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The Ulster Question in International Politics

1968 – 1978

by

Michael McKinley

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in the Department of International Relations
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This thesis is my own original work.

Michael McKinley.

Michael McKinley.
This thesis has three general concerns. They relate to the processes by which the Ulster Question became 'internationalised'; the extent to which it became an international issue; and, the extent to which it was subject to international influences.

In 1968, the island of Ireland had been partitioned for some forty-seven years into two states: a twenty-six county, predominantly Catholic, Republic; and a six county, mainly Protestant, state — Northern Ireland — which was constitutionally subordinate to the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster. Within the latter, the minority Catholic community had been subjected to various forms of discrimination, including infringements and deprivations of their civil rights. As a result, a campaign was mounted to remedy their grievances. In these terms, therefore, the issue at stake was essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the United Kingdom Government.

The civil rights campaign, however, provoked extreme Unionists (also known as Loyalists) to respond violently. Civil disturbances thus became common, and on such a scale that it was only a short period before the real questions were not of civil rights, but of the continued existence of the state of Northern Ireland and the political re-integration of the island itself.

In this transformation, the central roles were played by the governments of Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Through the years 1968—1978, both made approaches to the 'national' question and failed. Yet they failed, not because the problem was demonstrably insoluble, but because neither individually nor together did they adopt the type of policies which may have brought success, albeit limited. The conduct of Anglo-Irish relations, therefore, was one of the great sadnesses of modern Ireland.

Outside of the politics between these two countries, the Ulster Question diminished in importance. Despite occasions when the world seemed genuinely shocked or revolted by what was happening in the North
and despite attempts by the Irish Government to win international support for various of its objectives there, the community of states simply did not regard the Ulster Question as an issue which required anything approaching a sustained attention and activity. The 'troubles', evidently, were such a morass that it had no wish to enter — besides which, to have done so was to risk offending one of the central parties. Even in the area of international organisation this was true, except that here, the question proved more amenable to atomisation, and so pressing aspects of it frequently gained a currency, particularly in the forums of Europe.

Notwithstanding the overall response of states to the Ulster Question in its entirety, there were instances of quite sustained interest being shown in the conflict it gave rise to. Libya was thus prominent for a period, for the financial and other assistance it provided to the Provisional Irish Republican Army. So, too, were several non-state actors who were similarly inclined, such as the Irish-American support network in the United States, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Their contributions, however, substantial as they might have been in terms of cash and arms, did not change in any major way the direction or the magnitude of the unique war being waged within (and sometimes without) the Six Counties.

It is, therefore, a central conclusion of this thesis that the Ulster Question was an issue of but limited international significance. As long as Ireland is partitioned it is certain to remain as an outstanding question for only two countries, Britain and Ireland. But as long as Northern Ireland continues to provide a situation within its recent and current dimensions — i.e. one that can, for all practical purposes, be kept at some distance by its European neighbours — it will also remain on the periphery of international concern. Hence, it may be Ireland's misfortune to compare unfavourably with various contemporary misfortunes — such as Vietnam or the Middle East — and to be deprived of urgent considerations and initiatives. But this at least throws the Ulster Question back upon those who are most intimately concerned with it. In the final analysis it is a question which requires both an Irish and, perhaps inappropriately and perversely, a British answer.
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Introduction
Ireland, like Dracula's Transylvania, is very much troubled by the undead.¹

Ulster is not a nation but a province. As such it is an unlikely focus for a thesis within the discipline of International Relations. More precisely, however, Ulster is a partitioned province, created by a treaty in international law. Three of its nine counties — Cavan, Donegal, and Monaghan — lie within the Irish Republic; the remaining six — Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone — form part of the United Kingdom. The six are claimed by the former under the 1937 Constitution; they are also claimed, but significantly they exist, as an 'integral part' of the latter, as the entity known as Northern Ireland.²

According to the Constitution of Ireland, this division is temporary, 'pending the re-integration of the national territory'.³ Unity is also taken as the aim of the 500,000 plus Catholics who make up approximately one-third of the northern population. It is also the non-negotiable demand of the Irish Republican Army, a paramilitary organisation which is outlawed in both parts of Ireland.⁴

However, for the one million or so Protestant Unionists (or Loyalists as they are sometimes called) of the Northern Ireland population,


² In the following pages the terms Northern Ireland, the North of Ireland, Ulster, the Six Counties, the Province, the State will be used interchangeably and without political intent, depending on the context, the documents being cited, contemporary usage, and the requirements of euphony.

³ Article 3.

⁴ There is also a problem of nomenclature within the state occupied by the Twenty-Six Counties. The people within tend to refer to it as Ireland; in the North, the tendency is to refer to it as 'the Free State', or sometimes, 'Eire'. Elsewhere, 'the Republic' or 'the South' is also used. In this thesis, the terms 'Free State' and 'Eire' will not be used unless a citation is involved; the remaining terms will be used interchangeably as the circumstances and context demand.
Unity is anathema because of a deep fear that, in a united Ireland, their identity would be insecure and subject to discrimination and erosion by a government closely attuned to the Catholic Church. So strongly did this fear operate in the first half-century of Northern Ireland's existence that Unionists staunchly opposed any formal power-sharing arrangements with Catholics. But as in the Catholic community, there are paramilitary extremists such as the Ulster Volunteer Force, who see sectarian violence as an acceptable method of making their political points.

This situation admits no compromise because to compromise, according to the opposing factions, is to lose all. The result, or rather its surface manifestations, has been defined by Richard Rose as follows:

In law, it is a subordinate part of the United Kingdom, ruled by the authority of the British Parliament at Westminster. In fact, Northern Ireland is an insubordinate part of the United Kingdom - governed without consensus when it is governed at all. That is the Northern Ireland problem.\(^5\)

In 1968, this problem was seen most clearly in an area of politics which were of domestic concern: the denial of civil rights to the minority Catholic community, and the campaign that was induced to rectify it. The question of civil rights, however, could not be put without challenging Protestant/Unionist hegemony, and thus, the very existence of the State itself. When extremists responded violently to the civil rights campaign, this immediate issue became joined by (if it was ever absent from) the older question of unity. Gradually, and then with greater force civil rights were overborne by re-statements of the 'national question'.

In this process the past came powerfully into play. Indeed, the international politics of the Ulster Question since 1968 are deeply rooted, and can only be fully understood, in the context of Ireland's history and the international political history of Europe. And this history contains far more complexities than can adequately be conveyed in a thesis defined such as this is.

The Ulster Question is far older than the 1921 partition of Ireland. It invokes memories of a few heroes, more villains, and multitudes of victims. It goes back at least to the sixteenth century and, many have ventured, beyond then to the twelfth century invasion mounted by Henry II to secure the western extremities of his Kingdom. Even then, there is no need to accept the twelfth century as the starting point of it all that has become the Ulster Question: in Irish history, as in the mechanics of avalanches and other geological dramas, there is such a geometric progression between cause and effect, that effects are also causes and there is no stopping the search for an unmoved and unmovable first principle. Yet a start must be made somewhere in time, and because, in 1968, there were developments which were to re-vitalise the Ulster Question, the selection of that year is neither unreasonable nor arbitrary.

The following analysis therefore presumes a knowledge both of Irish history and of the signal events in, and related to, Northern Ireland since 1968. References to the former, however, are not sprung upon the reader, and are in any case occasional; similarly the latter is made available in some small way by the Narratives which precede each of the first four chapters and cover the entire period. The Narratives could, perhaps, have formed one of the appendices, but I thought that placing them at the back of the volume would lead to a lack of continuity. If they appear unduly lengthy, or even unnecessary, then I offer my apologies for proffering more background than is required.

The thesis itself, 'The Ulster Question in International Politics, 1968–1978', is concerned with the contemporary transformation of an issue which was essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the Northern Ireland Parliament at Stormont, or at least at no further remove than the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster, to one of limited, but nonetheless real international proportions and significance. It is concerned, in the first instance, with an inquiry into the behaviour of states and international organisations which seek to reconcile demands for justice and self-determination with countervailing demands for order and stability, all within the particular requirements of national and international self-interest. It is also concerned with the extent to which the Ulster Question is an international issue - in other words its international standing - and conversely, with the scope of external
influence which has been brought to bear on it. And finally, it is concerned with defining the international boundaries of Ulster's internal violence and with the relations between state and non-state actors directly involved or interested in the conflict and its possible outcomes.

Of foremost importance is the relationship between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom — Anglo Irish relations. Ever since Ireland was partitioned in 1921 the theme of the former's longest lamentation in this most sensitive diplomatic liaison has been when, if ever, and how, if at all, the country could be politically re-united. There is, therefore, no one 'Ulster Question'; there are several. These deal with the fundamental questions of politics — 'who governs?' and 'how?'. It is the interplay between the division of Ireland and the questions which gives rise to the international political dimensions of Ulster. Indeed, in the above terms the Ulster Question is deceptively straightforward as being concerned with the process of decolonisation, perhaps complicated to an extent by what the current literature refers to as the 'asymmetric diad' nature of the relationship — much the same as may be found between Canada and the United States, or New Zealand and Australia.

The problem is that very little about the Ulster Question is so straightforward. As one citizen of Belfast warned in 1970: 'Anyone here who isn't confused simply doesn't understand what's going on.'

To take a more pessimistic note from Gladstone, Ireland comprises the 'sad exception' — not only in Britain's record of conduct towards the country, or in the uniqueness of the current 'troubles', but more abstractly, in the sense of attempting to define just what the Ulster Question is in terms of a subject for study within the discipline of International Relations.

For a start, Anglo-Irish relations are unique; at best they but superficially resemble other asymmetric relations. The nature of their iniqueness is, however, well documented by historians, and attested to once more in Chapters 1 to 4, which cover four relatively distinct phases they have passed through since 1968.

Beyond Anglo-Irish relations, the nature of the Ulster Question
imposes an unacceptable stress on all existing analytical models, theories, and paradigms within International Relations. Indeed so great is this stress that virtually a separate model, theory, or paradigm would be required for each of the subject areas under consideration. In all, this would amount to nine, exclusive of Anglo-Irish relations. The thesis, therefore, would be dominated by theoretical considerations, which I believe is neither necessary nor desirable. In view of the fact that the international political aspect of the Ulster Question has not been well analysed, and because of my belief that it is an important subject, it is my intention that the actual politics, and not political science theory, should dominate this study.

But this should not be taken to imply that there is a proliferation, or even a reasonably wide choice of models, etc., to choose from. In fact there is a certain poverty within International Relations when it comes to this point: only two works, or rather parts thereof, proved at all useful. The first was the collected papers from a symposium held at the Center of International Studies, Princeton University, in 1963.\(^6\) The second also took the form of collected papers, and was the result of presentations to the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, in 1971.\(^7\)

While both suggest avenues of inquiry and possible areas or dimensions which might be examined, they lack coherence. There is no attempt to organise the available data in anything like a model. (And this is only to be expected given the nature of the original undertaking). Moreover, both collections, as their respective titles indicate, focus on the general relationship between civil violence and the world at large. In the case of the Ulster Question this would be both inappropriate and distorting. It is inappropriate because it emphasises the consequence of a failure to resolve an underlying issue, rather than the issue itself, and it leaves to one side the other forms of diplomacy which that issue has given rise to. The focus is therefore upon the symptoms at the

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7 *Civil Violence and the International System, Parts I and II, Adelphi Papers, Nos. 82 and 83*, respectively (hereafter cited as *Adelphi Papers, No. ...*).
expense of the causes. And it is distorting because it postulates that there is a relationship between violence and the 'international system', whereas the evidence which will be presented in this thesis suggests that the external nexus from the strife in Ulster is more towards two or three countries, and in other cases tenuous and not of primary importance. As a result, the works cited are only marginally useful.

Thus, what propositions of a 'critical', 'speculative' or 'constructive' nature (to use Hedley Bull's terminology)\(^8\) are to be advanced will be derived from the repository of historical knowledge rather than from those forms of inquiry which are not temporally based. But to the marked extent that there are established modes of behaviour in certain relations, there is what may be termed a 'model in time' which synthesises both the essential need for an historical awareness — which is demanded by the subject — and the obligation to organise that study systematically and according to contemporary interstate politics, in the main — which is the requirement of the discipline of International Relations.

A similar application is made in respect of the 'troubles' themselves. They are, to use terms popular in the 1960s and 1970s, examples of 'civil violence' or 'internal war', although the fact of having stated this does little to further the understanding of the conflict which has been waged between the IRA and the British Army since the autumn of 1970. This, however, should not be surprising. The American sociologist, Harry Eckstein, in a book published in 1964, affirmed that he had found in the pages of the *New York Times* between 1946 and 1959 over 1200 instances of 'internal war'.\(^9\) This description covered 'civil wars, including guerrilla wars, localised rioting, widely dispersed turmoil, organised and apparently unorganised terrorism, mutinies and coups d'etat.'\(^10\) Surprisingly, neither Eckstein, nor the scholars who collaborated with him to produce *Internal War*, saw fit to mention the particular case of a

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\(^8\) Hedley Bull, 'International Relations As An Academic Pursuit', *Australian Outlook* 26 (December 1977): 257.


\(^10\) ibid., p. 3.
resurgence of civil violence in Northern Ireland which was, in 1959, mid-way through its six-year course.

The reason for this appears to have less to do with the deficiencies of scholars than it does with what Pierre Hassner refers to as 'the diversity and elusive character of civil violence, the complex and contradictory character of international power relationships and hence about the essentially indirect, ambiguous and largely unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of the connections between the two.' From this, I thought that the most worthwhile avenue of inquiry was to raise two implicit questions concerning Northern Ireland:

(1) What most closely, if anything, does the conflict in the Province conform to, in terms of an international conflict?
(2) What has been the impact of the conflict on the international community?

Underlying these questions there is a deeper one which both of them beg. As Bull observed in 1971:

What is most striking about ... political violence ... is not its 'civil' character, but the way in which it cuts across the distinction between what is 'civil' and what is 'international'.

Thus, the deepest question in relation to the Northern Ireland conflict as a subject for study within the discipline of International Relations concerns the extent to which previous conventions of the community of states have been preserved, and/or what has replaced them.

Furthermore it is this same question which is so relevant in the Northern Ireland related activities at the level of international organisations. Not only do they supply interesting illustrations of how the assumed veto power of Article 2:7 of the United Nations Charter may be diminished, but they also suggest how it may be circumvented, in so far as an international 'hearing' is concerned, by recourse to more localised

(European) forums without any significant disadvantage to the plaintiff parties.

The structure suggested by this approach is an examination of the Ulster Question according to the loci within which its standing as a subject of diplomacy between sovereign states was determined. As a general rule, this aspect was directly related to proximity to Ulster. For these reasons, which also fortunately coincide with convenience and efficiency, the analysis is organised principally by geographical areas and, within these areas, chronologically. As was mentioned earlier, Anglo-Irish relations are the most significant of these and are, therefore, the concern of the first four chapters. Therefore Western Europe (four chapters), the United States (two chapters), and three countries of the 'Old Commonwealth' (one chapter in all) are treated in succession. There are two exceptions. The United Nations is placed after Anglo-Irish relations and before Western Europe because of the importance the Irish Government accorded its initiative there in 1969, and because the experience Dublin gained then appears to have determined some of its subsequent courses of action in Western Europe. And the two chapters relating to the contacts, operations, and supplies of the paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland are placed last for the reason that the level and style of analysis within them is somewhat separate from the remainder of the thesis.

There are three additional notes I would make on the organisation and make-up of this thesis. The first concerns the time frame, which is described as '1968–1978'. In some areas this period has been exceeded for the reason that there were events or developments about which I had information, and which, if included, enabled me to provide a more logical termination than would have been the case by abruptly finishing 31 December 1978. Furthermore, in many cases where this cut-off date was adhered to, it was not because I had tired of asking the question posed by the old man in Sean O'Casey's 'Drums Under the Windows':

What th' hell are th' up to now?

Rather it was because of another of his questions, i.e.:

How th' hell can you expect a fella to hear from here?
The second point concerns evidence. As Louis McRedmond has noted, the Irish tend to hide from all would-be interpreters of their past, part of their history in a "Gaelic strongbox ... to which [they] alone possess the key." The same attitude not only prevailed in relation to their more recent past, as was evidenced in the Dáil on many occasions, but was the modus operandi of all the central parties to the Ulster Question. For example, many of the details of Anglo-Irish discussions were either kept confidential, or released selectively, so that interpretation and understanding relied very heavily upon nuance and interpolation.

In this enterprise, however, one is very much alone. With but few exceptions the international politics of the Ulster Question as a comprehensive area for sustained inquiry has attracted no great interest. That of course has its own consolations — otherwise whence this thesis? But both of these factors — confidentiality and academic isolation — are compounded by the speed at which events sometimes occur in relation to Northern Ireland. As Oliver MacDonagh wrote of the years since 1967:

... it was the day of the instantaneous. The course of events so twisted and darted, at times, that yesterday seemed irrelevant by mid-day and tomorrow unknowable at nightfall.

Fortunately, even if the scholars were seldom to the fore, it was not always unrelieved darkness. The newspapers made the effort, attempted the coverage, some of them to a high level of understanding, as MacDonagh also testified:

The babble of explanation was too loud for thought, and, in immediate exposition and analysis, the best of journalists proved themselves superior to the scholars.

14 The exchange between Dr O'Connell and Dr Hillery in Dáil Éireann following the latter's 1972 international visit to several capitals is very much to the point (see Chapter 10, p. 442).
16 ibid.
And this brings me to the third point, which is that of certainty. Very often the Scottish juridical prerogative of 'not proven' is exercised. This is not always because I am unsure or undecided about the argument in question, but because there are limits to which even the most conscientious of reporting can sustain conclusions which might be held in pectore.

Mention of conclusions or opinions held in the heart, or in reserve, prompts a final, personal note. It stems from the wish to make explicit my own assumptions and morality with regard to the subject of this thesis. As my name might suggest, I am, to the best of my knowledge, of Scotch-Irish descent; indeed, three of my four grandparents held names that are commonly found in Ulster. Whatever their confessional affiliations were there (and there are grounds for thinking that my paternal grandfather was a Protestant), they were Catholics in New Zealand. I was raised as one accordingly. I have, furthermore, lived in Ireland for extended periods of research and study and made many friends there. My interest in the country, therefore, is both academic and personal—spiritual if you like.

Because of this attachment, I am more acutely aware of the need to exercise a rigorous undiscriminating scepticism in the following analysis. If some readers may think that I have not always succeeded, it was not for want of trying. I have demanded of myself a similar (moral) rigour with respect to the violence, and the talk of violence, which sometimes seems to be all pervasive. My position is this: I dearly wish to see a united Ireland to which all Irish men and women, North and South, have freely given their assent. This, I know, is but the remotest of possibilities given the current state of affairs; perhaps it is even chimerical. Nevertheless, it is my instinct. I do not, however, believe that those who demand a united Ireland, and who then kill indiscriminately other Irish men and women should be looked upon as agents of this state. Similarly, I hold no brief for those other parties, state and non-state, who demand some other liberty and behave in no better way. At the core it is a question of moral responsibility, portrayed most eloquently by Albert Camus:
I am not one of those who long for people to take up arms again in an uprising doomed to be crushed under the eyes of an international society that will spare neither applause nor virtuous tears before returning to their slippers like football enthusiasts on Saturday evening after a big game. There are already too many dead in the stadium.17

As this Introduction began with a reflection upon the historical nature of the Ulster Question, so it closes. Throughout the following inquiry into the various facets of the issue, it will be necessary to bear in mind that, fundamentally, it is an ancient question restated. Moreover, whatever it was in the distant past, it has been for some time a question of prime concern for but one nation, and the 'troubles' which have grown out of it are small in the scale of recent and current conflicts. It is important, therefore, not to exaggerate its importance as an issue in international politics. Clearly it is an issue: it is not, nor is likely ever to be, one of the more pressing issues in the world.

For this reason the results of the inquiry are to be seen in the same light as the Ulster Question itself — essentially sui generis — and possessing only peripheral relevance to the great issues which constitute the stuff of international politics. But that is no great failing: if they represent progress along a path towards the discernment of what Lecky termed the 'great permanent forces that are steadily bearing nations onwards to improvement or decay' they are yet worthwhile.

17 Stefan Kanfer, review of Notebooks, by Albert Camus, in Time, 10 July 1978, p. 49.
NARRATIVE, 1968-MARCH 1972
The decade of the 1960s, in particular the second half of it, is frequently described as radical, largely because of the movements which grew to prominence in this time, and their legacies. Perhaps it is possible to say almost anything about an age, and therefore fruitless to make the attempt, especially since time has yet to exert the fullness of its discriminating influence. But certainly much of an identifiable nature seemed to be happening in these years. And a discussion of the Northern Ireland Question would be incomplete without brief reference to the international milieu at the time it re-appeared. Although the decade of the 1960s was heralded by the lure of Camelot and the challenge of the New Frontier, its history, more often than not, records the failure of noble aspirations and of peaceful evolution as against violent revolution. If the '60s saw the age of Martin Luther King and the potential of non-violent protest, they also saw his assassination and the rise of Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmichael, and the Black Panthers. It was a time when Woodstock was eclipsed by Altamont, the 'days of rage' and Kent State. An era of protest, assertiveness, and revolution had dawned to live but briefly, but its dimension, for all of its short life span, was international.

In the United States the President succumbed, in large part, to protests against a war he could not end. In France, what is now delicately called 'the events of May' (1968) shattered the monarchic authority of De Gaulle and, momentarily, brought the country to a standstill. In China the Red Guards staged a revolution from which the country has still to fully recover. In Biafra, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Spain, and Yugoslavia there were, in varying degrees and combinations, instances of the playing out of the same themes of protest, assertiveness, and revolution, and in each of which violence was an inevitable consequence. This is not to say that every instance conformed to a specific type of political phenomenon or, indeed, that they were all political, but it is to suggest that each supports the claim that the '60s were a time of widespread dislocation and upheaval within societies.*

* See note 1 below.
At a time when the demise of the nation state was mooted, and in many cases accepted, a resurgent nationalism appeared in Wales, Scotland, among the Palestinian Arabs, the French of Quebec, and in the land of the Basques. Established states, thought to be stable, were challenged and in the process nearly every conceivable condition within them was polarised to its extreme as though this was the only remaining alternative for the further evolution of man.

In Northern Ireland the contemporary beginnings of this process appeared in the summer of 1968 as a reaction against various forms of discrimination. The previous year had seen the founding of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), a predominantly Roman Catholic organisation whose aims were to obtain an equality of treatment for Catholics in the state. In the period between August and October 1968, with the aid of counter-campaign violence and hence, publicity by the media, it grew into a mass movement.

That there existed actual and widespread discrimination mainly against Catholics was accepted by both the Cameron Commission established to inquire into the causes of disturbances in late 1968-early 1969, and by the Northern Ireland Government, whose announcement, in November 1968, of various reform measures was an explicit acknowledgment of the justice of the complaints. Amongst those grievances which the Cameron Commission accepted were:

1 Although the influence of external events is generally accepted by many scholars and commentators on Northern Ireland, it is denied by one of the leading personalities of that time. Bernadette Devlin, in a tenth anniversary (of the civil rights campaign) interview, claims she was not inspired by such outside examples or the events of May 1968 in France. She adds 'I never met Cohn-Bendit; Eamonn McCann (a Socialist-Republican then prominent in the civil rights movement) raged because the time we were to meet Alain Krivine we went out the night drinking!' She is also of the opinion that the reasons for the Civil Rights Movement are to be found in sociology and not politics.


2 A three-man Commission, chaired by Lord Cameron, authorised by the Governor of Northern Ireland to report on disturbances in the state from 5 October 1968 until early 1969. See note 3 below.
(1) A rising sense of continuing injustice and grievance among large sections of the Catholic population in Northern Ireland, in particular in Londonderry and Dungannon, in respect of (i) inadequacy of housing provision by certain local authorities (ii) unfair methods of allocation of houses built and let by such authorities, in particular refusals and omissions to adopt a 'points' system in determining priorities and making allocations (iii) misuse in certain cases of discretionary powers of allocation of houses in order to perpetuate Unionist control of the local authority.

(2) Complaints, now well documented in fact, of discrimination in the making of local government appointments, at all levels but especially in senior posts, to the prejudice of non-Unionists and especially Catholic members of the community, in some Unionist controlled authorities.

(3) Complaints, again well documented, in some cases of deliberate manipulation of local government electoral boundaries and in others a refusal to apply for their necessary extensions, in order to achieve and maintain Unionist control of local authorities and so deny to Catholics influence in local government proportionate to their numbers.

The Cameron Report also noted the more specific complaints of the siting of most new economic developments in the mainly Protestant area east of the River Bann, and of the foundation of the New University of Ulster at Coleraine rather than at Derry. Further, it referred to the resentment among the Catholic community at the continued existence of the Special Powers Act and the exclusively Protestant Ulster Special Constabulary ('B' Specials).

As a result of these grievances NICRA demanded a programme of six basic reforms which were, by liberal, democratic standards moderate and

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Note: Although discrimination was found to be predominantly against Catholics, the Report (p. 64) notes that 'certain authorities which were controlled by Catholic majorities pursued precisely analogous policies' to Protestant authorities which were discriminating against Catholics. The example cited (p. 60) is that of Newry Urban District which, controlled by non-Unionists, employed very few Protestants.

anything but revolutionary. But in the context of Northern Ireland they were essentially revolutionary in both tactics and substance.

The civil rights groups reversed the tactics of Sinn Fein. Instead of trying to change the regime by refusing recognition of British sovereignty, they sought to change it by claiming full rights as British citizens.

The reforms, therefore could be regarded as 'unionist' demands. Indeed it was Lord Cameron's estimate that they constituted nothing that would 'in any sense endanger the stability of the (Northern Ireland) Constitution'. The demands were:

1. Universal franchise in local government elections in line with the franchise in the rest of the United Kingdom.
2. The redrawing of electoral boundaries by an independent Commission to ensure fair representation.
3. Legislation against discrimination in employment at local government level and the provision of machinery to remedy local government grievances.
4. A compulsory points system for housing which would ensure fair allocation.

Later, a seventh demand was added: the withdrawal of the Public Order (Amendment) Bill.


It is interesting to note that Mr Vorster, as Minister of Justice in the Republic of South Africa, when introducing that country's far-reaching security law, the Terrorism Act, was quoted as saying he would exchange his entire Act, for just 'one clause of the Northern Ireland Special Powers Act'. Times, 30 August 1971.

(6) The disbanding of the USC (The Ulster Special Constabulary, also known as the 'B' Specials). 9

The methods employed by NICRA to publicise the discrimination which existed and the reforms to remedy it, owed much to exemplary influences and forces outside Northern Ireland.

It is very important to note that these developments occurred in an international environment sensitized to anticolonial struggles and followed the fullblown emergence of the civil rights struggle in the United States. Northern Irish Catholics, closely linked to the outside world by the media, were profoundly influenced by these events, especially the struggle of black Americans to achieve racial equality. Some Irish students had actually observed American protest marches firsthand and urged the adoption of similar tactics in Ireland.10

To this extent, therefore, it was not surprising to note that marches, demonstrations, and a general commitment to non-violent forms of expression were the modes by which the civil rights campaign in Northern Ireland were to be conducted. But there was a basic difference between what happened in the United States and in Northern Ireland, although it took some time for this to emerge and for its impact to be felt upon the pattern of events since 1968. In the United States, in places like Alabama, no one, black or white, seriously questioned the existence of the state itself, or its constitutional status within the union of American States. In Northern Ireland, however, the civil rights movement received support from a minority which traditionally opposed the every existence of the State, and which had cultural, emotional, religious, and sporting ties with another constitutional entity to the south. Thus, in this context, it is important to appreciate that the civil rights campaign

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9 A paramilitary force designed in the 1920s for border protection duties. So called because there were once 'A' and 'C' Specials as well. By 1969 it had become such an instrument of anti-Catholic repression that Lord Hunt, after inquiring into its workings, recommended, and the British Government obtained, its disbandment. Demands taken from Cameron Report, p. 78.

was, as Richard Rose emphasises, 'better described as a movement than as an organization'. He continues, 'It drew together, in temporary alliance, individuals with many different political backgrounds, ranging from Republicans to a few Protestants'.

Equally, it should be appreciated, as it was by the Cameron Commission, that in addition to being non-violent in policy and 'non-sectarian in origin and purpose', its programme was sought 'within the framework of the Constitution'. Evidence supporting this conclusion was also suggested by a 'Loyalty Survey' undertaken in the summer of 1968, which forms the basis for Richard Rose's Governing Without Consensus. According to this source, 33 per cent of Catholics interviewed supported the Northern Ireland Constitution, as against 34 per cent who disapproved and 32 per cent who '(didn't) know about the Constitution'.

The significance of these developments was not readily accepted by a large proportion of the Protestant population, who saw in Civil Rights only a disguised attack upon the status of the six northern counties, and the designs of the Irish Republican Army. As William Craig, the Home Secretary dismissed the movement: 'bogus and made up of people who see in unrest a chance to renew a campaign of violence'. Such opposition notwithstanding, the tactics of the movement appeared to be vindicated by O'Neill's proposed reforms, although their efficacy has also to be assessed in the light of sympathetic pressure from London and from the moderate Unionists supporting the Northern Ireland Prime Minister. In theory, the O'Neill reforms met the major Catholic grievances, and in one case exceeded them: Craig, who had come to symbolise the inherent oppressiveness of the Special Powers Act and other Protestant excesses, was dismissed from the Cabinet. Nevertheless, Catholic reaction, bred from half a century of mutual mistrust between them and a Protestant government, was cautious. In the Catholic view this attitude was justified in view of the fact that the promise of reforms constituted neither their actual passage into law, nor their realisation. It remained

12 Cameron Report, p. 79.
13 Rose, Governing Without Consensus, p. 189.
14 Sunday Times, Ulster, p. 47.
current, much to Protestant annoyance, after the Londonderry Borough Council, probably the most blatant example of gerrymandering in Northern Ireland, was replaced by a Development Commission.

These moderate and qualified successes had two immediate consequences. The first was that it produced a split within the civil rights movement. NICRA, concerned at the violent Protestant reaction to the marches and their apparent success, favoured a moratorium on this type of activity while Stormont worked on the implementation of reform. In this they were opposed by more militant groups — such as People's Democracy — a socialist student group from the Queen's University, Belfast. People's Democracy, like the civil rights movement to which it gave support, was quite amorphous, but in keeping with the generally more radical tone of its membership, argued for a continuation of protest activity until all the original aims of the campaign had been achieved. To this end they organised the 'Long March' between Belfast and Londonderry over New Year 1969. As this involved passing through areas of Protestant majority, resistance to it was anticipated and may even have been welcomed in a perverse way by some. But on 4 January at Burntollet Bridge outside Londonderry it was attacked by off-duty 'B' Specials and followers of the Reverend Ian Paisley with such viciousness that the lives of a number of the marchers were endangered. That evening, after the march was over, members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary combined with a Protestant mob to invade the Bogside, the largest Catholic quarter in the city, and conducted what Richard Ned Lebow refers to as an anti-Catholic 'pogrom' which, according to the Cameron Commission,

15 For an account of this movement see Paul Arthur, The People's Democracy, 1968-1973 (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1974), which is based upon this author's thesis for the M.Sc. degree at the Queen's University, Belfast.

16 Seventy-five miles.

17 The Cameron Report, p. 47 and p. 80 infers this from the evidence presented to it.


19 ibid., p. 225.
involved assault and battery, malicious damage to property ... giving reasonable cause for apprehension of personal injury among other innocent inhabitants, and the use of provocative sectarian and political slogans.\(^{20}\)

Although violence had attended upon civil rights demonstrations as early as 5 October 1968 — indeed, it contributed to their eventual success — the period which followed Burntollet was to differ markedly from those earlier days. Of this Lebow writes, 'For all practical purposes, this pogrom put an end to the era of civil rights marches and ushered in a more violent kind of confrontation'.\(^{21}\)

The second consequence was the division of the Unionist Party between those who, like O'Neill, recognised the need to meet some of the Catholic demands, and those who saw in them the destruction of the Northern Ireland State. By early 1969 support for O'Neill's policies had been so eroded that he called a General Election for 24 February which, instead of granting him a mandate for reform, served only to polarise Northern opinion and to emphasise his tenuous position as Prime Minister. It was no position from which to satisfy Catholic demands, nor one from which to resist the pressures of extreme Unionists.\(^{22}\)

On the Catholic side many civil rights leaders ran for office and their success, at the expense of the old Nationalist and Labour parties, appeared to Protestants as a portent of what a united Catholic community could achieve.\(^{23}\) When, in the following April, Bernadette Devlin, a twenty-one years old undergraduate active in the civil rights movement took the Mid-Ulster constituency in a Westminster by-election, Protestant fears

\(^{20}\) Cameron Report, p. 73.

