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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

2 September 1985

Dear Coln,

X REF

The Sinking of the British Greenpeace Ship  
Rainbow Warrior

You wrote to Mark Addison on 30 August with a report of developments over the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior.

The Prime Minister has commented that we should respond positively to Mr. Lange's request for an underwater explosives expert to assist in the New Zealand investigations. She recalls that she said in the House that we would provide help if asked.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Allan (Department of Transport).

Yours sincerely  
  
(Charles Powell)

Colin Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

30 August 1985

Prime Minister. ②

For information. We have received letters from Frank Cook MP seeking confirmation that there was no British involvement. MEA 30/8

Dear Mark,

The Sinking of the British Greenpeace Ship Rainbow Warrior

Herewith the report I promised: to be followed next week by a JIC assessment.

On 10 July the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior blew up and sank in Auckland Harbour. It had been due to lead a protest fleet to the French nuclear testing area at Mururoa Atoll. A photographer on board at the time, a Dutch national of Portuguese extraction, was killed.

The French Embassy in Wellington denied as early as 11 July that France was in any way responsible. The New Zealand authorities arrested a "Swiss" couple with passports in the name of "Turenge" and charged them with the murder of the photographer. The New Zealand authorities also announced that they were looking for the crew of the French yacht Ouvea which had visited Whangarea (north of Auckland) shortly before the sinking. The Ouvea, due back in New Caledonia on 28 July, disappeared after it had called at Norfolk Island, where it was searched by Australian and New Zealand police. The New Zealand authorities in due course established that the "Swiss" couple were in fact French citizens and members of the French External Intelligence Service (DGSE). The Swiss Government have protested to the French about the use of forged Swiss passports.

On 8 August, in face of mounting evidence of French involvement, President Mitterrand instructed Prime Minister Fabius to organise an enquiry. Fabius appointed M. Bernard Tricot, a Gaullist former Secretary General at the Elysee, to investigate and report. Meanwhile the New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr Lange, made clear his displeasure at French agents operating in New Zealand and said that New Zealand would "sue France" if it were confirmed that French agents had blown up the Rainbow Warrior.

On 25 August M. Tricot submitted his report, in the form

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of a letter to Prime Minister Fabius. He said he believed, on the basis of the evidence available to him, that there was no official French responsibility for the sinking. He thus exonerated Ministers (in particular, M. Hernu, the Defence Minister, who is responsible for the DGSE) and senior officials. But his "belief" was not based on clear evidence. He has since admitted that his report is an incomplete account and suggested that a further enquiry may be necessary. Such evidence as Tricot was able to gather reveals:

- (i) a major French surveillance/spying operation against Greenpeace and the deployment of agents to New Zealand for this purpose: the agents included the "Turenge" couple and the crew of the Ouvea;
- (ii) that the agents included people with the technical expertise to place mines;
- (iii) awareness of possible British sensitivities;
- (iv) that the reasons for thinking that the crew of the Ouvea were responsible for the attack were "not negligible".

The Rainbow Warrior is a British ship built and registered in Aberdeen, managed by the UK company Greenpeace (Rainbow Warrior Holdings) Ltd, and owned by a company based in the Dependent Territory of the Cayman Islands.

Interest in the UK has so far centred on allegations, which first appeared in France, that British Intelligence was in some way involved. These have ranged from suggestions that British agents planted the mines to hints that British Intelligence tipped off the New Zealanders about the French surveillance operations. Mr Lange has described the suggestions as "a completely mischievous diversion" and stated that there is nothing to fear in New Zealand from British agents and that the suggestion that British agents blew up the Rainbow Warrior is "absolutely absurd".

We have pointed out privately to French officials the restraint with which the UK has treated misleading reports in the French media and suggested that they seek to put an end to any attempts at disinformation. The Charge d'Affaires in the Embassy in Paris has also written to the French National Radio protesting about their broadcasting these reports, and has received an apology. While refusing to be provoked into commenting further than necessary on matters affecting security and intelligence, we have left the British press in no doubt off the record that the reports of British involvement are unfounded.

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We have taken the view that we can rely on the New Zealand authorities to uncover the facts and that there is no need for a separate British enquiry. Mr Lange has requested us to send an underwater explosives expert to assist in the New Zealand investigations. Sir Geoffrey Howe will be considering this over the weekend.

Greenpeace believe that the French sank their ship and have called on France to pay for the material damage and compensate the family of the photographer. Mr Lloyd Cuttler, a former adviser to President Carter, has been retained by Greenpeace for eventual legal proceedings. We have heard that they are sending a letter to the British Government seeking assistance.

I am copying this letter to Mr Ridley's and Mr Heseltine's Private Secretaries. It is going by telegram to Wellington for Mr Stanley, who arrives in New Zealand on 2 September.

Yours Sincerely,  
Colin Budd

(C R Budd)  
Private Secretary

Mark Addison Esq  
10 Downing Street

*We must  
in the House  
I said that  
of course  
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