

DOWNTOWN RADIO REPORT - 1700 - FRIDAY 12 NOVEMBER 1993

A Northern Ireland MP claims he has been given confidential information about a series of meetings which allegedly took place this year between senior republicians and representatives of the Government. Eamon Mallie reports.

Despite categoric denials by Downing Street and the Northern Ireland Office its reported evidence exists to independently corroborate the MP's claim. He said he was approached by an insider and informed direct contact involving the republican leadership and representatives of the Government had been going on over a period of months. It is further alleged that clearance for the talks had come from what he said was 'the highest level of Government'. Another well-placed source claimed the meetings were carefully co-ordinated with very considerable attention given to detail. Last weekend when Downing Street was approached about reported direct contact a spokesman said 'we've made clear on many, many occasions we don't speak to those who carry out or advocate or condone violence to further their political aims'. It has been learned that Downing Street called the Northern Ireland Office on Sunday to discuss the press inquiry. A spokesman for the Northern Ireland Office said 'we have no knowledge of such talks or meetings. The Secretary of State had made his attitude to talking to Sinn Fein very clear on many occasions'. The MP who was given the information about the secret meeting(s) said he is making further in-depth investigation through contacts which he has.