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Mr Barry
Mr Stephens
Mr Innes
Mr Blackwell

Mr Sonnenberg
APS/Secretary of State

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH NICIAC

As requested, I attach a briefing on the Police Authority building programme and the intimidation of contractors, for the above meeting on 9 September 1986.

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Stormont House Annexe

5 September 1986

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THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY: SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH
NICIAC - 9 SEPTEMBER 1986

CONSTRUCTION WORK FOR THE SECURITY FORCES

LINE TO TAKE

The Secretary of State might wish to take the opportunity to remind the Committee of the work available on security projects which has not been taken up due to the Provisional IRA's campaign of intimidation and of further work in the pipeline. Several companies and individuals have shown great courage in continuing to work on such projects despite the threats but there is a need for the construction industry as a whole and the major contractors in particular to give a lead on this very real problem.

2. The construction industry has stood up to a great deal of intimidation on many fronts in recent years and the present campaign must also be faced. The rewards would not be insignificant. The Police Authority alone would hope to spend some £40m over the next 4 years and if contractors would come forward to take up the work this amount could be viewed as a minimum figure. The Secretary of State could say that he recognises the difficulties of the situation and emphasise again that the Government is determined that the PIRA campaign will not succeed. To that end every effort would be made to support those firms prepared to work on security projects. He might even wish to take the opportunity to float again the idea of the consortium approach which would avoid individual companies or directors being openly associated with the work.

CAUTION: The Secretary of State should avoid being drawn into any discussion on the payment of premiums and/or danger money in respect of security force contracts.

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2.

BACKGROUND

3. While much of the Police Authority's major works programme was initially affected by intimidation - most notably the new sub-divisional headquarters at Waterside, Londonderry and the extension at Strabane - it has also been delayed by the need for substantial redesigning work to be carried out in order that adequate protection against mortar attack might be provided. In effect there has been very little new work coming forward recently; this situation is, however, about to change as the necessary redesigning is completed and there are several major projects which will be available for tender over the next 12 months - Ligoniel (£1.53m), Banbridge (£1.93m), Waterside (53.63m - retender), Strabane (£2.21m - retender), Dundonald (£1.23m) and Ballynafeigh (£0.86m).

4. The main brunt of the intimidation campaign has been felt in the areas of minor works and maintenance. Much of this work is required in the older border stations which are increasingly under pressure as additional manpower is squeezed into already cramped space and damage is caused by frequent PIRA attacks. It has proved impossible to retain contractors for most of this work and the Royal Engineers are undertaking several of the top priority tasks. In addition to the substantial programme of minor works an estate condition survey is underway; this has highlighted the need for a planned programme of maintenance for the complete police building stock. On top of all this mortar protection is required at many high risk established stations and something in excess of 300 temporary prefabricated buildings must be replaced or protected.

5. The Authority had anticipated spending some £10m on major and minor works in the current financial year; in the present climate of intimidation this has been reduced to £9m and there is every likelihood that this figure will be underspent. Over the PES period the Authority had estimated expenditure of some £12m in each year without taking the requirement for mortar proofing and hardened structures (as replacements for the prefabricated buildings) into consideration.

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