

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Secure Fax: 1869

16 March 1999 No of pages including this one: 2

To: HQ 4.35pm
For: Colm O Floinn

From: Belfast
From: Joint Secretary + Mr. McKee at CGNY

Subj: Rosemary Nelson - an update

1. The following are a number of points to update our earlier report.

2. We have requested a briefing on the structure and scope of the Phillips investigation, possible leads which it might follow and the latest security assessments in relation to the Red Hand Defenders (who, incidentally, used an authenticated codeword in claiming the killing) and other dissident Loyalist groups. This briefing will be given by Stephen Leach later this afternoon.

3. We have also been seeking some background on David Phillips, to supplement the material already forwarded by the Embassy in London. Media reports here over lunchtime have been presenting him as a highly experienced and capable police officer (though the connection with the Lawrence investigation has not yet been picked up).

4. One of the aspects which we will be pursuing with Leach - and with the Chief Constable, should he put in a scheduled appearance at our St Patrick's Day reception this evening - is whether the relatively sophisticated nature of the device used yesterday points to the involvement of one of the larger Loyalist paramilitary organisations, such as the UDA. As some media reports have observed, the UDA were in a position to carry out an under-car bomb attack on Eddie Copeland in north Belfast in 1996 and on Glen Greer in Bangor in 1997.

5. The message we have had from NIO and RUC sources is that the Red Hand Defenders and the Orange Volunteers are capable essentially of mounting pipe-bomb attacks and that the use of high-grade explosives yesterday, the operational sophistication and accuracy of the device and the careful targeting of Ms Nelson all

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point to assistance of some kind having been given to them. You may have noted public speculation by Ken Maginnis about a UDA dimension to this killing.

6. We will also be probing the reasons for the heightened security force activity in the vicinity of the Nelson home over the day or so before the killing. What we have been told so far is that the RUC and the Army carried out "rummage searches" in the Kilwilkie estate over last weekend following a number of phone-calls which claimed that there was a bomb in the area. The Army have also confirmed that they increased their patrolling in the area in response to an anonymous warning about a bomb. It seems inevitable, however, that this intensified activity will be represented in some quarters as having a link with the killing (by providing cover for the preparations for it) and will reinforce claims about collusion between the security forces and Loyalist paramilitaries.

7. We will also be seeking clarification of the precise status of the Mulvihill report into Ms Nelson's complaints against the RUC and what the Chief Constable is planning to do with it. We have had a hint from our ICPC contacts that, in the light of this report, the ICPC will be indicating shortly that its dissatisfaction with the RUC handling of these complaints remains. They are thinking about a press statement to highlight this.

8. We have been suggesting here that, if the inquiry into Ms Nelson's death is to be as transparent and meticulous as the Chief Constable has been promising, consideration might be given to putting into the public domain the conclusions reached by Mulvihill. A failure by the Chief Constable to do so might fuel allegations of a RUC cover-up and strengthen suspicions about a RUC involvement of some kind in yesterday's killing. You may have noted the call in today's Irish News editorial for publication of the Mulvihill report.

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15 MAR 1999

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G1 Section

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Secure Fax: 1860

15 March 1999

No of pages including this one: 1

To: HQ
For: Colm Ó Floinn

From: Belfast
From: Val O'Donnell

M. McGarry
22.3.99

Subj: Car-bomb explosion in Lurgan

We have just received information from the other side that there has been a car bomb explosion in Lurgan (in Shore Rd/Lake St area) a short time ago, in which one female was injured.

No further information is available at this stage. Further information will be transmitted on receipt.

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15 MAR 1999

Secure Fax: 1861

15 March 1999

No of pages including this one: 1

To: HQ
For: Colm Ó Floinn

From: Belfast
From: Val O'Donnell

Subj: Car bomb explosion in Lurgan

The other side were pressed for further information about the above explosion. In response, they gave the following information, but stressed that they have not received a formal report confirming the information.

- The NIO believe that the victim of the explosion was the Lurgan-based solicitor, Rosemary Nelson.
- The RUC (in initial oral reports) believe that the explosion was caused by a device placed on or under the victim's car. It may have been a booby trap device.
- The victim sustained "severe leg injuries"

There were no reports of any warning having been given.

You will be aware that Rosemary Nelson represents the Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition, in Portadown.

The other side have promised a further written report during the afternoon/evening.

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G4 Section

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