

Ref. A086/1078

PRIME MINISTER

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Cabinet: Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will wish to report on the security situation in Northern Ireland, notably the events of Easter Monday and the attacks by loyalist elements on members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, which have continued since then. He will no doubt also cover the increasing polarisation in the unionist community and the question whether Mr Molyneux and other politicians will wish in due course to start a dialogue with the Government. (The draft reply to the latest letter to you from Messrs Molyneux and Paisley, enclosed with Mr Daniell's letter of 8 April to Mr Powell, is relevant; so is my minute of 7 April about secret contact between Mr Molyneux and the Taoiseach, of which only the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chief Whip are informed.)

2. You may wish to ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the attacks on members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary are likely to continue and more generally about the prospects for public order. There is information that a loyalist march is planned on 5 May in Portadown, organised by the same people and using the same route as was foreseen for the march banned on Easter Monday.

3. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was invited by OD(I) on 4 March to review contingency plans for dealing with major disruption in Northern Ireland. I understand that he is reviewing the plans and may write to colleagues within a couple of weeks. In view of the importance of the subject - especially



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given the long period which the Government has had to prepare for a major crisis - you may wish in Cabinet to ask the Secretary of State to circulate his views as soon as possible.

RIA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

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