Department and 'C' Department. The HOLMES database does not reflect if sources were re-tasked.

8:10 There is no information contained on the HOLMES database to suggest any proactive intelligence gathered under the Interception of Communications Act 1985 (IOCA) or any form of surveillance having been considered, prior to, or after, the arrest of any suspects in Northern Ireland. This intelligence could have benefited the SIO prior to the arrest of the main suspects and indeed more importantly after their release, particularly Mackey (N420).

Recommendation (159). SIO's should consider in the early stages of all major crime investigations the benefits of using IOCA as an intelligence gathering tool.

ANALYSIS OF SOURCE INFORMATION

8:11 A detailed analysis of source information, attributed to each suspect/individuals nominal, has been prepared and made available to the SIO. Some examples, of instances where information received should be further assessed and exploited are:

- Report 13, which highlights that members of the travelling community have been involved in the movement of explosives for dissident Republicans in the past. (They may have connections with the Banbridge bomb on the 1st August 1998 as referred to later in this report).

  In August 1998, various information relating to a named person involved in the Omagh bomb was received by Sergeant Woods (N1332) for example M513, M514, M529 and M411 from sources [redacted] There is no record of any action having been raised, from the result of A751, to re-task the source who spoke to Sergeant Woods.

- Report 10A, relating to information received on the 26th August 1998, from a casual contact, regarding a blue Ford Fiesta registration mark OXI 3282. This vehicle was subsequently seized and the enquiry relating to it fully exploited. It is suggested from enquiries made, that the information provided by a source [redacted] was accurate. It appears from the HOLMES database that this source has not been debriefed since 26thAugust 1998.

- Information received on 21st April 1999 (ICIS Document 62159 refers) states that [redacted] the bombing was a mistake and that 'the 2 young persons involved had panicked'. Although [redacted] is the subject of an assessment file

intelligence. Details held on 'hard copy', indicate that [redacted] resides somewhere in England.

Recommendation (160). Further enquiries, including the re-tasking of the source, to establish the whereabouts of [redacted] and steps taken to progress what information [redacted] has about the Omagh bombing.

Recommendation (161). The SIO liaise with 'E' Department and FIB/RIU on the re-tasking of sources who provided information in relation to the Omagh bombing, with a view to identifying new information/lines of enquiry to exploit, in relation to suspects.

- **D1440 dated 14th January 1999, outlines information received naming Blair (N2111) as one of the 'main men' behind the Omagh bombing. The intelligence gives a detailed description of where the device was made up in [redacted] Republic of Ireland. There is no record of any action having been raised to liaise with An Garda Siochana, in relation to investigating the [redacted] described.**

8:12 **The Task Force Commander has confirmed he was made aware of the information contained in Document 1440 and realised its possible potential. He travelled to the Republic of Ireland and briefed senior An Garda Siochana officers, in an effort to have the information assessed and exploited. In a matter of weeks, An Garda Siochana made further enquiries and stated 'there was nothing in it'. Two anonymous messages M516 and M523, previously received on 20th August 1998 at 1400 hours and 1438 hours respectively, also implicate Blair as being behind the bombing.**

8:13 Blair (N2111), nickname 'Mooch', was identified by the investigation team. He has a long history of PIRA involvement and is believed to be a leading member of the RIRA (see M916). He is known to be a close associate of McKevitt (N3009), a suspected leading member of the RIRA. On the 15th August 1998, Blair is believed to have made contact with the 'bomb phone', suspected of having been used in the Omagh bombing, at 1419 hours. It is at this time, that the car bomb is believed to have been placed in Market Street.

8:14 Blair (N2111) is also the subject of a report relating to linked incident at Newry Police Station on 21st July 1998[4]. At present, Blair is not classified as a suspect on the HOLMES database and has never been arrested.

8:15 Two vehicles, namely a beige Ford Cortina vehicle registration mark 89D9413 and a blue Nissan vehicle registration mark OZS 708, which can be attributed to Blair, have not been the subject of video viewing in the Omagh investigation.

Recommendation (162). Blair (N2111) be the subject of thorough research, to include video viewing, with a view to assessing his implication or elimination in the Omagh investigation.

Recommendation (163). The Task Force Commander should provide a written report, regarding the enquiries he made about Blair, with An Garda Siochana, in order to update the HOLMES database.

ANONYMOUS TELEPHONE CALLS AND LETTERS TO POLICE

8:16 The HOLMES database contains 121 relevant entries. A number of anonymous telephone callers give information about sightings of the bomb vehicle and persons involved in the bomb attack. Allowing for a percentage of 'crank' or malicious calls, there are a number of calls which in the opinion of the Reviewing Officer require further attention by the SIO.

8:17 The tracing of anonymous calls to confidential numbers is governed by Force Order 2/99 File Box E(A) Classified. However, tracing of calls to local stations/incident rooms, would fall outside these guidelines and is viewed by the Reviewing Officer as an important investigative tool. Examples where no record could be found of steps taken to identify the origin or identity of some significant callers include:

- **M924 dated 27th August 1998 – an anonymous female telephoned Belfast Regional Control (BRC) stating that Magill (N3180) was the driver of the bomb car and was also involved in the bombings at Banbridge and Newry. The caller further stated, "Proof that this is a true message –** [redacted] **This message was crucial to the investigation, particularly in light of the anonymous calls made in regard to the Newry bombing, and the fact that a civilian, when attempting to apprehend a suspect, pulled a denim jacket off him[5].**

[4] *See Chapter 9 Paragraph 9:71.*
[5] *See Chapter 9 Paragraph 9:68, 9:73 and 9:83.*