

FAXED

John Holmes (by fax)

1. No joke. There with the latest press reports - excellent news.
2. The Taoiseach has been speaking very helpfully from Harau on the theme that this poses more questions for Sinn Fein. He has been remarkably strong against both J.F. and IRA (no transcript - you might see if the Taoiseach's people can oblige out there, though the Irish press will also pick this up over the weekend).
3. MIO <sup>not</sup> at (conscious of) having been commissioned - Alex may have spoken to others. Nothing in the pipeline that I'm aware of.
4. Might the PM like to congratulate the Taoiseach orally?

→ file  
Gardai 2/6

# 6 held as police uncover IRA bomb factory

by ALLAN RAMSAY

THE discovery of a huge active IRA bomb factory today exposed the terrorists' intention to return to a full-scale war with security forces.

A police raid on a remote farmhouse in the Irish Republic resulted in the arrest of six men as they were assembling a large mortar bomb and may yield further clues about the recent IRA bombing in Manchester which injured 206 people. Officers from the Garda's elite anti-terrorist strike force, the ERU, burst in on the six men at the farm near the small village of Clonaslee on the border between counties Laois and Offaly after a two-day surveillance operation.

One of the IRA "engineers" in the process of assembling the bomb, which is a favoured weapon for attacking police and army bases, challenged the officers with a handgun but was quickly overpowered.

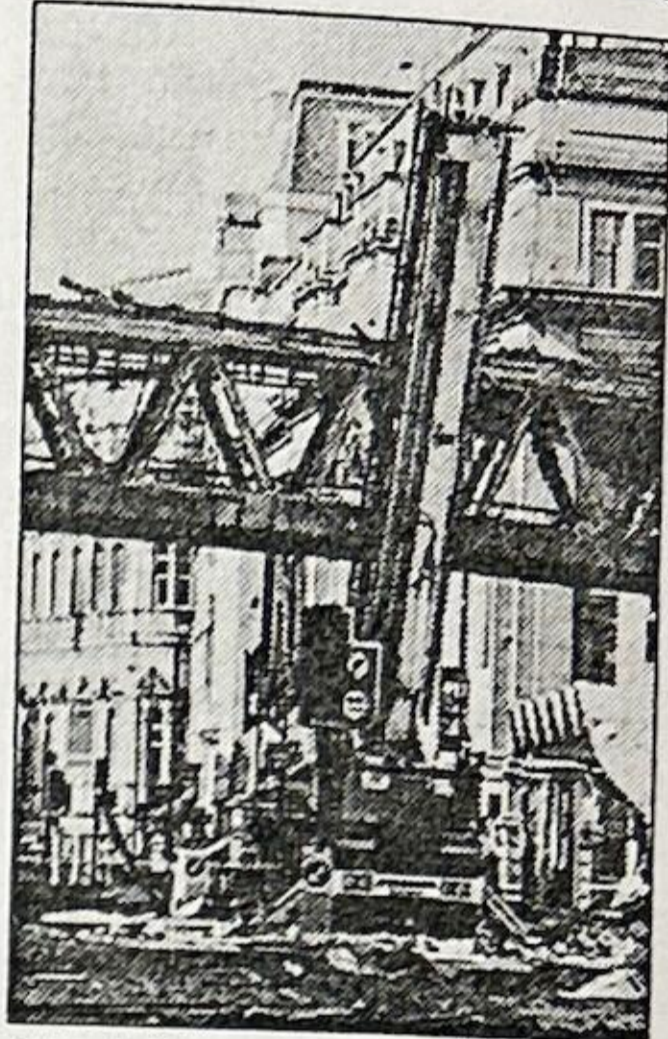
Anti-terrorist Garda commanders were jubilant about the success of the operation which netted two known IRA veterans - one a bomb-maker and the other a man previously held after the failed Eksund gun-running bid from Libya - plus a large amount of explosives.

Forensic experts were today examining a "substantial" amount of Semtex, home-made explosives, dozens of timing devices, electrical components used in rockets and batteries for mortars found in an out-house in the farmyard.

Detectives later surrounded an engineering plant in Dublin as a follow-up to the farmhouse raid.

The discovery was a blow to the IRA and one of the most important successes against the terrorists for some time, Garda sources said. "We caught them as they were actually working on the mortar bomb," said one. "We will not know the full extent of the haul until it has been forensically examined but we are satisfied it is highly significant."

The six men arrested were taken under heavy guard to Dublin and were to be questioned today. British



**Bomb factory may yield clues to the Manchester blast**

anti-terrorist officers seeking to trace the Manchester bombers and the origins of the explosive used which included Semtex and fertiliser will be keen to liaise with the Garda over the latest find.

The discovery underlines the warning delivered by Sir Hugh Annesley, Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary of an escalating bombing campaign in Northern Ireland and mainland Britain.

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