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British politicians remain silent despite revelations

(Brian Feeney, [Irish News](#))

Here we go again. Another report of another inquiry years after the events took place. No prosecutions recommended or likely.

Chief constable, prime minister, current proconsul all throw up hands and say as one: "Nuffink to do with me, guv." All in the past. Couldn't happen now. Let's move on.

So far so predictable. At least there's one minor difference this time. The one lesson that's been learnt from previous reports like Stevens' in 2003, and it's a small mercy, is that politicians no longer automatically 'call for a public inquiry'.

The penny's dropped even with our local geniuses that it's pointless, first because the British government has acted shamelessly to prevent inquiries revealing awkward truths by introducing the 2005 Inquiries Act to wreck the powerful 1921 Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act.

Second, and more important, is the reason the British government emasculated the inquiry process.

They'll tell you it's because of the vast expense over the years of inquiries like the Saville Tribunal which if you laid them end to end would never reach a conclusion. Needless to say that reason is far from the truth.

Guys like Mark Haddock, coyly referred to as 'Informant 1' in the ombudsman's report, were up to their dirty work during the first five years of this Labour government's tenure of office and indeed for the first year of Hugh Orde's time as chief constable.

It was only after the Stevens report that rapid and radical changes were made in handling what are known as covert human intelligence sources [agents]. If it hadn't been for the doggedness of Raymond McCord would any of this disgusting immorality have come to light?

Will anything ever be done as a result? Nuala O'Loan concluded that in dealing with the Mount Vernon UVF, "the

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most serious failings are at chief officer level particularly those chief officers who were responsible for Special Branch".

Now do you imagine for one minute that if prosecutions were taken against senior police officers that they would not immediately point the finger upwards and show that even more senior figures at Stormont were well aware of the dirty war going on?

Lord Stevens felt he could trust the taxpaying public with only a tiny fragment of his 3,000-page report which showed military intelligence, Special Branch, 14th Intelligence Company, MI5 and the even more infamous Force Research Unit, all competing for agents. We know some agents were operating for two agencies.

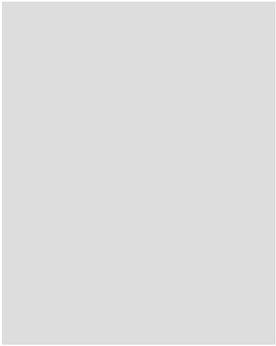
Mrs O'Loan tells us that Haddock was paid "in excess of £79,000" of taxpayers' money between 1990 and 2001. Who knew? Who was in charge? A policeman or a senior securocrat at Stormont?

Does anyone imagine that the RUC-protected murder gang operating out of Mount Vernon was anything other than one tiny fraction of the total British administration's conspiracy operation across Belfast, let alone across the north and in the Republic? Does anyone think you wouldn't uncover exactly the same stomach-turning sights if you knew which stone to turn over in say, Portadown or Lisburn or Armagh? We know that after the Security Services Act of 1989 the director and coordinator of intelligence (DCI) at Stormont was responsible to the secretary of state. We know that intelligence provided by top agents was read by British cabinet members of the Joint Intelligence Committee.

Are we seriously expected to believe that successive secretaries of state did not know of their agents' unsavoury misdemeanours? Does anyone believe senior intelligence officers did not ask for such behaviour to be sanctioned at cabinet level? If the proconsuls from 1997-2003 did not know what Special Branch was up to or ask the DCI for reports, why not? Apart from murder and racketeering, what was the outcome of this policy? Mrs O'Loan concludes that, "As a consequence of the practices of Special Branch, the position of the UVF, particularly in north Belfast and Newtownabbey, was consolidated and strengthened over the years".

In his report the then Sir John Stevens concluded that the intelligence services, far from advancing the cause of peace, actually prolonged the Troubles.

In short, the behaviour of the security forces in the north and



their political masters produced the opposite of what the British administration claimed to intend. Yet no British politician has accepted responsibility never mind apologised.

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