\(^{21}\) Lebow, 'Ireland', p. 225.


\(^{23}\) Two leaders in the civil rights movement, John Hume and Ivan Cooper were elected at the expense of incumbent Nationalist MPs who had been too slow to respond to the growing activism of the Catholic community.
were again accentuated. They found expression once more in a lawless police attack upon the Bogside of Derry, in the course of which substantial damage and injury to residents was inflicted. Despite Lord Cameron's recommendation that the incident 'should be rigorously probed and investigated', it was not. As a result the Catholic community found it increasingly difficult to distinguish between official and unofficial reactionary violence and to seriously doubt the ability of the government to implement its policies.

In this context of steadily deteriorating inter-communal relations anti-O'Neill Unionists sought to move against the Prime Minister by exacerbating them even further in the hope that Stormont would be panicked into a return to 'strong government', i.e. a refusal to concede to Catholic demands. To this end a bombing campaign was conducted against public utilities in east Ulster by the Protestant para-military organisation, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), but presented as the work of the IRA. Deceived, the Northern Ireland Government declared a state of emergency and thereby provoked even more violent confrontations between Catholics and Protestants. In turn, the violence brought renewed pressure upon O'Neill from the British Government to placate the Catholics by implementing the principle of one-man-one-vote. Although he managed to obtain from Cabinet its acquiescence in such a proposal it was with some difficulty. In the face of this indication that he could no longer guarantee executive command, Terence O'Neill resigned on 28 April 1969, and was replaced by a distant cousin, Major James Chichester-Clark.

The change of government purchased a period of respite for Stormont, and a brittle peace which persisted, despite underlying tensions, through until the 'marching season' of July-August 1969. Starting on 12 July,

24 Cameron Report, p. 74.
25 For an account of the reasons behind this attitude see Boyle et.al., Law and State, pp. 26-36.
26 Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 78-9; Lebow, Divided Nations, pp. 225-6; and Liam de Paor, Divided Ulster (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973), p. 190 (hereafter cited as de Paor, Divided Ulster).
27 Lebow, 'Ireland', p. 226.
28 de Paor, Divided Ulster, p. 191.
the traditional date for Orange parades, violent confrontations between Catholics and Protestants reappeared, culminating in five days of almost continuous rioting, known now as the Battle of Bogside. In Belfast, in August, a similar eruption was set off and the Catholic Lower Falls area was attacked and fired by a mob which included the RUC, the 'B' Specials, and civilians armed by the latter. In the realisation that the RUC and 'B' Specials could not contain the situation, assistance from the British Army was sought, and received, in both cities. Initially, it was welcomed by the Catholic community as their protectors, but recent experience had also demonstrated to the Catholics their vulnerability to extreme Protestant attacks. The result was the split, in December 1969, of the IRA into 'Official' and 'Provisional' wings. The differences between them were, in the main, concerned with tactics although ideological differences also came to the fore. Where the former countenanced radical agitation and mass confrontation, the latter were more interested in 'military' action in defence of the Catholic areas. Nevertheless, in August 1969, neither option was really open to the two IRAs — who lacked both the strength and the organisation to carry them out. Hence the intervention of the Army at this time brought a further period of relative tranquility to Northern Ireland.

With the help of British pressure upon Stormont many of the reforms demanded by NICRA came to pass. In 1969, one-man-one-vote in local elections finally became law; the 'B' Specials were abolished and the RUC disarmed (although they were inevitably re-armed during the disorders of 1971). In 1969, also, a Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, or Ombudsman, and a Commissioner for Complaints, both completely independent of the Government, were appointed to investigate complaints of maladministration, including discrimination, against government departments and against local authorities and public bodies respectively. In 1970, a Central Housing Authority and

29 Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 126-72, and de Paor, Divided Ulster, pp. 192-7.

30 Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 176-97.
Yet, with the approach of another marching season, the potential, and then the actuality of inter-communal violence increased once more. With this development the British Army began to concentrate its attention more and more upon the Catholic community. In July 1970 a curfew was imposed upon the (Catholic) Falls Road in Belfast when an arms search met with armed resistance. The Government also responded by introducing further measures of a legal and military nature which in turn led to both an increase in the incidence of clashes between the Army and the Catholics, and a growing hostility towards the military, who were now seen by that community as instruments of Stormont repression. In the prevailing conditions of this period the Provisional IRA thereby gained the necessary sympathy of the Catholic community and the confidence to take the offensive against the Army. In February 1971, following the death of the first British soldier in the current 'troubles', Chichester Clark announced on television, 'Northern-Ireland was at war with the Irish Republic Army Provisionals'.

To counter the reprisal campaign Chichester-Clark came under strong pressure to demand from the British Government actions which bordered upon, and in some cases were, extreme. When such measures were not forthcoming from Westminster, Chichester-Clark, like O'Neill before him, found his position as Prime Minister untenable, and resigned on 9 March 1971. He was replaced by Brian Faulkner.

Unlike the previous change of leadership at Stormont, Faulkner's succession did not presage a period of diminished tension. Despite moves by his government to transfer the responsibility for prosecuting other than minor summary offences to a Director of Public Prosecutions and despite attempts by him, in the summer and autumn of 1971, to

31 Lebow, 'Ireland', pp. 229-30.
32 Sunday Times, Ulster, p. 245.
33 ibid., p. 249.
involve the parliamentary opposition in the governmental process, both Catholic-Army and Catholic-Protestant relations increased in hostility in the first six months he was in office. Correspondingly, Catholic support for the IRA increased.

But it would have been unreasonable to have expected the change of leadership or Faulkner's package of reforms to have effected another peaceful interlude. By early 1971 the Provisionals had gone over to the offensive. Between March and August they undertook a bombing campaign against British commercial interests in Northern Ireland with the objective of driving them out by inflicting unacceptable economic costs, while at the same time, achieving the abolition of Stormont. In the process they also injured a substantial number of civilians and soldiers, and killed four of the latter.

In the face of this escalation Faulkner, in August 1971, obtained from the British Government, approval to institute a policy of internment without trial of people suspected of terrorist activities. Both militarily and politically internment was a disaster. For the first eighteen months of its operation it applied exclusively to Catholics. This fact, and the manner in which it was conducted, effectively completed Catholic estrangement from Stormont, the British Army, and for many, Westminster as well. Reports, later substantiated, that some internees were tortured inflamed their passions even more. Deaths and bombings increased dramatically: in the six months following internment 174 people were killed; in August alone there were 35 violent deaths and over 100 bomb explosions.

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34 ibid., pp. 254-5 and 305-06.


36 *Sunday Times, Ulster*, pp. 252-68.

37 ibid.
The misuse of internment powers also presented the IRA with further opportunities to extend its influence to Catholic areas in which it had previously been minimal or precarious. As the tension mounted, the IRA campaign against British interests, and its clashes with the British Army, developed into urban guerrilla warfare—a mode of fighting which was not expected when the troops were sent in, and in which they were neither trained nor experienced anyway. In this uncertain and stressful situation British para-troopers killed thirteen civilians at a demonstration in Derry on 30 January 1972.

'Bloody Sunday', as the event became known, signalled the final chain of events which were to lead to the prorogation of Stormont. Irish reaction, in the North and in the Republic, was immediately and angrily expressed. Both Official and Provisional wings of the IRA announced an intensification of their campaigns, with the former mounting an operation in Britain itself. In Dublin, a vengeful mob burned down the British Embassy and the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, recalled his country's ambassador to London. Elsewhere on the international scene the attitude towards Britain was questioning where it was not plainly condemnatory. The British public's shock at the allegations now being made concerning the conduct of the Army prompted an intense national debate on Northern Ireland. The Cabinet was, therefore, required to choose between continued support of a government whose ability to govern could be ensured only with a massive (for the size of the state) infusion of force, or the imposition of direct rule.

38 ibid., pp. 280-1.


40 This was not the first occasion to be so described: 21 November 1920 attracted this description with the killing of 14 British undercover agents and the reprisals, conducted by the 'Black-and-Tans', who fired into a crowd during a football match at Croke Park, killing 12. The second occasion was in Belfast on 10 July 1921 during which 161 Catholic homes were fired and 15 killed.
While both options were regarded as extreme, the latter appeared to offer less likelihood of an increase in an already high level of violence, and a greater correlation of political risks with ultimate political responsibility. Thus, on 24 March 1972, Prime Minister Edward Heath put to Faulkner a proposal that required the Northern Ireland Government to surrender the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the Province to Westminster. In reply he was advised of the Stormont's Cabinet's unanimous decision to resign if this was insisted upon. In these circumstances Heath announced the suspension of Stormont, and the direct rule of Northern Ireland from London through a newly-created Cabinet position, a Secretary of State, Mr William Whitelaw.

But by this time, if not earlier, the original demands of the civil rights movements had been eclipsed. What had started out as a campaign for equality under the Crown had been overtaken by an ancient quarrel. As John Hume, the Social Democratic and Labour Party MP, stated on BBC television on 31 January 1972, the settlement to problems was a 'united Ireland or nothing'.

Thus, what essentially took place between 1968 and 1972 — in Northern Irish politics, indeed in Anglo-Irish relations, and all politics concerned with the troubles — was the transformation of an issue from one which was clearly within Britain’s domestic jurisdiction, to one which was just as clearly characterised as international. And it is with that transformation that the following Chapter is concerned.
CHAPTER ONE

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS, 1968 - MARCH 1972
Anglo-Irish relations, or more particularly, Ireland's relations with Britain, pervade virtually every level of Irish public life. Indeed, so pervasive has become this influence since the hallmark events of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 and the Ireland Act 1949, that one commentator noted the irony that Britain, 'never able to conquer Ireland during almost eight hundred years of colonial rule, has almost succeeded during fifty years of her independence'. This, of course, is neither a condition peculiar to the Republic of Ireland, nor one that was unforeseen before either of the two events mentioned above. It does, however, point to a basic imbalance in the relations between Britain and the Republic of Ireland in such fields as population, economic development and dependency, and international influence.

But this is not to suggest that the imbalance bestows only 'enjoyment' upon the predominant, British, party and only sufferance upon the Irish — for it is often perceived in contrary terms. Speaking


2 The socialist revolutionary James Connolly, for example wrote in *Shan Van Vocht* (The Poor Old Woman), in January 1897, what many have viewed as a profound prophecy for the modern Irish State:

> 'If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic, your efforts would be in vain, England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through her array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country ...'


in an adjournment debate on Northern Ireland in 1971, Mr Merlyn Rees, a future Secretary for the State, noted that 'Relations with Ireland are illogical', by which he meant that the Republic, vis-a-vis Britain, enjoyed the seemingly ambiguous status of being both a 'foreign country' and a member of the Commonwealth. By this Rees was referring to the anomalous situation in which Britain and Ireland shared virtually a common currency, common travel area (no passports are required for travel between the two) and in which citizens of each may settle in the other without any special permit.

There was, therefore, a basic ambiguity, even absurdity, in Anglo-Irish relations. In part this was based upon the failure, or reluctance, to integrate recent Irish history into the British public consciousness — so that leading British newspapers, for example, continue, as they have since prior to 1920, of printing news concerning what is now the Republic of Ireland under the section head of 'Home News'. Sir John Peck, the British ambassador to Dublin between April 1970 and February 1973 refers to this effective refusal to recognise the independent status of the Republic as the 'Isle of Wight syndrome'.

In part this ambiguity resulted from a general lack of awareness, even ignorance of Ireland among what might be termed 'establishment' and official circles in Britain, but more so, it resulted from the formal and institutional ambivalence with which Irish matters were treated. It was not until October 1968 that the Foreign Office assumed responsibility for diplomatic relations with the Republic. Throughout the proceeding nineteen years these remained the prerogative of the

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5 There is an inequality as regards voting rights. Irish citizens, living in Britain, may vote in British General Elections, British citizens living in Ireland may not vote in Irish General Elections.

6 For example, the Guardian and the Times.

Commonwealth Office despite the fact that Ireland was clearly not a member of the Commonwealth. According to Peck, the traditions and requirements of each Office differed so markedly that this arrangement 'misinterpreted the unique relationship that exists between Ireland and Britain'.

Thus, expressions of irritation, such as that by Rees, and reciprocal complaints of suffocation by the Republic should not obscure the recognition by both parties, of the need to maintain high levels of friendly and co-operative relations. At times this has taken more the form of symbolic gestures — such as the return of Sir Roger Casement's remains to Dublin in 1965 — but it has also prompted more tangible expressions of a community of interests — such as the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area Agreement, also in 1965. And it should be noted that the British Prime Minister of this period regarded both achievements as contributing to the 'best level' of Anglo-Irish relations 'since the Government of Ireland Act nearly half a century earlier'. What Harold Wilson admitted, thereby, was the existence of the issue of partition, of the island of Ireland, which had confounded those relations since 1920, and which had caused them so frequently to be conducted in acrimonious and violent terms. Of the importance of this constant factor Patrick Keatinge writes

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8 ibid., pp. 16-17.
Note: although it would not invalidate the general observation as to the ambiguity mentioned above, it is possible that the institutional arrangement was mutually acceptable to both parties. Certainly this is an inference which may be taken from Lord Garner's *The Commonwealth Office 1925-68* (London: Heinemann Education, 1978), p. 320, in conjunction with J.D.B. Miller's *Survey of Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of Expansion and Attrition* (London: Oxford University Press, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1974), p. 406.


11 ibid.
... a large part of the content of Irish foreign policy has been concerned with a readjustment of relations with Britain, a readjustment which has demanded both acts and gestures of independence and sometimes opposition towards the state upon which Ireland is so economically dependent. The emotionalism, ambivalence and confusion associated with this persistently frustrating situation have helped make Anglo-Irish relations an obsession of Irish politics.12

Thus, on the British side, the improvement in Anglo-Irish relations noted by Wilson represented the operability and effectiveness of two underlying modes of thought. The first of these, instanced by the return of Casement's remains, is characterised by Oliver MacDonagh as a self-perceived, but ready willingness to forgive past transgressions, and an expectation to be similarly pardoned.13 The second, of which the Trade Agreement is an example, is located within that spirit of British political parties which Enoch Powell described as the 'healthy instinct ... to take account only of present issues and substantial opponents'.14 Insofar as the Republic of Ireland was concerned, this achievement was rendered possible by a variety of factors, not the least of which was the passing from active politics of Eamon de Valera and his succession, in 1959, by Sean Lemass. Against a background of economic development, material prosperity and growing religious ecumenism, Lemass attempted, through personal diplomacy and proposals for functional co-operation and constitutional reform, to achieve a rapprochement between the two political entities in Ireland.15 His view

12 Keatinge, The Formation of Irish Foreign Policy, p. 6.


expressed the hope that 'from the extension of useful contacts at every level of activity, a new situation would develop ... the solution of the problem of partition is one to be found in Ireland by Irishmen.'\(^\text{16}\)

To the extent that this strategy relied upon developments within the island of Ireland it had the advantage of de-emphasising the partition issue in Anglo-Irish relations. It also removed the inherent absurdity which the existence of the Northern Ireland state lent to them. According to Articles Two and Three of the Irish Constitution, the Six Counties were part of the sovereign territory of the Republic, from which it followed that they were not the concern of the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs. In fact, Northern Ireland affairs were handled by the Taoiseach personally. Similarly, in the British view, the Six Counties were an integral part of the United Kingdom and, therefore, the concern of the Home Secretary and not the Foreign Secretary.

But to the extent that it was formulated during a period of relative indifference, towards partition, in the Republic at least, and was dependent upon the unchallenged supremacy of the Ulster Unionist Government, it was an inadequate strategy. It was incapable of coping with the challenge to political autonomy in Northern Ireland into which the civil rights campaign developed. In this event the emergence of short-lived understandings between North and South, but particularly between Ireland and Britain, became threatened, if not drowned, by what MacDonagh refers to as 'the noises of old coercion, old condescension, old colonialism and old battles for parity and the rule of ordinary law.'\(^\text{17}\)

The mid-August riots of August 1969, in Derry and Belfast, mark a turning point in contemporary Anglo-Irish relations. Throughout the preceding year the Republic of Ireland Government, led by John M. Lynch, had taken a sustained interest in developments in Northern Ireland but its pronouncements on them were generally in accordance with the spirit


\(^{17}\) MacDonagh, 'Time's Revenge', p. 15.
of rapprochement pursued by Lemass. In part this was a result of the restraint with which relations between the Republic and Northern Ireland were conducted but it was also the result of the fact that the civil rights campaign was, initially at least, operating outside the traditional and inter-governmental framework of Irish nationalism. Consequently, although partition was seen as the 'root cause' of the disturbances, the Taoiseach and other official spokesmen continued to emphasise that a solution was to be found 'in Ireland by agreement between Irishmen, North and South, and with the goodwill of the British Government and people'.

As the Northern situation deteriorated, in 1969, to the point where law and order could be maintained only with the presence of the British Army, the Irish Government renounced its previous policy and assumed the interventionist role of protector of the minority community.

Following 'the Battle of the Bogside', in Derry, the Taoiseach addressed the nation over Radio Telefís Eireann, in the course of which he claimed 'that the Irish Government [could] no longer stand by and see innocent people injured and perhaps worse'. In addition, Lynch gave notice of his Government's intention to apply to the United Nations for a peace-keeping force and to request the British Government to enter into early negotiations with it to 'review ... the constitutional position of the Six Counties ...'

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18 Lemass resigned as Taoiseach in November 1966.


20 Luncheon address to House of Commons Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group, 30 October 1968, as cited in Eire—Ireland, No. 791, 8 November, 1968, p. 4.

21 Throughout this text the term 'Irish Government' will apply to the Government of the Irish Republic.

22 Irish Radio and Television, abbreviated form: RTE.

The British Government's reaction to this departure from a policy, which had existed throughout its period of office, took the form of abrupt and adamant refusals that the Republic of Ireland was in any way entitled to intervene. The final two paragraphs of the statement issued by Home Secretary, James Callaghan, on the actual deployment of the British Army 'in aid of the civil power', and the first two paragraphs of the Downing Street Declaration, explicitly and without reservation rejected any suggestion that the situation was international.

By a strictly legalistic construction, the British Government's exclusion of the Republic of Ireland rested on a solid foundation. But in the practise of its relations with Northern Ireland, and the perceptions and assumptions upon which this was based, it is apparent that the Downing Street Declaration concealed an increasing level of disingenuousness. In the area of assumptions it is significant that Callaghan opposed the deployment of British troops in Northern Ireland in early August 1969, in part, because of the anticipated 'sensitivity that would be aroused South of the border,' and the actions that the Irish Government might take at the United Nations. And it was the assumed Irish reaction at the United Nations which, in August 1969, decided the British Government against the blowing up of border roads. Both anxieties were justified. The introduction of the British Army, although a domestic prerogative of Westminster, entailed

as Lynch, *Statements and Speeches*). There is some controversy as to the accuracy of this version of Lynch's speech. According to many Lynch actually said '... can no longer stand idly by ...' (emphasis added). For example, Conor Cruise O'Brien in *States of Ireland* (St. Albans, Herts: Panther, 1974), p. 171, states that video-tape recordings verify this allegation.


27 ibid., p. 28.

28 ibid., p. 52.
the internationalisation of the situation in Northern Ireland in precisely the terms Callaghan had foreseen.  

In practice the British Government revealed a curious attitude by appointing a succession of Foreign Office diplomats as what Callaghan termed, 'its representative at Stormont'.  

The first of these was Oliver Wright, appointed in August 1969; the second was Ronald Burroughs, who succeeded Wright in February 1970. Other Foreign Office officials filled posts below this level throughout the period 1968-1972 as Westminster's indirect role in Northern Ireland increased.  

Furthermore there is a considerable body of evidence which points to a growing understanding of the Northern Ireland Question in this initial period, by Labour Government Cabinet Ministers, in terms of the eventual re-unification of Ireland. In practice, also, there was little doubt in Sir John Peck's mind that the position taken by the British Government in this period was other than 'an initial attempt to treat an international situation as if it were a domestic one'.  

(emphasis added). Indeed, it was the acceptance of the inadequacy of this position by the Labour Government between 1968 and 1970, and increasingly by its Parliamentary Party in Opposition thereafter, that was a major theme in Anglo-Irish relations throughout this first period. It was, as suggested by the preceding passage, a process interrupted by the change of government as a result of the British General Election of 18 June 1970. In the immediate period following this, Anglo-Irish relations, with regard to Northern Ireland, reverted to a pattern of claim and counter-claim, the resolution of which was effected only in the second period of analysis. What successive British governments failed to account for, in the periods in which they denied the Irish—and hence international dimensions of the situation—was the existence of compelling reasons for the Republic to intervene which could take little or no cognisance of attempts to limit the scope of its interests.

29 See Chapter 5, 'The United Nations'.

30 Callaghan, A House Divided, p. 65; a more formal title of this position, if it had one, is not given in any of the reference works of the period.

31 Dublin Irish Times, 18 October 1971.

32 Peck, Dublin From Downing Street, p. 100.
Of the immediate considerations, the first related to the perception, by the Irish Government, of the Catholic community in the Six Counties; they were, in Taoiseach John Lynch's terminology, 'our Northern brethren'. The second related to the failure of the O'Neill-sponsored civil rights reforms to be implemented in such a way that they represented the reality, rather than the legislative intention, of reform to the Catholic community. The third reason was a corollary of the first two: in the absence of reform, and in the face of extremist Protestant violence, the obvious place for Catholics to turn to for refuge, protection, and even arms, was the Republic. And if the Taoiseach had attempted to neglect his 'obligations' in this matter, then it is evident from the Official Report accounts of the times set aside for Questions in Dail Éireann that there were numerous TDs who were willing to ensure his attention returned to them. Finally, there was the assertion of a 'legitimate interest' which stemmed from the Irish Government's perception that its views 'on how peace and justice [could] be ensured in such a small island as ours [were] relevant and entitled to be heard'.

The long-term reason was provided by the objective of Irish re-unification, which was seen not only as an end in itself, but also as a means by which short-term objectives, such as equality of treatment for Catholics, could be effected. As the Taoiseach told a London audience on 30 October 1968 in relation to the recent violence in Derry:

33 Taoiseach's Statement on Civil Rights and Irish Unity, Eire — Ireland, No. 797, 12 February 1969, p. 4.
35 TDs — in Irish Teachtai Dala — Delegates to Parliament, commonly referred to as Deputies.
... those incidents are surface manifestations of a sense of injustice felt by a large proportion of the population of Northern Ireland for many years ... The clashes in the streets of Derry are an expression of the evils which partition has brought in its train.37

More explicitly, but to the Irish nation on 13 August 1969, he said '... the re-unification of the national territory can provide the only permanent solution for the problem ...'38 The civil rights campaign and its attendant violence was, therefore, integrated by the Irish Government, within a perspective which viewed Irish unity as the outstanding political question in its relations with Britain. The force of both of these in conjunction was a point well made by the Taoiseach in his address to the Fianna Fáil Ardfheis39 of February 1971:

The basic issue remains what it has always been. No words of mine could express it better than Yeats in his speech to the Seanad40 in 1925 when he said 'it is perhaps the deepest political passion with this nation that the North and South be united in one nation.41

The Irish Government's objective of a united Ireland, however, determined more than its conviction that the 'troubles' were its legitimate concern and that it had a right to intervene in the situation; re-unification also ensured that its subsequent course of action would be guided by principles of nationalist doctrine, of which two were important. The first was Dublin's refusal to recognise the

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38 Lynch, Address over Radio Telefís Éireann on 13 August 1969, Statements and Speeches, p. 3.

39 Ardfheis: High (or Principal) Gathering; in this context, the Fianna Fáil Party annual conference or convention.

40 Seanad Éireann: the Irish Senate.

41 'Fianna Fáil Ardfheis Statement by the Taoiseach', Eire—Ireland, No. 835, 31 March 1971, p. 7. Lynch here is unnecessarily modest: his own Address to the Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis the previous year contained a reference to Partition that is both eloquent and moving. Statements and Speeches, p. 16, para 1.
Stormont Government as other than 'the executive instrument of a subordinate Parliament'. The second was explained by Patrick Keatinge, as follows:

Given the essential, 'natural' Irishness of northern unionists, the fact of partition was seen as the fulfilment of deliberate and skilfully executed British policy. The conclusion is drawn that 'partition can only be ended constitutionally as it began, by an Act of the British Parliament', and the first priority is therefore to persuade the British government to abandon its imperialistic claim.

The strategy which resulted, therefore, was known as the 'Britain first' strategy which, as Keatinge observed, 'tended to cast the question of unity in a diplomatic mould'. It was, moreover, a strategy which was supported by the restrictions placed upon Stormont by Westminster, particularly since 1969. Paragraph 2 of the Downing Street Declaration states:

The United Kingdom Government again affirm that responsibility for affairs in Northern Ireland is entirely a matter of domestic jurisdiction. The United Kingdom Government will take full responsibility for asserting this principle in all international relationships.

The reasons for so constraining the Northern Ireland Government from an international role related, in the first instance, to its subordinate position vis-à-vis Westminster and secondly, to the international embarrassment caused by the Northern Ireland disturbances. Britain and the Republic of Ireland were, therefore, in agreement, albeit for

43 Eamon de Valera, Partition of Ireland, as cited in Kevin Boland, 'We Won't Stand (Idly) By', (Dublin: Kelly Kane, n.d.), pp. 89-90.
44 Keatinge, Issues in Foreign Policy, pp. 101-02.
45 ibid., p. 102.
46 As cited in Callaghan, A House Divided, p. 191.
different reasons, that Northern Ireland was to be excluded as an international actor. At the time (August 1969), however, this implied less an acceptance by each of the other's position than a common consequence of their respective and opposed positions.

A common feature of Anglo-Irish relations was thereby emphasised: as it was Britain which exercised de jure and de facto sovereignty over Northern Ireland, the Republic, in its dealings with Britain, has frequently been in the position of being able only to react to British stands or initiatives. Thus, in addition to the achievement of short-term (civil rights) goals in Northern Ireland which could be shared by both despite their fundamental disagreement as to interest, it became the major diplomatic objective of Irish foreign policy to achieve a change in British attitudes. (While it might be argued that Britain's position constituted an attempt to effect a change in the status quo of Irish attitudes, this is not confirmed by the evidence. Indications are that it was only the British position, with its adamant refusal to acknowledge the Irish Government's interest in Northern Ireland, which underwent a process of 'softening' as the period unfolded.)

In pursuit of these objectives the Irish Government relied upon what Lynch called 'quiet diplomacy and personal conversation', which was a natural extension of the unique relationship between Ireland and Britain and, indeed, of the former's reliance upon the latter for the continuation of the favourable treatment it received therein. Insofar as the achievement of civil rights reforms was concerned the Irish Government's policies found two types of diplomatic expression. The first took the form of contacts between it and the Catholic community in the Six Counties and was, according to Keatinge, characterised by

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... exhortations on the part of the government to the minority to show patience, a repudiation of violence, and a trust in the reform programme. ... gestures which include[d] a measure of diplomatic risk, such as Dr Hillery's\(^9\) visit to Belfast in July 1970, but it more often [was] seen in direct public appeals of which Mr Lynch's speech of 11 July 1970 \(^5^0\) was a notable example.\(^5^1\)

The second expression was more orthodox and took the form of appeals to the British Government as regards, in the Taoiseach's words, 'matters of concern to this country in relation to the North, including the pace and quality of reforms.'\(^5^2\) In essence this was a summary of the Irish Government's concern with the implementation of reform measures and is sometimes referred to as its 'guarantee' of this programme.\(^5^3\) (But this is a retrospective description: the extension of the Irish Government's asserted interest in Northern Ireland affairs, in these terms, was not made until July 1970).

This concentration upon civil rights reform — what Dr Hillery referred to as 'ideal[ing] with the immediate problem'\(^5^4\) — should not obscure the fact that unity continued to be expressed as a long-term goal, as the Taoiseach took care to emphasise:

But let nobody be under the illusion that these sentiments or our efforts to promote good relations between North and South or our sincere desire to see the vital forms ... speedily implemented — let nobody be under the illusion that all this in any way indicates the abandonment by us of our just claim that the historic unity of this island be restored.\(^5^5\)

\(^{49}\) Dr Patrick Hillery, Irish Foreign Minister, 1969-73.

\(^{50}\) Lynch, *Statements and Speeches*, pp. 22-5.


\(^{53}\) Keatinge, 'Irish Foreign Policy', p.63.


Unity, as was noted earlier (p. 38) was seen as providing the only 'permanent solution', but the way to this objective was to be by agreement, by reconciliation. By these terms force was rejected.

We are talking of land and people — and not of land and people alone, but of trust, goodwill, brotherhood. Land and people can, and have been, grabbed by force but by force one cannot win the confidence, the cooperation, and the brotherhood that will make all our land and all our people united and happy.

There were times, however, notably in August and December 1969 and between May and October 1970, when Anglo-Irish relations were complicated by an uncertainty, in the British Government's mind, as to whether 'quiet diplomacy', agreement and reconciliation were accurate expressions of Irish Government policy, or whether they were intended only to conceal designs of a sinister nature.

Even in 1981, well over a decade after Lynch's first dramatic statements on the North, it is still difficult to understand exactly why he was so prone to avoid a precise outline of his Government's policies. On balance, however, the reason must be ascribed to the Taoiseach's political personality. Had the 'troubles' fully erupted before the Irish General Election of mid-1969 it would have been tempting to have attributed the uncertainties of his pronouncements to the fact that Lynch was in a somewhat shaky position as leader of Fianna Fáil ('the Republican Party'): he had succeeded Sean Lemass in 1966 only as a compromise candidate, and as might be expected of such a leader, was regarded as a moderate. He had, therefore, a need to reach

59 Lynch's 'We Won't Stand (Idly) By' speech.
60 Blaney speech, Irish Times, 9 December 1969 (see pp. 53-4).
61 The period of what is now known as the 'Arms Scandal' (see pp. 54-7).
an accommodation with those in his Cabinet who were variously described as 'hard men' or 'broody hawks'. But the troubles didn't fully erupt until August 1969, and by that time, the objective constraints which otherwise may have limited Lynch in the exercise of his leadership did not obtain, as John A. Murphy observed:

In the 1969 general election he won back an overall majority for Fianna Fail, despite the predictions of the pundits. The Labour programme for a socialist Ireland was rejected overwhelmingly by a cautious electorate, and Fianna Fail's triumph was very much a personal victory for Jack Lynch whose whistle-stop convent circuit tour revealed him as a consummate campaigner. ... the result enormously strengthened his hand against his rivals ...

In these circumstances, it is useful to turn to the views of political commentator, Brian Farrell, who wrote of the Taoiseach:

Despite his performance at the polls, Lynch appeared an inert governmental leader. It is known that he indicated to members of his cabinet that he did not approve of the emphasis on personal public relations which had been such a marked feature of the Lemass years. Lynch preferred the concept of the cabinet as a team to the more brilliant solo runs favoured by Lemass. But he was also conscious of the strength of the men about him and (perhaps unduly) impressed by the organisational talents of some party managers.

... The result was a change in the pace of government. Instant decision [as per Lemass] was replaced by longer periods of gestation.

To this point, the cameo that is presented of Lynch in late 1969 is that of a man who, objectively, enjoyed a strong position both as the leader of a recently victorious Party and as Taoiseach in his own right, but who was, personally, inhibited by the stronger of his colleagues.

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62 Sunday Times, Ulster, p. 179.
63 Keatinge, Issues in Irish Foreign Policy, p. 120.
64 John A. Murphy, Ireland in the Twentieth Century (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), p. 151 (hereafter cited as John A. Murphy, Ireland in the Twentieth Century).
65 Brian Farrell, Chairman or Chief?: The Role of Taoiseach in Irish Government (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1971), p. 75.
If to this is added the 'impression he gave of having power thrust upon him rather than seeking it out',\(^{66}\) the suggestion that he was also not by habit a decisive man appears justified. Certainly his style — negative and imprecise — was consistent with this. As one account noted:

> When Lynch went on record throughout 1969, it was frequently to say what his Government would not do about the position in the north: it could not long stand aside, and so on. What Lynch's Government would do was never made clear either to his country or to his Cabinet.\(^{67}\)

This failure, and others derived from essentially the same causes, were to become characteristic of Lynch's statements throughout the period.

