

**INTERVIEW WITH PAT ARMSTRONG, CHAIRMAN, POLICE AUTHORITY
RADIO ULSTER - WEDNESDAY 7 AUGUST 1996**

Pat Armstrong: This is the unfortunate thing about parades of this nature, where they are contentious the rank and file police officers are put in between the two sides and they have to attempt to maintain law and order in the light of differences of opinion and between the two sections of the community, and that's very unfortunate. And it's unfortunate insofar as the resources which have to be devoted to this sort of thing could have been diverted to other policing issues like the pursuit of drugs abuse, drugs barons and so on, burglaries, car thefts. That money will now have to be diverted to meet the costs of the police preserving law and order, as it was in Drumcree and in Londonderry.

Interviewer: Do you think there is any question that individual police officers will do what's asked of them and will maintain discipline over the weekend?

Pat Armstrong: The RUC is a disciplined force and I wouldn't have any doubts about the discipline of the RUC in situations of this sort, but it's very unfortunate that they have to be placed in a position where they are required to police a public disorder situation which the community brought about itself, the two communities brought about. If they could have reached some sort of a solution, then the RUC wouldn't be in this position.

Interviewer: What we saw this afternoon was the Secretary of State making the announcement and then Sir Hugh Annesley giving interviews. Were you pleased to see that Sir Patrick had taken more of a, sort of, front line position on this whereas over the last

situation in Drumcree, Sir Hugh came in for an awful lot of criticism on his own.

Pat Armstrong: Well, I'm not pleased to see that either the Secretary of State or the Chief Constable has to take a decision like this, but in the circumstances this time it was the Secretary of State's responsibility to take the decision as things developed, and the Secretary of State has taken the responsibility for this decision this time.

Interviewer: Are you confident that, come what may, the RUC will be able to cope with the law and order situation? They were very very close to breaking point across Northern Ireland last time.

Pat Armstrong: Well, we certainly in the Police Authority would hope that the RUC will be able to maintain law and order in the Londonderry situation. It's very unfortunate that it happened so soon after the Drumcree situation, but we have every confidence in the RUC in maintaining law and order, and hopefully the two communities will co-operate with the RUC in preventing any serious public disorder.

Interviewer: You can never give any total guarantees though that the RUC will be able to cope?

Pat Armstrong: Well, we can't give a total guarantee but that's what the RUC is there for, to try as far as they can to maintain law and order, and to prevent public disorder, damage to property and indeed injury to persons.