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# LIBYAN ARMS SUPPLIES TO THE PROVISIONAL IRA (PIRA)



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Photo 1: Box of mortar bombs made in China, provided to Directorate of Military Procurement in Libya, supplied to PIRA and seized by French authorities on MV Eksund

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INTRODUCTION

1. Libyan support for terrorist groups has been a source of great concern to Western governments for many years. Given the sustained and violent terror campaign which the Provisional Irish Republican Army is waging in connection with Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom has been particularly disturbed by the extent and continuity of Libya's links with PIRA. Libyan supplies of arms and equipment, notably Semtex explosive, have enabled PIRA to maintain a high level of terrorist activity with appalling results. Following the resurgence in Spring and Summer 1988 of PIRA activity on the continent of Europe, it became apparent that the threat did not stop at the Channel and that a large number of European countries were being used by PIRA for the siting of attacks, for bases and for the transit of arms and personnel.

EVIDENCE OF ARMS SUPPLIES

2. The following report summarises evidence of Libya's links with PIRA and describes just a few of the terrorist incidents which Libyan support has facilitated.

3. Evidence of the supply of arms and equipment by Libya to PIRA became available in early 1986 when police in the Irish Republic recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition from hides in Counties Sligo and Roscommon. Amongst the weapons seized were nearly 100 Kalashnikov rifles of Romanian and East German manufacture and ammunition for them. The ammunition boxes containing them were marked clearly "Libyan Armed Forces" (Photo 1).

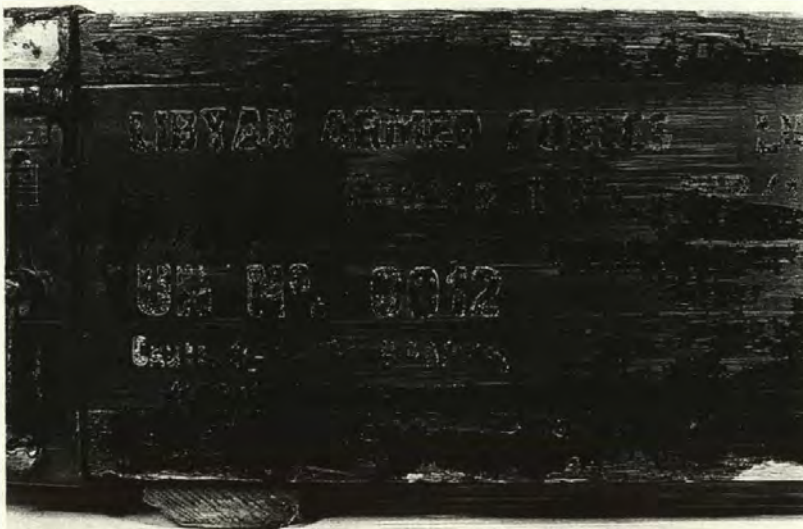


Photo 2: Ammunition for Kalashnikov rifles found in the Irish Republic in 1986 was contained in boxes marked clearly "Libyan Armed Forces"



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4. The MV Eksund which was seized by the French authorities off Brest on 30 October 1987 contained rifles from the same factory batch and provided further startling evidence of Libyan involvement. On board the vessel was approximately 120 tonnes of arms and ammunition which the Libyans were sending to PIRA. It included:



- over 1000 Kalashnikov rifles
- 20 surface-to-air missiles
- 50 heavy weapons including machine guns
- RPG 7 launchers and mortars
- over 1 million rounds of ammunition
- 2 tonnes of Semtex military explosive

Photo 3: Two SAMs found on board MV Eksund

Photos 3 and 4 show – more vividly than words – the size and significance of this shipment.

