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By David McKittrick  
Thursday, 18 September 2008

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## COMMUNITY TELEGRAPH

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What are these?

The legal and political saga that has followed the Omagh bombing took another turn yesterday when Gordon Brown announced a review of intelligence intercepts on the attack which killed 29 people in 1998.

Sir Peter Gibson, the Intelligence Services Commissioner, is to review "the intercepted intelligence material available to the security and intelligence agencies in relation to the Omagh bombing and how it was shared".

The move is viewed by many as a reluctant concession in the face of mounting pressure. It has come as a direct response to this week's BBC Panorama programme which revealed that the intelligence listening centre, GCHQ, was monitoring mobile phone calls made by the bombing team.

The Cabinet Office said the review should be completed within three months, with Mr Brown expected to outline its outcome in the Commons.

This may be a problematic timetable, however, since some of the Omagh bereaved have taken a civil case against alleged members of the Real IRA, which carried out the attack. The case opened in the Belfast courts in April and is to resume shortly following the summer legal recess. Yesterday the families asked for relevant material from the new review to be made available before their case comes to a close.

Its terms of reference appear to have been strictly limited to the Panorama revelations concerning the delivery of the bomb, rather than allowing for a wider survey of intelligence material before and after the attack.

By the standards of the notoriously secretive intelligence community, yesterday's move could be regarded as dramatic. It falls far short, however, of the demands of Omagh families who for years have been pressing for a full public inquiry.

A series of police and other official investigations have been held into the Omagh incident, often producing controversial outcomes and clashes of opinion. None of these have come anywhere close to laying the case to rest, and several have raised disturbing questions about the intelligence community.

Although various Real IRA figures are behind bars, no one has been specifically convicted of the Omagh murders. In December a south Armagh man was acquitted of the killings, with the judge criticising police evidence.

The Panorama programme has resulted in calls to clarify whether the bombing might have been prevented, and whether material of value was passed on at the time. The Omagh families threatened to take a case against the Government demanding a handover of material. Yesterday their spokesman, Michael Gallagher, said: "We welcome the swiftness with which the Government has moved on this.

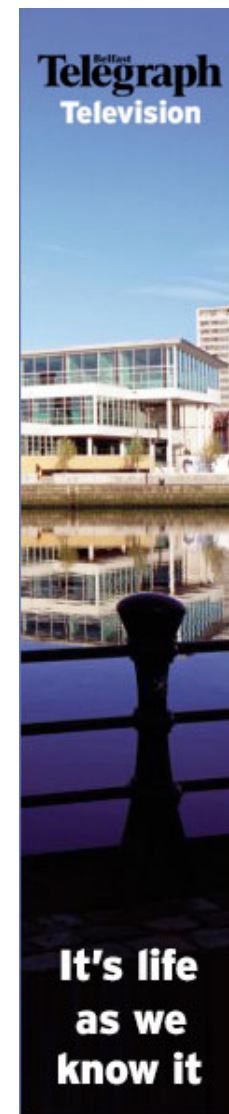
"It is indicated that this will take up to three months. We feel that the civil action now taking place, which will be over by that time, is the best possible way of using any intelligence or evidence gleaned from that.

"We would urge Sir Peter to seriously consider making this material and evidence available as soon as possible."

Describing the review as a positive move, Sir Hugh Orde, Chief Constable of Northern Ireland, said: "I think it's helpful that the Prime Minister has made an announcement and the allegations in the TV programme will now be looked at. We need to wait to see what comes out of that investigation."

vision of hope

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 For god sake this investigation will yield nothing! Why not a new and \*independent\* investigation into the Omagh bombings?

Posted by *Ciaran Gallagher* | 18.09.08, 01:56 GMT

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