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### Alisdair McDonnell MP MLA

24th January 2007

#### MCDONNELL COMMENTS AFTER MEETING AHERN ON COLLUSION REPORT

A senior SDLP delegation met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs Dermot Ahern this morning to discuss the Police Ombudsman's report into collusion between the security forces and loyalist paramilitaries. Speaking after the meeting in the Ballymascanlon Hotel, Dundalk, SDLP Deputy Leader Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA stated:

"We came to this meeting to brief Dermot Ahern on the rage and anger of nationalists, not just about Mark Haddock's murders but also the attitude of some within the British establishment, retired RUC officers, and unionist politicians. Dublin was at one with us that collusion was a fact. They agree with us that it happened and the British Government must face up to it, and it was not just in Belfast, it was across Ireland. It happened in South Armagh with the murderous Glenanne gang. It happened at Loughinisland. It happened in Dublin and Monaghan. It even happened just a few hundred yards from where we met the Minister with the murder of Dundalk man Seamus Ludlow.

We made it clear to the Minister that Ronnie Flanagan should go now. As Nuala O'Loan made clear this could not have happened without the knowledge and support of the RUC leadership. The truth is that the RUC did not just infiltrate the UVF, they managed them.

Dermot Ahern appreciated the SDLP's work to expose collusion down through the years and agreed with us that those responsible must be prosecuted. The minister also agreed with our concerns on the expanded role for MI5 in the North and the lack of accountability and transparency around that role. We were clear that there could be no dirty deal done to let paramilitaries and state killers off the hook with no questions asked. It is clear that we have to lance the abscess of collusion before we can begin to past behind us."

**ENDS**

24/01/07