

NORTHERN IRELAND INFORMATION SERVICE  
RADIO/TV TRANSCRIPT

*Anglo-Irish General  
File 889/94*

PROGRAMME: Newsbreak  
DATE: 25-4-95



The INLA has called a ceasefire. The announcement was made in court by a solicitor representing four men charged with this month's weapons find at Balbriggan in County Dublin. Our Dublin correspondent Shane Harrison was in court.

**Shane Harrison**

Mr Leo Morrison, a Belfast solicitor, told the court that the four accused, Hugh Torney, Anthony Gormley, Dessie McCreery and Sean Braniff did not want to be involved in any action that jeopardised the peace process. The court heard that the four were a delegation appointed by the leadership of the Irish Republican Socialist Movement and that over an 18-month period of discussions with relevant groups and individuals they had concluded that a non-violent approach was needed to overcome the problems relating to Irish unity. In their statement read by Mr Morrison the four said they had been able to persuade the INLA to suspend its military operations in July 1994. They said they hoped to send a delegation to the peace forum in Dublin to articulate the Republican socialist view. The four who face charges of unlawful possession of weapons and ammunition with intent to endanger life were remanded in custody until June 20th.

Loyalists have called on the INLA's leadership to clarify today's statement. Gary McMichael of the Ulster Democratic Party said loyalists were sceptical that the ceasefire announcement was made in court.

The Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams has said no agenda has yet been agreed for talks with the Political Development Minister Michael Ancram, but he said it would include discussion of the arms issue.

**Gerry Adams**

We have always made it clear that we're prepared to discuss decommissioning. That's clearly something which needs to be dealt with. How we deal with it is a matter for us to talk over. The peace process was stalled by the British Government's posturing over the last short while. They have now got themselves off that hook. I would like to think they won't put themselves back on another hook.

The Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind has arrived in the province to visit troops. He was met by the GOC Sir Roger Wheeler before travelling on to bases. Mr Rifkind was last here in August.

*Laura*  
*Can you get the report from DBD asap (see x over the page)*  
*we had get a copy of + how*  
*1st. p. 16-5 may want it.*  
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A new report on Northern Ireland exports shows there has been a 35% growth in sales to the Republic. The report carried out on behalf of the Department of Economic Development also indicates that local exports are rising at a faster rate than in the UK as a whole. The details from our business correspondent, Reg Rea.

#### Reg Rea

Exports in the manufacturing and service sectors rose by 25% in the two-year period up to 93/94, according to the survey. This compares with the UK-wide rise in export sales of just 18%. The biggest growth market for Northern Ireland goods was the Republic where sales rose by more than a third to £532 million. Exports were also sharply up to the European Union, South East Asia and North America. The survey carried out by the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre for the DED shows that Britain is still the Province's most important external market, but sales to the rest of the world are growing even faster. The Economy Minister Baroness Denton said the survey demonstrated local companies were now doing business in the world's most challenging marketplaces.

The Belfast based company Shorts has won a £9m contract to supply a weapons training simulator to the French Army. The contract was announced at a major Defence equipment conference in the Netherlands. Shorts says it won the order against stiff international competition.

Experts are examining a letter bomb addressed to the Agriculture Minister William Waldegrave at his Somerset home. The device was intercepted at a sorting office near Bath and made safe by an Army bomb disposal team. So far no one has admitted sending it.

The Down and Lisburn Trust says surgery and appointments aren't being affected by the strike by support staff which began at midnight. The four places involved are the Lagan Valley Hospital, Lisburn Health Centre and the Down and Downshire Hospitals. The staff are protesting against the decision by the Trust to put their services out to tender. The Trust says patients who have appointments at any of the centres should turn up as usual. Deirdre Devlin reports.

#### Deirdre Devlin

The Down and Lisburn Trust said all routine and out-patient appointments are going ahead as normal and patients should experience minimal disruption. The strike, which began at midnight, is to last four days. Those taking part work in catering, portering, security and grounds maintenance. They're protesting against the decision by the Trust to put their jobs out to tender. They're fearful at what will happen to them if the plans go ahead. Inez McCormack, Regional Secretary of the Health Union UNISON said members left the picket-line last night to help people who had been injured in a traffic accident nearby, and that they left it again to service gas cylinders needed by the hospital in the operating theatres. She said this showed they treated patients with humanity and care, and that it was disgraceful they were being treated by objects of contempt by management.

A Northern Ireland Housing Association has warned that first time home buyers could be badly hit if interest rates go up again. The Co-ownership Housing Association says the mortgage market is becoming increasingly hostile for people buying their first home.

