

Sihon

Secret

Phone Conversation - Rita O'Hare

5 p.m. on 12th June

Ms. Rita O'Hare of Sinn Fein phoned me at 5 p.m. on 12th June.

She said that she had been trying to contact P. Teahon or S. O hUiginn, both of whom were on their way back from the talks in Belfast.

She wanted to draw attention to what Gerry Adams said in Belfast today which, she said, was along the following lines:-

- the murder of Garda McCabe was wrong and Sinn Fein had repudiated it
- people were using the Adare crime to undermine Sinn Fein's bona fides in the peace process
- Sinn Fein are doing their best to handle a very difficult situation and are trying, in particular, ~~attempting~~ to ensure that the damage caused by the Adare murder and publicity associated with it doesn't further deteriorate Sinn Fein's prospects of securing peace
- the IRA made a statement last Friday and Sinn Fein's formal position is that it accepts what the IRA have said about the involvement of IRA members/units

Ms. O'Hare then went on to say that she was attempting to deal with considerable anger amongst Republicans who claim that several of their people have been beaten up by the Gardai in the course of the Adare investigation.

I explained that allegations of criminal assault would of course be a matter for the Gardai and I went on to say that there was enormous and justifiable anger within the

Garda Force and the community at large because of the murder of a Garda and the serious injury to another at Adare. She said she could fully understand this.

She said also that there was anger within the republican community over the fact that Gardai had (according to her) given the names of republicans to the media and that two republicans - Nesson Quinlivan and Pearse McCauley - had been specifically named in a news story as persons who could help with inquiries in connection with Adare. Having said this, however, she said that neither she nor Sinn Fein were trying to make a bad situation worse by complaining and that they are most anxious to continue their discussions with officials.

I said that a readout of what happened in Belfast (in which, she said, Sinn Fein are interested) could, I felt sure, be provided. In a nutshell, there was the positive gain, following difficult negotiations, that Senator Mitchell is in the Chair - the downside is that rules of procedure are in the melting pot, though the Senator is handling that process also.

Returning to the question of meetings with officials, I repeated (<sup>as</sup> ~~what~~ had been said to Martin McGuinness last Saturday) that the crime committed in Adare created enormous difficulties for the officials involved and particular difficulties for me, given the post I happen to hold.

I told her that I had attended the funeral in Limerick and that no words could describe the grief and pain which was evident there. It was an appalling crime and that was the view of the community at large. She said that Sinn Fein fully understood that. I also said that our only justification for maintaining contact was that it held out the prospect of peace and the possibility that all violence could be ended. Sinn Fein said, she said, are anxious to maintain contact for the same reason.

As to the allegations of assault and so on, I said that I had noted this and would make it known that she had contacted me about it. She said she wasn't asking me



to convey this to anybody but simply wanted to let me know that Sinn Fein were in a difficult situation in pressing forward with the peace strategy because they are having to deal, on the one hand, with people who are complaining about the mistreatment of republicans by the Gardai and, on the other, with the reality that an appalling crime was committed, responsibility for which is being laid at the door of some republicans.

I said that I would convey the substance of the conversation to Messrs. O hUiginn and Teahon with whom she will be in contact about a meeting.

Comment Ms. O' Hare's message was a little confusing, the reason being that she and others are themselves in something of a dilemma <sup>they are</sup> being asked to provide (traditional) support for republicans who have allegedly been mistreated while, at the same time, recognising (privately at least) that some republicans have been involved in a totally indefensible crime.

My understanding of the main purpose of the call was to say that Sinn Fein are doing their best to handle a very difficult situation, that they want to press ahead with their efforts to restore peace and that they need to maintain contacts with officials for that purpose.

7/5/12/6