

FROM: JUDITH BROWN

25 OCTOBER 1993

Mr Todd
Mr Clements

Ma Clements 27/10
To see please
start from the summary of see it)
in manual arrangements of see it)
whether Central Secretariat to be in the role
in the coordinating role in "civil incidents"
incidents & will be in section 4 to the role
the reference in Council is interesting
of Council is interesting
It would appear that several
council officials might
at that stage
relevant

indeed

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON POINTS TO LEARN FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

After the bomb explosions at Belvoir and Glengormley, the Secretary of State was concerned that the Government departments' response was less co-ordinated that it could have been, especially in relation to briefing of Ministers and himself. Mr Watkins of Central Secretariat was tasked to ensure that all possible steps were being taken by departments to ensure that adequate help and advice was provided to victims of these incidents and that the Secretary of State and Ministers were supplied with authoritative, up-to-date, information on what was happening.

When the immediate urgency of the Belvoir and Glengormley situations had passed, Mr Watkins convened a Working Group to look at whether the response could be improved by changing departmental procedures or removing 'red tape'. Mrs Madden represented CJSD on this Working Group as she has responsibility both for compensation policy and emergency planning.

The terms of reference of the Working Group referred specifically to the Government response to terrorist actions. However, the aim of the Group was stated as "... to develop an outline of a written standard operating procedure which would set out clearly who does what in response to any incident, whether from terrorist or natural cause".

This goes beyond the terms of reference, and recognizes that in many ways the response to damage to homes, businesses and communities by terrorist actions is similar to that employed in the aftermath of a civil disaster.

The report concentrates on financial issues such as compensation, social security payments and reconstruction issues such as the provision of emergency and long term repair services. The conclusions of the Working Group appear to be sensible and well thought out. No changes were recommended to the initial call-out procedures and the ability of agencies to respond effectively to an emergency situation recognised improvements in instructions from DOE(NI) to

local council chief executives and changes to social security policy were recommended, which if implemented, would benefit the response to people affected by civil emergencies. The recommendation at paragraph 7(j) that a briefing pack should be put together for issue immediately to any residents affected by a major incident or emergency is an interesting one. Such a pack would be valuable in a civil emergency, although the practicality of continuously updating a large number of packs containing information from many sources is open to question.

One of the main conclusions was that Central Secretariat would continue to provide a co-ordinating role and interface with Ministers in relation to any major incident. In this it takes on the role which NIEC would have in a civil emergency. This is in some ways a complication to outsiders but since the need to activate either arrangement is thankfully rare, I do not think that the different handling of terrorist and civil incidents is likely to cause much confusion. It does raise philosophical questions about what the difference is and why different departments have such similar responsibilities.

I do not think that we need to make any response or comment on the report at present. It will be interesting to see how the recommendations are taken forward.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

AJ EP 2920

*courses at Kasirgwal & we
will be considering this as part of our
re-examination of Council's attendance at the
College.*

27/10/03

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Mr John
Mr Clements

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON POINTS TO LEARN FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

After the bomb explosion at Belfast and Glengormley, the Secretary of State was concerned that the Government departments' response was less co-ordinated than it could have been, especially in relation to briefing of Ministers and himself. Mr Watkins of Central Secretariat was asked to ensure that all possible steps were being taken by departments to ensure that adequate help and advice was provided to victims of these incidents and that the Secretary of State and Ministers were supplied with authoritative, up-to-date information on what was happening.

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