It was, noticeable, for example, in the period of the Arms Crisis, when he succeeded only in creating ambiguity on the issue of Irish unity. As Conor Cruise O'Brien noted, the Taoiseach behaved 'as much as possible like a pragmatist ... while sounding as much as possible like a Republican.'\(^{68}\) And to the dichotomy this gave rise to, a further dichotomy arose between his 'conciliatory' and 'Republican' statements.\(^{69}\)

On 11 July 1970 he appealed to the 'Irish people, North and South, Protestant, Presbyterian, Catholic and simply Irish', in markedly conciliatory terms:

> This whole unhappy situation is an Irish quarrel. I admit that others come into it either because they misunderstand it or because they misuse it — but they are not an essential part of it. We must settle this quarrel among us ...

\(^{66}\) John A. Murphy, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century*, p. 151.

\(^{67}\) *Sunday Times, Ulster*, p. 178.


Let us not appeal to past gods as if past generations had said the last word about Ireland. We have our opportunity to say for our generation what is in our hearts and minds. I think that there is in us an instinct for good, for enjoyment, for beauty, and above all, for peace with our neighbours.  

Exactly one year later, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Anglo-Irish Truce, Lynch changed his whole perspective — from one that saw the 'whole unhappy situation' as an 'Irish quarrel' — to one in which it was essentially Anglo-Irish.

In doing so he quoted one of the foremost of 'past gods', Eamon de Valera. 'We cannot admit the right of the British Government to mutilate our country'. According to Cruise O'Brien these, and other statements of the early period, reflected Lynch's capacity 'to reassure simultaneously two sets of people who could not possibly both be reassured if they were both in possession of the same set of facts'. In view of Cruise O'Brien's political opposition to the Taoiseach, it may be suggested that this and his previous citation, constitute an overly harsh, if not inaccurate, characterisation. However, their substance is found in other sources and in the emergence of the term 'Lynchspeak', which was later coined to describe the obfuscatory style of pronouncement which Lynch used. That this term probably achieved its greatest currency in the six months following the massive Fianna Fáil election victory of 1977, when once more Lynch was


72 Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, p. 199.

73 Keatinge, Issues in Irish Foreign Policy, p. 116.

74 The origin of the term 'Lynchspeak' is unclear. It appears to have come into its own in 1977-78, when the media were attempting to interpret remarks by the Taoiseach which suggested an evolution of Irish policy with regard to the North. This was particularly true of his interview on R.T.E., (9 January 1978).
personally acclaimed, and when once more his position appeared unchallenged and unchallengeable, was testimony to its potential for disturbing Anglo-Irish relations. Until the British Cabinet, and indeed, the people of Ireland came to appreciate that the Irish Government's actions were not necessarily to be inferred from the Taoiseach's statements, the potential was frequently realised — with resulting irritations and misunderstandings. This is not to imply that this was the only source of misunderstandings — rather, that it was but one other source to those which were the legacy of eight centuries of English and British rule over Ireland — and without mention of which an account of the influences upon Anglo-Irish relations since 1968 would be incomplete.

The first major occasion on which Anglo-Irish relations were subject to these influences was the Taoiseach's speech of 13 August 1969 in which he announced, '... the Irish Government can no longer stand by and see innocent people injured and perhaps worse'. Lynch went on to declare the RUC and the British Army unacceptable, gave notice of a request to the British Government to apply for a United Nations Peace-keeping Force, and for early negotiations towards the 'restoration of the historic unity' of Ireland. He also announced the establishment of field hospitals by the Irish Army in areas along the Border adjacent to Derry.

To further these aims, and to underscore the gravity with which the Taoiseach and his Government regarded the Northern Ireland situation, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Patrick Hillery, was despatched to London on the following day. Hillery arrived without prior arrangements having been made at the Foreign Office, which in terms of ministerial exchanges between Britain and other friendly nations, was regarded as unprecedented. (At the same time the only apparent parallel was the alleged visit by Mr Selwyn Lloyd, to Paris, Lynch, 'Address over Radio Telefis Eireann', 13 August 1969, Statement and Speeches, p. 2.

76 ibid., pp. 2-3.
before the Suez invasion in 1956). His brief included a slight
expansion of the Taoiseach's requests; in particular this included
the suggestion that a joint Irish-British force be deployed as an
alternative to a UN force; a request that the 'B' Specials held in
reserve not be used, and that those in service be withdrawn; and
the urging of 'immediate implementations of some measure or measures
of civil rights' in the Six Counties.

According to de Paor, Lynch's announcement was 'received with
jubilation in the Bogside, where the arrival of Irish troops was
eagerly anticipated'. He also noted that it was 'greeted with extreme
annoyance by Major Chichester-Clark, who [then] sent 'B' Specials into
the streets of Derry'. This estimation of the effect of Lynch's
speech accords with two other authoritative sources. By Conor Cruise
O'Brien's account

Catholics interpreted it as meaning that the hour of
their liberation was at hand. Irish troops or U.N.
troops, or both together, were coming in, the walls
of Jericho as well as of Derry were coming down ...
To Protestants, the Speech meant that the Dublin
government was stirring up a Catholic insurrection
in order to overthrow Northern Ireland.

In retrospect, both interpretations appear fanciful and overly
influenced by the atmosphere of the time. But it is worth recording
that the Irish Army did have a contingency plan for an invasion of

77 Irish Times, 15 August 1969.
79 Liam de Paor, Divided Ulster (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin,
80 ibid.
81 Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, pp. 171-2.
82 Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 180-1; Gregory Henderson, Richard Ned
Lebow and John G. Stoessinger, eds., Divided Nations in a Divided World
(New York: David McKay, 1974), p. 247 (hereafter cited as Lebow et al.,
Divided Nations); and Richard Rose, Governing Without Consensus: An
Irish Perspective (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 168 (hereafter
cited as Rose, Governing Without Consensus). The source for Lebow
the North, and that there were members of Lynch's cabinet who advocated its implementation. Furthermore, Irish front-line troops, the Sixth Brigade, had been deployed in the Donegal border area since the RUC's incursion into the Bogside the previous April, and its first-line of reserves mobilised.

Thus British Home Secretary, James Callaghan, had reasons for finding the speech disturbing, as did members of his department. As he later wrote:

It really seemed to be putting the fat in the fire. Following Lynch's statement, and a call by the Civil Rights Association for diversionary demonstrations, riots and disturbances took place on a wider scale throughout the province that night than at any time since the civil war of 1921-2.

We had to consider the possibility that within the next twenty-four hours we might face both civil war in the North and an invasion from the South.

It is obvious from Callaghan's record, and the British Army's response, that the second possibility (i.e. invasion) was regarded as an 'unlikely contingency'. Whether Whitehall knew of the Irish invasion plan is uncertain, but in considering the remote possibility of such a move, Ministry of Defence officials allocated only half of an armoured car squadron to deal with it. But Callaghan is also substantially in agreement with Cruise O'Brien's and de Paor's assessment of the reaction

appears to be Ulster (above), but it also appears that this source, and certainly Rose, rely on 'Operation Doomsday plan by Eire Government', Belfast Telegraph, 13 January 1971.

86 Callaghan, A House Divided, p. 39.
87 ibid.
88 Sunday Times, Ulster, p. 181.
in the majority community — many of whom he saw as being in 'an ugly and aggressive mood to wreak serious destruction and damage on the minority if they suspected Mr Lynch's call might be listened to by the British Government ...'  

In response to these developments the British Government's reaction was predictable: a statement issued on 14 August 1969 sought both to reassure the Protestant community, by way of repeating the guarantees embodied in the Ireland Act 1949, and to preclude any and all foreign intervention. Hillery's visit, however, was less a failure than the circumstances of his arrival could have occasioned. Although he received what he described as 'a courteous brush-off', he was successful in meeting with both Lord Chalfont, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, and Lord Stonham, Minister of State at the Home Office.

In itself, this indicated that Westminster was becoming aware of the political pressures faced by the Irish Government. Four days later, at the United Nations, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs moved to place the Northern Ireland situation on the agenda of the Security Council, and failed. But, as Keatinge notes '... the way in which this diplomatic confrontation was handled suggested that some measure of diplomatic consultation would not be ruled out altogether'.

Within weeks an improvement in Anglo-Irish relations was further assisted by developments in the British Government's Northern Ireland policies which suggested that remedying many of the Province's basic

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90 ibid., p. 45.
91 ibid., pp. 43-4.
92 ibid., p. 51. That Hillery saw only Ministers of State rather than Secretaries is less a 'snub' than may be thought. Certainly Callaghan was in London and did not meet with him, but Hillery's counterpart, Michael Stewart, was on holiday as was the Prime Minister. Callaghan, *A House Divided*, p. 41.
93 Keatinge, *Issues in Irish Foreign Policy*, p. 117. See also Chapter 5, 'The Ulster Question and the United Nations'.
ills was high on its list of priorities. These included the Downing Street Declaration of 19 August, and the Communique issued at the end of Callaghan's visit later that month; the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Police, and of joint Stormont/Whitehall working parties on housing allocation, job discrimination, and community relations; and the publication of the Cameron Report on the disturbances which had taken place between October 1968 and April 1969.

Within weeks of the mid-August crisis there were, therefore, grounds based on a demonstration of British good faith and intentions, for Lynch to resume the earlier, conciliatory approach which characterised Anglo-Irish relations with regard to the North. In a speech at Tralee, Co. Kerry, on 20 September, he set out the 'basis of [his Government's] thinking and policy'; it was, once more, defined in terms of 'unity through agreement'. Of greater significance, he stated:

We are not seeking to overthrow by violence the Stormont Parliament or Government but rather to win the agreement of a sufficient number of people in the North to an acceptable form of reunification.

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94 For the text of this document and its accompanying Communique, see Callaghan, *A House Divided*, pp. 189-92.
97 Callaghan, *A House Divided*, p. 95; and *Sunday Times, Ulster*, pp. 149-50.
100 ibid., p. 10.
101 ibid., p. 12.
Callaghan found this a 'notably conciliatory' assurance and accepted it accordingly. Indeed, the occasion of his doing so publicly — a debate on Northern Ireland — indicated the greater understanding which British politicians had come to with respect to the pressures under which Lynch was operating his Northern policy. By some reports this had been demonstrated by the 'courteous' reception accorded Dr Hillery on his arrival in London in August, and by the similar lack of acrimony during the proceedings at the United Nations later that month. But speeches in the Westminster debate provided more explicit examples to this effect. Quentin Hogg (later Lord Hailsham) displayed what might advisedly be termed a statesman-like recognition of the problems besetting Anglo-Irish relations, which was characteristic of his pronouncements on Northern Ireland throughout his period as shadow Home Secretary:

I hope that Her Majesty's Government will think seriously about bridge building with the Republic to the South. ... I am sure that some of the bitterness which exists in the six counties of Northern Ireland has been the result of a coolness, an alienation, between our nation and the Republic. ... I hope that they, too, will respond to a gesture of friendship and to a suggestion from the Westminster Government that we may open a new page of happiness to us all.

In the same debate, Mr Kevin McNamara, a Labour Party back-bencher who paid a close attention to the Northern Irish situation, was particularly understanding of the Taoiseach's actions.

To have expected the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland to have done other than put hospital field stations on the border when the troubles were taking place in

102 Callaghan, A House Divided, p. 105.
104 Irish Times, 15 August 1969.
105 Boyd, Fifteen Men on a Powder Keg, pp. 323-9; and Callaghan, A House Divided, pp. 52-3.
Londonderry and Belfast was to suggest that he should sell his birthright and the ideals for which he and the parties in the south of Ireland have always stood in quite proper constitutional form and legitimate constitutional aspiration to see divided Ireland re-united as one country. To have expected him to have done less than send hospital aid to the frontier where people he knew looked to the south and rightly or wrongly were being injured and were in fear of going into hospitals in the north – for him to have denied the setting up of refugee bases would have been a complete negation of that man's political standing in the south.107

More significantly, the Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Denis Healey, followed with an unqualified endorsement of the sentiments expressed by Hogg and, generally, by McNamara.

There is not one word in the moving and generous speech by ... [Hogg] with which I could possibly disagree, and I particularly welcome the vision he displayed in his closing remarks about relations between the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic.108

Lynch, in turn, reiterated the Irish Government's disavowal of force and paid tribute to the

... thorough and objective manner in which Mr Callaghan set about his task of examining the situation ... to the recommendations he made, and to the steps he initiated towards reform and restoring peaceful conditions.109

There then followed a period, coincident with a period of relative tranquility in Northern Ireland, in which Anglo-Irish relations returned to the diplomatic modes and conventions of 'quiet diplomacy'.

They were challenged, if not seriously threatened, in the remainder of 1969 by only two minor incidents. The first concerned an initiative taken by the Irish Minister of Defence, Mr Jim Gibbons, to provide rudimentary training in the use of fire-arms to men from various

107 ibid., col. 86.
108 ibid., col. 152.
(Catholic) citizen's defence committees in Northern Ireland. In a thinly-veiled attempt to avoid being seen as training an illegal armed force, those elected for training were required to enlist for seven days' service in the FCA (Forsai Cosanta Aitula), the Irish Army Territorials. When this became public knowledge it proved too great a source of embarrassment to be continued. Lynch, in any case, was unaware of it. After only one week in operation, during which time nine men from the Bogside had been instructed at Fort Dunree in County Donegal, the practice was abandoned.*

A dinner in December to honour the Irish Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr Neil Blaney, for his twenty-one years as a member of Dáil Éireann, marked the second incident. During his speech he claimed that the Fianna Fáil Party had never taken a decision to 'rule out the use of force if the circumstances in the Six Counties so demanded.'† While it is clear that this speech was an expression of a deep rift in Fianna Fáil,‡ it is also clear from a close examination of Blaney's reported speech that he was, first, referring to the Party and not the Government, and, second, that the 'circumstances' he alluded to were hypothetical, though not impossible.

If a situation were to arise in the Six Counties in which the people who do not subscribe to the Unionist regime were under sustained and murderous assault, then as the Taoiseach said on August 13, we 'cannot stand idly by'.§

The nature and substance of the speech appear to have been understood by all concerned. It received little coverage in British newspapers, and no mention of it is found in the political memoirs

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* Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 190-1.
† Irish Times, 9 December 1969.
‡ For a brief account of Blaney's (and others) opposition to Lynch see Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 87-8, and pp. 178-9.
§ Irish Times, 9 December 1969.

For example, there is no mention of it in the Times.
of three British Cabinet members closely involved in Northern Ireland affairs at the time – Callaghan, Richard Crossman, and Harold Wilson 115 – or in those of Brian Faulkner. 116

The second major threat to Anglo-Irish relations from internal political forces in Ireland was the occasion of the 'Arms Crisis' of May 1970. In the early hours of the morning of 6 May the Taoiseach, Mr Lynch, acting 'on the basis of information ... which was got through the agency of our Garda 117 authorities', called for the resignations of two of his Cabinet, Charles Haughey, Minister for Finance, and Blaney (Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries). 118 A few days earlier Lynch had sought, and procured the resignation of the Minister of Justice, Mr Micheal O'Morain, on the grounds of ill-health, and there are suggestions that this related to the later dismissals. 119 Later on 6 May the Taoiseach informed the Dáil that he had received reports from the security forces of a plot to import arms into the country in breach of Irish law, and that a prima facie case existed which implicated two members of the Government.

115 Callaghan, A House Divided; Richard Crossman, The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, 3 vols. 1:2 (London: Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1975 and 1976 resp.); 3 (New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1977), 3 (hereafter cited as Crossman, Diaries, 3); and Wilson, Labour Government. All three, Callaghan, Crossman and Wilson, were members of the Northern Ireland Cabinet Committee.


117 Garda Síochána - Guardians of the Peace: the Irish police force.

118 Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 246, 14 May 1970, col. 1749. 'Agency' may be a term of some significance in view of reports that Scotland yard's Special Branch and agents of (British) MI5 and MI6 were prominent in the counter-operations against the arms smuggling attempt. Financial Times, 9 May 1970; and Guardian, 8 May 1970.

Blaney and Haughey, together with an Irish Army officer, Captain James Kelly, a Belgian-born Dublin businessman, Albert Luykx, and a young Belfastman with a record of IRA activism, John Kelly, were arrested on 27 May and charged with conspiring to import arms and ammunition illegally into the State. In the period between the dismissals and the arrests a third Cabinet member, the Minister of Health, Kevin Boland, resigned in sympathy with his two dismissed colleagues. The matter was further complicated in this period by the controversy which surrounded the position of the Minister of Defence, Jim Gibbons; in particular as to whether he authorised the arms purchases, and so rendered them legal.

Informations were refused against Blaney who was, accordingly, discharged at a preliminary hearing. The other four arrested were returned for trial which started at the Four Courts in Dublin on 22 September 1970.

From trial evidence and published sources it appears that, as a result of contacts earlier in the period between the Irish Government and the minority community in the North, representatives of Catholic organisations had approached the former, in 1969, with 'urgent and persistent' requests for arms with which to defend themselves against attacks by Protestant extremists. Of the steps the Irish Government took in subsequent events, the least which can be said of them, with any degree of certainty given the information currently available, is that they were 'collectively ambiguous'. Without too much imagination, however, it is possible to view these actions as part of a deliberate policy by a small number of influential members of the (then) Irish Government to materially, but covertly, intervene on the side of the minority community in the North in a manner which directly contravened British, Irish, and international law.

120 Mr Luykx was a naturalised Irish citizen.
At issue is the alleged role of Fianna Fáil during 1969 in effecting the split of the IRA into Official and Provisional wings, and in the appropriation of funds, by the Irish Government, for propaganda purposes and for the 'general relief of suffering'. From the latter appropriation the arms purchases were financed. Although the evidence that there were two unsuccessful attempts to import consignments of arms and ammunition from the Continent was never contested, there was, and remains, considerable dispute as to who was responsible. On 23 October 1970, all four of the accused were acquitted. On 4 November, Haughey and Gibbons — each of whom had sworn that the other's sworn testimony was untrue — joined Blaney and the remainder of the Fianna Fáil Parliamentary Party in supporting a confidence motion in the Dáil, proposed by the Taoiseach, in support of himself and his Ministers.

In the immediate aftermath of the trial, however, the verdict was less significant than either the events which required the trial in the first instance, or the matters which it revealed. Both, as they were disclosed, acted immediately upon the situation in the North and upon Anglo-Irish relations, and in a sense which the verdict was unlikely to modify retrospectively. Thus Callaghan notes the allegations concerning Blaney and Haughey contributed to 'increased tension in Belfast and

123 James Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army: The IRA, 1916-1974 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1974), pp. 369-72; Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 87-93, and pp. 176-97; Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, pp. 196-203; Conor Cruise O'Brien, Herod: Reflections on Political Violence (London: Hutchinson, 1978), pp. 139-40; and Rose, Governing Without Consensus, pp. 167-8. Note: Throughout these proceedings the Taoiseach (Lynch) maintained that, until 20 April 1970, he was unaware of the proposed arms purchases and the involvement of his various Ministers. But in 1980, some of the personal papers of Peter Berry, Secretary of the Department of Justice at the time of the Arms Scandal and regarded as one of Ireland's outstanding civil servants, were published. If they are an accurate record of what occurred, they document, inter alia, that Lynch was (i) advised as early as 17 October 1969 that Captain Kelly was involved in a plan to purchase arms for the IRA; (ii) advised of the same matter again on 13 April 1970, at which time he was also advised of the involvement of Haughey and Blaney; and (iii) that he did nothing, either to stop the arms importation, or to have this allegation further investigated until forced by unfolding events to do so on 20 April 1970. See Vincent Browne, 'The Arms Crisis 1970', Magill 3 (May 1980): 33-56; and 'The Peter Berry Papers', Magill 3 (June 1980): 39-72.
renewed outbreaks of violence'.

It is difficult to isolate more precisely the effect of the Arms Crisis upon the situation in the North and upon Anglo-Irish relations because, although they were both seriously deteriorating after mid 1970, this process owed much to other factors — such as the continued failure of the British Government to implement policies which represented the reality of reform to the Catholic community and, after 18 June, the appearance of the new Conservative Government as 'less sensitive to Catholic susceptibilities, and more amenable to Unionist pressure'.

To an extent the latter observation applied also to the Labour Government during its last few months in office but, after the change of Government, the decision not to ban the Orange Parades scheduled for the last week of June, and the pronounced change in direction of British military operations gave it additional substance. Not only was this change apparent in the land operations within Northern Ireland but also at sea.

Between July 1970 and April 1971 the Royal Navy undertook the occasional boarding of Irish vessels (mainly trawlers) in the waters off Northern Ireland, in order to prevent the illegal importation of arms.


127 Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army*, pp. 375-6; and *Sunday Times, Ulster*, pp. 198-205.


129 ibid., pp. 376-8; and *Sunday Times, Ulster*, pp. 205-12.

130 Peck, *Dublin from Downing Street*, p. 119.
Domestically, this presented a dilemma to the Irish (Fianna Fáil) Government. Since Ireland did not, in law, recognise the State of Northern Ireland, it could not recognise its contiguous territorial waters or, it follows, the right of the Royal Navy to hinder innocent passage therein. Yet it was virtually powerless to do anything about the matter. Such incidents, therefore, were a source of slight embarrassment to Dublin, more so in the knowledge that they were introduced without prior notification by London, and followed closely upon an appropriate opportunity for the latter to have done so.

But their full significance is to be seen less in this, or even in the minimal reactions they drew from the Irish Government, than in the attitudes they were injecting into Anglo-Irish relations, as illustrated by the following exchange in Dáil Éireann on the matter of boardings:

Mr M. O'Leary: [Labour, Dublin North-Central] Would the Minister agree that relations between the two countries are in a rather sorry state when we see the British taking action without consultation with us? Would it be true to say that relations are worsening when the security forces of one country act in this way without any consultation with a friendly state nearby?

Dr Hillery: [Minister for External Affairs] If it became common practice for other nations of the world to behave as Britain has behaved in this case, civilised relations between Governments would become very difficult.

Dr O'Connell: [Labour, Ballyfermot] Have we any assurances that this will not recur?

Dr Hillery: We have no assurance. All I can say is that I hope the nations of the world will not take this as a model for their behaviour.

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131 There is no record of any arms being discovered on these occasions.


Mr M. O'Leary: Would the Minister agree that the British Government are taking a rather crude assessment of this Cabinet in terms of their gun trading and so on? Does the Minister think this has any bearing on the incidents?

An Ceann Comhairle: [Speaker of the House]
That has no relevance.

Dr Hillery: No, we have no interest in the British Government's interest in our Government.134

The force of these two factors — the failure of Britain's Northern Ireland policy and the dispositions of the new Government — in combination, may be gauged from two actions by the Irish Government in the spring and summer of 1970. The first was the transfer of five hundred rifles, by the Ministry of Defence, to the town of Dundalk, just south of the Border, when it was feared that the Catholic community might be endangered.135 The same fear prompted the second, which was Dr Hillery's 'secret' visit to Belfast on 6 July, and the response it drew from Ministers in Whitehall.

In the circumstances of the violence in Belfast which had preceded the visit, Lynch termed it 'an initiative for peace'.136 An entirely different view was taken by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, who found it 'a serious diplomatic discourtesy', and

an error of judgement ... which ... has had the effect of making the task of everybody engaged in reconciliation more difficult.137

Yet, as with the mid-August 1969 crisis, Anglo-Irish relations suffered no lasting damage as a result of the actions and disclosures of this period. Indeed, if Callaghan's reaction to the Hillery visit was any indication of the bi-partisan approach to Northern Ireland at Westminster, they may have redounded to Lynch's advantage by

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135 Rose, Governing Without Consensus, p. 168.
demonstrating the pressures he was operating under. 138

What distinguishes these actions by the Irish Government, or by members of it who may have acted independently, is that they were responses to exceptional circumstances. Contemporary and considered accounts of events in Derry and Belfast in August 1969, for example, are virtually unanimous in this regard. 139 This applies whether it be in the reserved language of the Scarman Tribunal's Report that there were 'six occasions [between March and August 1969] ... when the police ... were seriously at fault' in their failure to discharge their responsibilities and obligations, particularly with regard to the Catholic community; 140 or in the genocidal sentiments reported of a Unionist Senator in the members dining room at Stormont in August 1969:

If only the bloody British Army hadn't come in, we'd have shot ten thousand of them by dawn. 141

Given the irredentist perceptions held by the Irish Government of the Catholic community in the North there were always strong arguments for it to act in a more interventionist manner – as Rose observed:

One argument was moral: Catholics threatened with attack by arson or gunfire had a right to arms in self defence. A second was strategic: as Protestants were

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138 Callaghan, then in Opposition, supported Lynch's 'initiative for peace' claim for the reason that Hillery's visit was arranged so as to pre-empt a proposed, and probably more inflammatory visit by Blaney (A House Divided, pp. 148-9).

139 For accounts of the circumstances leading up to the July 1970 Hillery incident, see Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army, pp. 375-6; and Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 201-21.


141 As cited in Sunday Times, Ulster, p. 142. It is not here claimed that the Senator's statement was 'considered'; only that it appeared in an account which is so regarded. See also, Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, p. 173.
already armed, then Catholics required arms to maintain a balance of power. A third argument had immediate appeal in Dublin, because it was prudential: by supplying arms and training men in their use, the Irish Government could see that guns got into the 'right' rather than the 'wrong' hands.¹⁴²

But, as Rose also notes, Dublin had to act with deference on this single issue for fear of giving 'overt offence' to London over the wider range of the two countries' bi-lateral relations.¹⁴³ This required, therefore, the Irish Government to take the least disturbing options — essentially compromises — available to it at each juncture.

Thus the attempt to import arms into the Republic for distribution in the North must be seen as essentially a compromise, albeit a controversial one, between 'standing idly by', and the invasion of the North earnestly sought by an influential bloc (Blaney, Boland and Haughey) within the Irish Cabinet.¹⁴⁴ Even if this example is held to be too fraught with doubts to be admitted as 'policy-directed', then the term compromise remains an appropriate description of what was undertaken for the reason that the options, both of invasion and of the supply of arms to Northern Catholics, were finally rejected in favour of more humanitarian measures (such as the establishment of field hospitals) and diplomatic initiatives.¹⁴⁵

That these actions were not only compromises, but that they were viewed by some as a betrayal of the 'Republican tradition' in Fianna Fáil was confirmed by subsequent events. Kevin Boland, the former Minister for Local Government and Social Welfare, resigned from the

¹⁴² Rose, Governing Without Consensus, p. 167.
¹⁴³ ibid.
¹⁴⁴ Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 178-82; and Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army, p. 370.
¹⁴⁵ A compromise was also effected between Britain and the Republic of Ireland at the United Nations, and a consideration of it is found in Chapter Five, 'The Ulster Question and the United Nations'.
Party in November 1970 to found Aontact Eireann\(^{146}\) in order to promote the traditional republican principles. From the North, the Dublin regime became, as in MacDonagh's description, 'the god that failed' - which had the effect of forcing the nationalist-Catholic community back upon the general Irish tradition of alternative government;\(^{147}\) of seeking 'to create, so far as they might be, self-governing and mass-governed enclaves'.\(^{148}\)

Equally, the term compromise applies to the actions taken in July 1970: in the face of the violence promised by the forthcoming Orange Parades Lynch did not press for their cancellation, but chose instead, after receiving assurances of maximum security for the Catholics from Sir Alec Douglas-Home, to make an eloquent nationwide plea for tolerance, re-unification and Anglo-Irish friendship.\(^{149}\)

It might be suggested that Ireland, out of a need to satisfy the requirements of Anglo-Irish relations in general, and indeed, to do what would be most effectual, was required to drastically reduce its options vis-à-vis the North and this ensured that Britain was the sole beneficiary in any exchange. This, however, would be an overly cynical judgment for it would exaggerate the punitive capabilities which Britain clearly had regarding Ireland, at the expense of the joint concern which both shared over the province. As Keatinge observed in 1971:

Undoubtedly, both the Westminster and Dublin Governments have a common interest in restoring peace in the North, and the British government clearly has an interest in supporting moderate policies in the Republic; they are reluctant to say or do anything which might adversely effect Mr Lynch's domestic position. Both sides,

\(^{146}\) In English: Irish Unity. See also Kevin Boland, "We Won't Stand (Idly) By", (Dublin: Kelly Kane, n.d.); and, same author, Up Dev! (Dublin: By the Author, Red Gap, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, n.d.).


\(^{148}\) ibid., p. 149.

\(^{149}\) Lynch, 'Address over Radio Telefis Eireann, 11 July 1970', *Statements and Speeches*, pp. 22-5.
therefore, have taken pains to keep the diplomatic channel open at all levels and to stress the existence of co-operative and constructive relations.150

Furthermore, as the above passage suggested, a cynical judgment would take no account of the real benefits to the Republic of Ireland which accrued from a strategy of compromise and diplomacy. During the period of the Labour Government (i.e. until June 1970), this amounted to less than a full acceptance of the Republic as an actor in Northern Ireland matters, but nevertheless, an implicit admission that it would not be excluded from some measure of consultation altogether.151 Moreover, the statements of the shadow Home Secretary (Hogg) offered some measure of support for the strategy, and the hope that (what came to be known as) the 'Irish dimension' would be recognised under a Conservative Government.152

In the event, developments in the immediate period following the June 1970 Conservative victory proved that hope to be less well-founded than Hogg's statements may have promised.153 If less than full recognition was accorded the Irish dimension, there was at least a record of outcomes in Northern Ireland which served to vindicate the Irish Government's strategy. In August 1969,154 and, more so, in

150 Keatinge, 'Irish Foreign Policy', p. 63.
151 Keatinge, Issues in Irish Foreign Policy, p. 117.
153 For example, Hogg was not appointed by Prime Minister Edward Heath to the Home Office. The position was filled, instead, by Mr Reginald Maudling whose previous knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, his responsibilities in Northern Ireland was, perhaps, most accurately captured by his reported statement following a visit in June-July 1970:

For God's sake bring me a large Scotch. What a bloody awful country.

As cited in Sunday Times, Ulster, p. 213.
154 Again it is emphasised that it was the restrained manner in which the UN proceedings were conducted which had a bearing upon Anglo-Irish relations and, indirectly, upon the situation in Northern Ireland. See Chapter Five, 'The Ulster Question and the United Nations'.


July 1970, Lynch could justifiably associate his diplomatic initiatives with British policies for the amelioration of the conditions of the Catholic community.

Significantly it was from Lynch's 11 July 1970 address that the Irish Government's explicit assumption of the role of 'second guarantor' of the rights and safety of the Catholic community dates. In addition, this partly reflected a growing sense of dissatisfaction regarding the speed at which the civil rights reforms were being implemented, and partly an apprehension concerning the consequences of the approaching Orange Parades. Yet it also appeared to have its origins in a sense of optimism that Britain and Ireland, together, could create the pre-conditions for reconciliation between Irishmen, and for the reunification of the country.

There is a fund of goodwill between Ireland and Britain, derived from a surer and deeper understanding of each other, reached through quiet diplomacy and personal conversation. I am satisfied that it is intended to restore peace with justice in Northern Ireland and to do this quickly and generously as the situation demands. I am confident that, when this is accomplished, the Irish, North and South, will themselves put an end to ignoble relics of ancient disagreements and create the conditions which will fully restore the Irish nation, in all its diversity and cultural richness.

On this basis, Anglo-Irish relations developed to include initiatives, towards medium-term goals which were 'intended to contribute towards a long-term solution, but could be embodied in

policy in a less remote future'. They included suggestions concerning the 'constitutional' status of Northern Ireland and for constitutional reform within the Republic, and general proposals for the expansion of functional co-operation between North and South. But these proposals, in common with the entire strategy of 'quiet diplomacy', were rendered inappropriate, even irrelevant, by the internal dynamics of the situation at which they were, in the first instance, directed. Almost co-incidentally, that situation deteriorated throughout the twelve month period following July 1970. It included a third phase of violence which began as early as January 1971 and culminated in the introduction of internment without trial on 9 August 1971.

Internment, or measures substantially similar to it, had been the recourse of Governments in Ireland in times of emergency on at least eight occasions since 1916. On all of them it had been introduced, for the greater part of their respective durations, on an all-Ireland basis and, in 1971, it was generally accepted, by the Northern Ireland Cabinet, that this was a necessary condition if the measure was to be effective. For this reason it is strange that the Irish Government was neither approached by the British Government to

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160 Keatinge, 'Irish Foreign Policy', p. 60.

