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Minister Now the whole basis and underlined feature of this exercise is aid to the civil power. This is a law and order nation and a law and order Government and ^{it} is the duty of the Armed Forces to assist the Gardaí and provide for them all the services that they need to see that law and order is preserved. Those are my instructions and I was sent here about a fortnight ago and I have followed them as diligently as I could but assisted to a superlative degree by everything you see around us, typified by the Chief of Staff in respect of the Army, Capt McKenna in respect of the Naval Force, the Secretary of the Department and those who are not here, namely the Guards - the Garda Force right down through from the top to the bottom. So the statement that we issued at about half-two this morning is correct. To that I would like to add that this craft was under surveillance for twenty-four hours. At least two Irishmen travelled on the Claudia; six have been apprehended. There were 250 rifles on board, ^{AS TO} By the way what I am saying now, you realise we have ~~been~~ getting telephone messages in the last few minutes so that if there is more on board, this is not all ^{THAT WAS} on board, but I merely say what I know and give you the full information I have at this moment ^{of} time. If there is further information the only reason why you are not getting it is that I have not got it. All right, happy on that! 250 rifles, 240 small arms are definitely on board and a quantity of anti-tank mines and explosives. Now I am informed by the Chief of Staff here that an anti-tank mine is not necessarily something that you use against a tank but it has this feature that relative to its weight and size it has a much higher degree of explosives ^{TO} than would be usual in the sort of explosives that have been used here and in the North of Ireland - its a very powerful thing. I have told you that they were under surveillance for twenty-four hours, and at that stage gentlemen. I think its over to you.

Reporter Could you tell us where these arms are from? Are they English or Russian or American?

Minister No I couldn't tell you at this moment where they are from. I am going to be quite honest with you. When I reach the stage of something I wont tell you, I'll tell you I wont tell you and anything else that I know of I will tell you - right.

Reporter Did the Irish Authorities get a tip off?

No Defence Minister in the world will divulge sources of information. You yourselves gentlemen are prepared to go to jail rather than divulge your sources of information and I have no intention whatever of divulging any source of information.

Reporter Was the seizure of the vessel part of the major clampdown by the new Government on this sort of operation?

Minister I dont know - if you could describe the action as a major clampdown or a change of emphasis. The situation was that a duty had to be done and it was diligently carried out by everybody involved. I wasn't Minister for Defence three weeks ago and I hadn't enquired with relation to any activities myself

Reporter line in future?

Minister I beg your pardon

Reporter Are you going to take a stronger line in future?

Minister I am going to take just as tough a line as was taken on this occasion → on all occasions

Reporter Was there any resistance at the time of the arrest?

Minister Yes. ~~We~~ would remind you in fact a year ago there was the Kilrush incident which drew a blank when a ship was apprehended and it drew a blank. This one didn't. The gentleman down there wanted to ask a question.

Reporter Well was there any resistance, was there any attempt to escape?

Minister You realise that we have been merely in contact by radio all the time and this is a matter of small short messages. I dont think so but I wouldn't like to say that I am certain of that - I dont think so.

Reporter Do you know, Minister, has this been the first shipment of this kind?

Minister I beg your pardon

Reporter Have there been other shipments of this kind?

Minister To my knowledge its the first but again I haven't had time in my short period here to delve into past events. I have been too busy trying to look after the present

Reporter Mr Donegan, could you just go through the whole incident for us? Could you just take us through it from the first news you had of it here to the final incident?

Minister Well, the vessel was under surveillance for at least twenty-four hours. We had a Garda Superintendent and a Customs Officer on board the "Eirdre" so that in fact the civil power situation would be preserved in all situations that we could think of. The exercise was then carried out; in fact, Capt McKenna would more properly be able to advise you on the Naval aspects of it and she was apprehended about a half a mile due east of Helvick Head. Boarding was carried out at 23.20 on March 28th. The launch was apprehended, I dont know, probably very shortly, same time; Capt McKenna says probably same time. There are six persons in custody.

Reporter Six Irish citizens?

Minister Yes I could say Irish

Reporter Six Irish

Minister Yes

Reporter How many Naval Vessels were involved in this operation?

Minister Four, three, three on spot and one

Reporter Three minesweepers and one Fishery Protector - the full force of the Irish Navy.

Minister That's right - threw the book at them

Reporter ground element?

