Reference   C40/7/97

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ROBERT HAMILL'S FAMILY - MONDAY 24.11.97

Staff Officer to
Chief Constable

The attached papers refer. To assist in understanding this report, it may be necessary to refer to the attached Appendices.

1   **Press Statements**

1.1   Please see report from Superintendent ██████ Deputy Chief Information Officer at Appendix A. Press Release No 1 was issued at 0600 hours on the day of the incident, 27.4.97. The offensive part of the release is apparently the reference to "rival factions". The Press Duty Officer took the information in respect of this press release from an MHS issued by local police in Portadown which referred to "two rival factions". With hindsight, it is accepted that the use of this phrase may not have been very appropriate, however, its use reflected the local police perceptions at that time.

1.2   Press Release No 2 was issued later on the same date by way of an update and an appeal for witnesses to come forward.

1.3   Press Release No 3 was issued on 30.4.97 by ACC Hall, in response to criticism from the SDLP regarding the alleged lack of intervention by the Landrover crew.

1.4   Press Release No 4 was made on 7.5.97 at the behest of the senior investigating officer, to appeal for witnesses. The opportunity was taken to clarify the situation with the phrase, "It now appears clear that 4 people, 2 couples who had left a social event in St Patrick's Hall, were set upon by a large crowd. This was the result of fairly intensive investigations by the police."

1.5   Superintendent ██████ points out that the police were simply doing their best to satisfy media demand and there was no attempt to be duplicitous about this matter.

2   **Suspension of Police Officers**

2.1   Please see a report from Superintendent ██████ regarding the involvement of 'G' Department (Appendix B). Superintendent ██████ quite rightly points out that there has not been an inquest into the death of Robert Hamill and some facts cannot be disclosed to the public as they are sub judice. It is recommended that the Secretary of State be advised as follows, in this respect:

"Decisions regarding the suspension of police officers are taken after consideration of various factors, including the seriousness of allegations and the availability of

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