

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2007/111/1908
Creation Date(s):	12 November 1976
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.



AMBASÁID NA HÉIREANN

EMBASSY OF IRELAND

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20008

SECRET

12 November 1976

Mr P.J.G. Keating
Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs

Dear Secretary

I enclose copy of a report by Mr Lillis of a recent conversation he had at the State Department with the Irish Desk Officer and an official of the U.S. Bureau of Customs on gun-smuggling to Ireland.

Broadly the U.S. side requested that we consider arranging for liaison between the Embassy and the U.S. Customs (possibly via the State Department) on intelligence in cases where our officers in the United States learned of developments that would require immediate action by the U.S. authorities to carry out effective investigation.

I agree with Mr Lillis that involving the Embassy in liaison with the U.S. police and related services is inappropriate and could seriously undermine the effectiveness of our attempts at persuading Irish-Americans of the validity of the Government's position on the Northern problem as well as the undesirability of supporting groups that back the Provisional IRA - particularly, as can easily happen in this country, if word of activity in this area on our part reaches the Irish-American community at large.

I further agree that the *Gárda Síochána* should be strongly encouraged to cooperate fully with the U.S. authorities through police channels and also that the speed and security of such communications should be examined with a view to improving them.

The U.S. Customs indeed have a point in describing the present system of communication as somewhat cumbersome and I feel that, in the light of our obvious desire to secure energetic co-operation from U.S. Agencies in eliminating gun-running as well as our commitment stated in Paragraph 10 of the Joint Communiqué on Irish-U.S. cooperation in this area, we might undertake verbally to the State Department that, in those very exceptional cases when our officers in the United States became aware of developments which required immediate action by U.S. officials and when the delays occasioned by our using our own network - communicating with the Department first, who presumably communicate with the *Gárda Síochána* through Justice, leaving it to the *Gárda* to liaise with the U.S. police and customs through London - we might contact the authorities here direct or through the State Department subject to a guarantee being given by the Americans in each case that the source of the information would not be revealed in any circumstances.

Unfortunately one has to cast some doubt on the value of such guarantees in this country. There have been a welter of congressional investigations recently of the various security agencies of the United States during which officials of those



AMBASÁID NA HÉIREANN

EMBASSY OF IRELAND

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20008

...2/

agencies have been obliged to reveal sources or be deemed to be in contempt. You are aware of a constant attempt to organise further congressional hearings on Northern Ireland and it is certainly possible that, were such hearings to take place, a hostile Congressman, or a Congressman being manipulated by activists hostile to us (e.g. Congressman Wolff of New York) would raise this issue with American officials.

Yours sincerely

Ambassador