161 It was generally assumed that this would include the repeal of Article 44 of the Constitution which recognised the special position of the Catholic Church; amendment of the Constitution with regard to divorce, and legislation to allow the sale of contraceptives.

162 Keatinge, 'Irish Foreign Policy'. pp. 60-2; and Keatinge, Issues in Irish Foreign Policy, pp. 117-18.

163 See preceding Narrative, pp. 24-5.


165 This was an inevitable consequence of direct rule from Britain prior to partition but, obviously, not so since that time.

internment itself, nor advised of its introduction in the North until after the operation had begun.  

The most likely explanation for this appears to have been a prevailing pessimism that the Irish Government would not agree to such a proposal, from which it follows that internment was introduced by the Stormont administration (but with Westminster's sanction) with the fore-knowledge that it would fail. In the once again exceptional circumstances the Taoiseach's reaction was predictable; publicly he denounced internment as 'deplorable evidence of the political poverty of the policies' which had been pursued in Northern Ireland and, privately, informed the British Ambassador to Ireland, Sir John Peck, that there was not the 'remotest possibility' of internment being introduced in the Republic.

Several reasons may be advanced for this response. The Lawless decision of 1961; a lack of comparable (to the Six Counties) IRA activity in the Republic; Lynch's desire, less than a year after the Arms Trial, not to further alienate either the more militant Republicans in his own Party, or the Northern Catholics; and possible public reaction to an extreme measure must all have been inhibiting factors. Yet in 1980, the Berry Papers again question the relevance of such conventional explanations. According to Berry, in November—December 1970, both the Taoiseach and the Minister for Justice,

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168 ibid., p. 128; and *Sunday Times*, *Ulster*, pp. 265-6.


170 Peck, *Dublin from Downing Street*, p. 127. (The phrase quoted is that of Peck, not Lynch.)

171 A decision which resulted from a complaint filed with the European Commission of Human Rights by Gerard Lawless, a Republican prisoner interned in 1957. In it, the Commission ruled that it had the power to
Desmond O'Malley, were intent on introducing internment to counter plans by Saor Eire to kidnap a number of senior Government officials (including Berry himself). Contrary to the reasons cited above, one of the more persuasive factors in this proposal was the imminence of a by-election in Donegal which Fianna Fail hoped to win with the help of a substantial Protestant vote which would be attracted by the Government's evident determination to put an end to violence.

For a period of ten days after internment was introduced, however, the Irish Government continued to respond in restrained terms. In a major statement on 12 August 1971, Lynch explicitly disavowed 'armed activity' in favour of 'determined political action', which now had as an additional immediate objective, the replacement of the Stormont Government by a power-sharing administration. Although Lynch appeared to acknowledge the lack of effectiveness of what he termed his Government's record of 'responsibility and restraint', he nevertheless appeared to have expected, as in times previous, a 'satisfactory response' to his statements. When such a response was not forthcoming, and when it appeared that there was a 'danger that the views of the Irish Government were to be excluded pronounce on whether or not 'a state of emergency' exists, and hence, whether or not internment was justified (Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 20-1).


174 ibid., p. 73.


176 ibid., p. 75. Also acknowledged by the British Ambassador to Ireland in his annual report to the Foreign Office. Peck, Dublin from Downing Street, p. 138.

177 Introductory note to 'Telegram Exchange with the British Prime Minister, Mr Edward Heath, 19/20th August, 1971', Statements and Speeches, p. 77, (hereafter cited as 'Lynch-Heath Exchange').
from consideration', the Taoiseach's concern became more urgent. He abandoned the conventions of quiet diplomacy and reliance upon the goodwill of the British Government for an approach referred to as the 'diplomacy of protest'. Within this the Irish Government pursued a more forceful strategy in its relations with Britain and attempted, through an international campaign, to influence other governments to support the objectives outlined in Lynch's 12 August statements.

The first expression of this changed strategy, and of the deterioration in Anglo-Irish relations, took the form of an exchange of telegrams between the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister, Edward Heath. The central point of Lynch's telegram stated:

In the event of the continuation of existing policies of attempting military solutions I intend to support the policy of passive resistance now being pursued by the non-unionist population.

[It is sometimes inferred from statements such as this that the Irish Government acted in the North through the agency of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). Lebow, for example, describes it as Jack Lynch's 'major vehicle of communication with the Northern Catholic community'. While the SDLP was 'well connected' with the Government of the Republic, it also enjoyed close relations with the British Labour Party and, later, with the Northern Ireland

178 This perception appears to have arisen after Faulkner, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, had met with Edward Heath in London on 18 and 19 August 1971 without the latter having responded to Lynch's statements of the 12th.

179 Keatinge, Issues in Irish Foreign Policy, p. 118.

180 'Statement opening the Special Debate on Northern Ireland, Dail Eireann, 20th October, 1971', Lynch, Statements and Speeches, pp. 102-03.


182 ibid., p. 77.

Secretary, William Whitelaw. Thus, although there were instances in which the SDLP may have been strongly influenced, or even used, by the Irish Government, it also acted, on occasions, independently and to the prospective embarrassment of Dublin.

According to Dr Garret Fitzgerald, Minister for Foreign Affairs between 1973 and 1977, and now Leader of Fine Gael, no Irish political party can afford to disregard the SDLP for fear of losing support within the Republic. Moreover, it was his view that the SDLP, rather than getting their brief in Dublin, do their briefing in Dublin.

In 1971, however, there was no requirement for the Irish Government to be apprised of the situation by the SDLP; its reaction was assured by its own perceptions of internment as an attempt at the 'outright-repression' of the Catholic community, and by the arrival within its borders of 'many thousands of refugee women and children'.

184 ibid.
186 As on the occasion of the Mid-Cork by-election in August 1972.
187 McAllister, SDLP, p. 96.
188 Interview with Dr Garret Fitzgerald, 14 February 1978. Also confirmed by Mr Donal Barrington, S.C., widely regarded as an influential advisor to Fianna Fáil; Interview, 16 June 1978.
189 Interview with Dr Garret Fitzgerald, Dublin, 14 February 1978.
191 'Lynch-Heath Exchange', p. 80. 'Many' is not defined: 'several' thousands was used at a later date (Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 256, 20 October 1971, col. 3).
Heath's reply, rather than acknowledging even the minimal Irish dimension which British behaviour implied existed until then, indicated a return to the exclusively domestic viewpoint of the Northern Ireland situation which prevailed prior to mid-August 1969.

Your telegram is unjustifiable in its contents, unacceptable in its attempt to interfere in the affairs of the United Kingdom and can in no way contribute to the solution of the problems of Northern Ireland.192

Similarly, Lynch's suggestion of a 'meeting of all the interested parties'193 was rejected:

... I cannot accept that anyone outside the United Kingdom can participate in meetings designed to promote the political developments of any part of the United Kingdom.194

For a short time, the British Prime Minister then appeared to lend the Taoiseach's intervention a degree of both justification and acceptability by inviting him for talks at his official country estate, Chequers, on two occasions in September 1971. But an Anglo-Irish summit had been scheduled even before internment (although not for the same days as the eventual talks) and any appearance that Heath was about to modify his position vis-à-vis Ireland was misleading.195 On the first meeting, on 6 and 7 September, Peck noted:

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192 'Lynch-Heath Exchange', p. 78.
193 ibid., pp. 77-8.
194 ibid., pp. 78-9.
195 There is evidence which supports a conclusion that Lynch's method of conveying his statement to Heath on 19 August caused the latter's reply to be couched in stronger tones than otherwise might have been expected. Peck, *Dublin from Downing Street*, p. 131; and Heath's telegram, para 7, 'Lynch-Heath Exchange', p. 79.
The positions adopted by Mr Heath and Mr Lynch [were] very clearly set out in [their telegrams] ... it would be an abuse of the English language to describe the talks as negotiations.\textsuperscript{196}

Nor could the term be applied with any accuracy to the second, notwithstanding the fact that it followed only three weeks upon the first, and the presence of Brian Faulkner, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister. Its purpose, as defined by the Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling, was:

to make possible the frank exchange of views in depth between the three Prime Ministers and, against a background of mutual understanding, to enable the three Governments to work more effectively to improve the situation in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{197}

In the event, the talks concluded with only the first possibility — the frank exchange of views — a reality. As they were obituarised by one commentator

... the Chequers talks fizzled out ignominiously, with an agreement which, in effect, reported the existence of a common problem rather than any progress towards an agreed solution.\textsuperscript{198}

Any hope occasioned by references in the joint statement to the existence of a 'greater' understanding between the three parties, or to the agreement between Heath and Lynch to remain in 'close communication', was clearly demonstrated by subsequent events to be illusory.\textsuperscript{199}

Peck writes of the situation in this period (late 1971) that it was 'by any standards confusing'.\textsuperscript{200} If anything, this was a conservative judgment.

\textsuperscript{196} Peck, \textit{Dublin from Downing Street}, p. 134.


\textsuperscript{198} Cruise O'Brien, \textit{States of Ireland}, p. 258.

\textsuperscript{199} For the text of the joint statement refer \textit{Statements and Speeches}, pp. 84-5.

\textsuperscript{200} Peck, \textit{Dublin from Downing Street}, p. 134.
In Britain, the Labour Party, which claimed to adhere to a bi-partisan approach on Northern Ireland, assumed a position which attempted to be sympathetic to the aspirations of the Irish Government while also rigidly supportive of the status quo. As Harold Wilson elaborated it:

I believe that the situation has now gone so far that it is impossible to conceive of an effective long-term solution in which the agenda at least does not include consideration of, and which is not in some way directed to finding a means of achieving, the aspiration envisaged half a century ago, of progress towards a united Ireland, to which statesmen of all views in Northern Ireland have expressed their support, in the right conditions and on the right terms, within the parameters of the Attlee Declaration.201

(In passing, it might be noted that the imputation of support for Irish unity from 'statesmen of all views in Northern Ireland' is, like his earlier claim that political leaders in the Irish Republic, and leaders of nationalist community in the North, had accepted that 'the Border [was] not an issue',202 indicative of attitudes which existed in Wilson's statements rather than in the statements, writings and actions of those to whom they were attributed.)

Within the Government the confusion was apparent, heightened, and perhaps personified, in the statements of the Home Secretary.

What I am saying is that the issue in the battleline of politics may be the Border, but in reality it is not the Border, because everyone knows that the Border will not be changed in the foreseeable future ...203

If the logic of Maudling's claim is not readily apparent (and it was not to some of his listeners),204 then this must be seen as the result of his attempt to promote, for both communities in Northern Ireland

204 ibid., cols. 40-3.
an active, permanent and guaranteed position in ... life and public affairs 205

from the exclusive standpoint of one only:

... one cannot create a cohesive Government if people ... are not prepared to accept the will of the majority on the fundamental point about the Border which people have always accepted in this country.206

His advice to the other, minority community was, as he explained it

... a variant on [the] theme of putting the Border on one side for a time and meanwhile getting on and working together to restore the life of Northern Ireland.207

The idea of Irish unity was, in any case, seen by Maudling as 'radical',208 but by Heath as 'understandable' and 'legitimate',209 if somewhat irrational. This last mentioned perception was recorded in an interview with Anthony Lewis of the New York Times.

The people in Northern Ireland are different in type and religion from the South. There is no historical or logical justification for saying that it must be one country; you might as well say Spain ought to absorb Portugal, and so on.210

In sum, there existed, in late 1971 at Westminster, the rudiments of a debate on the Ulster Question, but it was a debate which as well as being confusing in itself, was also truncated. On the Labour side

206 ibid., cols. 15-16.
208 ibid.
210 As cited in Irish Times, 28 February 1972.
this was due to its avoidance of the irreconcilability of Irish unity (this century, anyway) with the Attlee Declaration; on the Government side it was a result of its manifest inability to maintain a consistent argument even in support of the status quo. It hardly represented a bi-partisan approach, but then as one observer (Simon Winchester of the *Guardian*) of the Northern Ireland scene in this period noted:

> it was bipartisan simply because neither party had the faintest idea what to do with Ireland, and the policies that were shared were policies of ignorance.211

Insofar as an operating principle can be discerned in these policies it was in the form of a negative. The prospect of possible Irish unity, even if the majority of people in Northern Ireland were to express their desire for it within the terms of the Attlee Declaration, was not to be encouraged. Heath stated only that, if ever they did, 'I do not believe any British Government would stand in the way.'212

The claim of a state of confusion, alluded to earlier by Peck, was therefore understandable. So, too, was the feeling of frustration and deep dissatisfaction in Dublin. And as the following extract by the Fine Gael leader Liam Cosgrave indicated, it was widespread:

> It is no exaggeration to say that British policy towards Ireland has been characterised for centuries, and for the last 50 years, at times by malice, at times by ignorance, but almost always by stupidity and that stupidity has been shown clearly in recent actions - let me be impartial in this - by all British political parties. It is illusory to imagine we will get a bit more out of one than out of another. Once you scratch them they are all the same. There are some individual

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212 Heath, Speech at the Guildhall, 15 November 1971, as cited in the *Times*, 16 November 1971; and Peck, *Dublin from Downing Street*, p. 135.
exceptions to this, though most of them give vent to these views when they are out of office rather than when they are in it.213

In the remaining five months of the period under review, Anglo-Irish relations reached their lowest level since the Republic had been proclaimed, in 1949. The diplomacy of protest which the Irish Government had taken recourse to in the wake of internment was continued; indeed, from an Irish perspective, reinforced, by two further incidents in British security operations in Northern Ireland.

The first concerned the decision of the Irish Government, in November 1971, to file with the European Commission of Human Rights, an application in accordance with Article 24 of the European Convention of Human Rights.214 In general terms, the Irish Government submitted a series of complaints against the British Government alleging breaches of the Convention — the most publicised being allegations of torture, or inhuman and degrading treatment.215 This action arose from the introduction of internment in general, and out of allegations made by some of those arrested, of ill-treatment by the security forces during their arrest, interrogation and period of confinement.

Reports of these allegations were carried, initially, in Irish newspapers, and subsequently, in the newspapers of Northern Ireland and Britain, which prompted the establishment of an inquiry by the British Government.216 The reports based on these inquiries concluded that 'questioning in depth by means of the five techniques constituted physical ill-treatment, that certain other actions taken in regard to prisoners constituted measures of ill-treatment or of

215 For a fuller treatment of this subject refer Chapter Nine.
216 ibid., pp. 331-2.
unintended hardship, but that in no case had any of the ... complainants suffered physical brutality. For reasons relating to their terms of reference, conduct, and conclusions, the Irish Government found them unsatisfactory. Its concern, stated the Tánaiste, was 'not in any way ... alleviated by the Compton Report' and persisted in its case accordingly. Given the lengthy procedures involved at Strasbourg, this ensured that the 'interstate case' became the source of occasional friction and intermittent embarrassment between Britain and Ireland until the judgment of the Court was handed down in January 1978.

The second incident was 'Bloody Sunday', the response to which was determined by the general circumstances prevailing in Northern Ireland as well as the particular circumstances of the shootings in Derry.

What swept the country at the end of January and in early February as a great wave of emotion, compounded of grief, shock, and a sort of astonished incredulous rage against an England which seemed to be acting in the way we often accused her of acting but of which we had not, for decades, really believed modern England capable.

Thus, the Irish Minister for Finance, Mr George Colley, concluded that ... Mr Faulkner, the Security Committee and the relevant British Ministers must have approved of a contingency plan which led to what happened in Derry.


218 Tánaiste — Deputy Prime Minister; in Irish, literally 'heir apparent'.


220 Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, p. 264. See also Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army, pp. 384-5.

This mood, unified and condemnatory, demanded an appropriate expression by the Irish Government — inevitably so if the initiative was not to pass to the IRA, whose response would assuredly not be diplomatic. But Lynch, while holding to a belief that British Army repression of Catholic areas had been the primary cause of the situation which Bloody Sunday culminated in, was also concerned that the nation should express its grief and its support for the minority community with 'dignity and restraint'. This, however, was complicated by the lack of reliable information the Irish Government possessed in regard to the incident: as Mr Colley's statement suggests, and as Dr Hillery later confirmed, there was doubt in Dublin as to whether it had resulted from an accident or from an act of deliberate policy. Nevertheless, in accordance with both concerns the Irish Government made four proposals to the British Government, as follows:

(i) an immediate withdrawal of British troops from Derry and Catholic ghettos elsewhere in the North and cessation of harassment of the minority population;

(ii) an end to internment without trial;

(iii) a declaration of Britain's intention to achieve a final settlement of the Irish Question and the convocation of a conference for that purpose; and

222 The IRA, Official and Provisional, did take 'retaliatory' action but, in the period following Bloody Sunday, sympathy for the victims in Derry appears not to have implied, or resulted in, support for that organisation. Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army, pp. 384-5; and Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, pp. 265-7.


224 ibid., col. 909.


(iv) the amendment of Northern Ireland Legislation to include, specifically, the provisions which would secure the equal treatment of persons in the enforcement of the law and prohibit discrimination in the exercise of various voting rights, access to employment in government and semi-government bodies, housing allocation, and access to the public service. 227

In addition, funds were promised 'for political and peaceful action by the minority ... designed to obtain their freedom from Unionist misgovernment.' 228 Ireland, furthermore, withdrew its ambassador from London, 229 but Britain, whose Embassy had been fired, albeit by a small group acting under the cover of a large demonstration, maintained its representative (Sir John Peck) in Dublin.

On the international diplomatic front an offensive was mounted with two purposes. The first was to focus world attention on the civil rights meeting in Newry the following week so as to ensure that there would be no repetition of what happened in Derry. 230 The second was to obtain support for the Irish proposals. To these ends the Irish Foreign Minister undertook a tour of Western Europe and the United States 231 which was reinforced by a propaganda campaign contracted out to the Swiss public relations agency Mark Press. 232

227 ibid., cols. 912-13. This fourth proposal was added two days after the first three, and appears above in a summarised form.

228 ibid., col. 826.

229 ibid., col. 910. This action did not constitute the breaking off of relations by the Republic of Ireland. The Ambassador returned after direct rule was imposed in March 1972.


231 This tour is discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Ten.

232 This campaign did not relate solely to Bloody Sunday and its aftermath. Mark Press's initial contract ran from 15 November 1971, and would appear to have been established as a result of the introduction of internment. Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 262, 13 July 1972, col. 1618.
It was in this area of international diplomacy that the language used by Dr Hillery was in sharp relief to the dignity and restraint so besought by the Taoiseach. At the United Nations the Foreign Minister condemned the 'lunatic policies' followed by Britain in Northern Ireland and accused it of escalating aggression with a military policy consisting of 'torture, internment, and the shooting of unarmed civilians'. Not surprisingly, this drew one of the sharpest replies of this first period from the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home.

I must give a warning to the Irish Government that if they were to maintain the attitude they have taken — for example, Dr Hillery's speeches in New York yesterday — they could do serious and lasting damage to the relationship between our two countries.

Clearly, this reflected British annoyance not only with the language used by Hillery but also with the attempts by the Irish Government to bring its case before a wider, and they feared, an inevitably hostile audience. Yet the developing animus between Britain and Ireland was arrested in the short term, by the relatively uneventful passing of the Newry demonstration which had been arranged to protest against Bloody Sunday. On this event, according to Dr Hillery, he reverted to 'private diplomacy' in putting his Government's case on Northern Ireland.

In the Anglo-Irish imbroglio which existed that was an achievement. Indeed, it is deserving of comment that the Northern Ireland situation did not, even infrequently or with low intensity, give rise to the 'conflict of arms' between Britain and Ireland which Hillery feared it could. The reasons for suggesting the possibility, if not the probability of such an exchange lay in the nature of the

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Northern conflict as a 'transnational security challenge', and the occurrence within this of what Keatinge called 'awkward incidents', and Peck 'reasons for widespread and justifiable irritation in London and Belfast'.

From a Dublin perspective these evolved from the 'Northern brethren' perception of the minority community in the North, and the general unacceptability of the British Army in the Six Counties, to include a concern with virtually every facet of British military policy in the province. It was expressed over such matters as the deployment of (predominantly Protestant) Scottish Regiments in Catholic areas, the partiality of arms searches, the large number of licensed guns held by the Northern population, and the disfavour with which the formation of the Ulster Defence Regiment was regarded. Hence, the concern tended to reflect the change in role of the British Army in Northern Ireland from primarily a peace-keeping force to that of an army in support of the Unionist Government. It therefore came to include not only a concern with the boarding of trawlers (mentioned earlier), but also with incursions by British forces into the territory of the Republic while on patrol, or in pursuit of the IRA, and the cratering and spiking of cross-Border roads so as to make them

237 Keatinge, Issues in Irish Foreign Policy, p. 122.
238 Keatinge, 'Irish Foreign Policy', p. 63.
239 Peck, Dublin from Downing Street, p. 125.
240 Somewhat frivolously dismissed by Prime Minister Wilson as a concern 'about which football team in Glasgow some of the members of the regiment support'. House of Commons, Official Report, vol. 800, 30 April 1970, cols. 1447-8; and, for example, Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 255, 22 July 1971, cols. 2731-2.
241 e.g. Lynch, Statement of 5th July, 1970, Statements and Speeches, pp. 20-1.
242 e.g. Lynch, Statement opening the Special Debate on Northern Ireland, 20th October 1971, Statements and Speeches, p. 90.
244 See pp. 57-9.
impassable. As regards the former, in early February 1972, the Irish Government claimed that a total of 46 incursions and 27 overflights had been made since August 1969. Of some of these occasions the very least which could be said, if British replies that they were accidental are to be accepted, is that they denoted not only an extremely poor ability at practical map-reading, but also a standard of visual acuity not normally found in serving soldiers. 245 Thus, although the Border is, as some members of the Dáil admitted, difficult to locate, 246 there were occasions when it appeared to the Irish Government that the incursion in question could not be other than deliberate. 247

Perhaps predicatably, there was neither the substantial acceptance of the allegations made by each government concerning the forces of the other (a very few incursions were reported of Irish troops), nor of the arithmetic upon which they were based. Yet for all that, the majority of incursions and Border violations were relegated to the 'trivia' of Anglo-Irish relations. As Peck recalled:

Week after week, it seems in retrospect – perhaps less often, but at any rate with tedious regularity - one of us [from the British Embassy] would go down and trade a bundle of complaints, regrets, promises to investigate, requests for information. A British armoured car had invaded Irish sovereign territory. A helicopter had invaded Irish air space. Irish villagers had filled in

245 For example, on 25 January 1971, units of the British forces crossed the Border near Swanlinbar, Co. Cavan, on the main road between Enniskillen and Longford, despite the fact that there were tourist signs indicating to motorists that they were leaving Northern Ireland.


247 ibid., and Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 256, 27 October 1971, col. 284. Sometimes they were even humorous: on the morning of 23 July 1970, 22 British soldiers, in uniform, arrived by ferry at Dun Laoghaire, near Dublin, en route to duty in Northern Ireland. They had been sent, according to Peck, 'by some transport officer from a bygone age', and were required, for his sins, to change into civilian dress and return to Britain for a less embarrassing attempt to rejoin their regiment. Peck, Dublin from Downing Street, pp. 46-7; and Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 248, 29 July 1970, cols. 2403-04.
a crater in Northern Ireland. It isn't in Northern Ireland. It is. It isn't. Why didn't the Irish police catch those gunmen in the Cortina? (True answer — it goes quicker than one unarmed policeman on a bicycle). The Department of Justice has fully investigated your complaints of six weeks ago and finds them unfounded. The British Army has made a detailed enquiry and can find no evidence that any unit had come within five miles of the Border on the day in question. The regiment concerned is now in West Germany.

And so on. 248

But in Anglo-Irish relations, 'trivia', especially 'trivia' concerned with the security situation, frequently assumed a significance which was out of all proportion to the particular event in question. Furthermore, it did so in an unpredictable fashion. Some instances, ostensibly serious, resulted in brief and almost diplomatic exchanges; others, to all appearances of a less serious nature, loomed large and were disruptive. This, moreover, was to be a constant feature of Anglo-Irish relations. Indeed, much of the analysis of them in the following pages is concerned with the ways in which the recurring and inconclusive debate on security matters was manipulated and distorted to the (usually short-term) detriment of Anglo-Irish relations in general. The following instances illustrate both the characteristics outlined above — and some of their unintended consequences.

On 29 August 1971 two Ferret armoured scout-cars crossed into the Irish Republic on an unapproved road in the vicinity of Hackball's Cross, Co. Louth. 249 Accounts provided by the British and Irish Governments, respectively, differ in detail from each other but it is a matter of record that the scout-cars were blocked from returning across the Border, one of them set ablaze, and the other then allowed to return with the crew of the first on board. 250 Upon crossing the

248 Peck, *Dublin from Downing Street*, p. 125.

249 *Irish Times*, 1 September 1971, pp. 1 and 8; and *Times*, 30 August 1971, p. 1.

Border into Northern Ireland this vehicle came under a second attack, in the course of which it received fire and casualties were incurred. According to the British account this attack was mounted from both sides of the Border; by the Irish account, the soldiers were shot by fire originating from within the Six Counties. Nevertheless, despite extremist pressure upon both Governments, particularly the British, this incident was not, of itself, permitted to exacerbate the already strained relations between the two countries. It did, however, point to an important implication of Border violations, one that was probably not foreseen and certainly one that could not be conceded by the British Government if it was to maintain its claim that the Northern Ireland situation was essentially domestic, i.e. that cross-Border violence (as opposed to incursions) could be construed, as Ireland had argued at the United Nations, as a threat to international peace and security. Subsequent actions tended to undermine the British position even more.

In 1971, the decision was taken by the British Government to crater, and otherwise render impassable, cross-Border roads. By the end of that year, 121 unapproved crossings had been cratered or spiked. As a means of preventing the transfer of arms and material from the Republic to the North, it was a counter-productive measure. It resulted in an almost comical (were it not for the seriousness of the situation) cycle of crater-filling (by the local population) and re-cratering (by the British Army) activities which could have no

251 Irish Times, 1 September 1971, pp. 1 and 8; and the Times, 30 August 1971, p. 1.

252 The Taoiseach's statement differentiates between evidence that at least five shots were fired from within the Republic and 'the conclusion that the British soldiers were not shot from the 26 County side of the Border ...' (emphasis added). Taoiseach's statement, as cited in the Irish Times, 1 September 1971, p. 8.

253 This aspect is discussed in Chapter 5, pp. 82-3. On 31 August 1971, following the Hackball's Cross incident, the Daily Telegraph, went so far as to describe an Anglo-Irish war as 'an ultimate possibility which cannot be logically excluded'.


255 ibid.
other effect than to generate, unintentionally, support for the IRA on both sides of the Border. As Conor Cruise O'Brien recounted:

As the border generally runs through homogeneously Catholic territory—having been drawn at a time of maximum Protestant influence—the cratering was equally resented on both sides of the border, both because of its practical inconvenience, and because of a more basic biological feeling about a relationship to the soil: the foreigner was deliberately inflicting wounds on our land.256

Cruise O'Brien emphasises that this was not a fanciful inference taken from his visit to the Border areas257 which is confirmed by the attention cratering received from the Irish Government. Throughout late 1971 the policy from which it stemmed was frequently denounced, by Opposition and Government alike, in terms more vehement than those used to describe internment, and which were repeated, albeit less frequently, in reference to only one other occasion—Bloody Sunday. Thus, it was seen by the Fine Gael Leader, Liam Cosgrave, as a 'lunatic enterprise',258—a view that was shared by the Foreign Minister, Hillery259—and by the Minister for Transport and Power, Brian Lenihan, as an inconvenient and generally futile exercise conducted by 'stupid, bovine people in the Stormont and Westminster regimes'.260

In Dublin, therefore, cratering was regarded as 'a most serious situation' in which the respective Governments were taking

256 Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, p. 260.
257 ibid., note.
259 Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 257, 1 December 1971, cols. 1061-8. Although Hillery also found cratering to be 'folly' (col. 489), and 'silly', he appears to have been particularly attracted to 'lunatic' (or lunacy)—which finds expression no less than seven times in this short adjournment debate.
260 ibid., col. 570. Lenihan later succeeded Hillery as Foreign Minister and was, on this occasion, replying in that Minister's absence.
'totally opposing attitudes'. For this reason it may be something of a triumph that, while the Irish Government were to claim in early 1972 that 'gas canisters, smoke bombs and bullets' have been fired by British troops at people on the Republican side of the Border, there is no record of other than insults having been exchanged between British and Irish forces placed in antagonistic positions in the execution of their orders.

From a British Government perspective its Border interdiction policy was justified by an imposing body of evidence and by the obvious impracticability admitted to by Maudling, of closing the Border over which the IRA was held to be travelling with impunity. Initially this attitude resulted from

... the notorious fact that the chief of staff of the Provos, Sean Mac Stiofain, ... lived openly (till May 1972) in the Republic, and that I.R.A. communiques, claiming or disclaiming responsibility for the latest bombings and killings in the north, issued in a steady stream from headquarters in Dublin [which] seemed to prove the hollowness of Mr Lynch's repeated condemnation of violence.

Moreover, it was exacerbated by some 157 border incidents alleging 'violence originating south of the Border' and by 'occasions when shooting occurred and the Gardai [sic] or the Irish Army unaccountably

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261 Hillery, ibid., col. 1064.
263 For example, the 'Munnelly Bridge episode', as cited by Deputy Billy Fox, Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 257, 1 December 1971, col. 1060.
failed to play as vigorous a role as might be hoped.267

Nevertheless, the force of this claim was diminished by the realistic acknowledgements, by both Labour and Conservative Governments, that the IRA were 'as much an enemy to the Republic of Ireland as to the Stormont Government'.268 Moreover, and to the delight of the Irish Government, Lord Windlesham, the Conservative Minister of State at the Home Office, undermined the stated necessity for such policies as cratering by stating that there were 'relatively few crossings by terrorists' of the Border.269 This in turn was consistent with the view held by the Taoiseach,270 by former Home Secretary, James Callaghan,271 and by the British Ambassador for most of the first period,272 that the IRA's activities were less dependent upon support from the Republic than they were on the persistent feeling of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland that their social, economic, and political rights were being systematically denied and indefinitely postponed.273

Out of discretion and sound political sense this understanding of the Northern situation was never allowed to imply recognition of the IRA, in either the Republic or Northern Ireland, as a legitimate


269 House of Lords, Official Report, vol. 324, 23 September 1971, col. 133. 'Relatively few' is obviously imprecise but the noble Lord 'estimated that terrorists may represent no more than one in something of the order of 10,000 crossings'. ibid.


271 Callaghan, A House Divided, pp. 48 and 148.

272 Peck, Dublin from Downing Street, p. 128.

actor. Notwithstanding the former, a central element in British attitudes to cross-Border violence which re-emerged in this period was that the Irish Government, through the default of the Garda Siochana and the Irish Army, was declining to face an open challenge to the authority of the state by armed usurpers. Surprisingly, in the circumstances, the Irish Government held that the British were also remiss in this regard — in one case involving the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, Harold Wilson — inexusably. Until early 1972, with a conviction bordering on piety, British Ministers proclaimed their refusal to negotiate, or even meet, members of either Official or Provisional persuasion of the IRA. It was significant, therefore, that in 1972, the IRA was not an illegal organisation in Britain, nor were there any restrictions upon the British electronic media from broadcasting material supplied by, or interviews with spokesman of, the two organisations. Given the heavy penetration of the east coast of Ireland by programmes of British origin, this situation effectively resulted in the media services in, and of, one friendly nation broadcasting material which was prohibited within the second and moreover, which was intended to undermine the authority of the State therein.


275 See Section 18(1) of the Broadcasting Authority Act, 1960; and Section 2 of the Offences Against the State Act, 1939.

276 For two of the most lucid accounts of the issues involved in this matter, from an Irish Government perspective, see the following two addresses by the then Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien.

1. Speech by the Minister in the Irish Senate on the introduction of the Broadcasting Authority (Amendment) Bill, 27 March 1975; and
It was for this reason that Harold Wilson's lengthy meeting with prominent members of the Provisional IRA on 13 March 1972 was seen by former Minister for Foreign Affairs and current Leader of Fine Gael, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, as a 'treacherous act'. Wilson claimed, of course, that he met with Provisional Sinn Fein and at the initiative of a member of the Irish Labour Party. But if there was ever an instance which confirmed Cruise O'Brien's description of that organisation as 'the open, civilian legal expression of a secret and illegal army', this occasion at Inchicore, Dublin, did so. Those he met were Joe Cahill, John Kelly, and Dáithí Ó Conaill. Little wonder, then, that Provision Chief of Staff Sean MacStiofáin described them as 'our people'.

