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SECRET

Mr. O Tuathail.

Libya/IRA Connection

In a House of Commons answer last night, Mrs. Thatcher said that a new account of up-to-date links between Libya and the IRA was being prepared. Reports in today's British press suggest that the British Government believes that such evidence will assist in the justification of the American attack on Tripoli and Benghazi last week. I have drawn the attention of Mr. Kirby in the Department of Justice to Mrs. Thatcher's reply and have asked if he has any knowledge of what any new evidence may be. He was not aware of the matter, nor was he aware of any contact between British and Irish security services concerning the proposed reply. Mr. Kirby stressed that his Department was not necessarily aware of all information which the Garda authorities may have in their possession, and indeed he mentioned privately and not for repetition that in relation to the question of Libyan financial support for the IRA, it had been suggested to him by the Garda authorities that it would be better not to press for the information for security reasons, including possible loss of life. Mr. Kirby said that everything which the Garda authorities had actually sent to his Department had been submitted to his Minister and the Taoiseach, and also he believed to our Minister.

Mr. Kirby himself is inclined to doubt suggestions that the Libyans have provided £2 million or more to the IRA in recent months and that this aid is continuing. He is more inclined to favour the theory that the IRA is at present strapped for cash (a point which has been mentioned to Mr. O'Brien by a particularly well informed journalist (Alan Murray) recently).

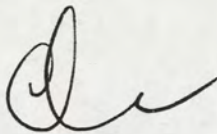
It is notable that in the material being put out by British Information Services no reference is made to Libyan financial

assistance, or to the question of the hand guns which were found in Roscommon/Sligo and which, it has been suggested by British Intelligence, were destined for Libya. The British Information Services have in fact simply referred to Irish press reports concerning the labelling of the boxes and the manufacture of the ammunition in Yugoslavia for the Libyan Army.

Mr. Kirby did mention, however, that the Garda authorities had told him that they are satisfied that money has been provided and is being provided, although he has not been given any concrete evidence for this and the Garda authorities themselves have not indicated that they have any concrete evidence.

Presumably the British Government will weigh carefully whatever they propose to point to as new evidence because of the danger of compromising security and sources.

The release of information, especially if it concerns events in our jurisdiction, is of interest to us for political as well as security reasons. It may be that the Taoiseach and the Minister for Justice and our Minister are aware of what Mrs. Thatcher intends to say in the House of Commons. If that is not the case, however, I would recommend that we ask the Embassy to enquire of the British what they intend to say and when they intend to say it.



Declan O'Donovan
25 April 1986.

c.c. Mr. David Barry
Mr. David Donoghue

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