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SofS

To see 18/5/9

TO: SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L)

FROM: RICHARD NEEDHAM

cc Minister of State (B&L)
 Lord Skelmersdale (B&L)
 Dr Mawhinney (B&L)
 Sir John Blelloch (B&L)
 Sir K Bloomfield -
 Mr Ledlie
 Mr Fell
 Mr Murray
 Mr Loughran
 Mr Crozier
 Mr Spence
 Mr Wilson Cent Sec
 MC

12/154/96

GLOR NA nGAEL

I am very concerned about reaction in West Belfast to the decision to withdraw funding from Glor Na nGael in accordance with Mr Hurd's statement of 27 June 1985.

It would appear that action has been taken across the nationalist community, involving the SDLP, RC church and community leaders as well as Sinn Fein, to fight the decision. I am told that people who a few weeks ago would not have been seen in the same room as Gerry Adams, attended a meeting along with him on the evening of 29 August.

The concern appears to be based on two grounds. First, there is a widespread feeling that Glor Na nGael has no paramilitary connections. Secondly, there is concern about the apparent arbitrariness of the decision and that there is no explanation of it. Community groups which have worked hard and with great difficulty to take constructive action in West Belfast feel that they may themselves be at risk of closure for reasons of which they are unaware and for which they can offer no defence or explanation.

I know the difficulties that are involved in handling decisions of this sort and why so little can be said about them, but I feel we must try to find ways of lessening their adverse effects. It is most disturbing that highly respectable organisations like Worknet, which have worked so

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effectively in West Belfast, are being drawn into opposition and that the Church apparently feels it must strongly oppose Government policy along with Sinn Fein. I am very concerned about the potential repercussions for the Making Belfast Work initiative and the harm that could be done to the more trusting relationship that we have gradually been establishing with the nationalist community.

Name Sinclair

for

RICHARD NEEDHAM

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September 1990

Approved by the Minister
and signed in his absence.

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