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My former deputy has shown real leadership, says Paisley

Monday, 16 March 2009

Former DUP leader and First Minister Ian Paisley has conceded that the life of the man who served as his deputy at Stormont is now on the line following his no-holds-barred attack on the Real IRA and the Continuity IRA.

Mr McGuinness, a former Provisional IRA commander in Derry, launched his fierce onslaught against the dissidents at Stormont in the wake of the murders of two soldiers in Antrim and policeman Stephen Carroll in Craigavon.

Republicans believe Mr McGuinness — who was standing alongside First Minister Peter Robinson and Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde as he delivered his condemnation — has angered dissidents to such an extent that they may try to kill him.

Sinn Fein have urged Mr McGuinness to take extra care and have increased the number of 'minders' assigned to protect him. It is also understood that Mr McGuinness has been provided with more security around his home in Derry.

Speaking to Sunday Life, Ian Paisley said he was in no doubt that Mr McGuinness had put his life in danger by what he called his "unequivocal condemnation and damnation of the terrorists".

Mr Paisley said: "My former deputy will have known the import of his words. They were words that no republicans would like to hear about themselves.

"Clearly there are some people who would want to seek revenge. But Mr McGuinness and politicians across the board have shown real leadership.

"It was heartening to see and hear the unprecedented and united response from all politicians to these bloodthirsty criminals in Antrim and Craigavon.

"They will have shown the terrorists that people do not want to live in a country where such barbaric crimes happen."

A number of other prominent Sinn Fein members have also been briefed about how to improve their own personal protection in the wake of the upsurge in dissident violence.

Dissident supporters have branded Sinn Fein "traitors" for signing up to a power-sharing deal with the DUP and for giving their support to the PSNI.

Police fear the latest wave of terror from dissident republicans will include attacks on a number of VIPs.

Security forces will be on high alert — particularly during St Patrick's Day celebrations on Tuesday — after intelligence suggested splinter groups are planning a 'spectacular'.

In the past 48 hours the PSNI's close protection unit has been beefed up. A number of senior politicians and judges stripped of their bodyguard detail last year have had their armed escorts restored.

The initial decision to slash personal protection levels followed talks between police chiefs, the NIO, Lord Chief Justice's Office and the Court Service. In 2007, around 90 people were receiving protection, involving 250 officers and in many cases civilian drivers. The annual bill exceeded £25million.



Ian Paisley

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But following the appraisal running costs dipped under £10m last year.

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I wonder how does Our Lord Jesus Christ want us to proceed in all these matters?

Perhaps He would refer us to the First Commandment. The first and greatest divine commandment is that we should love God and love our neighbour.

Perhaps we can have concensus on this principle?

Posted by *Sean Mac Eachaidh* | 17.03.09, 14:30 GMT

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Bill, you must be an old one yourself. Your comments are cetainly old enough. We could have a debating match about every action, non-action, comment or insult made by every politician in Northern Ireland over the last 40 years but, do you know what, it would get us nowhere. Your opinions are what held up progress here since 1998. Move with the times. Accept what is happening now. Or would you prefer politicians to score voting points through insulting each other and getting nowhere?

Posted by *PC* | 16.03.09, 13:02 GMT

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Did he not hear the interview McGuinness gave in which he gloried in his I.R.A. past, and said he had no apology to make for that and "the war" he fought in?? Paisley is nuts if he thinks a few weasel words from Marty is tantamount to an "unequivocal condemnation and damnation of the terrorists"!!!!!!! There is surely no fool like an old one.

Posted by *Bill* | 16.03.09, 04:51 GMT

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