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Mr Lyon - Mufax



1. Mr Carron

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - M
 PS/Mr Scott (L&B)
 PS/PUS (L&B) / M
 PS/Mr Bloomfield ✓
 Mr A Stephens
 Mr Brennen - M
 Mr Merifield
 Mr Gilliland
 Mr Buxton
 Mr Chesterton - M
 Mr Reeve

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TAOISEACH'S SPEECH ON NORTHERN IRELAND

You will have seen, from telegram 204 of 15 April, the gist of Dr Fitzgerald's speech in Cork on 14 April. According to reports Dr Fitzgerald claimed, in support of his thesis that changes were needed in the security forces in Northern Ireland, that there were parts of Northern Ireland where policing was inadequate. It appears that he went on to claim that the right to adequate policing was a minimum entitlement of any citizen in a civilised state, and the situation in Northern Ireland would have to be addressed and a solution found.

2. It is difficult to assess the criteria against which Dr Fitzgerald is judging "adequate policing", but clearly, by implication, Northern Ireland, or at least parts of it, fail to meet his criteria. If we look at the Interpol statistics of 1981 (the last that Ireland has made available) it would seem that a number of European countries, in overall terms, might fail to meet Dr Fitzgerald's exacting standards. The following are the rates of reported crimes per 100,000 of population and "clear-up rates" as a percentage:

	<u>Crimes per 100,000</u>	<u>Clear-up rates</u>
England and Wales	5,661	38
Northern Ireland	4,039	27
Republic of Ireland	2,598	37
Federal Republic of Germany	6,603	45
Italy	2,087	31
Norway	3,208	23

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3. It is clear from these figures that, from a national standpoint, although Northern Ireland does not emerge as the most law-abiding community or the most successful in clearing up crimes, it hardly merits the accolade of "the country with the most inadequate policing".

4. At a local level in Northern Ireland, you will recall, from Mr Buxton's note of 11 March on this subject, that for all practical purposes there is no discernible difference between the performance of the police in the predominantly Protestant area covered by 'E' Division in East Belfast and those in the Catholic area of 'B' Division in West Belfast (I attach comparative figures as a reminder). Similarly, in 'N' Division (which includes Londonderry) there is no evidence (other than anecdotal evidence) to suggest that the police in the Waterside sub-division to the east of the Foyle are any more proficient or successful than those in the Strand Road sub-division to the west. If Dr Fitzgerald has any evidence to the contrary we would be very interested to hear it.

5. I am of course aware that there is some local unrest in Londonderry about the Creggan Post Office which has been shut by the Post Office because of problems in transporting cash. The difficulty here is that the police are reluctant to assume routine and predictable duties - which the escorting of cash certainly would become. This is understandable; indeed we have seen only recently at Newry the tragic result of a police duty which has become routine (opening the Courthouse gates). This is a far cry from saying that policing in Londonderry is inadequate. Indeed, by this test I would venture to suggest that there may be areas in the Republic where policing could be termed "inadequate".

6. I am seriously concerned about Dr Fitzgerald's and Peter Barry's continued attacks upon the performance and standards of the security forces in Northern Ireland. This latest example is wholly erroneous and extremely tendentious, and I would suggest that we should think about countering it with some vigour. On balance I think that we should try to switch the debate from the

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public into a private arena. However, I would welcome your views.



P COULSON
Law and Order Division

17 April 1985

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