



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Wed a.m.

QUESTION NO

CHUN AN AIRE GNOTHAI EACHTRACHA: TO ASK THE MINISTER FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

To ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs if he will outline the assurances which have been sought from Colonel Gadaffi and the Libyan authorities on renunciation of support for and the end of arms supplies to the Provisional I.R.A.; and if he will outline the results which have been attained.

- Jim O'Keeffe

For PRIORITY answer on Thursday 7th November, 1991.

Draft Reply

X On Monday I had a bilateral meeting in Brussels with the Foreign Minister of Libya who was attending a meeting in the European Community and the Arab Maghreb Union of which Libya is a member. I outlined to the Libyan Foreign Minister our grave concerns on the issue and asked him for assurances that Libya had renounced its support for the IRA and had ended its arms supplies to that organisation.

The Libyan Foreign Minister assured me in his official capacity that Libya does not recognise, does not deal with and will not deal with the IRA; that Libya does not supply the IRA with arms or money; and that it does not develop contacts and has no relations with the IRA. He went on to assure me that Libya is closing its doors to any organisation practising terrorism anywhere in the world whether it be in the Middle

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East, Latin America and Europe including in particular Ireland.

X I welcome ^{these} the assurances and I expect the Libyan authorities to adhere scrupulously to them.

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Information Note

The Minister has had several meetings with the Libyans, at which he has stressed the Government's concern about Libyan support for the IRA and has obtained the following assurances from them:

- on 22 December 1989 in Paris the Libyan Foreign Minister said that Libya did not support terrorism and it was never Libya's intention to destabilise Ireland.
- on 27 September 1991 in New York the Permanent Representative to the UN and former Foreign Minister, X Mr. Ali Treiki, said that Libya had stopped supporting IRA terrorism two years ago.
- on 4 November 1991 in Brussels the Foreign Minister said that Libya does not recognise, does not and will not deal with the IRA; does not supply it with arms and money; does not develop contacts with it and has no relationship with its operations. He said that those assurances could be quoted publicly.

In spite of assurances obtained from the Libyans there continued to be equivocal statements from Libya on the subject. For example, on 17 June 1991 Col. Ghadaffy said on Libyan TV "Ireland is a just cause. We support it terrorism or no terrorism".

The weapons and explosives supplied by Libya in the early 1980s continue to be used to lethal effect by the Provisionals in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland security forces recently confirmed that the IRA used a SAM-7 missile in an unsuccessful attempt to shoot down a British Army helicopter in Co. Fermanagh in July. During the Eksund trial in Paris earlier this year the court heard evidence of Libyan involvement in the provision of the 150 tonnes of weaponry seized on the Eksund as well as four earlier shipments of arms, ammunition and explosives, including

large amounts of Semtex. Three of the Eksund crew are likely to complete their prison sentences in France very soon, when it is possible that they will be deported to this jurisdiction. In that event it is possible that they could face prosecution by the Irish authorities. If that happened the Eksund affair would undoubtedly hit the headlines once again.

The Libyan ban on Irish beef and cattle exports is attributed by them to the technical, hygienic issue of BSE. The Minister has pointed out to Foreign Minister Al Bishari and to the Libyan Permanent Representative in New York that the standards of hygiene in Irish cattle are excellent and that the 43 cases of BSE must be put in the context of a national herd of 7 million cattle.

The question of Ministerial visits to Libya does not constitute a problem. EC sanctions against Libya do not extend to restrictions on Ministerial visits. The most notable recent visit there was by the Italian Prime Minister, Giulio Andreotti, at the beginning of June this year. When Minister O'Kennedy visited Libya in Autumn 1990 the U.S. Embassy expressed concern to us about it; we pointed out that the visit was by a technical Minister and that other EC visits of that nature had taken place. The recent Andreotti visit is, of course, a particularly significant one. In August of this year Ministers from most EC countries, including MOS Joe Walsh for Ireland, planned to attend the launch of the Man-Made River Project in Libya. However, all the EC Ministers decided to stay away after Col. Ghadaffy had welcomed the abortive coup against President Gorbachev.

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Supplementary Questions

Q1. Did the Minister request the meeting on 4 November with the Libyan Foreign Minister and, if so, why?

A1. On 4 November a meeting took place in Brussels between the Twelve EC Foreign Ministers and their colleagues from the Five Member States of the Arab Maghreb Union,
 X Algeria, Libya, Maurit^{ia}_{ia}, Morocco, Tunisia. That provided the opportunity for a brief meeting, at my suggestion, with the Libyan Foreign Minister, Mr. Ibrahim Al-Bishori. We discussed matters of mutual interest, including support for the IRA and the Libyan ban on imports of Irish cattle and beef to Libya.

Q2. On what previous occasions has the Minister taken up with the Libyans their support for the IRA?

A2. Apart from last Monday's meeting I have met the Libyan Foreign Minister in Brussels on 12 November 1990 and in Paris on 22 December 1989 and have on each occasion emphasised our concern about Libya's support for the IRA. I also did so when I met the Libyan Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York on 27 September last.

Q3. Does the Minister believe the assurances he has received from Libya that it will not support the Provisional IRA?

A3. The assurances which I have just reported to the House

X

are particularly clear and unambiguous. As I will, I

have just informed the House

welcome the assurances and I expect the Libyan

authorities to adhere scrupulously to them.

Q4. What was the Libyan response concerning their ban on Irish beef and cattle?

A4. Their reply was that the ban, due to the BSE disease, can

be examined by Ireland and Libya. I invited the Libyan

X

Minister for Agriculture, his Chief Veterinary Officer

and other officials involved to visit Ireland to examine

the situation at first hand. The Libyan Foreign Minister

is conveying the invitation immediately to his

Government.

Q5. Has the Minister received an invitation to visit Libya?

X

A5. I have received no formal invitation. A visit is a matter for the two Governments to consider.

Any Ministerial

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