

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S STATEMENT

rocket launchers to be moved from the Republic into Northern Ireland on behalf of Continuity IRA; that the weapons would be brought in by 'E' (a nickname) between 6 and 8 August and taken to a specified address (the home of family 'F'); and that they would then be moved to an unknown address some two to three miles from Omagh, where they would be used in an attack on police in Omagh on 15 August. The caller did not, contrary to the Ombudsman's Statement, use the word 'unspecified': that was the description used by the officer who took the call, and referred to the lack of information about the precise nature of the police target rather than the form of attack. (The officer confirmed, in his statement to the Ombudsman's investigators, that his clear perception following the telephone conversation was that the attack on police would involve the rifles and/or rocket launchers mentioned by the caller.)

Police action on receipt of information

5.3 Rather than pass on potentially sensitive information by phone, the officer later drove to Enniskillen to brief first his Detective Chief Inspector and then the Special Branch officers on duty there. He also prepared, at their request, a hand-written report. The Ombudsman's Statement maintains that the Special Branch officers - **who were not interviewed by the Ombudsman's investigators** - undertook only 'some assessment and very limited action' on the basis of this information, 'dismissed the call as a "fall-out between smugglers"', and failed to identify other available relevant intelligence.

5.4 In fact the following actions and inquiries were initiated immediately:

- the officers contacted police colleagues in Omagh and Clogher to see if further information on those named was available. It was not;
- contact was made with An Garda Síochána with regard to 'E', allegedly resident in the Republic. Their immediate reaction, confirmed two days later, was that they had no knowledge of an individual with that nickname from the area mentioned by the caller;
- family 'F' and their address were checked for subversive traces. There were none; and
- arrangements were made - as the Ombudsman's Statement acknowledges - for a Special Branch officer to be present during the second call, which the caller had agreed to make the following evening, to ascertain further details and, if possible, arrange a meeting. In the event no call was received, then or at any time since. (Had this call been genuine or had it been in connection with the Omagh Bomb, a subsequent call would surely have been made.)

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