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*File B*

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

2 October 1984

CAPTURE OF PIRA SHIPMENT BY THE IRISH NAVY

Thank you for your letter of 1 October proposing that the Prime Minister send a message of congratulations to Dr. FitzGerald following the Irish Navy's capture of a PIRA arms shipment.

*BH*  
The Prime Minister agrees to send the message enclosed with your letter. I should be grateful if the text could be telegraphed to Dublin for delivery.

I am copying this letter to Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office).

CHARLES POWELL

Colin Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

*CST*

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS  
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)  
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

1 October, 1984

Prime Minister:

Agree to this message?

Dear Charles,

Yes, pls

JR

Capture of Pira Shipment by the Irish Navy

1/60

The Foreign Secretary has suggested that the Prime Minister might wish to send a message of congratulations to Dr FitzGerald following the successful capture by the Irish Navy last Saturday morning of seven tonnes of arms, ammunition, explosives, and military equipment which was being sent to the PIRA in the trawler 'Marita Anne' by sympathisers in the United States. Sir Geoffrey has already congratulated the Irish Foreign Minister. The Northern Ireland Secretary is being recommended to do the same with Mr Norman, the Irish Minister of Justice. I submit a draft message for the Prime Minister's approval.

The five men arrested on the trawler have been charged in Dublin with the unlawful possession of explosives and of having firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life. The size of the shipment exceeds that captured at the last intervention of this kind in 1973 when the coaster 'Claudia' was caught with a cargo of Libyan arms.

This capture is a badly needed boost to the morale of the Irish security forces whose muddled attempts earlier this year to capture the terrorist kidnappers of Don Tidey were less than reassuring. It will also enable the Irish Government to counter criticism from those in the North who doubt Irish determination to fight the PIRA. In his public reaction to the capture the Taoiseach said that the arms were being imported 'to murder Irish people North and South'. He did not miss the opportunity to address those who had financed the shipment. He said that 'There are still people in the United States who, failing to comprehend the situation in this country, are willing to send arms to murder Irish people, including our police and armed forces'. Noraid have denied all knowledge of this shipment.

I am copying this letter to Graham Sandiford in the Northern Ireland Office.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

(C R Budd)  
Private Secretary

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