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FROM: D J WATKINS
US CENT SEC
DATE: 30 OCTOBER 1992

CC: PS/Mr Mates (B,L&DFP) - B
PS/Mr Atkins (DOE,DED&L) - B
PS/Mr Hanley (DENI,B&L) - B
PS/Lord Arran (DANI,DHSS&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr Thomas (B&L) - B
Mr Elliott
Mr Murray
Mr Semple
Mr Blackwell - B
Mr Lyon - B
Mr Hunter, DHSS
Mr Wood (B&L) - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Wylie, SSA
Mr Robinson, CA
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr McConnell - B

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

GLENGORMLEY EXPLOSION

1. The SofS will want an immediate assessment of damage to civil property and advice on further action.

Damage

2. Housing: approximately 150 houses damaged, all privately owned; of which about 10 may prove to have severe structural damage. The 10 families will be offered alternative accommodation by the Housing Executive (HE). The other 140 sustained damage to roofs/doors/windows. Up to 50 commercial properties damaged.

CONFIDENTIAL

DJW/RJ/13623

CONFIDENTIAL

3. Two schools affected: St Bernard's maintained primary - superficial; on holiday; normal operation Tuesday. Glengormley controlled primary - considerable blast, minor structural damage; repairs underway; on holiday, fully operational Tuesday. No health service property damaged. Electricity and phone systems intact.

Action

4. Housing:
- HE staff on site within one hour of explosion. Staff based in local church hall;
 - weather-proofing by HE now complete;
 - information leaflets being distributed on contact points for HE, SSA, Compensation Agency (CA);
- Further - HE ready to give advice to owner-occupiers of suitable contractors, forms of contract, etc, for execution of full repairs.
5. Health:
- team of social workers in action, visiting each house.
6. Social Security:
- staff already operating in same local church hall as HE;
 - each house affected will be visited by Social Security Agency (SSA) staff over the weekend to explain entitlements, leave information leaflets, etc.

CONFIDENTIAL

DJW/RJ/13623

CONFIDENTIAL

7. Compensation:

- CA representatives on site, based in same church hall;
- 8 loss adjusters on site; preliminary estimate of damage about £1.5m;
- notice of intention to claim leaflets available; the Law Society has arranged that a panel of local solicitors is available and CA is providing to the panel a full stock of notices of intention to claim. Formal application forms will be provided within 24 hours of receipt of notices of intention. CA is ready, as at Belvoir, to release interim payments on foot of written confirmation from the applicant's solicitor that he/she has clear title.

Further Steps

8. Severe personal and domestic damage seems to have been sustained. The scale is less than Belvoir, and our overall response should be proportionate. But we need to bear in mind that personal damage may be as severe on an individual level.

9. With this in mind, I recommend the following in light of discussion with departments/agencies involved:

- SofS should authorise HE to offer to undertake repairs to owner-occupied houses in return for assignment of compensation rights; with HE (sic - not DOE) pursuing beneficiaries for payment of £200 compensation threshold where appropriate. Uptake was negligible at Belvoir, but the facility certainly deflected much criticism. Although this

CONFIDENTIAL

DJW/RJ/13623

CONFIDENTIAL

facility would be available much earlier at Glengormley, officials believe that uptake, and therefore risk to public (HE/DOE) funds, would be minimal. The SofS has already given his verbal authority for this, as it needs to be offered by HE today to have any impact, either material or political. We need not however make any public statements to this effect.

- the Press Office has already issued a low-key press release (copy attached). In keeping with that, we recommend that Ministers need not visit Glengormley today and that they should not use this explosion to go on to the offensive against the IRA. The Chief Constable has already visited the area. Instead, SPOB, Mr Wood and I recommend that Mr Hanley might visit the scene tomorrow essentially to reassure the local residents, thank public services, etc.
- on the political front, there may be mileage in Mr Hanley having a word today with the local MP, Mr Clifford Forsythe (home No [REDACTED] office 08494-60776); and with the Mayor of Newtownabbey, Alderman Templeton (Ind Unionist; phone 09603-52681). If so, he could draw on the action recorded in this note.

Conclusions

10. We should not volunteer any special payment (as with DHSS's £10,000 payment to the Belvoir Relief Fund authorised by the SofS). If the local Council set up a similar fund and we come under pressure to match it, we can reflect further if necessary, though without a favourable pre-disposition. If asked, Ministers can say that the Belvoir response was in recognition of action by the Council and widespread and severe personal distress;

CONFIDENTIAL

DJW/RJ/13623

CONFIDENTIAL

at Glengormley damage is on a lesser scale and we are satisfied that all the public services are promptly and fully in action to deal with personal distress.

11. If the question arises of the source of funds for compensation, etc, the line authorised previously by Mr Mates is that money will be found for criminal damage compensation. The same applies essentially to housing and other expenditure, without being drawn on specific funding sources.

Conclusion

12. Is the SofS content (1) with these actions and (2) to authorise the extended role of the HE as at para 9, first indent?

13. Will Mr Hanley contact Mr Forsythe and visit the area tomorrow?

14. A further progress report will be made on Tuesday 3 November.

[Signed DJW]

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CONFIDENTIAL

DJW/RJ/13623

CONFIDENTIAL

30 OCTOBER 1992

GLENGORMLEY BOMBING - STATEMENT BY THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

FOR INFORMATION

Following the bomb, placed by the IRA, in Glengormley last night an advice centre has been established in the Presbyterian Church Hall.

The Department of Health and Social Services, the Housing Executive and the Compensation Agency are all represented and can be contacted there on Glengormley (0232) 848774.

CONFIDENTIAL

DJW/RJ/13623