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Eames-Bradley to ask MI5 for truth

(by Suzanne Breen, *Sunday Tribune*)

A group set up to find ways to deal with the legacy of the Troubles will this week ask MI5 if it's prepared to tell the truth about its dirty war in the North.

Sources said the Eames/Bradley team is to meet representatives of British military intelligence to ask if they will come clean about their past activities and co-operate with any truth commission-style body which might be set up.

Former Church of Ireland primate, Lord Eames, and Denis Bradley, the ex-chair of the North's Policing Board, co-chair the British government-established group which is due to report by the summer.

It has just completed a series of public meetings across the North gathering the views of those bereaved and injured in the conflict.

MI5 was directly and indirectly involved in countless murders during the Troubles but, unlike republican and loyalist paramilitaries, has never admitted – let alone apologised – for any wrong-doing. Its activities are widely accepted to have been sanctioned by the British government.

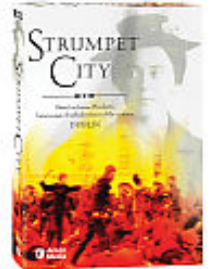
In his 2003 report, Sir John Stevens concluded that British agent, Brian Nelson, colluded with the UDA in 15 murders and played a role in 14 attempted killings and 62 murder conspiracies. He provided UDA gunmen with the names of Catholics who had no IRA connections.

Ex-British intelligence officer, Martin Ingram, said MI5 knew of Nelson's links with international gun-runners. Nelson would meet MI5 representatives in London before flying to Johannesburg to see arms' dealers. His weapons helped the UDA and UVF intensify their violence in the run-up to 1994, increasing pressure on the IRA to call a ceasefire.

It has also been claimed that MI5 was aware Pat Finucane was to be murdered but didn't intervene; that it allowed the 1998 Omagh bombing to proceed; and that it destroyed covert recordings in shoot-to-kill cases.

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MI5 has consistently refused to shed light on its shadowy activities and the Eames-Bradley group will face an uphill struggle to secure any genuine co-operation.

January 23, 2007

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