

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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FOR: M BROWNE/EMBASSY, LONDON **FROM**: J HACKETT

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Comments by Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan, BBC Radio Ulster, 22 January 1998

Interviewer: Which Loyalist groups do you believe were behind this recent spate of Loyalist attacks?

Flanagan: There are undoubtedly a number of Loyalist terrorist organisations involved in the recent atrocities and I have no doubt for example that the UFF has been involved in a number of the recent murders.

Interviewer: Can you be any more specific?

Flanagan: Well, I think it is fair to say that we are pursuing a definite line of investigation that leads us to that sort of belief at this stage in respect of our investigations into the murders of Mr Treanor, Mr Brennan and of Mr Hughes.

Interviewer: That's a worrying development, given that this organisation is supposed to be on ceasefire.

Flanagan: Well, definitions of ceasefire are not my business. I'm interested in protecting the public against the activities of such people and bringing such people to justice and those are definite lines of investigation that we are pursuing at this stage.

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Interviewer: I assume that you are letting the Northern Ireland Office know that it is your belief that the UFF has been involved in these recent atrocities.

Flanagan: Yes, I'm certain that I have briefed the Secretary of State fully and accurately in respect of all these matters.

Interviewer: Can I just take you on to yesterday's IRA statement. Are you worried at that development, do you think the IRA ceasefire is coming under any more threat?

Flanagan: I think the IRA undoubtedly continue to pose us all a very serious threat and that has to be worrying. Just examine what they are saying- 'if we don't get our way, we will resume killing and bombing and shooting'. What place in any civilised democracy have people who think that way?

Interviewer: Is there any evidence that the IRA is at play out on the streets? Is there any evidence that they have been involved in recent terrorist activity?

Flanagan: Well, I think if you go back over a number of years and examine for example, there were some murders carried out under the title of Direct Action Against Drugs. I said at that time that I believe those murders were the work of the Provisional IRA. I think there is some indication that recent activity under that flag of convenience is actually the work of the IRA.

Interviewer: So the IRA is active, is what you're saying?

Flanagan: I think they are undoubtedly active, I think the cessation in their terms holds and is in no imminent risk of breaking down but that doesn't mean that they are absolutely inactive.

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Interviewer: You mean in terms of a complete cessation of military operations, they are holding to that term?

Flanagan: Yes, and I see no imminent risk of that changing.

Interviewer: Just to sum up, you think the situation is dangerous but you don't think it's out of control?

Flanagan: Absolutely not out of control. We are there in numbers in the areas that are vulnerable to the sort of attacks that we have seen. we need full public cooperation. I have the right to demand that and I now demand that full public cooperation. They should report to us anything that they see remotely suspicious. Working together, we can thwart the intentions of these people who want to kill for the sake of killing.

END

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