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STALKER/SAMPSON ENQUIRY

ESSENTIAL FACTS

In late 1982 six suspected terrorists were shot dead by the RUC in Co Armagh. This led to allegations of a "shoot to kill" policy, a cover-up by the RUC and an incursion into the Republic of Ireland in the course of one of the incidents.

In May 1984, the Chief Constable of the RUC commissioned an enquiry. After consulting Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, and in accordance with usual practice, he appointed Mr John Stalker, Deputy Chief Constable of Greater Manchester to lead a team of detectives from Greater Manchester to carry it out.

Mr Stalker submitted an interim report to Sir John Hermon on 18 September 1985, Sir John in turn submitted it to the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland on 13 February 1986. On 4 March, the Director directed that further investigations should be undertaken. This task was to have been completed by the same team of detectives led by Mr Stalker. However following allegations about Mr Stalker's personal conduct, he was sent on enforced leave and later suspended from duty. The allegations concerning breaches of discipline in Greater Manchester are being investigated by Mr Colin Sampson, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire. Sir John Hermon is anxious that the enquiry into allegations about the RUC should be completed quickly. After consultation with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, <sup>and the Attorney-General</sup> he appointed Mr Colin Sampson to take over the leadership of that team in addition to his other task.

The Irish raised this issue at the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 17 June when Mr Barry registered the "interest and concern" of the nationalist minority community which had come to him. Some confusion prevailed for a time, when the Irish gained the impression that the Stalker Report was a final one. Northern Ireland Office Minister, Mr Scott made the position clear in the House of Commons on 19 June, and the Irish themselves took the heat out of the situation when Mr Barry in answer to an Oral Question from Mr Haughey, said that there had been some confusion but this had been the result

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## Essential Facts .....

of a genuine misunderstanding and not any attempt by HMG to mislead them.

The most recent development concerns the suspension of two RUC officers on 7 July, announced by the Chief Constable on 12 July. The two men had been transferred to non-operational duties, apparently following a recommendation in Mr Stalker's interim report. Mr Sampson recommended that they should be suspended. The suspensions go some way towards countering the suggestion that Mr Sampson would not be able to pick-up the threads of the enquiry owing to obstruction from the RUC.

Neither NIO Ministers nor officials have seen the interim report.

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Points to Make (Defensive)

- 1 Both the Chief Constable of the RUC and I stressed that it is important for the enquiry to be completed as soon as possible so that damaging speculation may cease.
- 2 Public speculation is harmful (not least to the RUC at a very difficult time): grateful for your efforts to damp this down in the Dail.
- 3 The conduct of the enquiry is a matter for the Chief Constable of the RUC; it is clearly taking its course, as the suspensions of the two men on 7 July have shown.
- 4 The suspension of members of the RUC is a matter for the Chief Constable.
- 5 It will be for the DPP(NI) to decide whether any prosecutions should be brought. This is the top priority.
- 6 At the appropriate time, I will satisfy myself that any matters of wider public interest arising are dealt with, and I would expect to make this clear to Parliament.
- 7 Publication of the report would not be appropriate. Reports of this kind are directed towards the possibility of serious criminal proceedings. For obvious reasons it is not practice to publish material of this sort.
- 8 There is no evidence to connect the investigation into Stalker with those by Stalker.

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