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DOORSTEP: SECRETARY OF STATE AT CASTLE BUILDINGS ON
19 JANUARY 1998

MEDIA

What is your reaction to today's and last night shootings, Secretary of State?

SECRETARY OF STATE

My reaction is like many people in Northern Ireland, my first thoughts are with the family and friends of both Mr McClusker and Mr Guiney and I am just appalled by the horror that more families have to go through what so many have gone through in the history of Northern Ireland. Nothing is achieved by killings of this nature, retaliation, I beg people not to indulge in it because why should we lose more lives when we are in fact doing what we can to move things forward to provide an alternative. I just ask anybody that has any information to take it to the police so we can do our best to avoid other situations of this kind.

COPY TO
2.1.198
MR O'DONNELL
MR HICKEY
~~MR HICKEY~~
MR HICKEY
MR CALLAGHAN
~~MR HICKEY~~

MEDIA

Can the peace process survive these activities by small groups?

(3)

SECRETARY OF STATE

It is very difficult, cos every murder increases the tensions between the communities, but I hope in many people that have been in Mourne this morning that I talked to said that they are not going to let these fringe groups set the agenda for them. We have the parties talking this morning beginning to get into negotiations, that is the way forward. And I just hope and pray that everybody sticks with it because that's the only way to stop further murders.

MEDIA

Dr Mowlam, a week ago it seemed so much more optimistic than it is now, what's your assessment?

SECRETARY OF STATE

My assessment is as I have said to you on many occasions is, you can leave here on a Friday and it looks good, you come back on a Monday and your heart sinks. The alternative can happen too, what we have got to do is focus on 1 May where we have a chance to set a new agreement, a new settlement and a better future for Northern Ireland. I just hope we all focus on that.

(4)

MEDIA

Do you think Sinn Fein's concerns can be accommodated, Secretary of State?

SECRETARY OF STATE

Paul Murphy, will talk to you later after today's Talks. I haven't been in them and I am sure what we will try and do is have an inclusive accommodation. That is what we are working for.

MEDIA

I just simply wanted to try and establish if in fact, you think there is any basis to the claims of Republicans that this particular document in any sense, poses a threat to their position?

SECRETARY OF STATE

I think that there were many different spins put on the document after it was published, its a more general agreement in the framework document though frameworks is still on the table. And the point of the document is to try and encourage and stimulate debate. I believe that started this morning and I hope to see more of it. Its in negotiations that the detail is sorted out and as per usual, the devil is in the detail.

(5)

MEDIA

Can I just ask you, the Twinbrook area isn't unknown for INLA terrorists, are you convinced it was the INLA alone which were responsible for the shooting?

SECRETARY OF STATE

One of those unanswerable's I have been given probably at the same briefing as you. That it looks like INLA, but just like in answer to the previous question, you wait until you get the full information, Thank you very much....