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DATE: 20 November 1996

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TO: HQ, ANGLO IRISH

FROM: DERMOT BRANGAN

ATTENTION: EAMON MCKEE

You might be interested to see the attached, which is the lead story in today's **Irish Echo**, that Adams and McGuinness are now back on the IRA Army Council. Understand that Holland's sources come from within the RUC.

Regards.

[Handwritten signature]

The change came in the leader of the Social Democratic and Labor Party, John Hume, speaking at a press conference in London. He said that the IRA had decided to return to the peace process, and that the IRA had decided to return to the peace process. The change came in the leader of the Social Democratic and Labor Party, John Hume, speaking at a press conference in London. He said that the IRA had decided to return to the peace process, and that the IRA had decided to return to the peace process.

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Adams and McGuinness back on IRA Army Council

Hume may barter SDLP votes if Major takes risk for peace

By Jack Holland

A reshuffle of the Provisional IRA leadership has placed Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams back on the Army Council, along with Martin McGuinness, according to reliable sources. The changes in the seven-member army council, which determines the organization's policies, are believed to have taken place within the last few weeks, following an intensive series of meetings.

The changes came as the leader of the Social Democratic and Labor Party, John Hume, spearheaded an all-out attempt to convince British Prime Minister John Major to bridge the gulf that still exists between his government and Sinn Fein in an effort to broker another IRA cease-fire. There is speculation that Hume has promised Major the support of the four SDLP MPs in Westminster if the government loses the backing of the nine sitting Ulster Unionist MPs, who, it is feared, would be angered by any concessions on arms decommissioning made by the British in order to secure a deal.

The changes within the leadership body of the IRA are the latest in a series that have occurred over last year, and some have linked them to the ongoing struggle to save the peace process.

Adams and McGuinness left the Army Council in October 1987, at around the time that it decided in principle to end the IRA's cess-

tion of violence, announced in August the year before. Though the decision to resume a limited form of violence was taken then, the IRA did not actually launch any attacks until February this year.

The return of Adams and McGuinness to the Army Council suggests a strengthening of those who have been supporting the republican movement's current peace initiative. Both men have been deeply involved in the peace process, behind the scenes and publicly, since about 1989. Though Adams has always denied IRA membership, it is believed that both he and McGuinness have been active members of the Army Council since the late 1980s.

The reports of Adams and McGuinness's return to the council come at the same time as rumors have emerged of a new IRA cease-fire. Most recently, McGuinness, speaking of the guarantees that must be given before

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Adams*(Continued from Page 1)*

the IRA called another cessation of violence, used the word "permanent" in relation to the possibility of ending the conflict. The following day, the British government's Northern Ireland secretary of state, Sir Patrick Mayhew, replied directly to McGuinness in a speech in which he said he noted "his use of that word." Mayhew went on to say that he agreed with McGuinness that there was a need for "inclusive" talks, but that he did not see the need for "inclusive" talks, but make the necessary commitment to rely on peaceful and democratic procedures alone. Mayhew denied that the British government had sought "victory" during the period of the last IRA cessation. Nor, he said, did the government seek "to support one tradition over the other."

Mayhew's response has

slightly raised the level of optimism in Irish government circles that a deal might still be possible that would allow Sinn Fein into the talks procedure following a new cessation of violence by the IRA. However, officials in both governments continue to be concerned about a possible negative reaction from the Ulster Unionist Party, even if the IRA did declare such a cease-fire — Unionists have lately raised the issue of demanding some arms decommissioning before talks begin, which would certainly abort any peace initiative from Sinn Fein.

The security forces are also concerned about continued IRA preparations for further violence. Most recently, the police foiled an attempted land mine attack in Derry. About two weeks ago, Bobby Storey, a veteran IRA activist who is close to Adams, was arrested and charged with possession of

incriminating material, including lists containing personal details about members of the security forces. Storey, who rose to prominence in the Belfast IRA in the late 1970s, was arrested in August 1981 along with Dermot Finucane after an ambush on a security forces' patrol. He was charged with attempted murder and sentenced to 18 years. He escaped in the mass breakout from the Maze Prison in September 1983 but was quickly recaptured.

As reported in the Echo last February, shortly after the decision was taken to end the cessation of violence, the IRA set up a special unit to carry out "spectaculars", and sources close to the republican movement suggest that Storey was in charge of it.

His arrest is seen as yet another blow to the IRA, which has suffered severe attrition at the hands of the security forces in Britain, Northern Ireland and

the Irish Republic since the beginning of the year. It has been particularly badly hit in Belfast and in England, where major active service units have been intercepted on several occasions. This has led to speculation that the security forces have so successfully penetrated the organization that resuming a full-scale campaign may prove more difficult than was thought. This in turn would have helped strengthen the position of the Adams-McGuinness axis, which is arguing that the peace initiative has to be pursued.

However, security forces in Northern Ireland are still fearful that the IRA intends to go back to war. It is known that the Northern Ireland police, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, have been warning the British government that a return to violence "is near." This contrasts with Britain's own internal intelligence service reports, which are more optimistic.