



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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## Meeting of Working Group on International Terrorism

Since the beginning of the year there have been a number of meetings of the Working Group on International Terrorism set up in the context of E.P.C. Our position has been that whilst not wishing to discourage movement within the Twelve towards consideration of the problem of terrorism, we would not wish a situation to arise where an organ of the EC or the Twelve began to discuss the problem of Northern Ireland solely as a terrorist phenomena outside its political, social and economic context.

In so far as terrorist organisations in Ireland are shown to have links with countries outside the community, we believe that it may be appropriate for the working group to discuss the nature of these links and the scope for concrete action amongst the twelve to prevent them. The emphasis in such discussions should, however, concentrate on the external elements and not seek to deal with the origins, motivation or activities of the terrorist groups themselves.

### IRA - Libya Links

Recently the Working Group has referred to IRA links with Libya. We have no evidence at present that Libya is giving material support to the P.I.R.A. The phase of active Libyan support for the IRA culminates in the Claudia affair in March, 1973 when a ship which had been loaded with Soviet arms in Tripoli was intercepted by the Irish Navy off Helvick Head and a number of people arrested. While the Libyan-IRA relationship continued in a substantial form for some years after that, it declined markedly from 1975 onwards. This probably resulted from a number of factors including pressure from the Irish and British Governments and a Libyan desire for better relations with both countries. (Ireland agreed to establish diplomatic relations with Libya in 1977).

The period from the mid 1970's up to present time has been marked by occasional bursts of rhetorical support for the IRA particularly at times when Libyan/UK relations are at a low ebb. We have continued to avail of opportunities which have arisen to impress on the Libyans our view of the IRA and of the Northern Ireland question:

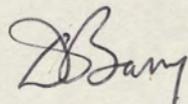
- The IRA is an illegal organisation engaged in terrorist activities in Ireland, North and South, as well as in Britain.
- The IRA's murderous campaign makes the achievement of a peaceful settlement to the complex Northern Ireland problem even more difficult.
- The Irish Government view support for, or offers of support for, the IRA as totally unacceptable.

Finally there has been widescale press coverage of an arms find by the Gardai at the end of January in the Sligo/Leitrim area. The find which included about 90 automatic rifles, handguns, and 20,000 rounds of ammunition was linked with Libya because of the appearance on the ammunition boxes of references to the Libyan Armed Forces. Despite continuing Garda enquiries there has as yet been no link established between the arms find and Libya. Gardai regard the reference to Libya on the ammunition boxes as inconclusive and without further supporting evidence insufficient to say that there was any Libyan involvement in supplying these weapons to the IRA. The Libyans have denied any involvement in the matter.

More recently the Garda have had indications that some of the pistols which formed part of the find came from a consignment of weapons shipped to Libya in 1982 for the use of the Libyan armed forces. Even if this more recent data is accurate the furthest that the Department of Justice would be prepared to go would be to conclude that there is a "probability" of Libyan involvement.

Despite the statement by Mrs. Thatcher in the House of Commons of a definite link between Libya and the IRA on the occasion of the American bombing attack in Libya no clear evidence has been presented to the Gardaí to substantiate such claims. The UK representative at the Security Council has in the past week also made a very categoric statement about alleged IRA/Libyan links.

Despite the wave of publicity in recent weeks the position as regards IRA/Libyan links has not altered so far as we are concerned. Such links may exist but since the Claudia affair in 1973 we have no concrete evidence to support the view.



David Barry,  
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