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Ms. McLaughlin
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**Anglo-Irish Secretariat
Belfast**

Clear Fax

22 January 1998

For: ~~Colm O Floinn~~

Group 3
Mr. McLaughlin
File

No of pages including this one: 1+4

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From: Kieran Dowling

53

Subj: Chief Constable's comments on UFF involvement in recent killings

1. We have already sent down our transcript of the Chief Constable's remarks on the above on BBC Radio Ulster this lunch-time.
2. I attach now in addition copy of a transcript of an earlier interview with the Chief Constable carried on UTV at 12.20.

As will be seen, he said he was in no doubt that "some of the recent murders have been carried out by the UFF". He had arrived at that judgment "on the basis of intelligence which I have to hand. And on the basis of strands of our investigation, including the analysis of a forensic nature in relation to certain of these incidents."

3. As he did in the BBC interview, he pointed to the fact that he has "set up a team to overview all of the activities of loyalist paramilitary organisations; particularly to look at the LVF and draw together the strands of investigation in relation to the various incidents in which they have been involved in; and to look at their connections also with other paramilitary terrorist groupings".

CHIEF CONSTABLE, MR RONNIE FLANAGAN, SPEAKING TO PRESS
AT RUC HEADQUARTERS, THURSDAY, 22 JANUARY 1998

OTV 1230 HRS - IVAN LITTLE

Question Ronnie Flanagan, these are dark and frightening times, what is your current assessment of the situation?

Chief Constable These are dangerous times and the murders we have seen recently are dreadful. And I understand people's concern and people's fear. Sadly we've been through this sort of situation in Northern Ireland before and it's time now to draw an end to this phase and make sure that these are situations we don't face again in the future.

Question But what about tackling the loyalist killer gangs who do seem to be most active?

Chief Constable That's what we're doing very rigorously; we've made a number of arrests after last night and you will appreciate that I cannot comment in details upon those; we've made arrests in relation to earlier loyalist atrocities. We're determined to bring to justice all those engaged in violence from whatever they emanate.

Question I understand you have actually set up a new squad?

Chief Constable That's right, we've set up a team to overview all of the activities of loyalist paramilitary organisations; particularly to look at the LVP and draw together the strands of investigation in relation to the various incidents in which they have been involved in; to look at their connections also with other loyalist paramilitary terrorist groupings.

FROM

(THJ) 01. 22' 98 14:37/ST. 13:50/NO. 3580102353 P 3/5

- Question There has been speculation that some of the recent murders have been the work of the UFF, what would you say to that?
- Chief Constable I have no doubt that some of the recent murders have been carried out by the UFF; I believe that on the basis of intelligence which I have to hand. And on the basis of strands of our investigation, including the analysis of a forensic nature in relation to certain of these incidents. I have no doubt that the UFF have been involved in a number of these murders.
- Question Can you say which?
- Chief Constable I believe that they were responsible for the murder of Mr Trainor, I believe they were responsible for the murder of Mr Brennan and I believe they were responsible for the murder of Mr Hughes.
- Question What does that say for the loyalist ceasefire and the peace process?
- Chief Constable I'm convinced the UFF were involved in these murders. So far as ceasefires are concerned and definitions of such, that is not my concern; I'm interested in protecting people against this sort of activity and bringing to justice those engaged in that sort of activity.
- Question The IRA has last night rejected the most recent Anglo-Irish proposals for the way forward. Do you share the fears of some commentators that they are about to end their ceasefire?

Chief Constable I'm not interested in the politics of the situation, I'm interested in terrorism, in violence, in crime and the potential for such; now I'm interested in doing all that I can to prevent the potential for greater terrorism and violence.

Question What do your intelligence reports tell you about the IRA-thinking at the moment?

Chief Constable I think at the moment they pose a threat, they continue to pose a threat, and we will be working to do all in our power to make sure that that threat is not realised.

Question Do you fear the IRA are about to end their ceasefire?

Chief Constable I think so far as the terms of their cessation of violence is concerned, I don't believe there's an imminent risk of that coming to an end. These are dangerous times and the murders we've seen recently are dreadful events. And I understand people's concern and people's fear. Sadly we've been through this sort of situation in Northern Ireland before and it's time now to draw an end to this phase and make sure that these are situations we don't face again in the future.

Question Is the situation sliding out of your control?

Chief Constable Absolutely not, absolutely not. Now that is no consolation whatever to the victims of recent violence or to the families of those victims, but it's certainly not out of control. We're there in numbers in areas most affected; but we need the public's assistance and I appeal for a total public co-operation.

FROM

(THJ) 01. 22' 98 14:37/ST. 13:50/NC. 3580102953 P 5/5

Question

People will wonder are your officers doing enough to tackle the problem.

Chief Constable

Absolutely. We're there in great strength and we're supported, where appropriate, by our military colleagues. Now today I have been in touch with the GOC and have been reviewing troop levels; we don't intend to bring in additional resources but we are certainly moving our resources about, and we have drafted in extra resources to Belfast. And we'll be there paying particular attention to the interfaces. But we need public assistance; we need early notification of any suspicious activity, and I appeal to the public to give us that early notification.

END