



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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MEDIA COVERAGE OF YESTERDAY'S RAF HELICOPTER CRASH

AT THE MULL OF KINTYRE

There has been extensive coverage of the crash on the local and national mid-morning and lunchtime bulletins on UTV and BBC 1. The situation is as follows:

- All twenty-nine people on board the helicopter were killed. Although one man was found still alive beside the aircraft, he died shortly afterwards. Those on board were:
 - 4 RAF crew members.
 - 10 senior RUC Officers.
 - 9 senior Army Officers, (5 Colonels, 4 Majors).
 - 6 senior NIO Officials who were described as being "key figures in security planning and co-ordination."
- Police and RAF spokesmen have said that they have no reason to suspect it was a terrorist incident. A five mile extension zone has been thrown up around the area of the crash where an extensive search for wreckage and confidential documents which would have been on board is underway. A number of bodies remain to be removed. Enquiries by the RAF, the police and the Department of Transport are underway. It is reported that officers of the SAS, MI5 and MI6 may have been among those on board.
- Secretary of State Mayhew has flown back to Northern Ireland for a top level meeting which also included the Army GOC, the Chief Constable of the RUC and the Security Minister. In a subsequent news conference, Sir Patrick Mayhew and Sir Hugh Annesley made statements (copies of which have been sent to Dublin earlier, together with a statement from the GOC). The Secretary of State said that the operational effects would be overcome and the work would continue. He said that the use of a single helicopter to transport so many key people was not a departure from standard practice. Sir Hugh Annesley paid tribute to the men who had died and to their outstanding service and said the community owed them a huge debt of gratitude.
- The implications of the tragedy for cross-border security co-operation will be discussed today at a meeting between the Minister for Justice and Garda Commissioner Culligan.

The Taoiseach has also expressed his sympathy. Prime Minister Major has said that he "deeply regretted this tragic accident". He said that society needed the protection of men such as those who had been killed and said they would move to re-appoint. The Queen has said she is deeply shocked by the crash.

- Armed Forces Minister, Jeremy Hanley who is on his way to the scene has said that despite this tragedy, the fight against terrorism will go on and the serious gap caused by the deaths will be filled.