



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2020/17/34
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

*No 15*  
**SECRET**

A/Sec Gallagher

*207 + 15*  
**SEEN BY**

**IRA - Talks**

Parrot

*cc PST; PSY M. Kavanagh  
R. Nally; All  
M. Mothman; M. Kavanagh*

*Taoiseach  
To see please*

*215*

*W. H. Murphy  
8/5/90*

I refer to my earlier reports on the initiative of the two Maze Chaplains (Fr John Murphy and Rev Will Murphy) to move the military leadership of the IRA and the UVF towards a political solution. As you know, this initiative began in July 1988 with the leaderships of both groups in the Maze, and subsequently involved the outside leaderships of both groups. It has had the support of Four Church Leaders - Cardinal O'Fiaich, Archbishop Eames, Bishop Cahal Daly and Bishop Sam Poyntz. The initiative has been on-going since that time and has been conducted in absolute secrecy. Fr Murphy has specifically asked that the Taoiseach be kept informed of the initiative.

I had a conversation with Fr Murphy on 2 May who indicated that they had just concluded a series of intensive discussions with the IRA Army Council. Arising from those discussions, the two Chaplains had a meeting on 1 May with the four Church Leaders. At that meeting, the Chaplains reported that the Army Council had clearly indicated to them their willingness to seek an alternative to the campaign of violence and, with this objective in mind, are prepared to enter exploratory discussions with the British Government. [There is apparently no question at this stage of a cease-fire, though Fr Murphy felt that, in the event of any talks, there would, at the very least, be a reduction in the intensity of the current campaign.]

Arising from the discussion between the Chaplains and the Four Church Leaders, it was agreed that the two Primates (O'Fiaich and Eames) will jointly approach the Secretary of State to see whether the British Government would be prepared to enter into such talks. It was hoped that the approach would be made the next day (3 May) or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Army Council's preference is naturally for such talks to be held in public, though they accept that any talks would probably have to be conducted in absolute secrecy. The IRA's third, and least favoured option, would be for talks involving Sinn Fein. [Fr Murphy commented that one thing which has struck him in the course of this initiative is the noticeable difference between the IRA and Sinn Fein - with Army Council members referring to Sinn Fein as merely "the party which is the closest to our view." Murphy's impression is that not all of the Army Council are particularly enamoured with the socialist views being espoused by the current urban-based leadership of Sinn Fein.]

Brendan McMahon  
Anglo/Irish Division  
4 May 1990

cc Mr M. Collins