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278 *Times*, 21 March 1972, p. 8. The member of the Irish Labour Party in question was almost certainly Dr John O'Connell, but whether he initiated the meeting is doubtful. Conor Cruise O'Brien records only that O'Connell 'acted as intermediary' (*States of Ireland*, p. 269), while Sean MacStiofáin [*Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (n.p.: Gordon Cremonesi, 1975), p. 239, (hereafter cited as MacStiofáin, *Memoirs*)] claims that it was at Wilson's request the meeting took place.


280 One time Provo Leader in Belfast, later to be jailed for his part in the 1973 'Claudia' (cargo vessel) arms smuggling attempt.

281 Belfast IRA. One of the defendants in the 1970 Arms Trial. Served six years in Crumlin Road jail for possessing arms and ammunition during the abortive 1956-62 IRA campaign.

282 In 1971, the Adjutant-General of the Provisionals. Later, if not in March 1972, a member of the 7-man Army Council which formulated the policy on IRA campaigns: and to become Provisional Chief of Staff.

283 MacStiofáin, *Memoirs*, p. 239.
According to Wilson his purpose in meeting the IRA was fourfold: first, and in direct contradiction to his own presence, to make clear to Sinn Fein that violence would achieve no political objectives; second, to advise them that no British Government could accept the terms of their peace plan; third, to propose a truce when the anticipated British 'initiative' was made; and fourth, to request that the spokesmen of the minority community be free from intimidation.  

In view of the Leader of the Opposition's dramatic interest in solutions to the Irish Question, it is reasonable to include Cruise O'Brien's claim that Wilson also sought an extension of the 72-hour truce which the IRA had called on 10 March.  

This truce, however, had been called by the IRA to demonstrate that it was 'under effective control and discipline'; that as a result, it expected 'a positive response' from the British Government to its revised Republican peace terms and, finally, in tacit recognition that Wilson's visit would be more easily facilitated during a lull in military operations.  

From IRA accounts it is clear that Wilson's visit was never likely to presage an indefinite suspension of operations but he appeared not to have understood this sufficiently.  

Dave Ó Connaill told me afterwards that in political terms the meeting was quite unproductive ... Wilson seemed to be more concerned with creating a favourable image, behaving in a hearty manner, slapping the three of us on the back and using words like 'bloody' and 'Christ'. Presumably, he thought the Provisionals swore this way.

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289 In some texts, Dáithí Ó Connaill is referred to by his Anglicised name – Dave O'Connell.

Rather, the 'Inchicore summit' adds strength to Richard Crossman's characterisation of the (then) Prime Minister during the period of his intense desire to visit Ulster in April 1969.

He has a passion for being on the spot, being in the news. Perhaps that isn't fair. It is, rather, that he sees himself influencing events personally. He wants to be active in international affairs rather in the way that he has stopped one or two strikes at home.291

In the injudicious indulgence of this passion he clearly exceeded the bounds of candour and courtesy in Anglo-Irish relations. According to Bowyer Bell, Wilson

... left the impression that a satisfactory end to the Provos struggle was in sight. He also left an outraged Irish Government which had, as Dave O'Connell gleefully pointed out, been used as a cover for the meeting with the Provos. The Provos were now in the big time politically. At a minimum they had veto power and at best they had bombed themselves ahead of Lynch in the queue to the bargaining table.292

Further, as Cruise O'Brien noted

It must be conceded that here the IRA had a point. Mr Wilson, like many another British statesman before him, was helping the argument of those in Ireland who hold that power must come from the barrel of a gun. And he did so, at a moment when that power was beginning to wilt from that which alone can cause it to wilt — the disapproval of the people of whom the gunmen were part. In other words — that is, using another metaphor of Chairman Mao's — this untoward visit came at a moment when 'the water' was just beginning to turn a little unhealthy for 'the fish' of the guerrilla. The 'Inchicore summit' put a little sparkle back into the water again ... 293


292 Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army, p. 386.

293 Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, p. 268.
The full implications of this meeting, unintended though they were, were felt at a later date. Perhaps fortunately, it occurred at a time when Anglo-Irish relations could hardly have been worse, and were pre-occupied with the anticipation of an 'initiative' on Northern Ireland by the British Government. In these conditions the immediate effect was to establish a precedent, later to be repeated by Wilson, and followed by Northern Ireland Ministers William Whitelaw and Merlyn Rees, of treating with the IRA. Reflection upon it was postponed, and then over-shadowed by the prorogation of Stormont on 24 March 1972— an objective which had been sought by the Irish Government since the introduction of internment without trial. Even if anti-British sentiments in the Republic were not completely dissipated by this measure, or that it was, in Dublin terms, incomplete,\(^{294}\) expressions of displeasure with particular British politicians were rendered inappropriate in the atmosphere of goodwill and optimism which prorogation injected into Anglo-Irish relations.\(^{295}\)

\(^{294}\) Incomplete because it was not accompanied by a power-sharing administration as Lynch had proposed in his 12 August 1971 statement (see p. 67-8).

\(^{295}\) The Taoiseach had been advised by the British Ambassador in early February that rumours of an initiative 'were not totally unfounded' (although its specific form remained unknown) and further, was advised of the prorogation of Stormont the day before it was announced. Peck, *Dublin from Downing Street*, pp. 142 and 144.
The prorogation of Stormont was one of the hallmark events of modern Irish history: it compassed for all the justifiable criticism that could be levelled against the institution itself, the death of an Irish Parliament. Moreover, prorogation, and the further polarisation of the two Northern communities which followed it, dominated not merely Irish politics but Anglo-Irish relations as well.

Every political group in the North underwent a dramatic change. Foremost to be affected were the Unionists. For them the abolition of what had been, in effect, their Parliament, signalled the fragmentation of their once apparently monolithic power structure. The Official Party continued to be led by the former Prime Minister, Brian Faulkner, but it was in reality no more than a remnant of what it had been. On the one hand, some of the more 'liberal' Unionists distanced themselves from a Party which they saw as incapable of providing a focus for political progress on communal lines, while on the other, the extremist Vanguard movement emerged to rally the disaffected who were in no way disposed to accommodate Catholic/Nationalist aspirations.

The anti-Unionists, however, were not immune from fissiparous tendencies. The old Nationalist Party was rendered virtually defunct in 1973 while liberal/Catholic support for the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) was withdrawn in favour of the moderate non-sectarian (but still Unionist) Alliance Party. In both cases the chief beneficiary was the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), founded in 1970, which had risen to be the principal opposition Party in the North.

Nevertheless it was between these widely divergent shades of opinion, and the Northern Ireland Secretary, William Whitlow, that continuous discussions were held in search of the conditions under which home rule might be restored to the Province. In September 1972 they culminated in a conference in Darlington, County Durham, attended by three of the seven Northern Ireland political parties invited – the Ulster Unionist Party, the Alliance Party, and the Northern Ireland
Labour Party. (The SDLP, Nationalist Party, Republican Labour Party, and Democratic Unionist Party were not present because of their non-fulfilment of various conditions they had stipulated for their attendance).

As the list of absentees foreshadowed, this conference was not a particularly productive exercise. It did, however, in October 1972, lead to the publication of a discussion paper which reviewed the background, set out the proposals made up to that time by Northern Ireland political parties and other interests, established the basic factors — political, economic, and security — which would have to be taken into account in moving towards a settlement, and stated the criteria which firm proposals for the future would have to meet. Subsequent consultations held between the Northern Ireland Secretary and a wide range of political parties (including SDLP) and other groups and individuals in the Province failed to produce any single agreed set of proposals for a constitutional settlement, but to the British Government, they did suggest the possibility that important aspects of a settlement could be framed in a way likely to gain the acceptance of the Northern Ireland people as a whole. Of particular significance for Anglo-Irish relations was the recognition of what the Discussion Paper called the 'Irish Dimension'. Essentially this was an attempt to reconcile the Attlean guarantee of 1948 with the reality of (the country of) Ireland’s geographic and economic integrity, and the need to accommodate the legitimate aspirations of the minority community.

It should be emphasised that these developments took place against a backdrop of endemic violence. Internment, as was noted in the previous chapter, did not prevent either the Official or

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Provisional wings of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) from continuing in their campaign against the British presence – indeed, it escalated the conflict to a higher level of violence than had existed prior to August 1971. Ironically, both wings of the IRA were also involved in a struggle for supremacy which bred its own internecine violence. A truce, however, enabled them to renew their main campaigns but with the announcement (and subsequent observance) by the Officials of a ceasefire on 29 May 1972, the initiative and responsibility for operations against the British passed almost exclusively to the Provisionals. In this same general period, the emergence of militant Protestant organisations such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), which had been intermittently active in Belfast since 1966, and the Ulster Defence Association, which was formed in 1971, led to a growth in 'loyalist' violence and killings classed as sectarian murders. In the five years from 1972 to 1976 out of a total of 1,120 civilian deaths, 569 were classed as sectarian or inter-factional killings, although many of these were by persons acting as individuals rather than as members of organisations carrying out orders. By the end of July 1972, there were 21,000 British troops in Northern Ireland – the highest number throughout the entire period under review – to counter this trend. Their immediate task of exercising tighter control over the security situation was demonstrated at the same time with the mounting of a large scale military operation which opened the Catholic and Protestant 'no-go' (paramilitary controlled) areas of Belfast and Derry. Thereafter, the influence of the British Army, in terms of a reduction in the incidence of violence, was gradually more apparent.

Such optimism as may have been felt in London because of this was, however, served a reminder of the strength of certain feelings in Northern Ireland by the Border plebiscite of 8 March 1973. In it, every

5 *Northern Ireland*, pp. 8-9.
6 Held under the provisions of the Northern Ireland (Border Poll) Act 1972 in fulfilment of a pledge given by the United Kingdom Government at the time of the introduction of direct rule.
citizen of the Province aged 18 or over was asked to state whether he or she wished Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom or to be joined with the Irish Republic outside of the United Kingdom. More than 600,000 voters representing 58.7 per cent of the electorate went to the polls and, of these 591,820 voted to remain part of the United Kingdom. The miniscule expression in favour of the contrary preference was explained by the decision of anti-partition parties and groups to advocate a boycott of the poll amongst their supporters on the grounds that the questions posed failed to give their respective opinions about future forms of government in Ireland an adequate opportunity to be expressed.

Yet, within a year of prorogation, the series of negotiations which Whitelaw had embarked on led to the publication of a White Paper by the United Kingdom Government entitled Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals. This document proposed the restoration of devolved government to Northern Ireland but with fundamental differences to the traditional Westminster system. Inter alia, it called for the creation of a new legislature — a Northern Ireland Assembly — elected by proportional representation, and an Executive which was required to admit minority participation. To underline the promise placed in this principle of 'power-sharing', it was stipulated that the United Kingdom Government would not recognise an Executive if it was to represent only one community. The White Paper also proposed additional safeguards to protect the rights of the whole community and of groups within it, and stressed once more the community of interests that existed between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland — the 'Irish Dimension'.

These new constitutional arrangements were subsequently embodied in the Northern Ireland Assembly Act, passed on 3 May 1973, and the

7 There were 1,030,084 electors entitled to vote.
In this time, also, the reform of the electoral system, another of the original demands of the civil rights movement, took effect. In May 1973 elections to the 26 new district councils were held based on a system of universal adult suffrage (single transferable vote) — the first such arrangement in local body elections since the foundation of the state.

Elections to the new Assembly were held in June 1973 and the results gave the 'pro-White Paper' Unionist Party 24 seats; the SDLP 19; Alliance Party 8; and NILP 1. The coalition of 'loyalist' interests which, whatever the extent of their disagreement on other points of policy, were united in rejecting as unworkable the proposals of the White Paper and Constitution Act, gained 26 seats. Thus while no one party won an overall majority of seats, there was a majority of seats held by parties favouring the new constitutional proposals.

By November 1973 this majority of 'pro-White Paper' Unionists, SDLP and Alliance Party had agreed on the formation and membership of the Executive. The following month, at a conference at Sunningdale College in England, the Governments of Britain and the Republic of Ireland, together with the parties represented in the Northern Ireland Executive, agreed to the establishment of a Council of Ireland with powers to represent the entire island in matters of common interest. On 1 January 1974 the United Kingdom Government delegated certain powers to the Assembly and the Executive was sworn in.

In so far as the security situation was concerned, this was an auspicious period. Since mid-1973 shootings and explosions had decreased as part of a general trend which continued through to the end of 1974 towards the point where the level of violence was lower than it had been for two to three years.

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10 The agreement was approved by the Assembly on 14 December 1973, by a vote of 43 to 27.
Throughout the latter half of 1973, however, the 'loyalist' opposition to power-sharing had been growing — so much so that 1 January 1974 was also the day on which the policy-making body of the Unionist Party chose to repudiate the Sunningdale agreement, forcing Faulkner's resignation as its leader in the process. He continued to serve as Chief Executive and leader of the Party in the Assembly, where he still commanded the support of 18 of the elected Unionists.

Further opposition to the new arrangements continued into 1974 until, in February, the United Kingdom General Election presented the 'loyalists' with the opportunity of testing public opinion. In the event, they received 51 per cent of the votes cast, which translated into victory in 11 of Northern Ireland's 12 (Westminster) constituencies.

Although the composition of the Assembly and the Executive were not affected by this outcome, there was an understandable hardening of attitudes in Northern Ireland following it. The anti-power sharing/Executive force came closer together under the banner of the United Ulster Unionist Coalition (UUUC), and there also developed, outside the party-political spectrum, the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC). It was this latter organisation which called a general strike throughout Northern Ireland in May 1974 with the purpose of forcing a renegotiation of the Sunningdale agreement. With the support of loyalist paramilitary organisations and the withdrawal of electric power, the Province was effectively immobilised to the point where even essential services were threatened.

In the stand-off which developed between the Executive, the United Kingdom Government, and the UWC, the position of Brian Faulkner and his Unionist colleagues became increasingly untenable. He and they resigned from the Executive on 28 May 1974, thereby bringing the power-sharing administration effectively to an end. On the following day the Northern Ireland Assembly was prorogued, initially for a period of one year from July 1974, but in practice indefinitely, and Direct Rule was re-introduced.

The Council of a Protestant organisation which claimed to represent 300,000 workers in Ulster. Although it had its origin in the Loyalist Association of Workers, which collapsed in 1973, it was a more cohesive and tighter organisation than its predecessor.
CHAPTER TWO

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: MARCH 1972-MAY 1974
The prorogation of Stormont— in effect its abolition— represented the assumption by Westminster of an inescapable responsibility for the political direction of Northern Ireland which had existed de facto ever since the British Army had been called to aid the civil power in August 1969. It was, nevertheless, a compromise between unambiguously and indefinitely sustaining the Protestant majority and its British allegiance, and accepting the logic of Irish history as it is propounded by nationalists—that peace and good order are impossible in a territorially divided Ireland.¹ For most of the period under review the British Government, in particular the Conservative Government of Edward Heath, tended in its actions towards the latter while denying in its statements that the former was in any case repudiated.

Prorogation, however, did not denote a sympathy for, or even an understanding of the Northern Ireland situation in terms of Irish unity. As the British Government's attitudes in late 1971 and early 1972 demonstrated, such sentiments patently did not exist. But prorogation did serve notice that Heath, having completed the formalities of the United Kingdom's entry into the European Economic Community (EEC), was about to take a more active interest in Northern Ireland.² Paradoxically, it also indicated that Britain had 'no vital interest in retaining power in Ireland, but on the contrary [was] committed to a settlement on a consensual basis'.³

Prorogation, therefore, brought about an immediate improvement

¹ For a brief account of the possible strategies open to the British Government after August 1969 see T.J.O. Hickey, 'Northern Ireland', Times, 29 March 1974.
² The Accession Treaty was signed in Brussels on 22 January 1972.
in Anglo-Irish relations. For Lynch it was a 'positive step' because it 'meant a recognition that it was not possible to work through existing structures'. Yet, no doubt because of previous British 'initiatives' which had failed, it was also greeted with caution. Prorogation was seen only as a 'necessary preliminary to a solution and not as itself a solution'. That could be achieved only within a new (United) Ireland towards which a commitment was required by the British Government. If the Irish response to Stormont's demise was in any way flawed, it was so in the less than full recognition it accorded Protestant interests, which that institution had faithfully (and almost exclusively) served for over half a century. In 1972 the Taoiseach wrote:

The real issue is not that of Northern Ireland. That was never the question — it was an answer, or part of an answer, to a larger question. Now that it has been proved inadequate that larger question remains. That larger and still outstanding question is how to achieve a settlement between the two islands which will ensure good relations between them — granted that Union did not work; that the division of Ireland has not worked; and that the incorporation of Northern Ireland, or any part of it, fully within the United Kingdom cannot work.

It was a neglect, perhaps a conceit in Ireland's relations with Britain that was not shared, at least to the same extent, by the recently appointed Northern Ireland Secretary, William Whitelaw, who claimed that the question would require 'sensible work' between North

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4 The Irish Ambassador to London, withdrawn after Bloody Sunday, returned on 24 March 1972, the day the suspension of Stormont was announced.


6 ibid.


8 ibid., p. 613.
and South. But this did not become apparent until the end of the period; for just over the two years which followed the British actions of March 1972 Anglo-Irish relations were primarily concerned less with the differences which clearly persisted between each government than they were with establishing the terms by which the Irish Question could be answered. So great was this promise perceived that outstanding differences on transnational security matters seemed to be either overborne in the spirit of co-operation or de-emphasised in the interest of its realisation, as two developments in 1972 illustrated.

In response to a continuing and substantial folio of allegations regarding cross-Border and Border-area violence, and to numerous calls by the British Government for 'closer coordination between the forces responsible for maintaining law and order on both sides', the Irish Government, in May 1972, established a Special Criminal Court. Yet curiously Whitelaw was, throughout this same period, lending further status to the political role of the IRA.

Prior to prorogation the British Government had proclaimed adamantly that there 'can be no concession to violence'. More
explicitly, and in reference to the IRA, it was stated by the Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling:

In this case there can be no settlement by discussion and agreement. Force must be defeated. There can be no compromise with violence. On this, I think that there is general agreement.14

Despite approving citations that to do other than condemn the IRA was 'moral cowardice',15 prorogation clearly served to qualify the generality of agreement. On 28 March, only four days after assuming office, Whitelaw announced that the Army would be prepared to reduce its activities in return for a reduction in violence by the IRA. Furthermore, he promised that, in the event of de-escalation he would phase out internment and release the remaining internees.16 The mounting toll of explosions, deaths and destruction appeared, in mid 1972, to place the March statements in sharp relief as expressions of unfounded hope.17 On 6 July 1972 Whitelaw went so far as to declare that 'there was no question of negotiating with people who are shooting at British troops'.18 Contemporary developments seriously challenged both the Government's resolve and the Secretary's intentions. On 7 July a Provisional IRA/Sinn Fein delegation was flown, by courtesy of the Royal Air Force, from Belfast to London. In a house in Chelsea belonging to junior minister, Paul Channon, they met with Whitelaw and three members of his ministerial team for secret discussions on three

15 A term used by Mr Gerard Fitt (SDLP, Belfast, West), and repeated by Maudling, ibid., col. 5.
18 Irish Times, 7 July 1972, p. 1. The Officials had suspended operations on 30 May 1972.
Government's decision to talk with representatives of what may accurately be termed 'the enemy'. If the conditions are such that it or they are nearing the point of exhaustion or destruction, it may be considered essential to ensure that contacts are established and that someone is left with whom to treat when capitulation is imminent. Or, more pragmatically, it may be argued that the IRA, as wielders of de facto power in certain areas of the North, and as an organisation which had demonstrated its ability to sustain a type of war against (at that time) up to 17,000 British troops, had acquired standing as an actor and were an essential presence at any conference seriously attempting a lasting solution to the state's problems.

In July 1972 the first condition was unfulfilled; although


21 The phrase 'a type of war' is used to avoid the objections which might arise if one of the several terms which are found in the literature was used. Indeed it is a characteristic of the literature on Northern Ireland that few rigorous attempts have been made to understand the military operations in terms of established types of warfare.

22 E.g. Lieutenant-Colonel P.W. Graham ['Low-Level Civil/Military Coordination, Belfast, 1970-73', RUSI, 119, (September 1974): 80-84] referred to the British Army's role in Ulster in Counter Revolutionary Warfare which, by exclusion, described the IRA as revolutionaries, and by implication, lent to them a legitimacy which the British Government have publicly denied.

23 Cecil King, former chairman of IPC Publications (Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror), in an interview with Donall Corvin, 'King and the North', Dublin Sunday Independent, 5 November 1976. However, King's advocacy of talking to the IRA because they were 'reasonable men' not 'just murderous thugs' appears never to have been a widely shared perception. See also Sunday Times, 'Insight Team', Ulster, new ed., (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), p. 310, (hereafter cited as Sunday Times, Ulster).
Ruairi O Bradaigh\textsuperscript{24} and Joe Cahill\textsuperscript{25} had been arrested in the Republic during May, the most telling pressure the IRA were subject to appears to have been exerted by sections of Northern Republican opinion against the bombing campaign.\textsuperscript{26} It was beyond dispute, however, that the IRA were the de facto 'authority' in such areas as 'Free Derry'. Both sides appreciated these conditions. According to MacStiofáin

\begin{quote}
Our meeting with Whitelaw was to take place in secret. An imperialist government does not agree to negotiate with representatives of a revolutionary movement without good reason. The reason was the continued ability of the IRA to fight the massive British occupation forces and to bring home to the English people the hard price that must be paid for the foolishness of propping up a colonial system which could not survive.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

Essentially, Whitelaw concurred. In his belief that 'the first essential is that the violence should end',\textsuperscript{28} and that he 'might be able to save lives and prevent damage to property' he was prepared to 'talk to anyone at all'.\textsuperscript{29} And go further besides.

By early June 1972, in response to the suspension of operations by the Officials, and in an attempt to encourage the Provisionals to follow their example, he freed 470 internees, and followed this, within a fortnight, by the release of fifty more. On 21 June he was reported as considering further concessions which included, in return for a Provisional cessation of operations, an order to the Northern Ireland security forces not to move against 'men on the run', to release the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{24} Then President of Provisional Sinn Fein. \\
\textsuperscript{25} One time Provo leader in Belfast; according to \textit{Sunday Times}, \textit{Ulster}, p. 261, he became Provisional Chief of Staff in March 1971. \\
\textsuperscript{27} MacStiofáin, \textit{Memoirs}, p. 269. \\
\textsuperscript{28} House of Commons, \textit{Official Report}, vol. 839, 22 June 1972, col.723. \\
\end{flushright}
remaining 300 plus internees, and to review the sentences of terrorists already convicted.  

Thus, even if the IRA was not approaching a state of exhaustion caused by military attrition it appears that the British Government was exhibiting symptoms approaching frustration and desperation to be quit of the troubles which Northern Ireland was bringing to it. It might otherwise be difficult to account for the cheering in the House of Commons which accompanied the Home Secretary's announcement that 'her Majesty's Forces [would] obviously reciprocate' to a cessation of IRA violence.  

It would also be difficult to account for the consideration given to the demands by that organisation, particularly the first.

1. The British Government to recognize publicly that it was the right of the whole of the people of Ireland, acting as a unit to decide the future of Ireland.

2. An immediate declaration of intention to withdraw all British forces by 1 January 1975, and the immediate withdrawal of British forces from sensitive areas, and a

3. General amnesty for all political prisoners in Irish and British jails, all internees and detainees and all persons on the wanted list.

Whitelaw claimed that he 'could not accept' any of the demands — which was predictable — yet he agreed to 'consider' them 'in case some

[30] Irish Times, 21 June 1972, p. 1. The first of these concessions was confirmed in House of Commons, Official Report, vol. 842, 7 August 1972, col. 291. The remaining two appear not to have received attention at Westminster in this period but the Irish Times report is in keeping with the developments then under way — see the Times, 23 June 1972, pp. 1 and 5.

[31] House of Commons, Official Report, vol. 839, 22 June 1972, col. 722. Reports of cheering which was on one occasion limited to Labour members, are found in the Irish Times, 23 June 1972, p. 1; and the Times, 23 June 1972, pp. 1 and 5.

peaceful way forward might be found — and that was not predictable. The key phrase in the first demand was 'acting as a unit'. As the British Government had given repeated assurances that the position of Northern Ireland, as an integral part of the United Kingdom, would not be changed without the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, it was difficult to understand how those assurances were to be honoured if the future of the state was to be determined in terms of the IRA demand. It was surprising, therefore, that Mr Whitelaw felt able even to consider such a proposal, for it was, and remains almost inevitable that any reference to an all-Ireland electorate would yield vastly different results to that purely to a Six-Counties electorate.

Potentially, the implications of the developments for Anglo-Irish relations were considerable. As the first Provo demand and part of the second were substantially planks in the Irish Government's Northern Ireland policy, the British Government's decision to treat with the IRA effectively allowed the men of violence not only to bomb their way to the conference table but also to outflank Dublin. The IRA — an organisation proscribed in the Republic of Ireland, and Sinn Fein, its political wing, whose views on Irish Entry into the EEC had just previously been rejected out of hand — had achieved what no Government of either the Free State or the Republic had achieved: an agreement,

33 ibid., col. 1179.

34 Seamus Twomey, Commanding Officer of the Belfast Brigade of the Provisional IRA, later claimed in an interview with the German news magazine, Der Spiegel, that Whitelaw 'signed' a 'truce document' with two lawyers as witnesses (cited in the Irish Times, 3 August 1972). A similar claim is found in MacStiofán, Memoirs, p. 293. Whitelaw, when questioned by Enoch Powell in the Commons denied the claim.

35 Both Official and Provisional Sinn Fein (and the Irish Labour Party) took the 'No' position in the 10 May 1972 Common Market Referendum. It was rejected by more than four to one against. In the Border areas where Sinn Fein was reputed to be strong the 'Yes' vote was recorded overwhelmingly. Many observers are of the opinion that this reflected a rejection by many people, of IRA/Sinn Fein as well as, or instead of, a preference for Europe. Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army, p. 388; and Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, (Frogmore, St. Albans, Herts: Panther, 1974), pp. 273-4.
by a British Minister responsible for Northern Ireland to consider unification on a nation-wide basis. The Provo/British Government meeting was, therefore, an unencouraging response to the Government's stronger measures against the IRA.

It could furthermore, have disrupted Anglo-Irish relations by forcing the Fianna Fáil Government of Jack Lynch to adopt a more forceful strategy in an attempt to retain its 'Republican' credibility. That the people of the Irish Republic may not have been enthusiastic in their support for Northern Catholics nor, perhaps, even Irish unity, was irrelevant. Given the leadership style of Lynch (mentioned earlier) and a mood in the Republic which had been conditioned by the publicity attendant on internment and Blood Sunday, Fianna Fáil was in no position, domestically, to do other than at least sound like the 'Republican Party' it claimed to be.

Anglo-Irish relations, however, were not prejudiced. An attempt by Catholics to forcibly occupy empty houses in Lenadoon Avenue, Belfast, on 9 July brought a confrontation with the British Army which steadily deteriorated and resulted in the termination of the truce which had existed since 27 June. The resumption of operations by the Provisional IRA forced the British Government to reassess its attitudes towards the organisation, and it did so with alacrity.

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36 In May 1970 the Dublin magazine *This Week* found that only 17 per cent of those interviewed in an opinion poll were in favour of sending the Irish Army into Northern Ireland, if the pogroms of August 1969 should be repeated. Cited in John Magee, ed., *Northern Ireland: Crisis and Conflict* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 22. Furthermore, during six months in 1972, a survey was conducted in Dublin with 3,000 respondents which casts some doubts on the traditional assumptions that a majority of the total population of Ireland were in favour of unity; see Michael MacGreil, *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland* (Dublin: Research Section, College of Industrial Relations, 1977). Obviously, since the results of the survey were not published until 1977, it is not here claimed that they were common knowledge, or even that they would have been accepted if they had been published; but the sentiments they recorded may have been sensed.

37 For further details of this event see Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army*, p. 391; and MacStiofáin, *Memoirs*, pp. 287-9 and 292-3.
Characteristically, the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, Harold Wilson, was out of phase with this reversal. On 18 July, he and the Opposition spokesman on Northern Ireland, Merlyn Rees, spent five hours talking to senior members of Provisional Sinn Fein in London and, it is claimed, with the prior knowledge of the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary.\(^{38}\)

However, by late July 1972 the British Government's stated and operational view of the IRA conformed very much with that of the Government of the Republic of Ireland. As Whitelaw told the Commons

\[\ldots\] Her Majesty's Government have now an absolutely unchallengeable right to ask the House, the country and, indeed, the whole world for their support in an absolute determination to destroy the capacity of the Provisional IRA for further acts of inhumanity. It has degraded the human race ....\(^{39}\)

Moreover, in reply to a question from Captain L.P.S. Orr, the Home Secretary gave a clear undertaking that 'neither he nor his Ministers, advisers, or any emissary on his behalf [would] ever again sit down with representatives of the IRA'.\(^{40}\)

For the British Government, talking with the IRA was always a practice fraught with danger, even outside the confines of Anglo-Irish relations. Domestically, it ran the risk of alienating Conservative backbench support in the Commons,\(^{41}\) while in Northern Ireland, it both aggravated Protestant anxieties and increased the possibility of an escalation in sectarian conflict and open hostilities between the Army and the Ulster Defence Association.\(^{42}\) When the

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\(^{40}\) ibid., col. 1373.

\(^{41}\) The *Times* of 19 July 1972 (p. 13) carried a letter from nine Conservative and Unionist backbenchers demanding a 'new and understandable policy for the province', and implying thereby, a call for Whitelaw's removal from his Northern Ireland Secretaryship.

\(^{42}\) Lebow, 'Ireland', p. 241.
interlude of talking failed and was exposed, the British Government returned to the security challenge in Ireland with all the zeal of the reconverted. And this was certainly manifest in the relations between Britain and Ireland.

Perhaps appropriately, it first found expression on the occasion of the 20th Olympic Games in Munich, in September 1972. In the course of a meeting at the British Consul-General’s office on 4 September the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach discussed a wide range of Northern Ireland security matters as well as Anglo-Irish relations and both nations’ prospective membership of the EEC. It was from the first-mentioned of these that a minor furore arose. When he left the Consulate-General, Lynch made it quite clear that he did not intend to make any comment on the discussions beyond a general statement that they were 'useful' and included matters of mutual interest. At the subsequent press conference the Taoiseach stated

My meeting today with Mr Heath was a continuation of a series of confidential discussions and consultations that we have been having in relation to the Northern Ireland situation ... But in so far as we had discussions today, the subject matter must remain confidential because it is on a confidentially basis that these discussions and consultations can continue to be useful.44

The British Government, however, did not feel so constrained. In an official release it was stated that 'closer cooperation and firmer action' were sought from the Republic.45 There was furthermore the definite suggestion of a threat

... unless it were felt both in Great Britain generally and in Northern Ireland in particular that the South is taking action against the IRA there is little hope of an acceptable solution.46

44 ibid.
45 ibid.
46 ibid.
Given the pressures upon Lynch from within his own Party and from the Opposition in the Dáil, this statement inevitably was interpreted as a serious breach of confidence and an attempt by the British Government to 'dictate' to the Irish Government. The former was an obvious inference from the Taoiseach's remarks at his press conference, as was the latter — which he did not convincingly deny. But, although the occasion presented him with an opportunity to point out the glaring inconsistencies in recent British behaviour, he chose instead a more subdued and understated reply. Thus, he noted only that one of those named, against whom the British Government sought 'firmer action', had attended the Whitelaw-IRA meeting and was, by the Home Secretary's admission, not wanted for the preferment of charges. Further, that the Irish Government 'had taken and would continue to take every action available to [it] within the law in relation to IRA activities within [its] territory.

In this context, Lynch's opinion that the Munich incident had not caused any 'deterioration or disimprovement' in Anglo-Irish relations may have appeared surprising. It was, however, to be seen within an expanded view of British intentions towards Northern Ireland and the sense of urgency which accompanied them. From the official British statement it is clear that Lynch was generally aware of both, and from his subsequent actions, clear that he understood, even if he did not welcome Heath's pre-occupation with transnational security matters.

