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**TO: HQ
FOR: C. O'Floinn**

**FROM: Belfast
FROM: B. Nolan**

*P1-PA
CB SEC 3*

Subject: Media reports of IRA renewal of ceasefire (Sunday, 15 September)

1. Alan Murray whose by-line appears on several of the reports in Sunday papers with above story was interviewed by Barry Cowan on today's BBC lunch-time news. His main observations were as follows:

- Lower and middle ranks of IRA are talking in a definitive way about an Army Convention within the next six weeks or so.
- A Convention is the only way in which Sinn Féin can lock the military side of Republican Movement into whatever decision is being planned.
- The envisaged decision refers either to a new type of military effort (as the current campaign has failed) or else seeks Army approval for a political way forward. Murray believes it is the latter option which is now being sought by Sinn Féin.
- The importance of the Army Convention as the supreme authority cannot be over-emphasised. "If you read the rules of the IRA you will see that the expected outcome would have the status of a compelling decision".
- The fact that the IRA has not returned to violence in the North, following the decision to abandon the 1994 declaration, is highly significant and points towards the political result which Sinn Féin now hopes to obtain from an Army Convention.

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- If such an outcome materialises in the way Murray envisages, he believes that Unionists will find it very difficult to say no to Sinn Féin participation in talks. It would constitute a definitive abandonment of violence and the worst that could happen would be a breakaway by a minority group.
 - The importance of the "big political picture" is now upper-most in Sinn Féin's mind. Sinn Féin spokesmen have long emphasised the need for a guarantor to assure the validity of a political way forward: "Someone who could say to the British, you said you will deliver that, you must now deliver it. The Americans are probably saying: we will fulfill that role. We will make sure the British don't waltz on whatever arrangement is agreed before you irrevocably end this campaign".
 - The security forces North or South are most unlikely to try to prevent the assembly of an Army Convention. If the two Governments know that the motion being put to the Convention is one to end the campaign of violence, they would not stop a bus load of delegates even if the bus had a notice saying "Delegates to IRA Convention".
2. Murray sounded very confident that he is on to something. He based much of his analysis on his experience of the 1980's decision to seek approval for abandonment of the old abstentionist policy.