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Belfast

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23 February 1998 **No of pages including this one: 1 + 3**

For: Colm O Floinn **From: Kieran Dowling**

Subj: Alleged UDA/UFF activity in Donegal

(Your SF 56 of 12 Feb refers)

1. We raised this issue with the British side on 12 February and, following reminders, a reply as attached - summarising an article which appeared in the *Irish News* of 16 February - was received this afternoon.

2. In passing us the attached, the British side suggested that any alleged UDA/UFF activity in Donegal would be a matter for the Gárda.

3. As will be seen, the *Irish News* article reported the UDP as having dismissed Pat Doherty's allegations about UDA/UFF activity in Donegal as "utterly unfounded". In addition, the Gárda, who were "reviewing security on a daily basis", did not have any information pertaining to the allegations.

4. However, as an effect of the unfounded allegation, Protestant employees of a Derry-based company operating in Donegal were now "living in sheer terror". David Nicholl, Chairman of the UDP's Derry branch "said he had been contacted by an employee of a company whose vans followed the route outlined by Mr Doherty". The individual concerned had no connection with the loyalist paramilitaries but was now terrified in case he was targeted by the IRA: he was "very concerned about what Pat Doherty's remarks are insinuating as are many Protestants and he says Protestants working in Donegal are now living in sheer terror".

5. Copy of a *Belfast Telegraph* article of 14 February in the matter is also attached.

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IRISH NEWS - MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY 1998

DERRY WORKERS 'LIVING IN TERROR'

Protestant employees of a Derry-based company operating in Donegal are "living in sheer terror" because of Sinn Fein allegations that the UFF were using the cover of delivery vans distributing products in the county as a base to target republicans according to the UDP.

The UDP dismissed the allegations, made last week by Sinn Fein vice-president Pat Doherty, as "utterly unfounded", claiming that they had spread fear amongst Protestants whose jobs take them into a number of areas referred to by Mr Doherty.

The chairman of the UDP's Derry branch, David Nicholl, accused Sinn Fein of "suffering an overdose of paranoia and panicking about their place in the talks.

"The Garda who are reviewing security on a daily basis have no information pertaining to these allegations.

"The UDP, like the Garda Siochana, are unaware of any loyalist activity in Co Donegal. But such unfounded remarks could put the lives of Protestants working there at risk."

Mr Nicholl said he had been contacted by an employee of a company whose vans followed the route outlined by Mr Doherty.

"This man is just trying to make a living for himself and his family and has no connection with loyalist paramilitaries. But he is now terrified in case he's targeted by the IRA.

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"He is very concerned about what Pat Doherty's remarks are insinuating as are many Protestants, and he says Protestants working in Donegal are now living in sheer terror."

Mr Nicholl said that, given recent developments in the peace process, the renewal of an IRA campaign of violence was " a distinct possibility" and urged all Protestants to remain vigilant.

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