

Director

**LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE REGARDING THE DEATH OF ROBERT HAMILL**

1. I have now had an opportunity to read the correspondence which has been provided to you under cover of the letter from [REDACTED] of the 3 December.
2. I note that [REDACTED] in the second paragraph of her letter refers to providing a report on the matters raised by the Secretary of State and in paragraph 3 and additional point 1 of Diane Hamill's letter to the Secretary of State dated 21 November.
3. I note, however, that [REDACTED] suggests at paragraph 3 of her letter that the Attorney would wish to see as full a report as possible so that if it is possible to defend the system in the way which the Secretary of State envisages, the opportunity is not lost. I do not wish to comment on whether the Secretary of State's job is to defend the system. However I think it appropriate, in the first instance, to provide as full a report to you as possible on the handling of the case so far and not restrict myself to the matters specifically raised by the Secretary of State.
4. The police investigation file in relation to the death of Robert Hamill was received in this office on the 7 August 1997. Eight persons in total were reported on the file. Of those eight, six had been charged by police with an offence of murder of Robert Hamill. The file effectively dealt with the evidence against those six persons who had been charged with the murder. The other two who were reported were to all intent purposes not relevant to the enquiry and there was essentially no or insufficient evidence to be considered in relation to their possible involvement in the murder of Mr Hamill.
5. Upon receipt of the police investigation file I commenced to consider the available evidence. This was an initial scrutiny of the file and was not meant to be an indepth consideration of the relevant evidence insofar as I did note that forensic reports relating to biology (body fluids) and physical methods were not yet available. Additionally, the post mortem report and medical reports were not yet available either. Both forensic and post-mortem and medical reports were essential for proper consideration of the case. No directions could properly have been taken at that stage without consideration of this evidence. Accordingly on the 12 August I issued an interim direction indicating that directions would pend the receipt and consideration of forensic and post-mortem and medical reports.
6. By the beginning of October the forensic and medical and post-mortem reports were still not available. The remand