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## News Desk



**Alex Attwood**

19th January 2007

### ATTWOOD COMMENTS AFTER RAYMOND MC CORD MEETING

Commenting after meeting with Raymond McCord Senior today in advance of the publication of the Police Ombudsman report, SDLP Policing Spokesperson Alex Attwood MLA said:

“It must never be forgotten that this Report is about the tragic death of a young man, Raymond McCord Junior, and the trauma caused to his parents and family. This is what must be remembered, first and foremost.

“The Report of the Police Ombudsman is likely to make horrifying reading. The most serious allegations possible are likely to be made about the conduct of police officers. The most serious consequences should follow.

“The reported recommendation of the Police Ombudsman that there are people who should be prosecuted must be taken forward. This must not be put on the long finger by the prosecuting authorities. Critically, there is the danger that the Public Prosecution Service and Attorney General will invoke so-called “public interest” grounds for not prosecuting people against whom the most serious allegations are made. This could arise not only around people identified in the Ombudsman Report and the Stevens Report but also be used to allow the On The Run’s to walk. The risk of all this cannot be overstated.

“This case confirms again to the SDLP why robust accountability around any person or organisation managing agents or gathering intelligence is needed. As one of those robust mechanisms, the Police Ombudsman is fulfilling a huge service to the community by probing into this matter and telling the truth.

“This is particularly so as the McCord case is of quite recent vintage. This report is likely to confirm that it is not that long ago when appalling things were and were being allowed to happen. It proves again why accountability is still needed. It vindicates the view of the SDLP that the giving of a bigger role to MI5 without robust accountability, a role that includes running agents in republican groups, is a grave error.

"The SDLP will very carefully consider the Police Ombudsman's Report to determine where things should go. The management of agents and intelligence is now very different than in previous days, particularly in the time of old RUC. Vigilance is still needed and the SDLP will stick to this task."

**ENDS**

**19/01/07**