Basically this pre-occupation reflected a three-fold concern. The first was that the British were attaching considerable importance to the forthcoming conference of Northern Ireland political parties


49 ibid.

50 ibid.
at Darlington, County Durham, in late September. They were, therefore, anxious to achieve an improvement in the security situation before then so that internees could be released. The second was to placate Unionist anxiety about the conference by demonstrating that the Republic were acting against the IRA. Finally, but somewhat less immediate, was the concern that all that could be done was seen to be done, in the field of security co-operation, prior to the presentation of interim draft proposals for the future of Northern Ireland, scheduled for late in 1972.

In the event, these fears were well grounded: the failure, or more accurately, the inability of Whitelaw to end internment and to release all internees, ensured that the conference took place without the presence of the SDLP. Furthermore, the three parties which did attend (Alliance, Northern Ireland Labour, and Unionist) emerged from the three days of talks with precisely the same positions they had on entering them. Yet the British Government, and particularly Prime Minister Heath, remained undeterred in its resolve to effect an accommodation between all parties (para-militaries excluded) to the Northern Ireland question.

Whereas previously Heath had disclaimed any 'historical or logical' basis for Irish unity, on the grounds of racial and religious differences, his Government on 30 October 1972, published 'a paper for discussion' which contained a considerably different understanding of the issues involved. In a notable section headed 'The Irish Dimension' the paper affirmed the passive support of Irish

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51 ibid. SDLP were threatening to boycott the conference if the internment had not ceased.
52 But the Party submitted its own formal proposals to Whitelaw who, in turn, presented them to the conference.
53 Lebow, 'Ireland', p. 245.
54 In an interview with Anthony Lewis of the New York Times, as cited in the Irish Times, 28 February 1972.
No United Kingdom Government for many years has had any wish to impede the realisation of Irish unity, if it were to come about by genuine and freely given mutual agreement and on conditions acceptable to the distinctive communities.  

More significantly it stated

A settlement must also recognise Northern Ireland's position with Ireland as a whole ... it is a fact that Northern Ireland is part of the geographical entity of Ireland; that it shares with the Republic of Ireland common problems, such as the under-development of western areas; and that, in the context of membership of the European Communities, Northern Ireland and the Republic will have certain common difficulties and opportunities which will differ in some respects from those which will face Great Britain.

Whatever arrangements are made for the future administration of Northern Ireland must take account of the Province's relationship with the Republic of Ireland: and to the extent that this is done, there is an obligation upon the Republic to reciprocate. Both the economy and the security of the two areas are to some considerable extent inter-dependent, and the same is true of both in their relationship with Great Britain. It is therefore clearly desirable that any new arrangements for Northern Ireland should, whilst meeting the wishes of Northern Ireland and Great Britain, be so far as possible acceptable to and accepted by the Republic of Ireland which from 1 January 1973, will share the rights and obligations of membership of the European Communities.

In these terms Irish unity was still not encouraged, but there was a suggestion in the Green Paper of slightly more than the non-committal

56 ibid., p. 33.

57 This economic aspect also represented a convergence with the views of the Taoiseach, who noted in his 'The Anglo-Irish Problem' (p. 615) that 'the real dividing line in Ireland so far as economic prosperity is concerned has always been an East-West and not a North-South one'.

58 The Future of Northern Ireland, pp. 33-4.
attitude towards it which was imputed, by some observers, to Britain. Not only had the Irish dimension been recognised, but more, the old restraints born of imperial necessity were in erosion. Ireland had no longer, as in Lord Salisbury’s 1872 declaration, to be 'kept at all hazards': all that remained of that heritage was the negative condition 'that Northern Ireland should not offer a base for any external threat to the United Kingdom'.

Notwithstanding the advances which these developments represented in Anglo-Irish relations, they were not purchased entirely at the expense of the Ulster Unionists. In their anticipation the Taoiseach had, in July, indicated his willingness to begin preparatory work on the drafting of a Constitution in the context of a new Ireland. Moreover, two days following the publication of the Green Paper, Heath demonstrated the limits to which the people of Great Britain were to be accorded an opportunity for the popular expression of their views on the 'new arrangements' for Northern Ireland. On 1 November 1972 a plebiscite Bill was issued for the purposes of determining, among the people of Northern Ireland, what their wishes were in respect to either continued union with Great Britain or unification with the Republic of Ireland.

Such a self-referential device was, of course, never likely to find acceptance with the Irish Government. From the beginning of Partition it had remained an article of Republican dogma that no section of the population of the island of Ireland had any right, in

59 E.g. Moody, The Ulster Question, p. 92.
61 The Future of Northern Ireland, p. 32.
63 i.e. as per Whitelaw's statement on p.107.
64 There is no record, in the decade under review, of any suggestion that the people of Great Britain and Northern Ireland should be consulted on the former's continued position within the United Kingdom.
de Valera's description, 'to mutilate our country'. Accordingly, it was rejected, as in the Taoiseach's contribution to an Oxford Union Society debate on Irish Unity.

My Government could never accept that it is a valid or useful exercise to consult only the people of Northern Ireland by a plebiscite on Irish unity. Such a plebiscite ... can contribute nothing, is completely predictable and can only widen the rift between the two communities.  

It did not, however, serve to retard the increasingly close co-operation between Britain and the Republic regarding the North. Nor could it. According to Lynch the opportunities presented by the Green Paper imposed a 'duty ... and a responsibility' upon his Government 'to respond in a constructive way'.

Once again this found expression in the security field and, as before, it revealed an interesting juxtaposition in attitudes. From October through December 1972 the Irish Government introduced a series of strong measures against the IRA: on 19 November Provisional Chief of Staff Sean MacStiofáin was arrested; three days later a draconian amendment to the Offences Against the State Act was introduced, which was passed in December, and in the same month many prominent members of Provisional Sinn Fein/IRA were arrested, including

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65 'Oxford Union Society Debate on Irish Unity', *Eire — Ireland: Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs*, No. 854, 18 December 1972, p. 4, (hereafter cited as *Eire — Ireland*). On 8 March 1973, the poll was held throughout Northern Ireland. The result declared on 9 March 1973, was that 591,820 electors voted in favour of continuing Union, while 6,463 electors voted in favour of severing the link with Britain and joining the Republic of Ireland. In other words the Protestants voted overwhelmingly for the Union while the Catholics did not vote. See also Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, *Northern Ireland Border Poll 1973*, by R.J. Lawrence and S. Elliot, Cmnd. 5875 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1975).

66 ibid., p. 5.

67 This provided for the conviction of a suspect solely on the testimony of a police officer, i.e., his belief alone that a man was a member of an illegal organisation.
Ruairi O Bradaigh and Martin McGuinness. Yet this period had been prefaced — before the Munich meeting of Heath and Lynch — by a refusal on the part of the British Government, in the face of increasing activity by the IRA, to reconsider its decision not to introduce legislation which would proscribe the organisation in Britain and permit the arrest of its members.

What this suggests, and other evidence confirms, is that security — the third level of issues between Britain and Ireland — was not to be allowed to inhibit progress towards both Catholic rights and national unity. Thus although Border-road cratering was still an issue, its importance no longer held the proportions it had when a Unionist Government was in power at Stormont. Even demands for the withdrawal of the British Army were couched in terms calculated to minimise offence or even to suggest that they were formal rather than earnest demands.

The beginning of this attitude was apparent, if only just, in the last days of the previous period. And surprisingly, only five weeks after Bloody Sunday, they were apparent in relation to the British Army's presence in Northern Ireland. While in Washington, in March, at the time of the House Foreign Affairs sub-committee hearings on Northern Ireland, the Taoiseach criticised Senator Edward F. Kennedy's insistence upon an immediate and total withdrawal of British troops from the Province. Although Lynch advocated their immediate withdrawal from the Catholic areas, in a Northern Ireland context he went so far as

68 Then President of Provisional Sinn Fein.


71 See, for example, the brief exchange between Mr Bill Fox and the Minister for Foreign Affairs on this subject, Dáil Eireann, Parliamentary Debates, Official Report), vol.260, 13 June 1972, col.1325 (hereafter cited as Dáil Eireann, Official Report).

72 See Chapter 10, pp. 422-7; 435; and 440-1.
It required some period of time before the soldiers could be pulled out ... to dampen down and reconcile feelings in the two communities.\textsuperscript{73}

By the end of July, Dublin's acquiescence in the British military presence was extended, in part because of a resurgence in IRA activities and in part because of prior briefing of the Taoiseach by the British Ambassador,\textsuperscript{74} to include a tacit acceptance of Westminster's need to subdue the 'no go' areas of Belfast and Derry. Accordingly, 'Operation Motorman'\textsuperscript{75} attracted no formal protest by the Irish Government.\textsuperscript{76} Less than three months later, this attitude towards the British Army had further ameliorated to the point that the Taoiseach then expressed the desire that it should not be peremptorily withdrawn.

It is a very difficult situation for the [British Army] ... But I should greatly regret it, if the Army were to be pulled out. It would lead to very serious trouble. I don't think the British Government would want that to happen.\textsuperscript{77}

For Lynch and the Fianna Fáil Government which he led, the effort against the IRA had proven costly. In February 1973, hoping to take advantage of various economic and political upturns and also out of the need to ensure his Government of a Parliamentary majority, he called a General Election. And lost. He and Fianna Fáil were not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{74} Peck, \textit{Dublin from Downing Street}, pp. 147-8.
\item \textsuperscript{75} Undertaken in the early hours of 31 July 1972, and in which British security forces removed the barricades to these areas and then occupied them.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Ian McAllister, \textit{The Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party: Political Opposition in Divided Society} (London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1977), pp. 118-19, (hereafter cited as McAllister, SDLP).
\item \textsuperscript{77} \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 19 October 1972.
\end{itemize}
defeated on the basis of their Northern policies; indeed, as with the General Elections in Britain and in the Republic of Ireland throughout the decade under review, such issues were not central or even relevant to their outcome.

The new Government, a coalition of Fine Gael and Labour, was headed by Liam Cosgrave, the son of W.T. Cosgrave, a former Taoiseach who had imposed the death penalty upon various members of the IRA during his period in office. This hereditary distinction apart, Liam Cosgrave's succession as Taoiseach brought several prospective advantages to Anglo-Irish relations. As Patrick Keatinge observed, he

... was not inhibited by as many broody hawks among his backbenchers as Lynch had been, and his own party's background allowed him to take full credit for action against the IRA.78

In addition his Cabinet contained two leading appointments, Dr Garret Fitzgerald as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien as Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, both of whom were known for their conciliatory views on the Northern issue.79 These factors are sometimes held, as by Moody for example, to be the cause of the ensuing 'appreciable' improvement in Anglo-Irish relations.80 Such claims are to be accepted with caution. Although Anglo-Irish relations did improve throughout the early period of the National Coalition Government, an improvement was, as Kyle rightly observes,81 under way in


79 See their respective books on the issue: Garret Fitzgerald, Towards a New Ireland, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1973), and Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, (Frogmore, St. Albans, Herts: Panther, 1974). Both were published by different publishers in 1972. Since then Cruise O'Brien has published a further book which extends some of the themes of his earlier work, i.e. Herod: Reflections on Political Violence, (Hutchinson, 1978).

80 Moody, The Ulster Question, p. 93.

the last four months of the Lynch Government — in reflection of the measures previously outlined.

However, in three areas the Coalition's Northern policies were a distinct departure from its predecessor's, and contributed positively to the Republic's relations both with Britain and Northern Ireland. In the first instance, Fine Gael had from as early as September 1969, accepted that re-unification should depend on a majority vote in Northern Ireland. Second, the recently appointed Taoiseach had, in his first St. Patrick's Day message, clearly indicated that his Government's emphasis lay on reconciliation rather than unity. And third, the Coalition was less concerned to continue the role of 'second guarantor' of the rights of the Northern Catholic minority.

Aside from these Irish factors, Anglo-Irish relations were considerably assisted in March 1973 by the publication of the White Paper which contained the proposals for the future government of Northern Ireland. As such, it necessarily reflected a careful balancing of four principal concerns.

1. The long-neglected needs of the Catholic minority for justice and equality.

2. The determination of the Protestant majority to maintain the Union.

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82 Keatinge, Issues of Irish Foreign Policy, p. 247, note 85.
84 MacAllister, SDLP, p. 150.
85 Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals, Cmd. 5259 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1973), (also known as the 'White Paper' and hereafter cited as that or as Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals).
86 ibid., pp. 1-2.
87 ibid., pp. 5-6.
3. The overriding imperative of ending nearly four years of sectarian violence and bloodshed.88

4. The Irish Republic's concern for an 'Irish Dimension' in Northern Ireland's future.89

It contained suggestions, moreover, for the abolition of Stormont as a Westminster replica in miniature, and its replacement with a more modest provincial Assembly and an Executive of limited powers on which both communities would be represented.90 Insofar as the Republic of Ireland's long-term objective of national unity was concerned, this was provided for by the familiar prescription that it could be effected only 'on a basis of consent',91 and by the proposal to establish a Council of Ireland.92 This latter proposal may be attributed to both Prime Minister Heath's claim that 'full account' was to be taken of the Irish Government's views in framing the proposals in the White Paper,93 and that Paper's claim (repeated by Whitelaw)94 that

... virtually all the Northern Ireland political parties have envisaged some sort of scheme for institutional arrangements between North and South which many described as a 'Council of Ireland', although there were different concepts of such a Council, and in some cases an emphasis upon conditions which would have to be met before it could operate successfully.95

On balance, it appeared to deserve the bouquet bestowed by a generous trans-Atlantic observer.

88 ibid., pp. 6-7.
89 ibid., pp. 29-30.
90 ibid., pp. 9-23.
91 ibid., p. 5.
92 ibid., pp. 29-30.
95 Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals, p. 29.
In the White Paper, Prime Minister Heath and Mr Whitelaw have clearly gone about as far to right old wrongs and ensure equality in Ulster as the feelings of their own British Conservative party and the temper of a million Ulster Protestants would allow. This is to say it neither met fully with the ultimate aspirations of the Ulster Unionists nor with those of the Irish Government. Cosgrave, foreshadowing what was to be a substantial item for negotiation later in 1973, saw the need for the Council to be an instrument of reconciliation, and was concerned that it 'should contain within itself the seeds of evolution'. But these, as he took care to emphasise for the benefit of the Unionists (and to change his metaphor), were to be seen not 'as a Trojan horse', but within the general 'basis for hope' which the White Paper offered. As he explained it in June 1973

If a broad and genuine consensus transcending community differences could now emerge as a basis for definitive settlement, I for one would welcome it. But such a broad consensus seems unlikely at present. So it is necessary to work towards it by seeking to promote reconciliation as the essential preliminary basis for a settlement. This is more likely to be a gradual process rather than a single event. The great need therefore is for political institutions that will favour and encourage this process.

Thus it was only conditionally true to claim, as Cosgrave did claim, that his Government was prepared to enter into talks with the proposed Northern Ireland Executive 'without pre-conditions'.

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98 ibid., col. 580.
99 ibid., cols. 581-2.
100 Northern Ireland: Text of a speech given by an Taoiseach Mr Liam Cosgrave T.D., on 21st June, 1973 (Dublin: Government Information Services, n.d.).
101 ibid.
That these talks took place at all testifies to the determination of Edward Heath to reach some form of long-term settlement in Northern Ireland. Although he has so far failed to attract either biographer or hagiographer and although he has so far declined to produce his own account of his premiership, it is difficult not to view many of the developments in Britain's relations with the two divisions of Ireland, between 1972 and early 1974, as expressing the idiosyncratic Heath rather than (say) the less definable 'personality' of his Cabinet. But again, it must be stated, and with no intention of diminishing his endeavours, that they appear not to have sprung from any great affection for the Irish or even sympathy with their aspirations, be they nationalist or unionist. Indeed from one knowledgeable Irish observer Heath earned the title 'the world's most insensitive politician' for commencing a St. Patrick's night address in London by saying, 'I know a great deal about the Irish. After all, my housekeeper is one'. Yet it was his determination which frequently transcended any imputed insensitivity and characterised the close of the first period and the beginning of the second. As Sir John Peck noted:

The battle of the British Government to join the Common Market, which was in large measure a personal battle of Mr Heath's, had not yet been finally won, and crucial votes in the House of Commons were still to come. I believed then, and I believe now [1978], that the decision of the Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party to suspend Stormont the fifty-year old instrument of Unionist domination, before the battle of Europe was won was one of the most courageous and honest political acts of the century.103

Such evidence as that cited may, of course, justify very little by way of conclusion. Nevertheless it is here suggested that an understanding of events throughout the last two years of the Conservative Government is more easily facilitated by reference to the political personality of Prime Minister Edward Heath. In particular, it is


103 Peck, Dublin from Downing Street, p. 145.
suggested that Heath, while having neither a deep understanding of Irish history, nor a sympathy for the aspirations to unity of the Irish, was disposed to effect a radical transformation in Ireland so as to be rid of a problem on the periphery which was deflecting Britain's attention from issues which were central. And towards this he was prepared to allocate much valued political talent and expend considerable energy.

A notable manifestation of this attitude occurred — indeed, was required — in September 1973 with Heath's visit to the Republic of Ireland. As implied, it was more than a friendly and relatively inconsequential diplomatic exchange. In fact it was necessitated, from a British perspective, by a concern with the intransigence of Ulster's political parties, IRA operations in Britain, and differences with the Irish Government over the proposed Council of Ireland. Furthermore, Ireland's relations with Britain had become unsettled because of a reactivation of Border-area incidents and evidence which at least suggested the existence of British espionage operations in the Republic.

The first mentioned of these concerns — intransigence of political parties in Ulster — had been the cause of Heath's visit to the Province in late August. With the failure of the first Assembly meeting in July — mainly due to extremist opposition by the Rev. Ian Paisley and William Craig — the Prime Minister gave notice, in characteristically blunt fashion, that such an impasse could not be tolerated for very much longer. Ulster's leaders, he prescribed, should 'thrash out their differences and get on with it'. He went on to suggest that while attacks on Britain would not shift British policy, the failure of Ulster's political leaders, especially the moderates, to come to terms, might well try the patience of the British public.

To emphasise this point Heath announced his impending visit to

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104 Known as 'The Heat visit' by those responsible for the heavy security coverage which was deployed at the time.


106 ibid., pp. 1 and 2; and *The Times*, 29 August 1973, pp. 1 and 2.
Dublin within days of the Belfast meeting. In becoming the first British Prime Minister to officially visit the Republic, Heath also transmitted an unmistakable message beyond the Border that his Government's efforts to resolve the problems of Northern Ireland would not be thwarted.

At Baldonnel the principal matter for discussion was the Council of Ireland. Although the language of the joint statement put an unruffled surface on the evidently friendly but firm talks it blurred what was a major difference between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach.

In the preparatory studies for the talks the Irish Government proposed the creation of the Council of Ireland simultaneously with the creation of the new Executive. Indeed, Dublin suggested that the Social Democratic and Labour Party in Northern Ireland would find this an enticement to move towards participation in the Executive. Heath, however, resisted this timetable while in no way deprecating the concept of a Council:

Our view is that what the parties in Northern Ireland ought to do is to discuss these matters together — those who are going to form the Executive — and decide what they want to see in the Council of Ireland. They will then be able to have discussions with the two governments. The parties in Northern Ireland must work out the framework in which they are going to operate.

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108 Clement Attlee, as Prime Minister, had trade talks in Dublin during a holiday he spent in Ireland, but this was in the period of the Irish Free State.
109 The talks took place in the Irish Air Corps Officers' Mess at Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel, some ten miles from Dublin.
110 The text of the statement is reported in the Times, 18 September 1973, p. 1.
113 ibid.
We as a government are committed to the proposal for a Council of Ireland with the government here in Dublin ... 114

That is, despite a common commitment of intent, Heath's view fundamentally opposed Cosgrave's who, at a press conference after the discussions, stated

I have explained that in our view, in order to carry conviction on all sides, it was essential to proceed at the same time with both proposals.115

Given such a divergence in views it was understandable that the Council issue dominated, and perhaps accounted for, the unexpectedly long session of talks 116 at the expense of immediate security matters. But, as pressing as these other matters were, they appear not to have been accorded the attention which they would otherwise have received.117 Nevertheless the occasion did serve to bury several issues in the security area which had resulted in increasing dissatisfaction between the two Governments, particularly on the Irish side.

For Heath, whose country, in August and September 1973, was the target of the Provisional IRA's 'English campaign',118 the meeting yielded little beyond the understanding and vague promise recorded in the joint statement: 'Means of containing and eliminating violence in Northern Ireland, irrespective of its source, were discussed.'119

114 ibid., p. 2.
115 ibid.
116 The talks were originally scheduled for five hours but took more than nine.
117 Accordingly Mr Brian Faulkner, leader of the Unionist Party in the Northern Ireland Assembly described the talks as 'disappointing' because they did not deal, inter alia, with the matter of extradition of fugitive terrorists. Times, 18 September 1973, p. 2.
118 For brief accounts thereof see Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army, pp. 399-400; and the New York Times, 2 September 1973.
Foremost among the actions for which the Irish Government required explanations, if not expiation, were two separate cases involving Englishmen who claimed to be working for British intelligence in the perpetration of their criminal activities. Known as the Wyman and Littlejohn brothers' affairs, respectively, they resulted in convictions before the Special Criminal Court in Dublin — in the former, of trying to obtain official information, and in the latter of armed robbery. In the Wyman case the accused is reported as having claimed to be a British agent, while the Littlejohns consistently claimed they were working for the British Ministry of Defence, in support of which a body of circumstantial evidence was produced. According to their testimony they were recruited by British military intelligence to infiltrate the IRA; their activities were controlled by the Ministry of Defence; and their task was to foment public and official opinion in Ireland against the IRA — hence the bank raid.

The difficulty in accepting such claims against the strenuous denials of the British Government that they had in any way condoned a bank robbery is that the Littlejohns' testimony is a melange of the factual, the plausible, and the improbable. For example, it was admitted by the British Government that the Defence Secretary, Lord Carrington, had through the mediation of Lady Onslow, received an offer

120 'Separate' inasmuch as they relate to two distinct incidents but reports of the Littlejohns' trial indicate that Wyman may possibly have been in communication with them.
122 Unfortunately for scholarly research, Wyman's trial was held 'in camera' but the claim to which this note refers is widely accepted. *Daily Telegraph*, 14 February 1973.
of IRA arms information which would be forthcoming only at a meeting between Kenneth Littlejohn and a Government Minister. It was also admitted that Lord Carrington acted upon this and arranged for the Junior Minister of the Army, Mr Geoffrey Johnson-Smith, to meet with Littlejohn. However, because the Wyman case was heard 'in camera', and because the greater part of the Littlejohn brothers' extradition proceedings in London were also heard in secret, it is unlikely that a full and reliable account of either will be available for some time. Nevertheless, as these incidents occurred at a time when the British Government was concerned about Czech and Russian arms reaching the IRA, when it was also (in 1972) requesting that the Irish Government take more effective action against the Provisionals, and when the incidence of raids had increased dramatically in the Republic, it was difficult to allay the suspicion, faint or otherwise, that the Littlejohn's attempted heist of £67,000 could have been officially inspired.

A variation on the intrusion of Bond culture into Anglo-Irish relations was also evident in the activities of the British Army in the Border areas. On 25 May 1973, a number of armed British soldiers, some of whom were in civilian dress and travelling in an unmarked 'civilian' van, were apprehended by the Garda Siochana after spending some time in the Republic, on entering Clones, Co. Monaghan, from a

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127 ibid.
128 ibid.
129 This situation was further complicated by developments within the Republic of Ireland. In reply to a call from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Lynch, for the Taoiseach to demand a full disclosure from the British Government, the Coalition publicly revealed, from inherited files, that Lynch, as Taoiseach, had been told of the Littlejohn's connection with the British Government in the early stages of the affair. *Times*, 26 January 1974.
southerly direction. Accordingly, the explanation that they were lost was found by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to be 'less than satisfactory from any point of view'.

In part, therefore, Heath's visit to Ireland in September 1973 was required by the British Army's understandable insensitivity to the nuances of the Irish Dimension. (Conversely, it may have been thought, albeit mistakenly, that the increasingly hard line taken with the Provisionals implied a tacit understanding that certain liberties could be taken on the Border.) Thus there persisted in Dáil Eireann, calls for the Foreign Minister to take the Irish Government's views before the British Government on not just the outstanding events as outlined in the foregoing pages, but also on such matters as the behaviour of the British Army in the Six Counties, the living conditions and eventual release of internees in the North, and the proposed use of CR Gas by Northern security forces.

That Heath, by his historic visit was able to 'bury' these concerns in the interests of Anglo-Irish relations may be regarded as a mainly negative achievement. It required, by this view, only that the Irish Government did not pursue them at any, or too great a length. But this would be to understate the positive benefits to Anglo-Irish relations

131 They were released from custody the same day after being detained for explanations. Dáil Eireann, Official Report, vol. 266, 13 June 1973, cols. 307-10; and ibid., 14 June 1973, cols. 583-94.

132 ibid. col. 592.


136 Chemical name dibenoxazepine: a water-soluble gas with intense lachrymatory and skin irritant properties.

which it effectively produced. Given the state of antipathy with which the British public increasingly regarded Ireland, it served to counter any incipient hostility which may have existed towards the Irish community in Britain — who were in the terms of the Minister for Foreign Affairs 'a hostage community'.

Finally, and with a mind to the excluding sections of the Downing Street Declaration and the acrimonious terms of the Lynch-Heath exchange following internment, the British Prime Minister's visit was notable as much for the items on the agenda as for the substance thereto. As Keith Kyle noted:

The fact that such matters would come before British and Irish Prime Ministers ... shows what the suspension of Stormont, the fight against terrorism, and the joint entry of Britain and Ireland into the EEC, have between them done to old notions of what is domestic policy and what is not.

The contrast between previous positions — both British and Irish — was even sharper in December 1973 when a delegation from the two Governments met with those parties from Northern Ireland which had agreed to serve in the first power-sharing executive at the Civil Service College, Sunningdale Park, in Berkshire. The main topics discussed at the conference were the financing of the Executive; the functions of the Council of Ireland; policing; law enforcement; and the status of Northern Ireland. Of these the Council, the status of

138 Conservatively estimated, after 1966 census, at over one million, of whom three-quarters were from the Irish Republic, Kevin O'Connor, The Irish in Britain (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1974), p. 152.

139 Interview with Dr Garret Fitzgerald, former Minister for Foreign Affairs (1973-77) and now Leader of Fine Gael, 14 February 1978.


141 For accounts of the politics of this development see Paddy Devlin, The Fall of the Northern Ireland Executive, (Northern Ireland: by the author, 39 Greenane, Shaw's road, Belfast 11, 1975), pp. 40-51; (hereafter cited as Devlin, The Fall of the Northern Ireland Executive); and MacAllister, SDLP, pp. 128-30.

142 MacAllister, SDLP, p. 131.
Northern Ireland, and law enforcement assumed more significance than the two remaining items.

After four days of negotiations, a long and detailed communique was produced which proposed that a Council of Ireland would be established, and that the Republic of Ireland would recognise the constitutional position of Northern Ireland and would take action against fugitive offenders. In effect the second and third items were the price to be paid by the Republic for the first, which provided for a two tier structure with both executive and harmonising functions in such areas as agriculture, electricity, tourism and transport, but also with some competence in human rights and policing.

Of these the solemn declaration 'that there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in that status' was a significant departure from previous Irish Government policies. But it was accompanied by an advance, from previous and passive British Government attitudes towards unity, to one in which it now promised to 'support' the wish of any future majority in the North to 'become part of a united Ireland.'

As between the parties present at Sunningdale the agreement was notable on two levels. First, it reflected, as had recent developments, the influence and personality of the British Prime Minister, Heath. By one account

Heath was the iron chairman — occupying the rooms which commanded the central well where the lobbying was done, closing the bar to remove distraction during the final
all-night sitting. His aim was to compel a settlement, not to represent British interest.147

And it should be noted that every reason existed for him to so 'compel a settlement'. Quite apart from British impatience and Irish pressure for one to be effected, the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 required that, unless a power-sharing Executive was in operation by March 1974, the Assembly was to be dissolved and direct rule resumed.148

Second, this 'most ambitious attempt to date to place the issue of Irish unity on a less controversial footing',149 particularly the section(s) relating to the Council of Ireland, was marked by what Kyle described as 'an agreeable whiff of ambiguity'.150 Indeed, in this regard, the Sunningdale Communique of 9 December 1973 presents an interesting comparison with the Anglo-Irish treaty of 6 December 1921. Patrick O'Farrell wrote of the earlier settlement

The Treaty was, in fact, all things to all men. Those who supported it in the Dail debates did so because they contended that it recognised the substance of Ireland's national independence: those who opposed it in the House of Commons did so for the same reason. Those who supported the Treaty in the Commons contended that its qualifications ... were quite sufficient to keep Ireland subject to all necessary British control — which were precisely the grounds on which its Dail opponents rejected it. Or to put it with blunt simplicity: the anti-Treaty republicans fought the Irish Civil War because they held the same interpretation of the Treaty as did the British government.151


148  Devlin, The Fall of the Northern Ireland Executive, p. 42; and MacAllister, SDLP, p. 129.

149  Keatinge, Issues of Irish Foreign Policy, p. 121.

150  Kyle, 'Sunningdale and after', p. 441.

It is here contended that, with due allowance being made for the differences in substantive intent between the Treaty and the Communique, and for a tolerable level of shared objectives between the SDLP and the Irish Government on the one hand, and between the Unionists and the British Government on the other, O'Farrell's description was generally applicable to 1973, as MacAllister confirmed:

The scope and detail of the Sunningdale Agreement were such that both Unionists and SDLP could return to their supporters and justifiably claim that they had achieved a compromise especially favourable to their own side. The SDLP could claim that they had achieved a strong Council of Ireland and rather than devalue the idea of reunification they had helped to create the institution that could bring it about. The Unionists could similarly maintain that the Council was merely a body fostering mutual aid and in return for accepting this they had extracted from the Republic a 'de jure' recognition of the province's constitutional status plus action to bring fugitive offenders to justice.152

Thus ultimately he concurred with Michael Farrell:

... the success of the Agreement depended on neither side listening to what their allies were saying about it.153

And ultimately of course, that asked too much of inattentiveness. Those who were opposed to the Agreement had interpreted it with some perception, as the Unionist M.P. for Amargh, John McClusker, indicated in his reply to the reproach that he and his fellow candidates had, during the February 1974 General Election campaign, frightened their electors with the prospect of a united Ireland 'tomorrow'.

I told them that it was more subtle than that [putting Ulster into a united Ireland tomorrow] and that it was more likely to put their children into a United Ireland in 25 or 30 years time. I said that the Sunningdale agreement was designed not to kick us out of the United Kingdom but to change our attitudes, to swing our gaze slowly towards Dublin and by slow process to change the

152 MacAllister, SDLP, p. 132.
attitude of the Loyalist people so that one day they might believe the myth of Irish unity which so bedevils many people in Northern Ireland. I said that the Sunningdale agreement was an insidious way of bringing our people eventually to agreeing that it was a solution.  

Ironically, the achievement of the agreement at Sunningdale heralded a decrease in the British sense of engagement in Ireland. In a sense Heath destroyed his own achievements: he had been the first Prime Minister since Lloyd George to pay serious attention to Northern Ireland, but in response to a miners' strike he called a General Election for February 1974. He was voted out of office, to be replaced by Harold Wilson's third Labour Government. In a United Kingdom context, Sunningdale was never an issue; in Northern Ireland it inevitably was. Candidates opposed to it won eleven out of the twelve Northern Irish seats. There existed, therefore, an arguably moral basis upon which disgruntled Protestants could oppose the power-sharing Executive. They did so with a weapon not used previously in Northern Ireland — a general strike.

This action, mounted in May 1974 by an amalgam of hardline 'loyalist' (extreme Unionists) groups called the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) became 'one of the pivotal events in Irish History in the 20th Century'. Moreover, it has with considerable accuracy been described as the 'strike which broke the British in Ulster'.

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155 Donal Barrington, 'After Sunningdale?', Administration (Dublin), 24, (Summer 1976): 241, (hereafter cited as Barrington, 'After Sunningdale?').

