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September 10, 1986

The Honorable Caspar W. Weinberger  
 Secretary  
 Department of Defense  
 The Pentagon  
 Washington, D.C. 20301-1155

Dear Secretary Weinberger:

We are writing to urge that the Department of the Air Force terminate its contract with Short Brothers, Ltd., of Northern Ireland. We seek this due to the company's continuing policies which have resulted in blatant discrimination against the minority Catholic community in Northern Ireland.

On March 2, 1984, the Air Force announced that Short Brothers had been awarded two contracts under the European Distribution System Aircraft (EDSA) program. The total amount of the contract was estimated to be \$150 million over a ten year period. It is our understanding that about half of these funds have in fact been obligated. We should urge the Air Force not to exercise its option to purchase additional aircraft from Short Brothers and terminate the contract.

You may recall at the time that this contract was awarded, a bi-partisan group of House and Senate members wrote to you to urge that the initial contract be amended to include a formal commitment from Short Brothers that they would adhere strictly to the Fair Employment Act of Northern Ireland with respect to all hiring and recruiting for jobs which would emanate from these contracts. Regrettably, this request was refused by the Air Force.

The fact is, since the time that the contract was awarded to Short Brothers, they have failed to meet the basic test of the Fair Employment Act by providing equality of opportunity for both communities in Northern Ireland. In 1978, Short Brothers, which is Northern Ireland's largest employer, had a workforce of over 5,000 persons. A total of 5 percent were Catholic. As of August, 1986 Short's total employment had increased to 7,000 persons, yet the percentage of Catholics has remained at 5 percent, despite the fact they comprise 38 percent of the population in Northern Ireland. It should also be noted that almost one third of the new jobs created were as a result of the Air Force contract.

With respect to recruiting policies, Short Brothers has actually regressed since the contract was signed. According to the Fair Employment Trust, during the nine months after Short Brothers secured the Defense Department contract, the proportion of Catholics recruited actually decreased by 2.6 percent despite the fact that the proportion of Catholic applicants increased from 17 to 26.6 percent.

In addition, Short Brothers refused for a period of five years to sign the Fair Employment Agency's declaration of intent to provide equality of opportunity in employment. In recent months, published reports have indicated that Short Brothers has allowed their facilities to be used by Unionist extremists for purely sectarian activities aimed at intimidating the minority employees of Short Brothers.

In our judgement, Short Brothers' policies and refusal to work toward improvements in expansion of opportunity for both communities is most disturbing. The Air Force contract was one of the largest ever won by Short Brothers. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the Department of Defense to terminate this contract before we allow any more United States taxpayer funds to be used to subsidize continued discrimination in Northern Ireland. Earlier this year, on a bi-partisan basis, Congress approved legislation to provide a first time economic aid package for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Central to this legislation are certain conditions and understandings of the distribution of the \$120 million in U.S. aid over the next three years. This includes two provisions which we quote directly from the legislation:

"Disbursements from the fund

- a) will be distributed in accordance with the principle of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination in employment without regard to religious affiliation

"The President shall report to the Congress on the degree to which

- 2) The United States contribution to the fund is meeting the objectives of encouraging new investment job creation and economic reconstruction on the basis of strict equality of opportunity

The ongoing Air Force contract with Short Brothers represents a glaring departure from current U.S. policy with respect to Northern Ireland and should be terminated on this basis as well as the aforementioned reasons.

We appreciate your prompt response.

*Biaggi  
Jure  
Munyak  
Korjowski*

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