Minister I want to emphasise that there was a ground element and a very efficient ground element involved in this - 1st Motor Sqn and 12th Bn

Reporter These were standing by on the shore?

Minister These were in → Chief of Staff +

Chief of Staff They were, generally speaking, in situations back to the shore line available if they were required

Minister Yes

Reporter Were there any arrests on the shore?

Minister I think— again of course you realise that this thing is happening very fast— I think it would be proper to say "probably not." The only ones I might pick—I might go wrong in telling you—weren't arrested on shore, might be the people on the launch. I don't know officially what happened.

Reporter When

Minister I wouldn't be able to tell you that, I merely tell you everything I know.

Reporter Where was the ship when she first came under surveillance?

Minister Captain.

Capt. McKenna Oh, the ship when she first came under surveillance was around about the Salteés

Minister But she went round and round - I mean we were trying to conjecture what exactly -

Reporter Obviously you were expecting this vessel?

Minister Yes

Reporter Do you believe she intended to go to Helvick?

Minister I believe she was intended to rendezvous

Reporter Were the Air Corps in any way involved?

? MINISTER The Air Corps were standing by.

Reporter Minister, you were saying a moment ago that she was going round and round and you were trying to conjecture. At that time did you know what was involved in this or were you in fact conjecturing?

Minister Oh, no. We weren't conjecturing on what was involved. We knew what was involved if our information was correct.

Reporter Was there any link up with the British Security Service?

Minister That is a question relating to the fact that no Defence Minister in the world would give information on Intelligence, and I don't intend to do that.

Reporter Will the people involved be charged today?

Minister Will they be charged? I don't know. I'm going now to Cork in a Helicopter. It's a matter entirely for the Gardaí. I am going to Cork now to thank the entire service that was involved. I want to express the sincere thanks and appreciation of the Taoiseach and the Government and myself and indeed I'm sure I speak also for the people here who are with me on the marvellous work and courage and integrity shown by the Army, Naval Service, the Air Corps and the Garda.

Reporter How many vessels did you have ?

Capt McKenna ? 4 vessels

Reporter Could you tell us which vessels you had?

Capt McKenna Yes, ~~De~~ Déirdre, Grainne, Fola and Banba

Reporter These were all in the area when contact was made?

Minister Yes

Reporter What about the Army?

Minister Well I'd like to tell you about the Army. You have got all sorts of things such as radio contact ~~an~~ it and services that the Army provide. The Army - this could not have been probably done without the Army. The Army, the Navy the Air Corps and the Garda are all involved. The fact that the operation was at sea means that the colourful end was the Navy, but the ~~others~~ were all involved. All deserve high praise. I think everybody now knows and all the world will know that this is a law and order state and we intend to have it so and our loyal forces of all kinds and our loyal police force are of the greatest integrity and worthy of the greatest praise.

Reporter Could Capt McKenna tell us were the Irish Navy personnel armed when they went on board?

Capt McKenna I can assure they were armed - very much so

Reporter How many in the boarding party?

Capt McKenna I just couldn't tell you the number at the moment

Reporter Would you say it was comparatively small, though?

Capt McKenna Well, if you are boarding in fishery protection its about 3 you send aboard but now remember we had four vessels and four threes are twelve - that's the least anyway

Reporter Captain, the boarding party came from the Déirdre?

Capt McKenna Oh, I honestly couldn't tell you if it came from the Déirdre. I would say it came from all four or bits of all four. Remember - the size of the boarding party is relative - that you have the four armed vessels

Reporter So that in fact this boat was surrounded before they probably realised there was anything happening?

Capt McKenna I would, I must say, subject - I am only going down myself within the next hour and we were only interested in kind of the important particulars...but I would say this is substantially correct.

Minister We are going down now by helicopter to Cork

Reporter Were you in fact waiting for her to walk into a trap which she couldn't get out of?

Capt McKenna Well, we led her into a trap and we came in after her

Minister Well, we had her for a long time because of this matter of the contiguous zone which goes out to twelve miles. International law allows us to take steps under certain Articles of the Convention and we were advised by the Secretary of the Department here and by other people in the service what rights we had. We were prepared to use them.

Reporter Will there be charges ?

Minister No charges

Reporter Do you know the Company the ship belongs to?

Minister Dont know

Reporter Do you know how many of a crew there was?

