

CONFIDENTIAL

P98/99

FROM: [REDACTED]
PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY
23 MARCH 1999

cc Mr [REDACTED]
Mr [REDACTED]
Miss [REDACTED]
Mrs [REDACTED]
Mr [REDACTED]
Mr [REDACTED]
Mr [REDACTED]
Mr [REDACTED]
Mr [REDACTED]
Mr [REDACTED]

MR LANGDON (via Mr [REDACTED])

FINUCANE, HAMILL ET AL

When we met yesterday you asked me very fairly to give you as clear an idea as I could of what I wanted you to do. I had a go at a response in the discussion but it has occurred to me since that it would be sensible if I sent you this commissioning note.

2. Since the Good Friday Agreement the police in Northern Ireland have been under closer attention than ever. The inquiry into the police chaired by Mr Chris Patten has taken a great deal of formal and informal evidence. This has involved reference to past cases where allegations have been made of faults of commission or omission by the RUC. Mr Patten has said to one or two of us that the murder cases of Finucane and Hamill cause him particular disquiet. He has wondered whether there is anything that the Government might wish to do about them before the report of his inquiry is completed and published. I, at least, have the impression that he would expect to say quite a bit about each of these cases in his report if they were not, as it were, taken off the table beforehand. He specifically said to me that there were other

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