**Conor Bradford**

Has the Irish National Liberation Army declared a formal ceasefire?

**Shane Harrison**

The case was just down for listing which meant that they were going to fix a further adjournment hearing. There were only two reporters in court, one of them being myself. And then in the middle of the court the solicitor representing two of the four suspects said that one of them, Mr Torney, wanted to read a statement. Mr Judge Morris, who was one of three judges hearing the case, said that since the four were ably represented by their solicitors, they couldn't make any statement but the solicitors could. So then Mr Leo Morrison, a Belfast solicitor with the J J Rice company in Belfast, read out the statement in which he indicated that the INLA had suspended its military operations since July 1994.

**Conor Bradford**

And this would then have a bearing on this case?

**Shane Harrison**

Well that is something only the judges can decide. Mr Morrison read out the statement saying that the four had been appointed by the Irish Republican Socialist Movement to carry out discussions with individual groups and relative people like churchmen with regards to discussing a non-violent approach to the problems relating to Irish unity. And in the statement the four said that they had been able to persuade the INLA to suspend its military operations in July 1994 and that they hoped to send a delegation to the peace forum in Dublin to articulate the Republican Socialist view.

**Conor Bradford**

What about the judge's reaction to this statement. Did he have anything to say?

**Shane Harrison**

No, nothing to say at all. The court case then proceeded and the four, who face charges of unlawful possession of weapons and ammunition with intent to endanger life were remanded in custody until June 20th. It was all extremely bizarre, a very, very unusual way to announce a ceasefire and I am sure that there's going to be calls for clarification about the whole thing.

**Conor Bradford**

Rather fortunate that you happened to be there, Shane, as well?

**Shane Harrison**

Indeed.

**Shane Harrison**  
Indeed.

**Conor Bradford**

Joining me now is security correspondent Henry McDonald. Henry, are you surprised by this?

**Henry McDonald**

Very surprised, given the nature of it being announced in a courtroom rather than to the media the way the IRA and loyalist ceasefires were announced. It's extremely bizarre.

**Conor Bradford**

You could say this was a ruse to get off a very serious charge or you could see it as something more meaningful. How do you view it?

**Henry McDonald**

I think it's important to remember the four individuals involved are key players in the Republican Socialist Movement and they are important and very central to that organisation. So I think whilst cynics might say it's a ruse, at the same time, given the nature of these people and who they are, you have to say it sounds genuine.

**Conor Bradford**

And if that is the case, then you've got really the sort of final terrorist sort of jigsaw in place now, haven't you?

**Henry McDonald**

Well let's temper that a little bit because one of the fringe loyalist parties this morning, Gary McMichael's Ulster Democratic Party, said that they want clarification, there's that word again, from the INLA on the outside and the INLA leadership in Belfast to say that this is absolutely genuine and firm, so we have to be a little bit cautious that it is the end of all terrorist organisations' violent campaigns.

**Conor Bradford**

Because it's quite a fractured organisation and one group might say one thing and another group might do quite another?

**Henry McDonald**

Absolutely. Over the years the INLA has been riven by internal factions. Given the nature of these people in court it seems genuine there has been some division between people in the North, Northern INLA Activists and the INLA leadership in Dublin, but I think if there is any opposition to the ceasefire from the group in Dublin it will only be theoretical.

**Conor Bradford**

Are you saying then that you're waiting now for a further sort of confirmation that there is a genuine ceasefire now being declared by the INLA?

**Henry McDonald**

Well given that most ceasefires are issued through the media and are issued in a public statement, rather than through a court of course you're waiting to see if there's a genuine statement, and certainly that's the position not only of the UDP but also the Progressive Unionists who I spoke to a short time ago, said they wanted clarification as well.

**Conor Bradford**

Of course the court will want to know if there indeed was a defacto ceasefire what were they doing with all these weapons is the rather pertinent question?

**Henry McDonald**

Well that remains to be seen. The court will obviously have to establish that but there was never any indication from the INLA camp before that they had had a defacto ceasefire since July. For example, in September of last year they were issuing statements to Belfast newspapers criticising the direction that the Provisionals were going in terms of their ceasefire. So I think we have to be a little bit sceptical, a little bit cautious about claims that there was a ceasefire since July. They have been inactive since July, in fact their last big operation was an attack on loyalists in June which of course precipitated the Loughinisland massacre.

**Conor Bradford**

But if this is genuine clearly excellent news for the Government and indeed the people of Northern Ireland?

**Henry McDonald**

Well coming on the day after the opening of talks with Sinn Fein, it's certainly a boost to the peace process, but again, one has to be a little bit sceptical until we get absolute clarification.