

FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD IRVINE OF LAIRG

CONFIDENTIAL



HOUSE OF LORDS,  
LONDON SW1A 0PW

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File  
27 March 1998  
M.B.

The Right Honourable Dr Marjorie Mowlam MP  
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland  
Room 8 Parliament Buildings  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3ST

Dear Mo,

PROPOSED POLICE COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

I understand that our officials are liaising on the content of your proposed papers. However, my comments on your minute to the Prime Minister are:-

- (a) I am supportive in principle of the proposal to establish a Royal Commission to examine policing in Northern Ireland.
- (b) My concern is that the Commission's proposed terms of reference extend to: "and criminal justice issues which are closely linked to policing". I am advised that this is not intended to extend beyond those items closely related to policing such as responsibility for prosecutions or policing work on the ground (e.g. restorative justice), but you may want to consider whether there may be a wider and less benevolent view taken by local politicians that the whole of the Criminal Justice System is to be covered by the Commission.
- (c) Also I wonder whether the reference to "a parallel review of criminal justice" would benefit from further definition - an independent review is not proposed and the papers should perhaps make it clear that planned "discussions" will build upon the ideas already suggested by HMG and the Talks.

So, in these respects, I think there may need to be more clarity and definition in relation to criminal justice matters in the papers and in the Commission's terms of reference. I am sure you can achieve that and I would then be happy to offer my unreserved support.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of IN, Donald Dewar, John Morris, and to Sir Richard Wilson.

Yours ever,

David