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FROM: [REDACTED]  
Head of Police Division  
22 June 2000

cc see distribution list below

**DESK IMMEDIATE**

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) – O

**ROBERT HAMILL CASE – NEW DEVELOPMENT**Summary

**Issue:** This note advises Ministers that the police have reopened the Robert Hamill murder investigation.

**Timescale:** Immediate

**Recommendation:** That Ministers note the development. Further advice will be submitted in due course on a line to take and whether this will impinge upon the timing of [REDACTED]'s review of the case.

Background

Ministers will be aware that one of the statements made following the murder, which was withdrawn in view of the individual's concern for their personal safety, alleged that an officer present at the time of the attack subsequently made contact with one of the assailants. It is alleged that the officer phoned the individual and advised him how to go about destroying forensic evidence and thus avoid detection. John Leckey, HM Coroner for greater Belfast, announced, on 7 June, his decision not to hold an inquest into Mr Hamill's death in view of concerns for the safety of certain witnesses.

2. The behaviour of the officers in the vicinity of the attack was also investigated, under the supervision of the ICPC, and on 30 September the DPP directed 'no prosecution'. The ICPC advised us, in confidence, on 12 May that they have asked the Chief Constable to consider a disciplinary charge of 'neglect of duty' against the senior Constable at the scene of the

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attack. The Chief Constable is currently considering a response to their recommendation.

Development

3. Apparently one of the witnesses who gave an alibi in support of the policeman who was alleged to have made the telephone call, was re-visited at the coroners request. It transpires that she has made a new statement (on 20 June) alleging that her original statement was untrue. The policeman concerned is not the senior Constable who is facing the possibility of a disciplinary charge. The Chief Constable met with the ICPC last night and has decided to open up the investigation again, with ICPC supervision. The investigating officer and ICPC supervising member are to meet the DPP on Monday in order to consider how they will progress the investigation.

4. Clearly this is a significant development and will have a bearing on the calls for an inquiry, if made public. We would also need to assess whether or how it might affect the timing of [REDACTED]'s review.

5. As far as we are aware, neither the police nor the ICPC have plans to announce that these further investigations are being carried out in the Hamill case. If it transpires that they do, appropriate press lines will be submitted.

*Signed*

[REDACTED]

cc PS/ [REDACTED] (B&L) - O  
Mr [REDACTED] - O  
Mr [REDACTED] O  
Mr [REDACTED] - O  
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