Minister Dont know

Reporter Where are they now, sir - in prison?

Minister Oh no, no, no no - I dont know - Captain

Capt McKenna No, as far as we know they are aboard the ship at Haulbowline

Reporter Were the arms

Reporter Can you tell me Minister why there are no charges against them - There are?

Minister Well, do you think it is a wise thing or an interesting thing that you have Nationalists from the far side of the globe involved in what is obviously a financial situation. We are not interested in them, we are interested in

Reporter

Minister No, a situation like that is quite simple. They are ~~run~~ just here for the money. They came half way across the world and we are not interested in them. We are interested in their ship and we want them out of Irish territorial waters and if they put their nose into it again we will chop it off.

Reporter You say from the far side of the globe and half way across the world. Does this suggest Russia?

Minister No

Reporter The Middle East?

Minister No

Reporter

Minister Gibraltar, 12.30, 21st

Reporter Where is the ship registered?

? Cyprus

Reporter There has been a suggestion that Cyprus might be a place from which arms might come?

Minister You can ^{MAKE} that suggestion, I dont know

Reporter You dont know where the arms arrived from?

Minister No, not at the moment

Reporter You are suggesting more or less - I could be wrong - that the arms could have come from Gibraltar?

Minister No, I am suggesting that the boat came through the Straits of Gibraltar. It is a great check point because the distance across, Captain, is what between the African side and the OTHER?

Capt McKenna Less than twenty miles - I couldn't be absolutely certain

Minister Less than twenty

Capt McKenna Down to ten or twelve - that's a guess

Minister Its very short. Its a very short narrow strait - so if people want - if you want a surveillance of stuff going into the Med or coming out of the Med - you'd sit pleasantly at Gibraltar or the far side.

Reporter Could you tell us ?

Minister No

Reporter Minister, what tonnage has the ship?

Minister 296 according to *THE NEWSPAPERS.*

Reporter Someone suggested it was 500 and 700 tons?

Minister All right, ok, Well, according to you fellows it was 296

Reporter Did you look after the whole operation yourself?

Minister Not at all, I wouldn't dream of that. The situation is that I was merely there for a good reason, and I'll tell you the good reason. If there ~~was~~ ^{ABOVE} the situation of the Minister for Defence and ~~how~~ ^{how} his power is built up within the laws of this State - any situation whereby at any time during this operation there was needed a directive on the strengthening of the armed forces - by giving that directive, I was there to give it. In fact the previous day I went so far as to take a piece of paper and write every power I could possibly put down on it and sign it and give it to Captain McKenna so that he wasn't carrying the can - I was, because this is a law and order State and it is going to be that.

Reporter Could you tell us what you were doing before you were called in - were you at a party, or dinner or a function or parliament - whereabouts were you?

Minister I cant remember, I cant remember - that's really true. As far as I know I was over in my office

Reporter Can you tell us how long ago it was that you first heard about this - you personally first heard about this whole business?

Minister No, because that tends right on to this whole question of Intelligence and a question of sources and I will not.

Reporter Can you tell us when you made contact with the actual vessel I mean was this Did you make contact off the Irish coast?

? We made contact within the last twenty-four hours off the Irish Coast

Reporter Were you in radio contact at any stage?

Minister With her, no no not

Reporter

Minister No

Reporter Can you also tell us how many personnel were involved from the Defence Forces

Minister ? Well if you take the Naval side there were approximately 140

Reporters Minister, what are the crew numbers of the Claudia?

Minister I dont know

Reporters Who were the Naval members?

Minister No, I dont actually, *Know*

Reporter How many were on board the coaster and how many on board the trawler?

Minister Well, I have a situation there where I - there is a variation on it - ~~I~~ would have said to you last night that it was three on the - on the boat - on the Claudia and three on the launch, but now there seems to be a message that would suggest that it was possibly two on the Claudia and four on the launch

Reporter Are these all in custody now?

Minister Yes

Reporter Is Interpol involved in this?

Minister What?

Reporter Interpol.....

Minister I beg your pardon

Reporter Is Interpol involved in this?

Minister That's related to the same question that you dont get an answer for

Reporter Has an International implication been declared?

Minister What? Sorry about that

Reporter International implications - it's not about an Irish boat that *was* seized?

