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Reference Code: 2004/7/2675

Title: Letter from Ambassador of Ireland to Great Britain D O'Sullivan to HJ McCann, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, regarding the proposed sale of night-vision equipment from Britain to the Department of Defence, with a note from Kelvin White of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the security aspects of such a sale.

Creation Date(s): 1 May, 1973

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 2 pages

Creator(s): Department of Foreign Affairs

Access Conditions: Open

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AMBASÁID NA HÉIREANN, LONDAIN.



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

17 Grosvenor Place

SW1X 7HR

SECRET

1st May 1973

Dear Secretary

In his letter of the 19th April Mr Whelan informed you of the decision of the Ministry of Defence to lift the restrictions on the sale of night vision equipment to the Department of Defence. He also indicated that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would be handing over a Note about the modalities of supply.

I took delivery of the Note from Mr Kelvin White when I called on him yesterday afternoon and I enclose two copies of it. He laid particular emphasis on the security aspect. There are a great many areas of the world to which the export of this equipment would not be allowed. The Ministry of Defence is fully satisfied as to the reliability of our Army. The British have come across only three instances of Irish Army rifles having come into the hands of the IRA. As the IRA are most anxious to get access to this equipment, every precaution must be taken with it. Consequently the arrangements for delivery and use should be settled in detail between the Department of Defence and Brigadier MacMullen.

I am writing separately on other points which came up during my talk with Mr White.

Yours sincerely

Ambassador

Mr Hugh J McCann
Secretary

Department of Foreign Affairs

In an Aide Memoire of the 17th of November, 1972, the Embassy asked, on behalf of the Irish Department of Defence, about Night Vision Equipment of the Image Intensifying type, and the availability of this equipment for export. The equipment falls under two heads: surveillance equipment and weapon sight equipment.

2. There is no limitation in principle to the supply of either category to the Irish Department of Defence. Certain safeguards are, however, desirable in practice. These, it is suggested, could be the subject of further discussion between the appropriate officials. In brief, in circumstances where any untoward incident involving equipment licensed for export could affect security, or the maintenance of good relations with the recipient country, it is desirable that there should be discussions on the security precautions that will govern the storage and handling of such equipment. It must be borne in mind that Night Vision equipment, and particularly the individual weapon sight, is known to be high on the IRA requirements list.

3. It would therefore seem appropriate that Brigadier MacMullen (Military Attaché, HM Embassy Dublin) should work closely with the Irish Department of Defence in arranging the transaction, and, after satisfactory arrangements have been made, that delivery should be made directly from the British firm of Pilkington Perkin and Elmer to a designated depot of the Irish Department of Defence without the involvement of any intermediaries.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

27 April 1973