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## News Desk



### Alex Attwood MLA

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#### **ATTWOOD: WORST FEARS CONFIRMED – AGENTS AND EX POLICE OFFICERS MUST BE PURSUED FOR THEIR CRIMES – RIGHT FOR ALL TO ACCEPT OMBUDSMAN'S RECOMMENDATIONS – MI5 REPRESENT STRATEGIC AND SUBSTANTIAL THREAT IN THE FUTURE**

SDLP Policing Spokesperson Alex Attwood MLA has said that the report of the Police Ombudsman into police and security force collusion with loyalist paramilitaries confirms the 'worst fears' of many people. Speaking today Mr Attwood stated:

"The report of the Police Ombudsman confirms 'the worst fears' of many. Not only were the police running an agent linked to up to eighteen murders and a catalogue of serious crimes, but some police officers failed to arrest agents involved in serious crimes, concealed intelligence, conducted 'sham' interviews, created misleading records, presented inaccurate documents for court hearings and much else. The Police Ombudsman is right to conclude that 'there was collusion of certain police officers with identified UVF informants'.

"All of this is appalling. Those involved in any of this - be they agents or officers or anyone else – should face the full consequences for their actions, including prosecution. That is why the PSNI and PONI must relentlessly pursue those involved. The risk that people referred to in the McCord report or those named in the Stevens Inquiry or the On The Runs all going free without penalty and punishment is real and must not be tolerated.

"It is important that the Chief Constable has accepted the recommendations of the McCord Report, as is the recognition by the Police Ombudsman that the PSNI and Policing Board have made 'significant changes and introduced new policies and working practices' in relation to intelligence and managing agents. That said constant vigilance, robust accountability, the highest standards and independent oversight is the architecture to ensure that 'never again' can this happen.

"That is why the bigger, broader role for MI5 recently announced is a strategic and substantial threat to this approach. This makes the conclusion of the Police Ombudsman that effective accountability mechanisms are essential around national security to ensure 'that what has happened here (McCord) does not recur' should be viewed as a stark warning. That is why the SDLP continues to strongly push for the Ombudsman's Office to be the mechanism for complaints against MI5.

"In meeting Raymond McCord Senior last Friday, the strength and dignity of both he and his family are very clear and very strong. All of this stands in stark contrast to the conduct over years of police officers who adopted the lowest standards conceivable."

**ENDS**

**22/01/07**