Photo 1 (on page 1) leaves no doubt about its origin



Photo 4: Only part of the 1 million rounds of ammunition packed into the hold of MV Eksund



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5. The fact that Eksund was intercepted is no cause for complacency. Examination of equipment seized, particularly in the Irish Republic and in Northern Ireland over the past three years, leaves no doubt that Libya supplied PIRA with large quantities of material before the Eksund was intercepted. Four earlier deliveries are thought to have been made totalling about 100 tonnes of equipment, and probably included similar quantities of weapons, ammunition and explosives as those found on Eksund. Some of the weaponry from these earlier deliveries has come to light. Over 300 of the Kalashnikov rifles have been recovered. Expenditure in attacks, or seizures, of Semtex explosive (in the UK, Republic of Ireland and on the Continent) now totals more than one tonne. But clearly huge stocks remain unrecovered: the regularity with which PIRA use Semtex suggests that substantial quantities remain available to them.

### TERRORIST USE OF LIBYAN ARMS

6. The following provides graphic evidence of how PIRA intends to put those stocks to use. It is a selection of PIRA terrorist incidents, all of which involved arms and equipment provided by Libya. The selection represents only a small fraction of the incidents which have taken place over the past two years.

#### 7. Northern Ireland

- Over 170 attacks employing over 400kg of Semtex explosive have been mounted in Northern Ireland alone comprising booby traps, bombs, and home made mortars and grenades.
- On 18 March 1988, PIRA murdered a young girl and seriously injured her boyfriend at Belleek in Northern Ireland. Neither of the victims had any association with the security forces and PIRA later admitted that the attack had been made on the wrong car. The intended target was a soldier who lived nearby. The weapons used were Kalashnikovs.
- On 27 October 1988, a Soviet design of man portable flame thrower was recovered from a PIRA hide in a hospice in Belfast. This is the first flame thrower ever recovered in Northern Ireland and there is good evidence that it was amongst equipment obtained from Libya. It can project a jet of flaming petrol over 80 metres. Parts for a second weapon of the same type were found in Londonderry on 13 September 1988.
- On 14 December 1988, PIRA attacked a police vehicle near the court house in Newry using an RPG7. Several police and bystanders were injured. The weapon was recovered in the subsequent investigation.

#### 8. Great Britain

- On 19 February 1987, police uncovered a large cache of arms and explosive belonging to PIRA in the north of England. The equipment included three Kalashnikov rifles, 2 pistols, 85kg of Semtex and various timers. These were sufficient for a prolonged campaign which would have included at least twenty bombs.
- On 22 December 1988, a large cache of PIRA bomb making equipment was found in a flat in South London. It included over 50kg of Semtex, one Kalashnikov, two handguns and a large quantity of components for the assembly of timers.

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Further example

9 Republic of Ireland

On 28 January 1988, police in the Irish Republic found a large cache of equipment concealed near Malin, County Donegal. This included 100 Kalashnikov rifles, four machine guns, 50,000 rounds of ammunition and 50kg of Semtex. Two of the machine guns were sold by FN Belgium to Libya in 1978.

On 23 June 1988, a security force helicopter flying near the border with the Irish Republic came under fire and was forced to crash land. Two heavy machine guns were used in this attack: subsequently a weapon of the same type, a Chinese made 12.7mm machine gun, was recovered in the Republic.

10 Belgium

On 21 January 1988, police in Brussels discovered a car containing 110kg of explosive and a radio detonation system of a type unique to PIRA. The target for this attack is unknown. Photo 5 shows part of the explosive.



Photo 5: Blocks of explosive marked "Semtex H" found in a car in Brussels

On 12 August 1988 a serviceman was shot dead in Ostend.

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11. Netherlands

— On 1 May 1988 an under car booby trap killed two British servicemen and seriously injured a third when it exploded as they left a night club in Nieuw Bergen. The device, which contained about 1kg of Semtex, was claimed by PIRA in a statement. The remains of the car are shown in photo 6.

