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Alex Attwood MLA

28th January 2007

ATTWOOD: HADDOCK TRAIL LEADS ALL THE WAY TO MI5

Commenting on an article in the Sunday Times, SDLP Policing Spokesperson Alex Attwood said:

"This article confirms what the SDLP has been saying - that the Haddock trail leads all the way back to MI5. It was MI5 which was the source of - and handed over - monies paid to agents involved in the worst crimes. The SDLP has been proven absolutely right on the compelling need for accountability and complaints mechanisms around anything that MI5's hands touch.

"The claims in the article may be a 'defence line' by people in the spotlight after the Ombudsman's report into the McCord case. But the claims that MI5 funded 'the intelligence budgets' of RUC special Branch; that MI5 must have approved applications and released 'reward and incentive' monies for agents; and that old RUC Special Branch intelligence requirements were 'set at the highest levels in Whitehall' expose the full range of this scandal.

"All of this confirms why the SDLP has been right to stand up against the bigger and deeper role agreed by Blair and Adams for MI5 in the north, including running agents of strategic influence in republican organisations. The same type of accountability and complaints mechanisms that have seen policing move so far forward over the last five years must govern every person or agency involved in intelligence policing. Sinn Fein must recover from their strategic blunder around MI5 and support what the SDLP has been demanding around any future role for MI5 in the north.

"As the SDLP has suggested last week, the full extent of this scandal is now becoming clear. What MI5 and elements in RUC Special Branch were up to occurred on Tony Blair's watch. Tony Blair must respond. "

ENDS

28/01/07