156 Sub-title of Robert Fisk's book: i.e. The Point of No Return: The Strike Which Broke the British in Ulster, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1975), (hereafter cited as Fisk, The Point of No Return). As considerable use will be made of this work in the succeeding pages of this chapter, it is relevant to note that both of the other two principal secondary sources used cite it approvingly. Barrington ('After Sunningdale?', p. 240), with obvious approbation, refers to it as a 'remarkable book', and MacAllister (SDLP, p. 143), describes it as 'an authoritative account'. 
Initially, there appeared no compelling reason for this to have been the case. In April Prime Minister Harold Wilson had journeyed to Belfast to meet with the Executive's Chief Minister, Brian Faulkner, to assure him that the Labour Government stood by the Sunningdale Agreement and to state his revised position on meetings with groups such as the Provisional IRA.

What I want to make clear is ... the utter determination of Her Majesty's Government that violence will not succeed. To use the phrase which has now been interwoven into all discussions about Northern Ireland, the men of violence are not going to bomb their way to the conference table. Nor must they be allowed to bomb Northern Ireland into the abyss. The work of the security forces to counter violence, from whatever quarter will continue. There will be no let-up.  

At this press conference he gave a warning of the consequences of failure to those who would obstruct the working of the Executive. In this event, he said,  

... there would be little hope that we could once again reconstruct a fresh political initiative.  

Taxed by journalists on that comment he enlarged upon it as follows  

You would have to introduce direct rule, or maybe some other variation of direct rule, but no one believes direct rule is a way forward. Direct rule in political terms is a dead end ... It would need legislation - it would be temporary, with no light at the end of the tunnel.  

Within the space of six weeks this comment was seen to be a prophecy. On 15 May 1974, following the decision of the Assembly to support the Sunningdale Agreement, the UWC began their strike which resulted in the collapse of the Executive on 28 May.

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158 ibid.
159 ibid.
This Agreement, which represented the culmination of over four years of diplomatic and political endeavour, and which the two sovereign parties to it intended registering at the United Nations, collapsed mainly for reasons which had nothing to do with Anglo-Irish relations. The UWC strike was only a single, immediate cause of this effect of which there were a further ten proximate causes. Six of these belong outside the scope of this work and are mentioned only in passing. They included, first, the fact that the situation in Northern Ireland was in competition with several 'other crises' for the British Government's attention in 1974. Second, there were tensions within the Executive, which served to weaken it, regarding the SDLP's concern with policing and the continuance of internment. The third and fourth were consequences of the British General Election of 28 February 1974 — because it 'left the country effectively without a government, and thus provided an opportunity, which the Northern Irish dissidents could not resist, to sabotage the Sunningdale Agreements', and because it provided these elements with a 'democratic' basis for their activities.

A fifth resided with the IRA, as Fisk noted

With some vision, Liam Cosgrave, the Republic's Prime Minister, blamed the Provisional IRA for the downfall of the executive, thus questioning whether the UWC could ever have been created without the watershed of violence which had preceded it.

160 According to Harold Wilson these other crises were: (1) the British economy; (2) re-negotiation of Britain's membership of the European Economic Community; (3) problems of relations with Chile and South Africa; (4) conflict and crisis in Cyprus; and (5) dangers of hostilities with Turkey — see Harold Wilson, Final Term: The Labour Government, 1974-1976 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, and Michael Joseph, 1979), pp. 16 and 19-20.

161 MacAllister, SDLP, pp. 137-40. MacAllister identifies two further areas of tension within the Executive relating to the Republic of Ireland Government's inability to fulfil its obligations under Sunningdale, but these are treated separately in the following pages.

162 Peck, Dublin from Downing Street, pp. 162-3.

163 Fisk, The Point of No Return, p. 227.
Finally, the sixth of these non-Anglo-Irish reasons, and one perhaps more commonly perceived in Dublin than elsewhere, was found in Northern Ireland Secretary Merlyn Rees' vacillation and his reluctance to stand up to the Army.\textsuperscript{164} This accorded with the general theme of Fisk's book, as summarised by Barrington, that

\begin{quote}
... the Government was uneasy and felt it could not rely on the Army; the Army distrusted the RUC while the BBC gave the striker extraordinary publicity and felt entitled to remain neutral as between the Government and a strike which everyone knew to be illegal and which was, in Westminster terms, seditious.\textsuperscript{165}
\end{quote}

But, the essentially domestic nature of this cause notwithstanding, it became an issue in Anglo-Irish relations. In part this resulted from what Fisk terms, the Dublin Cabinet's 'fundamentally nationalist interpretation of events' which was, in turn, derived from a lack of reliable first-hand information reaching it from Belfast.\textsuperscript{166} Nevertheless, the Irish Cabinet was not inhibited from making its position known — unofficially by telephone and officially through the British Ambassador\textsuperscript{167} — although it could not assume other than a passive stance for fear of exacerbating an already critical situation in the North.\textsuperscript{168} Thus, privately, the British Government were still left in no doubt as to the nature of Irish views.

The Taoiseach and other members of the Cabinet saw Sir John Galsworthy,\textsuperscript{169} the British Ambassador in Dublin, and told him that Britain was largely responsible for the crisis in Belfast. They had become incensed not so much by the developing strike but by the way in which Britain, after harrying the Irish Cabinet for stricter measures to overcome terrorism, was now failing to maintain order in the six counties of the North ...

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{164} ibid., p. 187. Paddy Devlin, a member of the Executive also claims that 'by a series of breath-taking blunders and unprecedented bungling, Rees ensured the success of the stoppage for the UWC'. Devlin, \textit{The Fall of the Northern Ireland Executive}, p. 89.
\item\textsuperscript{165} Barrington, 'After Sunningdale', p. 240.
\item\textsuperscript{166} Fisk, \textit{The Point of No Return}, pp. 187-8.
\item\textsuperscript{167} Sir Arthur Galsworthy, who succeeded Sir John Peck in February 1973.
\item\textsuperscript{168} Fisk, \textit{The Point of No Return}, p. 186.
\item\textsuperscript{169} Fisk identifies him as John, Peck as Arthur.
\end{footnotes}
viewed from Dublin, the British lack of action smacked of that old spectral insurrection at the Curragh ... 170

There was, therefore, little apparent awareness in Dublin that the Irish Government may have, by commission or omission, been in some way, if not principally, responsible for the failure of Sunningdale. Yet in this regard there were four reasons which supported such a conclusion.

In the first instance Cosgrave is reported to have insisted that the loyalists — of the like of the Rev. Ian Paisley and Mr William Craig — be excluded from Sunningdale on the grounds that their presence would be disruptive. 171 Somewhat disingenuously, this was finessed by the recently appointed Northern Ireland Secretary, Francis Pym, 172 who claimed that since the loyalists would not join the Executive, they could not attend Sunningdale. Although Cosgrave's fears may well have been realised — the loyalists had obstructed the Assembly's legislative functions 173— it was also true that they were, to paraphrase the Constitutional Proposals, 'the elected representatives of Northern Ireland opinion', 174 and entitled to be there as much as (say) Faulkner or Fitt. 175 Indeed the British Government recognised this and eventually issued an invitation to the loyalist parties to attend Sunningdale. However, as MacAllister observes, the method of issuing the invitation — while Paisley was

170 Fisk, *The Point of No Return*, pp. 186-7. Cosgrave has subsequently denied Fisk's claim (Interview with the writer, Dublin, 17 September 1979), but Fisk remains adamant that, at the inter-government official level, at least, his account is accurate (Interview with the writer, Dublin, 19 September 1979).

171 Fisk, *The Point of No Return*, p. 43.

172 In December 1973, before Sunningdale, Pym was appointed to succeed Whitelaw — who was appointed Secretary of Employment.

173 MacAllister, *SDLP*, p. 129.

174 *Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals*, p. 10.

175 Fisk, *The Point of No Return*, p. 43.
speaking at the dispatch box – ensured its refusal. Thus the Sunningdale conference was conducted in the absence of those parties in Northern Ireland whose presence may have helped to allay suspicions that the meeting was essentially a betrayal of traditional Unionist interests.

The second area of responsibility is more one of a joint failure. With regard to the Republic of Ireland it concerned a reluctance to modify certain domestic political and constitutional arrangements, as argued by Barrington.

For Sunningdale to have succeeded, it was necessary to convince the overwhelming mass of the people, both North and South, that it represented a new departure in the history of the people of the island. This required some overt symbolical political act from the people of the South to show their determination to create new institutions and a new system of government in Ireland. ... To do that, nothing less than a new Constitution, approved by the people in a Referendum, was required in the Republic.

And, of course, a similar claim may be made with regard to the North.

Another fundamental mistake made at Sunningdale was to assume that decisions as important to people as those taken there could safely be taken by Governments ... without express popular endorsement.

In the Republic this failure lead to a situation in which 'Government and Opposition appeared to be manoeuvering for position, each prepared to take credit for Sunningdale if it succeeded, but fearful of the risks involved in consulting the people', while in the North it meant that

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177 Barrington, 'After Sunningdale?', p. 237.
178 ibid., pp. 235-6.
179 ibid., p. 237.
180 ibid., p. 236.
... an opportunity to educate the people of Northern Ireland and of all Ireland about the implications of the Sunningdale Agreement was missed. As a result ... it was possible for the Leaders of the Loyalist Coalition to suggest that Sunningdale was something which the British Government was attempting, with the connivance of Dublin, to impose upon the people of Northern Ireland.181

The third and fourth reasons which may be adduced for the failure of Sunningdale arose out of the terms of the Agreement itself. Given the resistance to the timing of a Council of Ireland, but the Agreement's provisions to establish one, it may be logically concluded that Cosgrave had fought hard for it. If he was not then to damage Faulkner's credibility (beyond that which Faulkner had himself effected by his Executive activities) it was essential that the Irish Government fulfil, 'in the letter and spirit',182 the obligations contracted at Sunningdale.183 But its inability to satisfy the expectations engendered concerning law enforcement, and the recognition of the status of Northern Ireland, not only undermined the Agreement, but also contributed to rifts within the Executive.184

A recurring and dominant aspect of Britain's relations with the Republic of Ireland throughout the periods under review to date had been its frequent requests for close co-operation in the matter of apprehending and prosecuting those defined as 'fugitive offenders'.

181 ibid., p. 237.
182 Phrase taken from Faulkner's amendment in support of the Agreement, before the Assembly on 14 May 1974.
183 Curiously, some years later, Cosgrave offered the opinion that Sunningdale failed not because it attempted 'too much', but because it was either 'too early or too late'. Interview with Mr Liam Cosgrave, T.D., 8 June 1978. His assessment is a contrast to that of his successor (as Leader of Fine Gael), Dr Garret Fitzgerald, who wrote that, 'in hindsight', Sunningdale failed because it 'attempted too much too soon, and on too narrow a base, so far as Northern unionism was concerned' (Garret Fitzgerald, 'Five Years of British Muddle', London Sunday Times, 18 December 1977).
184 McAllister, _SDLP_, pp. 140-2.
The problem, however, was that the Irish Constitution contained no provision for extradition if the offence in question was political. Hence, there was a need to resolve

... how most effectively, from a legal point of view, to bring to trial persons alleged to have committed crimes of violence, however motivated, in any part of Ireland irrespective of the part of Ireland in which they are located.185

To this end an eight-man Law Enforcement Commission was established consisting of British, Northern Irish, and Republic of Ireland representatives. In essence they were required to solve a problem concerning a 'limited, though very dangerous, class of offender', who, if apprehended in one jurisdiction in Ireland for offences alleged to have been committed in the other, could claim that the offences for which it was sought to charge them were political offences, or connected with political offences.186

The Report was published on the afternoon of Thursday 23 May 1974, by which time the strike had almost run its course. Mainly because of the Republic of Ireland's opposition to extradition, the Commission recommended the setting-up of extra-territorial courts to try fugitive offenders. Despite the Irish Government's acceptance of this main recommendation187 it found no favour with the British Government, which had hoped that Dublin would support extradition.188


186 ibid., other fugitive accused persons were covered by existing extradition legislation.


188 Fisk, Point of No Return, p. 186. By Cosgrave's account, this was a disappointment entirely of the British Government's own making. According to him, the British were never encouraged to think that an agreement on extradition would be forthcoming; further, that they used this issue periodically to berate the Irish Government even though they fully understood the difficulties which the latter faced (Interview with the writer, Dublin, 17 September 1979).
But there were, as Barrington outlined, sound political objections in Dublin to what London was asking.

The RUC and the British Army [were] being charged by the Government of the Republic before an International Court with the torture of political prisoners. Since then, there [had] been major reforms in the RUC, and vast improvements in the quality of British administration in Northern Ireland. These [were] not ... sufficient either to attract the support of the minority population in Northern Ireland, or to make it politically possible for any Government in the South to sanction the automatic extradition of Irish citizens from South to North.189

Moreover, as Cosgrave indicated to Galsworthy (and possibly Wilson) on 23 May, the British Government's failure to act decisively against the UWC made the Law Enforcement Commission's Report irrelevant.190

There was, however, an element of misleading self-justification in the Taoiseach's assessment inasmuch as it implied that the British Government's inactivity against the UWC was sufficient cause not to support extradition. Given that the Report was completed well before the strike took place,191 it cannot be accepted that British inaction in May could have in any way influenced the Commission's deliberations, nor can it be accepted that the Report in any way indicated or presaged more than an incremental advance in understanding between the Republic and both Northern Ireland and Britain on the issue of security.

The matter of the Republic's recognition of the position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom fared even worse than that of law enforcement. This was, initially, a direct result of the territorial claim contained in Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution. In the absence of a referendum, the leader of Aontacht Éireann, Kevin Boland, brought suit to challenge the legality of the declaration made by Cosgrave at Sunningdale. Although the Irish Government successfully

189 Barrington, 'After Sunningdale', p. 249.
190 Fisk, The Point of No Return, pp. 186-7.
defended its actions, the Court's verdict was of little satisfaction to those parties interested in the full implementation of the Agreement. The Irish Government had argued that the declaration at Sunningdale

... did not acknowledge that a portion of Ireland, therein described as "Northern Ireland", is part of the United Kingdom... \footnote{192}

And the Supreme Court found that the Sunningdale declarations '... were clearly distinct and in no sense an agreement on fact or principle'. \footnote{193} Cosgrave's recourse to the device that the Republic recognised the de facto position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom was, therefore, not an acceptable substitution. As MacAllister noted,

... he [Cosgrave] appeared to put one interpretation on the declaration when addressing Unionists and another when faced with litigation. \footnote{194}

Under the weight of all these burdens, then, Sunningdale, or rather the most tangible expression of its hopes — the Executive — collapsed on 28 May 1974.

It is difficult, however, to attribute a significant portion of the blame for this to any alleged failures of Anglo-Irish relations or, for the matter of that, to any alleged faults of commission or omission by the Irish Government. The latter judgment is, of course, contrary to that of Barrington's, who concluded that 'a major portion of the blame for the failure of Sunningdale must rest with the South' \footnote{195} (emphasis added).

The Sunningdale Agreement did not fail because the loyalist groups were not represented at the Conference. Granted, they should

\footnote{192} Irish Times, 15 March 1974, p. 8.  
\footnote{193} Irish Times, 2 March 1974, p. 15.  
\footnote{194} MacAllister, SDLP, p. 141.  
\footnote{195} Barrington, 'After Sunningdale?', p. 235.
have been there, but then it is difficult to imagine that such a document as the Sunningdale Agreement would have resulted, in anything like the same form as did result, if they had been present. Moreover, it cannot be accepted that Cosgrave's insistence on their absence was other than a fortuitous coincidence of view with that of the British Government. Furthermore, Pym's later invitation to Paisley not only indicated the limits of the Taoiseach's influence in the matter, but the British Government's lack of enthusiasm for their presence. Is not the logical conclusion to be drawn that Heath, in his determination to achieve a settlement, was ill-disposed towards including in any negotiations those who might justifiably be described as 'part of the problem' rather than 'part of the solution?' And even had the historic Agreement been reached in their presence, would they not still have conducted their subsequent opposition to it accordingly?

Similarly, it is difficult to accept that Sunningdale would have attracted wider support in Northern Ireland if the Republic was to have adopted a new Constitution. Although Paisley, in the course of an interview with the *Irish Times* and RTÉ in late 1971, suggested that such steps as Barrington outlined previously might cause Northern Protestants to look more favourably upon the Republic and a united Ireland,¹⁹⁶ this line of thinking appears not to have been adopted by Loyalists or mainstream Unionists in subsequent years. Indeed, if Fisk was correct, such measures were unlikely to impinge upon the political calculations of the Loyalists. As he noted, even the Irish Government's declaration that 'there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in that status' was 'largely forgotten' by them.¹⁹⁷

Finally, with the benefit which seven years remove affords, and a further view to the influence of the Law Enforcement Commission's Report upon the overall progress of the strike, Cosgrave's assessment

¹⁹⁶ *Sunday Times, Ulster*, pp. 307-08.
¹⁹⁷ Fisk, *The Point of No Return*, p. 43.
that it was irrelevant must be allowed as accurate. The causes of Sunningdale's failure which may be located within the realm of Anglo-Irish relations were not decisive. For example none, either contemporaneously or in the intervening years, has assumed the significance in this regard which is attributed to the failure of the British Army to act against the UWC in the first forty-eight hours of the strike. 198

In MacAllister's treatment of these factors he did not claim that Sunningdale failed because of them — rather that two of them (extradition and recognition) were among four causes of 'stress' and 'tension' in the Executive. 199 Thus, while his conclusion that they 'harmed the Republic's credibility', 200 is consistent with the arguments presented in the foregoing pages, Barrington's conclusion that a 'major portion of the blame ... must rest with the South' is not. Moreover, Barrington's judgment was internally inconsistent with his own argument: it assumed that the 'no surrender' — 'not an inch' cast of mind in Northern Ireland was amenable, in the short-term, to modification by developments in Dublin and London. Clearly they were not.

Where Barrington may have offered an insight into the Anglo-Irish components of the failure of Sunningdale was in his assessment of the assumptions which many in the Republic of Ireland held following Britain's 1972 initiatives:

[A] disastrous mistake made by Dublin politicians and political journalists was the suggestion made in the days before and after Sunningdale that the two Sovereign Governments in London and Dublin would sort out the Ulster situation. The Ulster Workers' Strike was to expose this kind of political arrogance for what it was. 201

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198 ibid., p. 72.
200 ibid., p. 141.
201 Barrington, 'After Sunningdale?', p. 237.
Surprisingly, Britain was not included in the above. Yet there was no evidence that would suggest that Britain was any less 'arrogant' than the Republic in its appreciation of what could be achieved in Northern Ireland. Indeed, Heath's dominant role at Sunningdale was probably the most blatant example of this failing (if failing it was) in the entire history of the Executive. It is argued here, therefore, that Barrington's accusation of 'political arrogance' could have been levelled equally against Britain as it was against Ireland. And there would have been justice in this. The decisions relating to Sunningdale were, very largely, Britain's and the Republic's; the immediate consequences, very largely, were Northern Ireland's.

In their joint enterprise there was more than a suggestion of an attempt, to paraphrase T.P. O'Connor's famous phrase of ninety years before, to govern one state through the popular — indeed, the vulgar — conceptions of another. Historically, this was a common enough charge against Britain's rule in Ireland; in 1972-74, it was a peculiar irony that the Republic of Ireland should have transgressed in such a way against the North.

While, this was a considerable mote on the Republic's claim to respect the 'other tradition', and one that raised uneasy questions about just how the North was and might be regarded by the Government in Dublin, among the factors which brought down the Executive it was of a low order. It might even be more precise to conclude that Anglo-Irish relations (and contemporary politics) in the Republic proved irrelevant to the outcomes of May 1974. In the period which preceded that time, probably the most productive with regard to the Ulster Question, they had proved sufficient only to establish the means by which a settlement might have been approached, but less than equal to the task of sustaining them.

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There is here a distinction to be drawn between the achievements in and of Anglo-Irish relations which preceded the UWC strike, and the outcomes of that action. In the conclusion expressed above, then, there is no attempt to diminish the former, but rather to provide a reminder of what their limits were in the face of that habit in Irish history for certain influences and accidents to have their way. Thus the remarkable change in British attitudes on such matters as the Irish Dimension, Council of Ireland, and Irish unity are to be set against the dominance of British factors – in some cases irrelevant British factors (e.g. the miners' strike) – which allowed the situation in Northern Ireland to take the course it did in 1974.

While one is aware that the manufacturing of historical analogues from disparate sets of material is an analytically debauching exercise, there seems to be a correspondence between events in Ireland in 1914 and events in Northern Ireland in 1974. In the former it was a case of the British Government being served warning, by way of the Curragh mutiny, that the British Army could not be relied upon to enforce Home Rule in Ulster; in the latter, a mutiny was absent but the lack of confidence that the military would move against the UWC strikers was certainly reported in the most authoritative account of the period. Similarly, in 1914, the outbreak of World War I and Britain's involvement therein effected the postponement of Home Rule (for the twenty-six counties), and in 1974 the British General Elections brought into train many of the conditions which contributed to the fall of the Executive. In both cases the Irish Question at issue was irrelevant and unrelated to the major intervening variable, the war and the election, respectively.

It would, however, be a gross pessimism to conclude that Anglo-Irish relations (and politics in the Republic) were, by their very nature, flawed with respect to the situation in Northern Ireland in 1972-74. Again, what has to be borne in mind is that the British Government was able to establish the parameters within which

i.e. Fisk, The Point of No Return.
international diplomacy and third-party domestic politics were likely to be effective. The fact that the British Government did not take any concerted action against the UWC strike in its early hours was a clear illustration of this. In terms of a general and historical principle, it was a demonstration of London's marked reluctance to confront Loyalist (or Unionist) intransigence.

Of course it was possible that, even had London acted contrary to this principle, the end result could have proven that the might of Westminster was insufficient to rule the Six Counties. According to a leading Ulster historian, Anthony Stewart, the patterns of behaviour which worked in the Province were unlikely to be changed or broken by the type of developments which this chapter examined:

Neither pressure from London, nor pressure from Dublin, can alter them. They are impervious to propaganda and to hostile criticism; since both must in the end come to terms with the reality of their existence. Nor will they be changed in essence by the economic, social and intellectual pressures of the contemporary world, as so many imagine. To say this is not to aver that the economic and constitutional situation of Northern Ireland will not change, or that its society will not change; it is, of course, changing continually, but it changes in accord with intrinsic laws, and not at the dictate of the makers of instant blueprints. The function of wise constitutions and just reforms is to help humanity to achieve a future that is better than the past, but if they are not to have the opposite effect they must take account of the grain, not cut against it.204

Yet, to accept Stewart's assessment, with its heavy reliance on precedent and extrapolation, or to interpret the material in this chapter in a manner consistent with it, would not, to this writer, be appropriate. Two reasons dictate an alternate judgment. The first is that neither precedent nor extrapolation are themselves wholly appropriate. The former comes close to a resignation of the will that insures against all risk, and to a self-fulfilling guarantee that the

failures of yesterday absolve those in the present from even making an attempt. Similarly, extrapolation is repellent not only because it conceals passivity with the illusion of movement, but also because, essentially, it seeks no more than to apply new co-efficients to old and discredited 'solutions'.

The second reason is that as a result of the failure of the British Government to exercise its jurisdiction – particularly with regard to the Loyalists – discussions of the relevance of Anglo-Irish relations, or of the irresistibility of patterns of behaviour in the North, are truncated. They terminate on a note of despair because the course of action with which they are concerned were pursued without a willingness to accept their consequences.

This abdication of (British) political will, therefore, confuses the image of Anglo-Irish relations in 1972-74: it lacks a continuity of relief against which it could be judged with more certainty. Thus, to conclude that Anglo-Irish relations were irrelevant to the outcomes of May 1974 is only to affirm that the Ulster Question is, in certain circumstances, an English question, and that judgments of a more final character are in this instance subordinate to that fact.

Stewart might have been absolutely correct when he wrote that Northern Ireland will change only 'in accord with its intrinsic laws', but in the absence of the British Government's testing of those laws, his statement tended towards an hypothesis. He did not exhaust the possibilities of such action. Which dictates, in logic at least, that the conclusion expressed in the paragraph above is more easily supported. That the question of Ulster should have been seen once more to devolve upon the British Government in the first instance was not a new or startling phenomenon. What was startling was the fact that, after so much effort and hope had been invested in an 'Irish' solution on both sides of St George's Channel, it should somehow inexorably return to a point close to which the parties began their negotiations. In all, an elaborate and melancholy tribute to the verity of scripture:
All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. 205

205 Ecclesiastes, I, 7. The relevance of this passage was first suggested by Stewart, who also cites it, but in connection with his own conclusions (The Narrow Ground, p. 185).
NARRATIVE, JUNE 1974 - JUNE 1977
The fall of the Northern Ireland Executive signalled both the failure of the British Government’s effort to devise a solution for Northern Ireland and a return to Direct Rule. The experience also encouraged ‘loyalist’ intransigence and fueled exasperation in London. Instead of offering further alternatives, the British Government proposed only a forum — a Constitutional Convention — through which the Northern Irish should design their own alternative. The July 1974 White Paper containing this proposal did, however, endorse power-sharing and the ‘Irish Dimension’ again. It also reserved to Westminster the power to decide whether the recommendations of the convention would be adopted.\(^1\) The proposals themselves were subsequently enacted as part of the Northern Ireland Act 1974.

In specific terms this Act provided for a Constitutional Convention of 78 members to be elected on a multi-member basis from the 12 (Westminster) parliamentary constituencies by the single transferable vote system of proportional representation

\[ \ldots \text{to consider what provision for the government of Northern Ireland is likely to command the most widespread acceptance among the community there.} \]

The Act also provided that the Convention should have an independent chairman and that it should produce a report (or reports) on its conclusions to the Secretary of State who would in turn lay it before Parliament.

In preparation for the May 1975 Convention election, the majority of Unionists re-united themselves as the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC). Aiming to win the maximum number of seats under the complex proportional representation system of balloting, they were able to negotiate among themselves the number and identity of candidates they would endorse in each constituency. Their campaign manifesto called for, inter alia, a twenty-one seat representation at Westminster

\(^1\) The Northern Ireland Constitution, Cmnd. 5675 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1974).
(on a par with Scotland and Wales), rejection of any 'artificial device' for giving any group more power than it won in elections, a government formed by the leader of a majority in the House, the return of security responsibilities to Stormont, and no imposed association with the Irish Republic. Faulkner remained outside this arrangement to form a new Unionist Party of Northern Ireland (UPNI), with little hope of success, to represent an intermediate alternative to Protestants.

Through a Provisional Sinn Fein (the political arm of the Provisional IRA) election boycott, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) was the dominant competitor for Catholic votes. Its platform stressed economic issues, and called for a strong Northern Ireland Assembly, an Executive in which both parts of the community would be full participants, and the recognition and acceptance of both an Irish dimension and a British dimension in Northern Ireland's affairs.

The UUUC strategy proved to be greatly successful: its candidates won a solid 47 seat bloc of the 78 Convention seats. The SDLP won 17, the Alliance won 8, Faulkner's UPNI won 5, and the Northern Ireland Labour Party took one. Those whose campaign manifesto placed them within negotiating distance of each other had, therefore, only 31 seats between them. With a solid majority of the seats and a platform that was uncompromisingly specific on the main issues, UUUC members had neither a need nor a desire to compromise. The Convention failed accordingly.

Despite wide areas of agreement between the SDLP and the UUUC (on such matters as the re-establishment of a devolved administration, greater participation by representatives of the minority community, and the introduction of a Bill of Rights), the Constitutional Convention failed because of the fundamental differences which were evident in their respective election manifestos. In effect it was only the formal and legitimate rejection of the Sunningdale Agreement which had been achieved by other means the year before.\(^2\)

The British Government's reaction to this impasse was to extend the deadline for the Convention report until May 1976. This similarly, and inevitably failed to achieve anything and the Convention was dissolved in March 1976 when it became clear that there was no prospect of agreement between the parties. Its conclusions took the form of a majority report which was unacceptable to Westminster in terms of the Northern Ireland Act of 1974, and minority reports with terms which were equally unacceptable to the UUUC.

After the final dissolution of the Constitutional Convention the British Government made no further formal attempts at a settlement in Northern Ireland. As a result of its experience it concluded that 'a period of constitutional stability was needed in which the Province's economic and security problems could be tackled.' Direct Rule was therefore, renewed in July 1976, and annually thereafter.

In the absence of initiatives from London the period July 1976-June 1977 was one without any major focus, although there were developments which appeared to offer some hope of amelioration in Northern Ireland. Foremost among these was the Peace Movement, founded in August 1976 by two women, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan. It was a mass movement which crossed sectarian divisions, as evidenced by the tens of thousands it attracted to demonstrations in both Protestant and Catholic areas. As might be expected in the circumstances it suffered from the very attributes which made it so appealing: it proposed no specific programme other than the repudiation of violence practiced by the extremists of both sides and a broadly expressed Christian concern for all. Yet it so tapped the well-springs of such a great number of people in Northern Ireland that the established political organisations, in varying degrees and for one reason or another, regarded it suspiciously. For all that the Peace Movement emerged as a spontaneous and genuine reaction to eight years of 'troubles' and the best hope that some sort of consensus was possible in the future.

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Similarly, the failure of the May 1977 strike called by the Reverend Ian Paisley's United Unionist Action Council (UUAC) provided further grounds for supposing that Ulster's extremists would not always have their way. Whereas in 1974 the Ulster Workers' Council strike had brought down the Executive, the UUAC's attempt to restore Stormont along its pre-1972 lines accomplished nothing. Worker support was lower, and British reaction swifter and more decisive than before. Not only was the strike broken but, for the time being, Paisley and the paramilitary groups which supported him were discredited.

On the other side of the paramilitary divide there was also evidence that the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) was becoming somewhat more isolated from the great majority of Catholic opinion. Externally, the flow of funds, north from the Republic and east from the United States appeared to indicate a falling away of support. Furthermore, in the Republic legislation was enacted in 1976 which contained the most stringent measures to combat the activities of terrorist groups hoping to use the 26 Counties as a base.

But hope was also to be seen in other areas as well. By 1976, further progress had been made on the reforms demanded in 1968-69. The Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976 made discrimination unlawful on grounds of religious belief or political opinion in both public and private sectors, thereby removing some of the reservations which were attendant on earlier measures which allowed discriminatory practices by firms in their non-government work.

Such welcome omens, however, were tempered by contra-indications — mainly in the security field — that Northern Ireland was far from returning to normality. By virtually every index of terrorist activity, 1976 was a more violent year than 1975: the number of deaths rose; the high rate of sectarian killings continued — both despite the fact that seizures of explosives by the security forces almost doubled, as did charges made against members of the IRA. Nevertheless, the

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4 See Appendix III.
intensification of activities by the security forces did appear to contribute to the reduction of terrorist activity in 1977 which was to be, on a comparative basis, the 'best' year since 1970.\footnote{ibid.}
CHAPTER THREE

Anglo-Irish Relations: June 1974 - June 1977
In the wake of the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) strike certain lessons appeared to suggest themselves in relation to the future government of Northern Ireland as seen from London and Dublin perspectives. The first was the clear disjunction between the preponderance of political and military capabilities which Britain possessed vis-à-vis Northern Ireland, and its intentions to use them as an instrument of political will to achieve its objectives. As Donal Barrington described it

The British Government has the power but not the will to rule in Northern Ireland. For it, the game is not worth the candle.¹

In contrast, the Government of the Republic of Ireland had neither the power nor the will to attempt to incorporate Northern Ireland into the Republic against the wishes of the Northern majority.² This had been a persistent and frequently stated element of Irish Government policy since September 1969.

From these two lessons two conclusions may be drawn as regards Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Of the former

... the only real power which the British Government has in Northern Ireland is the power to get out. More correctly, no new political initiative is open to it unless, it spells out the terms on which it is prepared to stay, and the situation which would cause it to go, and, in the latter case, what transitional arrangements, if any, it would be prepared to make.³

And of the latter

¹ Donal Barrington, 'After Sunningdale?', Administration (Dublin) 24 (Summer 1976): 242, (hereafter cited as Barrington, 'After Sunningdale?').
² Ibid., pp. 243-4.
³ Ibid., p. 242.
... the immediate interest of the Government of the Republic is for peace in the North with justice for the majority and the minority.4

The British Government, while apparently aware of its remaining options, understandably — in view of its immeasurably greater responsibilities — chose not to admit them, explicitly at least. But inferentially it was clear that for Britain, the sense of disengagement from Ireland which had marked the last two years of the Heath premiership, was in the ascendant. An early indication of this attitude was found in the publication of a discussion paper on the financial arrangements between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom.5 It appeared to be an extension of Prime Minister Harold Wilson's 'spongers' speech, made during the strike,6 a reminder of the province's financial debt to Britain. As Fisk noted:

It took the loyalist and nationalist politicians only a few hours to realize that the London Government was, in effect, telling them that Ulster's departure from the United Kingdom would not be too deeply regretted.7 [emphasis added].

