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22 FEB 2000

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RÚNAÍOCHT IDIR-RIALTASACH
NA BREATAINE-NA hÉIREANN
BÉAL FEIRSTE

BRITISH-IRISH
INTERGOVERNMENTAL SECRETARIAT
BELFAST

cc Sec Gallagher
Counsellor A&I
GT

Secure Fax No: 153

DATE : **20 February, 2000** **NO. OF PAGES** (including this one): **3**

TO: **G. Ansbro / F. Mythen.**

FROM: **Paul Hickey.**

Copied directly to B. Callaghan, DOJELR.

Ms Griffin
Passed on to the
Taoiseach's
Office
22.2.2000

WEEKEND REPORT 18-20 FEBRUARY, 2000

Murders of David McIlwaine and Andrew Robb, Tandragee, Co. Armagh

We were in contact in relation to the above in the course of the weekend.

The victims were not formally identified until 8.30 p.m. and their names were only released at around 11.00 p.m. following notification of relatives. They were named as David McIlwaine (18) from the Laurels, Portadown, and Andrew Robb (19) from Festival Road, Portadown.

Some of the circumstances of the murders are now becoming clearer. The RUC now believe that the two victims attended a nightclub in Tandragee - The Spot - on Friday night and left it in the early hours of Saturday morning in order to get a taxi. They have also stated that they believe that they may have been involved either directly or indirectly in a number of "minor skirmishes" in or following the disco. The time of death is, however, estimated to be some time later and the RUC are anxious to trace the victims movements from the time they left the Spot nightclub. The examination of the scene at which the victims' bodies were recovered is also being said to indicate that the murders occurred there. The bodies of the victims were discovered at approximately 9.30 a.m. on Saturday morning by a woman motorist. The location at which the bodies was discovered was described as Druminure Road, near the Moondage Road junction, about two miles from Tandragee itself. The two bodies were some yards apart.

With regard to the cause of death, initial reports that the men had been shot were later played down by the RUC who indicated in the early afternoon that they could not

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confirm the exact cause of death as both had suffered horrific injuries. The RUC subsequently confirmed late on Saturday evening that the preliminary cause of death was multiple stab wounds. They have also confirmed that there is no evidence that a gun was used.

Speculation, as you know, has centred on a possible link between the murders and the earlier murder of Richard Jameson and whether they are a result of a LVF /UVF feud. That speculation continues to feature heavily in the print media today. The LVF blamed the UVF for the murders but denied that the victims were LVF members or affiliated to that group in a telephone call to Downtown Radio on Saturday evening. The male caller, who used a recognised LVF codeword, was reported to have categorically denied that the victims were LVF members and to have claimed that they were murdered by "UVF child killers". Pastor Kenny McClinton is also quoted in the Sunday Life as saying that the two victims were not connected to any paramilitary organisation. The Sunday Life, however, also says in its report that the two victims were known to associate with leading LVF members. David McIlwaine's father is also quoted today as saying that his son had no involvement or links with any paramilitary group and that his death was the result of being"in the wrong place at the wrong time". Detective Inspector Todd was interviewed on Radio Ulster on Sunday and also stated that there was "nothing in the police investigation at this stage to make that [i.e. paramilitary connections] suggestion".

It was also reported on Sunday that a number of persons had been arrested by police in connection with the murder investigation. The RUC were stressing that these arrests had occurred under the PACE Order as opposed to PTA/EPA. D/Inspector Todd was also quoted as saying that they are not connecting them to any organisation at this time in the investigation. The RUC appear therefore to be keeping an mind on the motive for the murders and have clearly not ruled out some link to the earlier "skirmishes" in Tandragee on Saturday morning. Todd said in the interview that this was a "line of inquiry they were keen to pursue" but also indicated that the RUC would continue to consider other avenues. This probably explains in part the SOS's decision not to proceed with issuing a statement on Saturday.

Other Developments / Incidents

Three Persons Charged Arising From Arms Finds in Belfast on 16 February.

Further to Thursday's SF 145, three persons appeared in court on Friday to face charges arising from arms finds in Belfast.

Anthony and Brenda Coleman, St. James Road, West Belfast were charged with possession of an AK47 rifle, twenty nine rounds of ammunition, and documents likely to be of use to terrorists. Brenda Coleman was described as being two months

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pregnant. Martine Teresa Sharkey, Coneywarren Lane, West Belfast was charged with possession of an AKM assault rifle. All three deny the charges and bail was refused. Reports on Saturday in relation to the Coleman's bail applicvation in the High Court stated that the prosecution evidence was to the effect that the AK47 found in their house was on a shelf in the utility room off the kitchen.

Attempted Arson Attack on Home of Mother of Marin McGartland, Moyard Parade, West Belfast

There were reports that police were investigating a suspected arson attempt on the home of the mother of IRA informer Martin McGartland. A woman ran off after she was challenged as she poured a flammable liquid through the letter box of a house in Moyard Parade. A police operation followed and a woman was arrested who was reported to be helping police with their inquiries. A 28 year old woman is to appear in court on Monday charged with attempted arson with intent to endanger life.

It is understood that the woman who had been arrested was a former girlfriend of McGartland.

Arms Find, Waterside, Derry

A number of firearms were recovered in what the RUC described as a series of planned drug searches in Derry. They included one home-made machine gun, one revolver and two shotguns in addition to assorted ammunition at one address in the Lincoln Court area of the Waterside area. A small quantity of controlled drugs were also recovered at two addresses. One man was arrested.

Disturbances in Strabane

Six RUC officers were injured in disturbances in Strabane at 2.30 a.m. on Saturday morning (19/2) morning. The incident happened outside a bar at Market Street in Strabane when a police patrol stopped to break up a fight involving two people. They were then attacked by a crowd of around 150 people. The officers were punched, kicked and hit with bottles. They called for assistance and four people were later arrested at the scene. The officers injuries are not thought to be serious. It was reported later that a 25 year old man would appear in Strabane Magistrates Court on 9 March charged with assaulting police, disorderly behaviour, and resisting arrest.

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