Minister There are no International implications. The international situation is simply this that we were in territorial waters half a mile east of Helvick Head. Even if we had been outside the three mile limit but within a twelve ~~nine~~ mile limit this has nothing to do with fishery protection at all. We would have been in what is known as a contiguous zone and this contiguous zone was the subject of an agreement on International Law which Ireland entered into. We could in fact have operated right out to twelve miles on the basis of a contiguous zone. In fact for some ^{TIME} before the boarding was carried out there was no chance for this vessel ~~except~~ it would be apprehended. We knew that, we had them in the trap because his best was 9 knots, the minesweepers do 14, the Deirdre does 18. He was surrounded.

Reporter Was the Claudia a coaster or a trawler? It has been reported variously as being a coaster and trawler.

Minister A coaster, a coaster

Reporter Had she any other cargo on board besides

Minister That I couldn't tell you

Reporter How long do you anticipate you will retain this vessel?

Minister Just as long - until we get this stuff off her and give her the boot

Reporter And will you be questioning the Captain and crew before the vessel leaves?

Minister That's a matter for the civil power

Reporter Will you be going on board her today?

Minister I dont know

Reporter Minister, did your predecessor know about this particular shipment

Minister I dont know anything about my predecessor, I think he is a very decent man. I am quite certain he did a lot here before I arrived from ~~the~~ ~~WHAT~~ I have seen and certain other things I have seen since I came here. I dont know anything about this. You could ask him if you want but I . . .

Reporter Does this mean you are going to step up boarder patrols now?

Minister I beg your pardon

Reporter Does this mean you are going to step up patrols?

Minister Oh, I dont know what will happen in the future. That's a matter for these people here. I'm merely the cog in the wheel that has to make sure that its not a square cog - a square ~~peg~~ in a round hole

Reporter Have you any definite information, Minister, about the movements of the ship before passing through Gibraltar. Did it call to any ports in North Africa?

Minister No, not at this moment. I think it's fair to say that I quite honestly could not tell you

Reporter Did it call to Tunis?

Minister Well, there ~~ARE~~ all sorts of things. Somebody else suggested that it called into Ca I dont - we dont know. Its - none, none

Reporter The fact is you dont know where she was before she vanished or you are not saying?

Minister No, I dont know, dont know thats just the plain way of saying it. That doesn't mean the parts I mightn't know.

Reporter Are the six persons detained - are they all men?

Minister Yes, yes, I would love to produce a good story for certain newspapers, but . . .

Reporter You must be feeling very pleased about the whole thing, Minister?

Minister Well I'm not pleased at all, I'm sad about the whole thing - very sad about it that this should occur and that the necessity for what we have done should arise and any such matters of punishment that should arise. ~~and~~ This is nothing but a matter of sadness to me but what must be really exemplified is that in my considered opinion, 99% of the citizens of this State want ~~do~~ law and order and are backed by their Government and I think also if I was to coin the British phrase - the loyal opposition - and that we are going to see that they get it and that this is what the world can now say and what British people can

Minister
(contd) now know that in fact the Irish people are not the sort of people that some writers might perhaps say they were and ~~that~~ we are a good democratic modern State bent on law and order and the stopping of ~~v~~ violence and the taking of life.

Reporter So what will happen to the IRA now then, Minister?

Minister Well I dont know but you know the course on which the Government has been set since its election and ~~it~~ - from there out the question of efficient things should be

Reporter When was the Taoiseach informed?

Minister The Taoiseach knew all about everything at all times

Reporter When did he first know, sir, could you tell us?

Minister Its entirely related to the same answer as you have got in relation to the first time we first knew

Reporter Minister would you mind, as far as you can, giving us the route of this vessel again?

Minister Well the easy way, to do that or rather the sensible way to do it is to give you the information that was given me namely that she came through the Straits of Gibraltar at something around midday on the 21st

Reporter On the 21st?

Minister Yes, she then vanished and there are all sorts of talks about where she called and didn't call. We dont know. Maybe ordinary shipping sources would be able to get you that information. Maybe they have got you. Maybe thats why these talks about various places are mentioned

Reporter So, from the time she was last seen on the Straits she then turned up here?

Minister Thats' right. She then turned up here and she was under surveillance.

Reporter Does that mean she is registered in Holland?

Minister No, she is not registered in Holland. She is registered in Cyprus, but on the radio I have heard that she was owned in Holland, I dont know if thats right or not.

