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Alex Attwood

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ATTWOOD: NEW COLLUSION TEAM NEEDS MI5 INFORMATION

Commenting on the announcement of a new unit under the Historical Enquiries Team (HET) to investigate collusion cases starting with the Glennane Gang, SDLP Policing Spokesperson Alex Attwood said:

"This announcement needs to be carefully assessed. The creation of a London-based, independent HET team might move things a little further forward. However, without cast-iron guarantees that MI5 and MI6 will share all information, and make any of their members available for interview, this development may unravel.

"There is a fundamental and growing problem. There is not enough money being made available to the HET and the Police Ombudsman to do their job to the standards required and in good time. The HET and the Ombudsman will become horribly stuck if the government does not substantially increase funding and endorse truth recovery mechanisms that make state agencies, republican groupings and loyalist organisations account fully for their actions.

"The SDLP is anxious to hear further from families of those murdered in the early seventies and all the families affected by the Dublin and Monaghan bombings. The HET may or may not move things forward and this new investigative panel may get very bogged down. Ultimately, the families concerned require the truth and an independent public inquiry may well prove the only way to move towards that goal."

"This announcement being made to a Dail committee in Dublin demonstrates the need to address issues of policing justice and truth on an island-wide basis."

ENDS

14/11/06