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Mark Durkan MP MLA

25th January 2007

DURKAN: FLANAGAN MET MCCORD IN 1998

SDLP Leader Mark Durkan MP said the British government should not accept any excuse of ignorance of collusion by the upper echelons of the RUC.

Speaking as he led a delegation to meet the Secretary of State on developments in the collusion scandal, he said:

"We will be telling the Secretary of State that the government needs to alter its stance on the Ombudsman's report. It appears that Peter Hain has bought into Ronnie Flanagan's story that he knew nothing about collusion between Special Branch and Mark Haddock's Mount Vernon gang until he read the Ombudsman's report. But Ronnie Flanagan can't say he didn't know. We know that Flanagan met with Raymond McCord in 1998 and the whole story of his son's murder was laid out for the Chief Constable. Two years later the Stevens Inquiry met him to ask about the same case.

Turning to the wider political situation, he said: "We will be making it very clear that nationalism wants Sinn Fein to deliver a clean and clear decision on policing that will disarm the DUP. Don't give the DUP an excuse to walk away from power-sharing.

"If we are going to go forward to a stable future, we need to deal with the past properly. But what we will not do is accept any sort of side deal where an unaccountable MI5, Diplock courts, emergency powers or amnesties for state killers are foisted on us in return for some sort of deal with Sinn Fein on their On-the-runs again. That is no way to deal with the past, nor is it the way to get a better future."

ENDS

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