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7 Questions the Prime Minister must answer

15 September 2008

Statement by TUV Leader Jim Allister QC MEP:-

“The disturbing revelations about the Omagh bombing on Panorama raise fundamental questions which the Prime Minister must answer.

It is the PM who has ultimate oversight of GCHQ and the security services. His predecessor promised relentless pursuit of the bombers, but now it seems services for which the PM has responsibility may have thwarted their capture. The Prime Minister must frankly explain why.

Among the questions he should honestly answer are:

1. Was there live monitoring of the terrorists’ mobiles and, if not, why not in view of the request for same from the RUC Special Branch and the experience of the Banbridge bombing?
2. Why was there a delay of days before any information was delivered to Special Branch?
3. Was there monitoring of the phones of known suspects after the bombing and if not, which seems very unlikely, why not?
4. Why was no information gleaned in subsequent monitoring (assuming such occurred) ever shared

with the RUC? Why was this vital intelligence withheld?

5. At what level, including political level, were any of the decisions to withhold information taken, it being unbelievable that after the atrocity political direction would not have been sought?
6. Were the security services protecting an informer, or informers?
7. Quite apart from GCHQ's role, did the UK Security Services have advance knowledge of a planned attack in Omagh, was that shared at a political level and what political direction was given?

This last question is particularly important in dispelling the suspicion which some might have that the Omagh bombing was permitted in order to jog the political and peace processes along.

The Prime Minister is the one man in accountable office in this nation which should now face up to and deal with these issues.

My further comment on the Panorama report is that it demonstrates Nuala O'Loan's earlier criticisms of the RUC, and in particular Special Branch, were premature and wrong-headed."

Terrorism

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