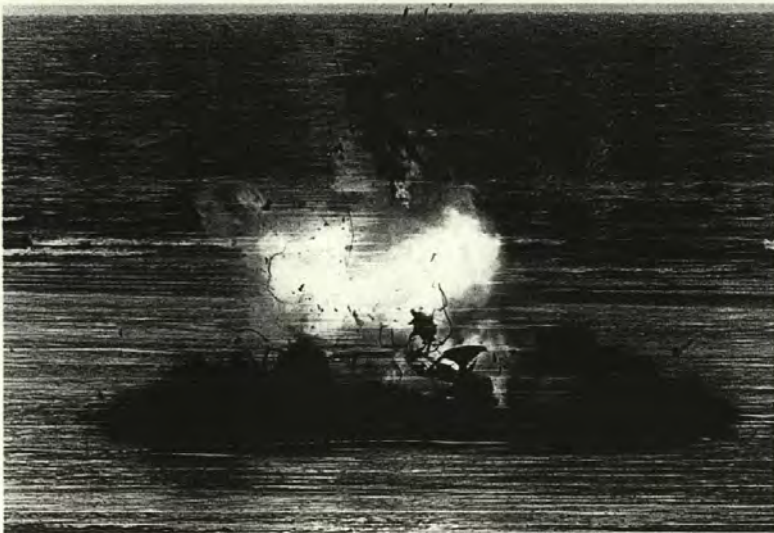


Photo 6: Remains of the car blown up by PIRA in Holland in May 1988. The bomb device contained just 1kg of Semtex.

— In an associated incident on the same day a serviceman was shot dead in Roermond. The weapon used was a Kalashnikov.

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Photos 7 and 8: Test detonation showing the devastating effects of a 1kg Semtex under car booby trap device. Of the Semtex available to them, PIRA have already expended (in attacks or seizures) about 1 tonne – enough for 1000 such bombs.



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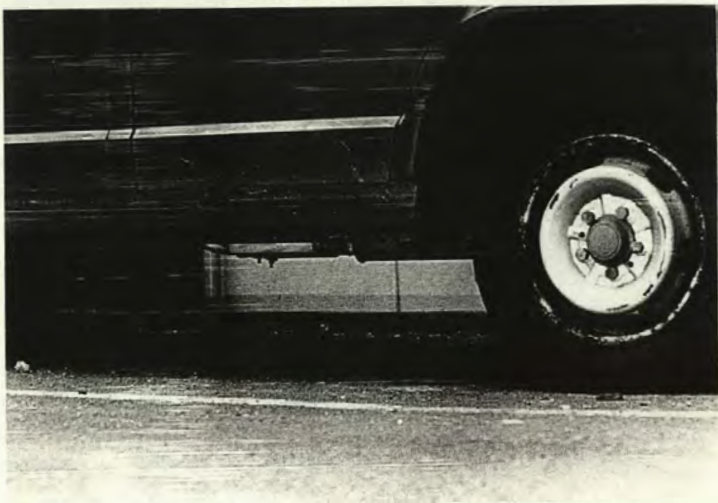
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Photo 9:

A typical PIRA undercar booby trap contained in a plastic lunch box. The photo shows the box containing the timer circuit and 1 kg of Semtex. On the outside of the block is the mercury tilt switch. The circular block object is the magnet which is taped to the box to hold the device under the car.

Photo 10:

The booby trap in place: only a thorough inspection would discover it.



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12. Federal Republic of Germany

- On 3 May 1988 a booby trap bomb was found under a car belonging to a British soldier in Bielefeld and was successfully defused. The device is believed to be of the same design as that used in Nieuw Bergen (see above).
- On 13 July 1988 there was an attack using two linked explosive devices against a barracks block in Duisberg. Nine servicemen were injured. When pursued the attackers opened fire with two Kalashnikov rifles, one of which had been used in the Roermond shooting (see above).
- On 5 August 1988 a bomb exploded at the perimeter fence of Rey Barracks, Ratingen. Four servicemen and one civilian were injured.

13. Spain

- On 9 March 1988, Spanish police found a PIRA car bomb in Marbella. This was the device that PIRA had intended to explode at a military parade in Gibraltar. The attempt was disrupted by Security Forces. It contained 62.5kg of Semtex and typical PIRA timers.