Reporter Tell me was there any cooperation with

Minister No, I couldn't possibly in any way inform you ~~on~~ anything like that and you wont catch me no matter how hard you try. That is a matter for ~~I~~ Intelligence and I am not nineteen years in politics for you fellows to catch me.

Reporter You said the ship was first noticed at the Saltee Islands - was she actually seen by the Irish - by the Navy

Capt McKenna Yes

Reporter Did you know in advance the Irish destination of this vessel?

Minister Well, its entirely related again to the matter of ~~S~~ Security and ~~I~~ Intelligence

Reporter Do you know, Minister, who was bringing these arms in?

Minister Not at all, I mean at this stage the situation is that six Irish citizens are apprehended, are in custody and there I leave you - you have got to think of the Garda.

Reporter You said there were two or three people aboard the coaster arrested. Were there other people on board also?

Minister Of course the crew; oh yes indeed yes.

Reporter Where were they from - Cypriots?

Minister I dont know

Reporter Any indication where

Minister Well the best indication I can give you is that she came through Gibraltar at twelve - at noon or thereabouts on the 21st.

Reporter Not quite sure

Minister Not quite, something like that now - 21st yes

Reporter Have the Irish Government alerted Interpol now and traced them back?

Minister That's related again to the question that I wont answer.

Reporter Mr. Donegan, the leaders of the IRA have indicated that they have been getting things like rocket launchers through Southern Irish ports and across the Border into the North. This cant possibly be the only shipment of arms thats come through into the Republic?

Minister That is an expression of opinion by you on which I will not comment.

Reporter When you mentioned Irish citizens is there an indication that these are people from the North or?

Minister There is no indication whatever at this moment in time

Reporter Where are they being held at the moment - in Cork?

Minister I cant exactly say. They may be in custody, in transit or they may be in Cork.

Reporter Is the Claudia en route to Cork at the moment?

Minister She is there, she is there

Reporter Haulbowline or in Cork itself?

Minister ? Haulbowline

Reporter

Minister Yes thats right yes

Reporter Where was the trawler involved owned?

Minister Pardon

Reporter Where was the trawler owned?

Minister It's not a trawler, it's a launch

 ?

 We think it was belonging to - at least it was used in ~~one of the~~ sea angling - one of the sea angling launches used in Dungarvan - we are not quite certain. It's not - it wasn't a fishing vessel as such.

Minister To explain to you how this thing could have been done. They were doing it on a rising tide, and therefore if this launch were to be used and I don't commit myself at all on whether it was or was not, for this is a matter entirely for the Guards - if it were to be used to convey arms or bombs or anything else to the shore this launch would only draw possibly a foot and a half to two feet - draw water a foot and half to two feet. Therefore, it would have been quite easy for men to wade out and carry goods ashore on a beach using this launch, and of course they would have had a few hours of tide and if the launch went aground it would constantly be rising; there is no question of it sitting down and they not getting it off again, on a rising tide.

Reporter Was the Claudia ever in Ireland before - have you established?

Minister I haven't the foggiest notion

Reporter Can you give us an idea of the arms and explosives that have been seized?

Minister Yes, this is now minimum. We don't know what more is on but we can say to you that there were - there are 250 rifles, 240 small arms and a quantity of anti-tank mines and explosives and I'll describe to you this anti-tank mine what it means - it's a very high explosive relative to its size. The Chief of Staff advises me that an anti-tank mine has a higher quality explosive altogether relative to its size. You could convey a smaller amount of it to a point and do more damage

Reporter

Minister Not against mines - not against tanks

Reporter What sort of rifles?

Minister I don't know at this moment. I'm being utterly honest with you.

Reporter Does the quantity mentioned earlier - 5 tons - still stand?

Minister That's the quantity that came through on the radio as the estimate of our people when they boarded her

Reporter How many were in the boarding party?

Minister Well, Capt McKenna could only conjecture

Capt McKenna Well, I'm afraid I couldn't tell you the exact number - I don't know.

Reporter What's the normal number of a boarding party?

Capt McKenna It's not something we do normally. We board a fishery protection vessel alright and there ~~ARE~~ three, normally three, of us.

Reporter What is happening the Capt and crew of the Claudia now in Haulbowline? Will they be questioned? Will they be charged?

