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Pages: 2

TO: HQ FROM: BELFAST
FOR: P HENNESSY FROM: M MELLETT

Attacks on the homes of five SDLP Councillors
on 20/9/93

On hearing radio reports of these incidents early this morning we raised them with the other side.

This afternoon Christine Collins told me she had had a discussion with the Chief Constable during the morning and she gave the following information about the security aspects of the incidents.

Four of the five devices exploded. The fifth, at the home of Councillor Toman, was defused by the security forces.

I asked if it was proposed to review the security of all SDLP Councillors following last night's incidents. She said that their security generally was kept under continuous review and in regard to individual Councillors in the light of specific threats.

Councillor Cassie McDermott, Banbridge, has been in the VIP Protection Scheme for some time because she has been attacked on three previous occasions.

Jonathan Stephenson, Belfast, was recently one of ten people to be admitted to the Scheme.

Dr. Joe Hendron has been in the Scheme for some time.

Peter O'Hagan, Lisburn, is now being admitted to the Scheme, as is Patrick Toman.

The VIP Protection Scheme involves the provision of particular security arrangements for persons admitted to the Scheme. The RUC assess the threat and decide what arrangements are appropriate in all the circumstances. I asked if the recipient of the protection had a say in the level of security which he considered ought to be provided. She told me he had but only within the limits recommended by the RUC. She said that some SDLP politicians had, in the past, refused high level security arrangements recommended by the RUC. She referred to the occasion when an RUC member was shot while protecting an SDLP politician some year back. This incident, she claimed, formed the basis for current SDLP policy on accepting high level/profile security.

P.S. Since speaking with Ms. Collins, I have heard from other sources that an RUC member called on Mr. Stephenson after the incident last night.

The RUC man's approach went something like this:

- Who are you?
- Which party do you support?
- Can you think of anyone who would want to do this to you?
- Have you made any inflammatory speeches lately?