. 89 Sinn Féin Councillor Alex Maskey claims that seven people in the Andersonstown area had been approached by the RUC and told that their names had been included on recovered documents. Mr Maskey said that the documents had been discovered in a loyalist arms dump and that a person was to be charged in connection with the find.
17. 11. 89 Philip Paul Jackson, Fountain Estate, Derry charged with possession of information likely to be of use to terrorists.
18. 11. 89 Five people from the Waterside area of Derry, Robert Allen, Kenneth Cavanagh(22), William Trevor Temple(23), George Harold Shields(28), Jennifer Peoples(18) charged with collecting or recording information likely to be of use to terrorists. Allen and Shields also charged with possessing firearms. The charges had been announced the day before by John Stevens. At a subsequent bail hearing it was alleged that a photomontage with the personal details of murdered Sinn Féin Councillor John Joe Davey was found with other security material. It was also alleged that Temple was a member of the UDA.
21. 11. 89 Solicitors Madden and Finucane acting for certain

individuals named in confidential security documents leaked to loyalist paramilitaries issue statement in which they say they were considering immediate legal action to compel the Chief Constable to provide the detailed information necessary to enable those affected to protect themselves and their families.

6. 12. 89 Sixteen people, including leading member of UDA, are arrested in Belfast and Derry, and said to be assisting the Stevens inquiry in investigations into serious crime.
8. 12. 89 Sam Duddy(44) accused of having a document containing information about a suspected IRA man which would be useful to terrorists. At the same time three men (David Millard, 38, William Jackson, 27, and David Burke, 17) charged with intimidation. According to an RUC officer present in court the charge "would appear not at the present time" to be connected to the Stevens inquiry. Ms Pauline Lambe(23) was later charged with recording information which could be useful to anyone planning to murder an unnamed civilian between January and March last year.
9. 12. 89 Solicitor of Liam Ryan killed by the UVF in Ardboe claims that RUC had tried to contact Ryan to inform him that his name was on a leaked photomontage and that they wanted to make arrangements for his personal security.
10. 12. 89 Dennis Jeffrey McGuckin(33), prison officer, charged with collecting and possessing information likely to be of use to terrorists. Roy Wilson Lambe(25) charged with recording information likely to be of use to a terrorist organisation as well as possessing firearms (assault rifle, three pistols, and assorted ammunition), and raising funds for a proscribed organisation, the Red Hand Commandos, by distributing and selling pamphlets. James Thomas Stewart(23) accused of possessing documents containing the names and addresses of IRA suspects.
11. 12. 89 Two members of ULDP receive Christmas cards with photographs cut out from photomontages of republican suspects in the Derry area.
18. 12. 89 RUC carry out raid on UDA headquarters and unidentified paramilitary sources are quoted in the media as suggesting that a loyalist arrested at the weekend and charged with terrorist offences had linked a large number of people in the UDA to recent security leaks.
8. 1. 90 Twelve loyalists said to be members of the UDA were arrested in East Belfast in connection with Stevens Inquiry. The London Independent claimed that there had been prior warning of the raid from sources within the security forces and that as a result several loyalists had escaped arrest.

17. 1. 90 UDA leader Tommy Lyttle(52) charged with withholding information which could have prevented an act of terrorism. His son, Tommy Lyttle(29), and Eric McKee(32) charged with possessing documents containing the names, addresses and other descriptive details of suspected members of the IRA which could be useful to terrorists planning to murder them. David Brian Lambe(35) charged with belonging to the Red Hand Commandos, possessing two pistols, a rifle and 35 bullets with intent to endanger life and possessing documents about IRA suspects. Michael Joseph Hegan(35) charged with recording information which could be useful to terrorists planning to commit murder or cause serious injury.
20. 1. 90 Brian Nelson(42) of West Circular Crescent in Shankill area of Belfast charged with having details of suspected IRA members which could be of use to terrorists. Following the subsequent disappearance of his family, it is alleged that he had been a police informer.