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RÚNAÍOCHT IDIR-RIALTASACH
NA BREATAINE-NA hÉIREANN
BÉAL FEIRSTE

BRITISH-IRISH
INTERGOVERNMENTAL SECRETARIAT
BELFAST

ccd 18.10.00

COPY TO: ~~Secretary~~ General
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TO : Gary Ansbro/ Fergal Mythen/Fiona Flood
Anglo Irish Division

FROM: Val O'Donnell

Copied directly to B Callaghan, DoJELR

SUBJECT : Joseph O'Connor murder : Denial or responsibility by (P)IRA

As reported orally, the IRA issued a statement last night denying any involvement in the murder of Real IRA member Joseph O'Connor in West Belfast on 13 October. The full text of the statement given to the BBC is as follows.

"In the light of the speculation and allegations surrounding the killing of Joseph O'Connor the IRA wishes to state that it was not involved in his death. The IRA leadership extends its condolences to the O'Connor family. Malicious accusations suggesting IRA involvement are designed to heighten tension and promote the agenda of those opposed to the current IRA strategy. Threats directed at the IRA do nothing but exacerbate the situation. The IRA leadership will not be deflected from our current strategy.".

Earlier yesterday the victim's mother refused an offer to meet Gerry Adams . This followed a protest mounted by family members outside the Sinn Fein party offices in West Belfast . She is quoted in to-day's Irish News as saying

" I do not want to meet Gerry Adams . As far as I am concerned , my son's blood is on his hands."

Mrs. Margaret O'Connor is also quoted as rejecting the IRA statement last night denying responsibility, saying

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" I know who killed my son and so do the local people. As republicans we won't name them publically."

In a radio interview (about budgetary matters) this morning Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness described the IRA statement as "an important development."
Mr. O'Connor is to be buried to-day. To-day's sitrep (transmitted separately) reports of a volley of shots being fired last night (at 20 53hrs.) outside a house in Whitecliffe Parade, Ballymurphy and that a large crowd assembled but dispersed soon afterwards. Mr .O'Connor was shot dead outside his mother's house in the same road.

Attached for convenience are extracts from to-day's Belfast papers which report on the matter.

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