Minister I'll tell you now what will happen precisely. The Claudia will get a boot in the transom and will be put out of our waters fast.

Reporter When you say you got her into a trap then did she go somewhere she didn't intend originally to go?

Minister Well, that's another matter related entirely to **I**ntelligence and **S**ecurity

Reporter You said earlier

Minister You are getting a very fair break, you are being told absolutely everything I know except anything that revolves on that and I cant - you fellows will go to jail for your sources. I dont have to do it but I dont have to tell you either.

Reporter Will you be giving further information later in the day?

Minister Well I'm going to. I'll be at your service at any time that you wish me to be. I am going to Cork now with the Chief of Staff Capt McKenna, Comdt Savino and the **P**ress **O**fficer and who else. . . .
That's it?

Minister Yes, that's it and - I dont know - I mean I'll give you all I can give you and stay within my proper behaviour. Well, I promise you that I have given you everything and indeed if you want me at the station when I come back here I'll meet you again and give you everything that is within my proper behaviour, but I'll stay within my proper behaviour .

Reporter Could we arrange a press conference with you now when you come back from Cork.

Minister Well this is it - when do we expect to be back

Chief of Staff Justice

Minister Yes, I would think. The Chief of Staff says Justice. **M**aybe they would be the right people. I dont know - I haven't had communication with my colleague on the Cabinet at all because this is. ~~this is~~ - you realise this has been an all night operation - I had a shave and a shower this morning

Chief of Staff

Minister Yes I think that that is a good idea from the Chief of Staff. The Press Officer, you see, Comdt Savino is there and we can amplify anything we have or wish for you through Comdt Savino

Reporter How will we be able to contact him then?

Minister He is flying down and he is flying back. Comdt, how would you feel like contacting the Press

Comdt Savino

Minister Yes, and what ^{TIME?} when you say afternoon now, we mightn't be back maybe until 3 o'clock or something like that but a

Reporter We would like to talk to you personally again, Minister, if we can
Thats what it **COMES** down to

Minister That's quite all right

Reporter 5 o'clock shall we say, **S**ir?

? Minister 5 o'clock here .

Minister Well if it suits your newspaper schedule thats all right - all right

Reporter Minister, will you show the BBC outside where the is

Minister OK

Tom McCaughran asked the Minister how the arrest came to be made

Minister - Well I mustn't tell you anything that would involve intelligence or security of any kind. We had this boat under surveillance since yesterday and we apprehended her in Irish territorial waters about a half a mile east of Herwick Head. We could in fact act up to 12 mile out under an International Convention which refers to contiguous waters and we had the law with us right up to 12 miles out. She was only a half a mile out when we took her.

Can you tell me what type of arms she was carrying?

Minister - Certainly, There were 240 Rifles, 250 small arms and a quantity of anti mine - anti tank mines, now I dont know what anti tank mines are, but I am told by the Chief of Staff that they are a very high explosive material. What it really means if you want to blow up something you can blow up, you can do more damage with a smaller quantity and from that point of view its a very very powerful explosive.

What type of Rifles were they?

I dont know, you see we are only on Radio Call, you see I am up all night you see and we are getting the Radio Information coming in.

Do you know the Country of origin of the arms?

No I dont that Country, no.

Well do you think that these arms were destined for the IRA?

I have no opinions on that except that certainly they were not being brought in here to shoot ducks and we will leave it at that. As far as the origin is concerned, we know that this boat came through the Straits of Gibraltar on the 21st around midday. Then she vanished and she arrived.

Were other Security Forces and perhaps other Navies involved in this operation?

That has to do with Intelligence and Security and I wont tell you. You will go to jail before you will reveal your sources of information - I wont tell you.

Does this operation represent a tougher line with subversive organisations?

Well I have only been here three weeks and I dont know where you start or finish on what is a tough line. As far as I am concerned, this is a law and order Government, this is a law and order State, this is democracy and we are going to be a good modern democracy that will do our job. Ninety-nine per cent of the people in this Country want law and order and we are going to give it to them.

Do you think that there may have been other shipments?

I have no views on that at all or any knowledge

Was this known before hand, was this a trap for this particular boat?

I wouldn't think that you could describe anything like that as a trap. Its quite obvious that we were waiting for the boat and we acted properly. We had the security of the State in our hands and we had to act as we did.