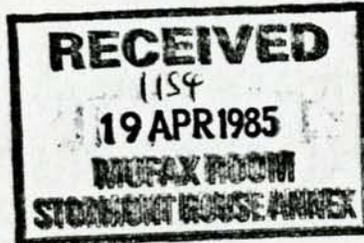


E.R.

6/2



Mr Coulson - M



cc: PS/SofS (L&B) - M
 PS/Mr Scott (L&B) - M
 PS/PUS (L&B) - M
 2 PS/Mr Bloomfield - M
 Mr A Stephens - M
 Mr Bronnan
 Mr Merifield - M
 Mr Gilliland - M
 Mr Buxton - M
 Mr Chesterton
 Mr Reeve - M

3 SEC/1

POLICING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your note of 17 April about the false impression Irish Ministers seem to have of the effectiveness of the RUC in Northern Ireland. We discussed this when we met in Belfast on 17 April.

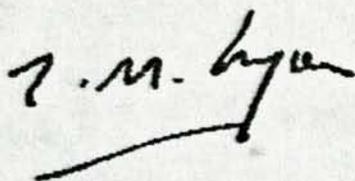
2. We both recognised that the Taoiseach's statements need to be considered within the wider political context of the present state of Anglo-Irish relations. But even allowing for that, there have been a number of indications recently that the Taoiseach and his advisers have a false and unhelpful impression both of the effectiveness of the RUC in Northern Ireland; its work in patrolling and investigating crime in nationalist areas; its efforts to improve its relations with the community; and the respective responsibilities of the Chief Constable, the Police Authority, the Police Complaints Board, and the Secretary of State.

3. Like you, I doubt if now is the time publicly to confront Irish Ministers on all this. I think there would be benefit, however, in us considering whether we could provide some factual briefing for the Irish on all these issues so that they were aware of the facts, and of the importance which we attach to there being a proper perception of the work of the

E.R.

RUC. The timing of such a presentation would need to be carefully considered, but, as a first step, it might be helpful if together we prepared a briefing note with supporting factual information on these matters for our Embassy in Dublin. If you agree, it would be helpful if you could prepare a first draft.

4. I know that Ministers generally take every opportunity to show publicly their support for the RUC. This will be given added emphasis in the next few weeks as the full impact of the enquiry into the Sean Downes affair becomes public knowledge. You may wish to consider whether there might be an opportunity in the next few weeks for the Secretary of State or Mr Scott to talk more specifically about the effectiveness of the RUC across the communities in order to counter some of the more damaging and inaccurate criticisms which were in Dr FitzGerald's speech and which will no doubt be reiterated and perhaps enlarged on in the coming weeks.



J M LYON

19 April 1985