



## **An Chartlann Náisiúnta** **National Archives**

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**SECRET**

*in the 'Catholics' line'*  
16.1.90  
SEEN BY *Taoiseach*  
To see *pleas*  
25/1/90  
Paramilitary Talks

cc: PST; PC4  
Mr. Nally; DCC  
Mr. McHugh; Mr. Ryan

Further to my earlier reports on the talks involving the IRA and UVF initiated by the Catholic and Church of Ireland Chaplains in the Maze in July 1988, I understand from the Catholic Chaplain (Fr Murphy) that the talks are continuing to make progress, albeit slowly.

While progress has been slower than he would have hoped when he started out in July of 1988, ~~nonetheless~~ he is convinced that it is having an impact within both organisations. In that regard he mentioned that he had received reliable signals from sources in the IRA that the initiative had stimulated an on-going debate within the organisation as to the future direction and strategy of the republican movement, specifically the role of the armed struggle.

The talks are continuing to be conducted on the basis of separate meetings with each organisation outside the Maze, and involve the top military leadership on both sides. The UDA continue to be excluded from the initiative at the insistence of the UVF, who feel that the UDA would quickly de-rail the initiative owing to the fact that it is corrupt and riddled with informers. His objective of face to face talks ~~between~~ the IRA and UVF has yet to be realised, though he continues to be optimistic that such face to face talks could take place in the relatively near future.

The four Church leaders who are backing the initiative (Cardinal O'Fiaich, Archbishop Eames, Bishop Cahal Daly and Bishop Poyntz) continue to be enthusiastic in their support. In that regard he mentioned that in December, the Quakers had put together a peace initiative based on relatively low-level contacts among republicans and loyalists in Derry and had approached Archbishop Eames for a public indication of support for their initiative. Eames had contacted the Chaplains who made some soundings which showed the initiative to be "half-baked". They advised against any public support, on the grounds that an indication of public support on the part of the Church leaders might undermine the existing initiative. In the course of an evening, Eames, along with the two Chaplains, visited each of the other four Church leaders to ensure a co-ordinated approach and it was agreed not to indicate any public support for the Quaker initiative.

Fr Murphy again stressed the need for the utmost confidentiality regarding the initiative and was anxious that the Taoiseach be kept informed of developments on an on-going basis.

*BW*  
Brendan McMahon  
Anglo/Irish Division  
Dept of Foreign Affairs  
24 January 1990

cc A/Sec Gallagher ✓  
Joint Secretary  
Mr Collins