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Secretary 2/11
General H. Hare
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below please
which hand
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Kenne Flanagan is a

Note
I reminded the
Taoiseach that the
UDP expulsion was not
in fact of
any
representation
by a
political party
He was in fact
conscious of this and
felt that
if IRA
involvement
was clear
SF would
have to
be out
of the
talks.
16.2.98



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Taoiseach - Door step interview, Wednesday, 11th February 1998

considerable expert - 11/2/98

Reporter: Speaking of such attacks Taoiseach, there have been a number of attacks in the last 24 hours, if it is discovered that these attacks were the acts of the IRA. What should happen to Sinn Fein in the talks process.

Taoiseach: Well, you know, I think we have to be careful in all of this. We have to first of all make sure that the due process is followed and the ground rules set out very clearly the procedures that are there. You can be assured but that whatever process is followed within the ground rules will be with consistency and it is, there is an obligation of course on the security forces to give whatever information that they have and I'm sure they'll do so. But I am very worried about the escalation over the last 24 hours. Just before I came out here, there are unconfirmed reports of a further atrocity somewhere along the border, whether that's true or not I hope it's not obviously, but there certainly has been a stepping up of activity and hopefully this could stop forthwith. Its entirely unhelpful to what we are all trying to do and certainly the Mitchell principles and the democratic process is the only one to follow.

Reporter: When you say consistency Taoiseach, is it fair to say by that that you mean that Sinn Fein would be treated no differently for example than the UDP.

Taoiseach: No party in the talks can be treated differently. The only way that these things can be dealt with is that there is a very clear process laid down in the ground rules documents and that is the indictment process and procedures. It has worked well and it is one that I would adhere to regardless of who is involved.

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Reporter: Taoiseach, have you sought clarification from the security forces as to whether the IRA are involved or do you expect to get....

Taoiseach: We have sought clarification and I do so again to say that whatever information is available on these matters should be made known. It seems from the information that is available to me and could I just underline that this is tentative at this stage, but that the shooting the night before last of the man who was allegedly involved in drugs, that that was from the same organisation that would have been involved before, that's the D.A.D.

Reporter: A cover name for the IRA.

X

Taoiseach: Well, that is something that has been stated number of times but I would wait till we hear precisely what the reports are from the Chief Constable.

Reporter: Taoiseach, have you been speaking to the British Prime Minister this week in the light of the recent killings or is there a danger that he is more focused on Iraq at the moment.

Taoiseach: No, I haven't been talking to him this week but we of course have been talking to his senior officials, both Monday and yesterday. And I know that my people have been talking to them again today and there has also been contact with Mo Mowlam. In all of these events, the danger always is that we revert very quickly to the tit for tat. That is entirely unhelpful for everybody and as I did a few weeks ago when Catholics were being murdered I think we all need to try to keep a focus on the talks and regardless of these events to keep moving forward but of course they do disrupt the normal progress of what we are trying to do.

Reporter: Have you sought any reassurance from Sinn Fein that what is occurring at the moment is at odds with what they would want to happen.

Taoiseach: Yes, Well the position of Sinn Fein as stated yesterday is that nobody associated with them has any involvement in these things but I think we have to wait for the clarification of all of these things and of course I said in the house yesterday in reply to the questions from both John Bruton and Ruari Quinn that there is an obligation on the parties to answer these particular issues.

Reporter: Taoiseach, would the Irish government itself move to indict Sinn Fein at the talks.

Taoiseach: Well we'll follow the process. It's a due process, well worked out in the ground rules documents and without fear or favour regardless of who is involved in these things, that process has to be implemented and we will follow precisely the same process that we did in conjunction with British government just a few weeks ago in the indictment process. That is the only way these things will work. You cannot be changing your mind. It is only by consistency and fairness and following rules that have been set down that we can deal with these issues and you know I think nobody should be expecting that I would do anything else.

ENDS