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PRIOR TAKES RESPONSIBILITY

NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY JAMES PRIOR TODAY TOOK "FULL RESPONSIBILITY" FOR THE MISTAKES HE ADMITTED HAD BEEN MADE IN THE VIOLENT SCENES SURROUNDING THE ATTEMPT TO ARREST NORRAID PUBLICITY DIRECTOR MARTIN GALVIN.

HE ALSO ADMITTED THAT "IN RETROSPECT" THE ATTEMPT TO BAN GALVIN FROM NORTHERN IRELAND COULD HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE.

IN HIS FIRST PUBLIC COMMENTS SINCE SUNDAY'S VIOLENT SCENES IN BELFAST IN WHICH A MAN WAS KILLED, MR PRIOR SAID: "IN RETROSPECT THAT DECISION TO BAN GALVIN'S ENTRY LOOKS A BAD MISTAKE. BUT AT THE TIME IT DID NOT LOOK THAT WAY. ~~_____~~ 10

"IF THINGS HAD WORKED OUT DIFFERENTLY WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN UNDER JUST AS MUCH CRITICISM IF WE HAD NOT BANNED HIM FROM COMING HERE," HE SAID.

GALVIN "OPENLY SUPPORTED MURDER, VIOLENCE, AND COLLECTED MONEY FOR ARMS TO KILL SOLDIERS AND POLICEMEN," HE SAID.

"WHEN YOU KNOW ALL THAT, DO YOU JUST SIT IDLY BACK AND SAY LET THIS MAN COME AND DO WHAT HE WANTS TO DO?

"THE ANSWER IS YOU HAVE TO TAKE A JUDGMENT ON THIS MATTER. SOMETIME YOUR JUDGMENT IS CORRECT AND BORNE OUT BY EVENTS, SOMETIMES IT GOES WRONG.

"I HAVE TO SAY IN THIS CASE SOME MISTAKES HAVE BEEN MADE FOR WHICH I TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY. FULL RESPONSIBILITY MYSELF."

ASKED WHETHER THE EXCLUSION ORDER ON GALVIN WAS A MISTAKE, MR PRIOR SAID THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT RUC CHIEF CONSTABLE SIR JOHN HERMON WOULD BE INQUIRING INTO. ~~_____~~

MR PRIOR CUT SHORT HIS HOLIDAY IN HAMPSHIRE TO RETURN TO LONDON AFTER THE DEATH OF 22-YEAR-OLD SEAN DOWNES AT A RALLY MARKING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTRODUCTION OF INTERNMENT. ~~_____~~

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