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4 ibid., p. 244.


6 On 25 May, Wilson had incensed the population of Northern Ireland, Protestant and Catholic, with a speech over the BBC which included the following passage:

British taxpayers have seen the taxes they have poured out, almost without regard to cost ... going into Northern Ireland. They see property destroyed by evil violence and are asked to pick up the bill for rebuilding it. Yet people who benefit from all this now viciously defy Westminster, purporting to act as though they were an elected government; people who spend their lives sponging on Westminster and British democracy and then systematically assault democratic methods. Who do these people think they are?


7 Fisk, The Point of No Return, p. 230.
Further indications of an attitude of disengagement in the immediate aftermath of the strike were found in the tone of the second discussion paper on the proposed Constitutional Convention, and in the manoeuvres of the Northern Ireland Secretary, Merlyn Rees, to create a violence-free environment in which this body could deliberate.

In Anglo-Irish relations during this period, however, neither party was prepared to admit that the Sunningdale Agreement had been completely vitiated. On the contrary, the National Coalition of Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave continued to proclaim its force.

We must go forward from here. The principles of partnership and co-operation with democratically elected representatives in this island ... remain as true and genuine a basis for progress as they have ever been.

Yet his refusal, the day following this statement, to hold a referendum on the Agreement, suggested that the limits of hope for further progress were hardly expansive. Not only was there no attempt made to amend the articles of the Constitution which gave so much offence to the Unionists, but even a lesser measure designed to placate Protestant fears failed miserably. After the fall of the Executive, and in response to complex pressures in the Republic, the Irish Government introduced a Bill legalising the sale of contraceptives. Without informing any of his Cabinet of his intention, Cosgrave voted against the Bill, which was defeated. In conjunction both developments constituted an unhelpful and inauspicious beginning to the Irish Government's declared intention 'to reassure [the Northern majority] that the Sunningdale package was a bona fide package, that it was full of good intentions and that they were meant'.

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9 see pp. 167-8.
11 ibid., 29 May 1974, cols. 151-2.
12 Minister for Justice, Mr Patrick Cooney, ibid., 26 June 1974, col. 1597.
When this statement by the Minister for Justice, Patrick Cooney, is placed in the context of earlier post-strike official statements, it becomes evident that it was more of an 'adieu' to a once fond idea than a declaration of intent. On 14 June Cosgrave, on behalf of the Irish people, disavowed any desire of 'unity or close association with a people so deeply imbued with violence and its effect'. In the lengthy debate on Northern Ireland a fortnight later it was patently obvious that the Irish Cabinet realised, even accepted, the truth inherent in the many previous (and unpopular) warnings given by the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, i.e. that Protestant working class hostility towards anything which they construed as enforced Irish unity was a fact of life for the present and foreseeable future.

There was, therefore, an attempt by the Taoiseach to focus attention upon those who were perceived to have caused previous policies to founder.

The political leaders of these islands have devoted considerable time and energy to the formulation of policies for securing peace with justice in Northern Ireland. In the past it was to a large extent on the initiatives of the British and Irish Governments that such formulations were devised. I think that it is to the Northern political leaders that we should now look for the next steps in this process.

Furthermore this attitude denoted a general passivity, which persisted throughout the National Coalition's remaining period in office, towards both the immediate and long-term goals which had been the concern of contemporary Anglo-Irish relations.

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15 ibid., col. 1581.
Within this approach the Irish Government effectively renounced its pretensions to be the 'second guarantor' of the Northern Catholic community, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs indicated.

It would be very satisfying, no doubt, for us down here to have the will to do things but it would not help anyone in Northern Ireland for us to speak in those terms, to mislead people who might not differentiate between will and power and who might read into speeches of that kind an expectation that they can be protected in certain circumstances if certain things happen.16

A more significant casualty of this period was the Irish Dimension. Despite explicit assurance in the White Paper, *The Northern Ireland Constitution*, that 'any political arrangements must recognise and provide for this special relationship',17 it was not again to assume the importance it had held between October 1972 and the fall of the Executive in May 1974. In the British Government deliberations which followed closely upon the resumption of direct rule it is clear that this once central aspect of Anglo-Irish relations was to be set aside in the interest of creating conditions more conducive to political dialogue in the North.18 Within the space of eighteen months its relegation was rendered almost complete by Rees's announcement that:

The Government do not consider it necessary or appropriate to create an institutional framework such as a Council of Ireland for relations with the Republic. Arrangements for co-operation should evolve positively and naturally as and when the need for them arises and is generally recognized and accepted.19

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16 Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, ibid., col.1699.
18 See, for example, the Northern Ireland Secretary's speeches as follows: Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, *Official Report*, vol. 874, 3 June 1974, cols. 878-8; vol. 878, 4 July 1974, cols. 610-13; and ibid., cols. 1162-70, (hereafter cited as *House of Commons, Official Report*).
However, this process of attrition undergone by the Irish Dimension as a British priority was complemented by its corresponding abandonment in the policies of the Republic. Indeed, it may be more accurate to regard the priority accorded it in British policy as reflecting London's willing acquiescence in initiatives taken by the Irish Government to minimise areas of its Northern Ireland policy to which Unionists were objecting. To this end the Irish Government, according to a confidential policy document prepared by Conor Cruise O'Brien, developed a strategy by which it would do 'everything in [its] power' to prevent a Loyalist majority emerging in the forthcoming Constitutional Convention. Further, it was the Irish Government's view that 'a relatively low profile' (as opposed to a 'noisy threatening posture') was 'that best calculated to allow the emergence of a non-Loyalist Protestant vote'. The factor which decided the Irish Government in favour of this strategy was the anxiety felt regarding a scenario which included military activity by the Loyalists, a resultant withdrawal of British forces, and the 'virtually certain' prospect of an all-Ireland civil war which would follow.

More positively, these sacrifices in Irish Government policy were directed towards 'the most useful thing', the 'all important thing' – the reconstruction of power-sharing. In support of this objective the Irish Government repeatedly sought and obtained reassurances from

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21 Ibid.
22 Ibid. A very similar scenario, labelled the 'malignant model' of alternative futures was described nearly two years earlier in Conor Cruise O'Brien, *States of Ireland*, (London: Hutchinson, 1972), pp. 299-303.
the British Government that power-sharing was the pre-condition\(^{25}\)/
pre-requisite\(^{26}\) for future developments in the North. It was no doubt
heartened by such affirmations as Rees's in the House of Commons on 27 June 1974:

> Power-sharing is not dead. It is the one thing which has stayed on since the fall of the Executive.\(^{27}\)

Thus the Taoiseach stated to Dáil Éireann on 24 October 1974 that the British and Irish Governments had agreed that power-sharing (and the Irish Dimension) were 'non-negotiable' principles.\(^{28}\) Ostensibly, therefore, there existed an (albeit reduced) identity of interests in Anglo-Irish relations.

Yet this was not in fact the case. Indeed, the frequent reassurances on power-sharing given by the British Government, between the fall of the Executive and May 1977,\(^{29}\) can in large part be traced to a well-founded sense of nervousness on behalf of the Irish Government that London's support for it had been, or was about to be, eroded.\(^{30}\) At issue were differing sets of assumptions concerning the emphasis which should be accorded to a concept which was tainted with the failure of the Sunningdale package. They may be accurately gauged from the following two passages concerning the respective policies. Keatinge notes that


\(^{26}\) ibid., p. 22.


\(^{28}\) 'Taoiseach's address at Opening of Dail', Ireland today: Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, No. 856, 18 November 1974, p.3, (hereafter cited as Ireland today).

\(^{29}\) The last meeting between Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, and Northern Ireland Secretary, Mr Roy Mason. The National Coalition was defeated in the June General Election, by Fianna Fáil.

\(^{30}\) Fitzgerald, 'Statement on Northern Ireland, 12 October 1977', pp.20-1. Doubts about British intentions regarding power-sharing were evidently shared by the SDLP who 'sought political undertakings directly from the Prime Minister'. McAllister, SDLP, pp. 150-51.
the coalition government's aim was to discreetly encourage a return to power-sharing ... [emphasis added], 31

while Fisk, writing of the British perspective, observes

the phrase 'power-sharing' was none too discreetly forgotten ... [emphasis added]. 32

Moreover, in the pursuit of its objective the Irish Government was faced with a dilemma. Either it assumed a forceful role vis-à-vis power-sharing and thereby risked its acceptability to the Unionists, or it maintained its recently adopted low profile and relied upon the questionable enthusiasm of the British Government for the measure. In practice a combination of both methods was attempted — with less than wholly satisfying results. The Irish Government appear to have insisted, within the confidentiality of major Anglo-Irish negotiations, that power-sharing be affirmed as an operating principle, 33 while the British Government obliged by its pronouncements but effectively did little else to promote it. 34

Power-sharing, or rather, a lack of confidence in British intentions regarding power-sharing was, however, only one of four factors which undermined Anglo-Irish relations throughout the remaining period of office of the National Coalition. Primarily, the doubts concerning this principle may be viewed as extending from the overriding Irish uncertainty concerning the British policies in Northern Ireland. As Keith Kyle later commented

... the worst shock for the Irish Government was the revelation of what they interpreted as British irresolution in the face of a fundamental challenge to

32 Fisk, The Point of No Return, p. 230.
34 See also pp. 204-10 concerning the alleged Unionist-Labour Party 'pact' and its bearing on power-sharing.
Britain's authority, particularly in the vital first days [of the UWC strike]. From then on they felt themselves out of touch with British motives, consulted in a formal way but not taken into confidence.35

Moreover Anglo-Irish relations in this third period confirmed Harold Wilson's April 1974 prophecy that if the Executive failed then 'there would be little hope that we could once again reconstruct a fresh political initiative'.36 Thus, drift served to compound uncertainty throughout the following three years – through the succession of James Callaghan as Prime Minister, to the return of Fianna Fáil as Government in the Republic.

The remaining three factors – a readiness on the part of the British Government to negotiate with the Provisional IRA, the susceptibility of the Labour Government (after 1976) to Unionist pressure at Westminster, and disputes concerning transnational security matters may be regarded as issues with more limited implications than the first. Indeed, it is suggested that these factors achieved the prominence they did, directly as a result of the absence in Anglo-Irish relations of imaginative measures such as had characterised the preceding period.

It is emphasised that the above four classifications are not exhaustive: others, such as internment,37 the use of CR gas by security forces in the North,38 sectarian murders,39 and espionage,40

all contributed to the deterioration in Anglo-Irish relations between mid-1974 and mid-1977, but by no means to the same extent as those which are given a more detailed consideration.

As on previous occasions, the British Government's decision to meet with the Provisional IRA coincided with efforts in both Britain and Ireland to create conditions inimical to the latter's support. In both countries the respective governments accepted the recommendations of the Law Enforcement Commission and proceeded with legislation to establish extra-territorial courts. In the case of Britain contact with the Provisional IRA also followed closely upon virtuous denunciations by the Northern Ireland Secretary of the political morality of acceding to such a course of action. On 3 June 1974 Merlyn Rees had explained to the House of Commons

This group [the UWC] is a non-elected body of men that sought to subvert the expressed wish and authority to this Parliament through unconstitutional and undemocratic means involving widespread intimidation ...

In the same way as I refused to be bombed to the conference table by the Provisionals, so I have been adamant that a sectarian strike by so-called Loyalists and backed by para-military forces would not force me to such a conference table.42

Nevertheless, in December 1974, with the foreknowledge and something more than the tacit approval of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO),43 a group of Protestant clergymen met with Provisional IRA leaders at Smyth's Village Hotel, Feakle, Co. Clare.44 This resulted

41 The Legislation came into effect on 1 June 1976.


43 McAllister, SDLP, pp. 148-9, claimed that it was 'with at least the tacit approval of the NIO', and a report subsequent to the publication of this work indicates that the 'men of God had the Government's confidence' — John Whale and Chris Ryder, 'Ulster 1968-1978: A Decade of Despair', Sunday Times, 18 June 1978, p. 17, (hereafter cited as Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair').

44 Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 17; and Conor O'Clery, 'Provisionals got a commitment to withdraw', Irish Times, 9 June 1978. (O'Clery's article is an interview with the Rev. William Arlow, the man responsible for arranging this and a later meeting between British Officials and Provisional Sinn Fein; hereafter the article will be cited as O'Clery, Arlow interview, Irish Times, 9 June 1978).
in a ceasefire by the Provisionals which lasted from 22 December 1974 to 16 January 1975. Within a few weeks of this meeting, on 19 January 1975, representatives of Provisional Sinn Fein — only notionally distinct from the Provisional IRA — met with British Government representatives including James Allan, a Foreign and Commonwealth Office diplomat seconded to the NIO. Once again the outcome was a ceasefire, which began on 10 February.

Rees's reversal of his previous policy on this matter owed much to his hope for a stable environment in which the forthcoming Constitutional Convention could operate. By his account he

... sought to get away from the daily catalogue of violence and open the door to a new situation in which discussions and political activity could take place in a constructive and peaceful atmosphere.

He was, therefore, disposed to respond to reductions in the level of violence by the IRA. As he admitted in the Commons

the actions of the security forces ... would be related to the level of any activity which might occur.

Furthermore he promised that, in the event of 'a genuine and sustained cessation of violence', he would 'gradually release all detainees'.

Rees, it might be noted, eschewed the term 'ceasefire'.

Last year there was a ceasefire. I did not describe it as a ceasefire. Those were the words used by the Provisional IRA.

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45 Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p.15; and O'Clery, Arlow interview, Irish Times, 9 June 1978.
47 House of Commons, Official Report, vol.884, 14 February, cols.201-02, as cited as McAllister, SDLP, p.149.
In fact they were words used by more than the Provisional IRA: in May 1975, a British Government agency, the Central Office of Information, described the cessation of violence that occurred as a 'ceasefire' [Northern Ireland, (London: Central Office of Information, 1975), p.6], while in 1979, Sir Harold Wilson went so far as to term it a 'definitive
Moreover he went so far as to deny that the meetings with Provisional Sinn Fein were negotiations.

There have never been negotiations with anyone, but, ... it is valuable to explain Government policy, and my advisers believe that benefit is to be gained from doing so.50

Rees's attempt to evade the use of expressions alluded to by semantic juxtaposition is to be understood in terms of the opprobrium which contacts with the Provisionals had earned William Whitelaw in 1972. But such an understanding in no way serves to authenticate his claim that the meetings, in early 1975 anyway, were called so that the IRA might become better acquainted with the British policies. On the contrary, there are grounds for concluding that, at these meetings which were 'never ... negotiations', it was the IRA that convinced the British representatives of its intentions to conduct a massive terrorist campaign on the mainland, and obtained in return for not doing so, several advantages which included a promise by the British to withdraw from Northern Ireland.

If this was the case, then obviously the Northern Ireland Secretary allowed himself somewhat elastic limits, beyond the release of detainees, in which to respond to the IRA's 'sustained cessation of violence'. It is useful, therefore, to consider the evidence relating to the outcomes of these meetings, and in some instance, the reliability of those who provided it. In particular, considerable reliability must be placed on the veracity of the Rev. William Arlow, a Church of Ireland clergyman,51 and then Assistant Secretary to the


51 Denomination given by Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 15. Fisk, The Point of No Return, p. 247, wrongly states Arlow is a Methodist.
Irish Council of Churches. He is, throughout Ireland, widely respected for his integrity and courage and is, by one description, a man of 'transparent trustworthiness'. In confirmation of part of his testimony there is no record of disagreement with it from any of the six clergymen who accompanied him to Feakle.

That the meeting at 'Laneside' on 19 January 1975 was more than a policy-advising session was borne out by events both before and after it. On being apprised by the IRA of its intentions to direct a bombing offensive upon the London underground, and of its demands to prevent this, Arlow and his colleagues reported to the NIO. Broadly, the demands were for reduced military activity (including an end to detention) and an increased opportunity for the Provisionals to press their views, both in negotiation with the authorities and in local politics. Within a week Arlow had journeyed to London with a further Provo message and returned to Dublin with the British response. On 20 December 1974 a Provisional IRA truce was announced with effect from two days on.

Following the 19 January meeting the ceasefire, which had been suspended three days earlier, was invoked once again. And once again the circumstantial evidence is heavily supportive of a conclusion that negotiations took place, as follows:

52 Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 15.
53 They included the Secretary of the Irish Council of Churches, the Rev. Ralph Baxter; the Church of Ireland Bishop of Connor, Bishop Butler; and two clergymen from England. Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 17; and O'Clery, Arlow Interview, Irish Times, 9 June 1978.
54 A secluded house, at Craigavad, near the southern shore of Belfast Lough.
55 Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 17.
56 ibid. It is claimed that 'Arlow and his men' went to London, but there is no mention of who, if any, accompanied him to Dublin with the response.
57 ibid. As a side point, Marian and Dolours Price, convicted of bombing offences in Britain, were shifted to more comfortable quarters at Durham, and late in the extended ceasefire of 1975, were transferred to Armagh.
1. Detainees were progressively released, and detention itself ended at the end of the year despite the failure of the ceasefire and the succeeding period of violence.

2. Large scale Army searches in Catholic areas were abandoned and military checkpoints on the edges of these areas were withdrawn. (They were replaced with the advent of renewed sectarian violence.)

3. Specified Provisional leaders were given immunity from arrest.

4. Street level negotiations were conducted between British officers and local Provisional commanders.

5. 'Incident Centres' were established from where Provisional Sinn Fein appointees could report breaches of the ceasefire and conduct political activity.\(^5^8\)

Within a complete enterprise that was regarded as anathema by the Irish Government, the most damaging single item to Anglo-Irish relations was the decision to establish, with British Government funding, a total of seven incident centres. In an approach to the British Ambassador in Dublin the Irish Government advised that such centres were 'unacceptable' to it on the grounds that they gave political credibility to the IRA at the expense of Catholic-elected representatives in Northern Ireland.\(^5^9\)

Exclusive of these tangible developments, the most disturbing feature, to the Irish Government, of British contacts with the IRA was the reports of an undertaking to withdraw from Northern Ireland. According to *Irish Times* correspondent, Conor O'Clery, after the first 'Laneside' meeting,

> officials at Stormont began to lace their after dinner conversations and political tete-a-tetes with predictions of a pull out.\(^6^0\)

\(^{58}\) ibid., p. 15.

\(^{59}\) *Times*, 24 February 1975.

The condition upon which this depended, it was suggested, was the failure of the Constitutional Convention: if and when it did so, the British would commence their withdrawal. 61

Among those who believed that the Provisional IRA had received a British commitment to withdraw was one of their more widely-known leaders, Dave O'Connell (Dáithí O'Connaill), who claimed that

The overall feature of that truce was a statement by the British Government that it was committed to disengage from Ireland, but it could not say so publicly. 62

More substantially, it appears that the Government in Dublin were also convinced that the Provos genuinely believed they had received such a commitment. 63 And the Rev. William Arlow was in no doubt that they had. In an interview over RTE on 25 May 1975 he claimed

... the British government have given a firm commitment to the Provisional IRA that they will withdraw the army from Northern Ireland. This would be under circumstances such as if the present Constitutional Convention fails to produce an agreed structure of government for the province. 64

Over three years later he was 'absolutely certain' that the British undertaking, constituted not just a prediction of disengagement but an actual commitment to withdraw. 65

Not unexpectedly, the Northern Ireland Secretary denied Arlow's allegations in a brief but firm statement.

There is no truth in the statement made by the Rev. William Arlow concerning an alleged agreement about the withdrawal of British troops. 66

61 McAllister, SDLP, p. 149.
62 As cited in Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 15.
63 ibid.
64 Belfast Telegraph, 26 May 1975, as cited in McAllister, SDLP, p.149.
The British Government, however, itself appeared to substantiate Arlow's claim by two genuine acts of disengagement. The first concerned economic withdrawal. According to the one report, the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill of 1975, a major measure of nationalisation and refinancing, was drafted so as to exclude the Belfast shipyard of Harland and Wolff and, thereby, to present a 'meaningful sign' of withdrawal to the Provisional leadership. A similar exclusion applied to the aircraft manufacturing concern of Short Brothers and Harland.67

The second act of disengagement was military stratégic. In this period five Government bases were closed in Northern Ireland—an air traffic control centre, an FCO radio station, two RAF establishments, and a Royal Navy depot.68 If these indications were not the British consideration for a Provisional IRA ceasefire, then as empirical evidence they surely support a conclusion of some form of British disengagement at a time when it was extremely dangerous for them to be seen as such.

It could, of course, be suggested that the British Government was pursuing a sustained policy of official ambiguity, and through this, hoped to both delude the Provisionals into keeping 'the gun on the shelf', and encourage the intransigents within the Convention to reach an accommodation with the moderates. But this is imputing a particularly dangerous and Machiavellian character to British policy-makers that they otherwise did not display between 1968 and 1979—and for good reasons. Deluding the Provisionals would have had the most violent of repercussions when they had realised it, and interestingly, they have never claimed in the six years since the ceasefire that they were so taken in. And if it was to encourage the Loyalists, who were an overwhelmingly majority in the Convention, to reach a settlement with parties such as the SDLP, then against all reasonable expectations, the failure of the 'imposed' (to Loyalists) Sunningdale Agreement would need to have passed from the active memories of all concerned.

67 Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 15.
68 ibid.
Nevertheless, the paucity of irrefutable evidence requires that the claims of a British commitment to withdraw from Northern Ireland be advanced with caution. This is not the place in which to enter into a more detailed analysis either as to what exactly what was transacted between the Provisional IRA and officials of the NIO, or of the controversy which the Rev. Arlow's claims attracted. Because of the focus of this thesis it must suffice to note that the Irish Government was clearly disturbed by the persistence with which British Ministers admitted the IRA to negotiations, as was later indicated in the Dáil by Garret Fitzgerald, the Minister for Foreign Affairs throughout this period.

On the IRA side, the idea that their methods might secure sympathy or support from elected politicians, or that elected politicians might be brought to the conference table at the point of a gun, has received no support in the Republic since the events of May 1970. Since that time the various IRAs have had no grounds for any illusion as to the willingness of any Government here to deal with them or tolerate them.

Unfortunately this was not true of the U.K. Government. A Conservative Northern Ireland Secretary met IRA Spokesmen personally and conceded to them special treatment in prison akin to that of prisoners of war — thereby deluding them into thinking that persistence with their campaign would bring that Government to the conference table with them, and his successor authorised his officials to enter into discussions with political representatives of Provisional IRA, not easily distinguishable from members of that organization. These actions have probably prolonged violence in Northern Ireland by a number of years.69

Thus, also from an Irish perspective, the British Government, had undermined a basic principle upon which a power-sharing devolved government should be established, i.e. 'the defeat of violence, by convincing the IRA that it cannot win'.70 Furthermore the advantages to the Convention which Rees had hoped to create by a stable environment were negated. In Northern Ireland the controversy which the withdrawal allegations attracted did nothing for the spirit in which it was conducted, while in the Republic, there was understandably no improvement

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67 Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 15.
68 ibid.
upon Cosgrave's pessimistic prediction that 'little likelihood' existed of a constructive outcome.71

The Irish Government, moreover, took steps which left London in no doubt as to its views on the 'accommodation' which had been reached with the Provisional IRA. In July 1975, Dave O'Connell, reportedly their Chief-of-Staff was arrested in the Republic; a month later the Taoiseach broke his silence on Northern Ireland to demand 'effective action' to end sectarian violence there.72 However, despite these reminders of Irish irritation, it took some time for the British Government to respond favourably — and it did so then less out of accession to the former's demands and more as a consequence of events in Ireland. Although the end of the ceasefire was never officially declared, August 1975 may be held as its termination. That month saw the commencement of a period of sectarian assassinations which eventually led, in the following November, to the closure of the incident centres. Even so, meetings between the Provisionals and British officials persisted intermittently until July 1976 and the assassination outside Dublin of the British Ambassador to Ireland (Mr Christopher Ewart-Biggs) and a woman official of the NIO.73

The third factor undermining Anglo-Irish relations between June 1974 and June 1977 — the susceptibility of the Labour Government at Westminster to extreme Unionist pressure — was at first sight the least necessary of all the disturbances to which they were subject. For instance, there was in Dublin an understanding that the circumstances of the British Government were not propitious for the development of an 'initiative' on Northern Ireland, as evidenced by the following passage from a speech by the (former) Minister for Foreign Affairs:

No doubt a British Government with a threatened parliamentary majority facing grave domestic and political problems in Great Britain, finds it difficult to give the kind of single-minded attention to

72 Financial Times, 18 December 1975.
73 Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 15.
Northern Ireland that was given in 1969 and again in 1972/73 ...\(^\text{74}\)

Additionally, and on the British side, James Callaghan's succession of Harold Wilson as Prime Minister on 5 April 1976 brought with it an incidental advantage. From as early as 1973 he had an obvious affinity and respect for Fitzgerald. In the memoirs of his period as Home Secretary (1967-1970) Callaghan noted his 'close sympathy'\(^\text{75}\) for the then opposition T.D. (Irish Member of Parliament) — which remained undiminished, indeed increased, in the ensuing years. In March 1977 he told a National Press Club gathering in Washington, D.C.,

> I do not wish to cut across anything that Garret Fitzgerald will say ... I believe he is coming to address you next Friday. Well let me give you a free trailer to Garret Fitzgerald, the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Eire. You will hear a witty, erudite speaker, a man of very deep conviction and of very great knowledge ... I don't want to cut across anything that Garret is going to say ...\(^\text{76}\)

But ironically, it may have been the ideas that Callaghan's memoirs contained which dimmed the prospects of closer Anglo-Irish relations in this period. \textit{A House Divided}, in company with Harold Wilson, \textit{The Labour Government}\(^\text{77}\) and Richard Crossman's Diaries,\(^\text{78}\)


\(^{76}\) As cited in London Press Service, Verbatim Service 064/77, 'Extracts From Questions After Premier's Washington Press Club Statement' (also referred to as National Press Club Washington), pp. 6-7. Whether this admiration was reciprocated by Fitzgerald is open to speculation: there are no similar references to Callaghan in his publications or other published repositories of his views.


\(^{78}\) Richard Crossman, \textit{The Diaries of A Cabinet Minister}, 3 vols. 1:2 (London: Hamish Hamilton and Jonathon Cape, 1975 and 1976 resp.);
revealed the disquieting shallowness of the Labour Government's appreciation of the Northern Ireland problem — in particular a pervasive British failure to develop policies which accurately reflected strongly-held perceptions, or to implement fully those policies which were developed.

It may also have been Callaghan's misfortune that A House Divided was published when he was in Opposition, enjoying a widely-held but undeserved reputation as a 'success' in Northern Ireland, and not concerned with even 'shadowing' that portfolio. Thus the 'greening' of the future Prime Minister — i.e. his hope for eventual Irish unity — must have been an embarrassment to him upon assuming the leadership of a party whose tenure of the treasury benches was in large part dependent upon a small minority who were unalterably opposed to this prospect. (Nor could Harold Wilson's comfortable advocacy of Irish unity, in Opposition, have been a legacy Callaghan received with any great gratitude).

His Northern Ireland Secretary was, therefore, obliged to engage in some peculiar conceptual inconsistencies. The first principle on which Rees argued was contained in the July 1974 White Paper, which stated

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79 Oddly, the Irish Government regarded some of the leading officials who served these politicians in very good light. According to Mr Sean Donlon, an assistant Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the reports submitted to London by seconded F.C.O. diplomats Oliver Wright and Howard Smith, were 'first class', (Interview, Dublin, 7 June 1978). According to one report, a similar respect was voiced for a later F.C.O. appointment at the NIO, Frank Cooper, (Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 15).

80 The same shallowness imputed to the Labour Minister named above is also found in the memoirs of a former Conservative Home Secretary. See Reginald Maudling, Memoirs (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978), p. 28; p. 157; and pp. 178-88.

81 Harold Wilson took over this role in December 1971.

82 Callaghan, A House Divided, pp. 182-7.

83 See Chapter 1, p. 72.
Any pattern of government must be acceptable to the people of the United Kingdom as a whole and to Parliament at Westminster. Citizenship confers not only rights and privileges but also obligations.84

Second, the House of Commons was the supreme legislative body of the United Kingdom, it was up to that body 'to reach final decisions'. 'That', said Rees, 'is what being part of the United Kingdom is all about'.85

Both, however, were aspirations rather than operating principles. Insofar as the first was concerned, there was not in 1974, nor has there been since, any suggestion that the British Government would refer Northern Ireland matters to the United Kingdom electorate. And with some justification. In every major survey conducted in Britain since 1974 a majority opinion has been expressed in favour of withdrawal.86 As Sir John Peck, the British Ambassador to Ireland (1970-1973) remarked of an earlier similar claim to that of Rees's

this [was] an elegant charade which fooled nobody.87

Nevertheless, with regard to the second Rees was somewhat more able to demonstrate the operability of the principle. On 3 February 1976 the Constitutional Convention was ordered to reconvene because the United Kingdom Government did not view its Report as 'commanding sufficiently widespread acceptance throughout the community'.88 It was required, thereupon, to further deliberate and, hopefully, agree on a system of government which 'provided for a form of partnership and

85 ibid., col. 54.
86 According to a study published in 1978, from June 1974 to February 1977, 'British opinion has been consistent and clear: in each of seven surveys a majority, averaging 57 per cent, has favoured a phased withdrawal of troops' (Richard Rose, Ian McAllister, and Peter Mair, Is There A Concurring Majority About Northern Ireland, Studies in Public Policy, No. 22 (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 1978), p. 27.
88 ibid., col. 54.
participation'. Yet the limits within which this prerogative would be exercised were abundantly clear. The collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive was eloquent testimony to the contingent rather than the absolute primacy of Westminster which the Loyalists operate under, and which the Labour Government passively encouraged by its lack of effective action against the UWC. In appreciating, but in no way justifying, the *force majeure* of their position Rees concluded that

*a united Ireland [was] not in the gift of this Parliament.*

To this point it may reasonably be assumed that the Irish Government extended its understanding of the factors which determined the diminishing efforts by the British Government to break the stalemate in Northern Ireland. Thereafter, for the clearest of reasons, this could not be assumed. At issue was a measure — on increase in the Province's representation at Westminster — which if introduced or encouraged by the British Government, could only be interpreted as antithetical to Irish unity. In this it was obvious that the imperatives of maintaining government office were foremost, although the full extent of what was involved did not become apparent in the period now under review.

But it was apparent that the Labour Government, in the latter half of 1976, had found it necessary to reverse its position on the representative question. On 18 March 1976, the Northern Ireland Secretary came under strong pressure from the Conservative Opposition during Question Time in the House of Commons to increase the number of Northern Ireland seats. Rees in reply insisted that, 'even to talk about extra representation is to fly in the face of history' and, therefore, that such a change would not be feasible.

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91 See Chapter 4, pp. 204-10.
Throughout the remainder of 1976 the Labour Government remained non-committal on increased representation until the approach of a devolution debate. At that point, Mr Michael Foot, the leader of the House of Commons, proposed that

progress should be made on the question of representation from Northern Ireland.

Furthermore he repeated to the House part of a speech made by the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mr Roy Mason, the previous week, in which he said that a constitutional settlement would open the way for the change in the 'present under-representation'.

His denial that this was in the nature of a 'commitment' did not allay fears in Dublin that the British Government was fundamentally uncertain of its own intentions. Thus the Irish Foreign Minister noted later

the ... private discussions between Unionist/Loyalist M.P.s at Westminster ... and some members of the present British Government ... may have helped to delude Unionist opinion as to the attitude of the present British Government.

and

a prolonged failure to give full attention to the problem, leading to a feeling amongst both sections of the community in Northern Ireland that the buck is being passed exclusively to them, despite the obvious difficulty that they face in arriving at a solution unaided, and without any clear concept of the intentions of the sovereign power.

The National Coalition of which Fitzgerald was a Minister passed

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93 Mason succeeded Rees as Northern Ireland Secretary in September 1976.
95 ibid., col. 826.
97 Fitzgerald, 'Moylough Speech', p. 16.
from office in June 1977 without the sought-after clarification of British intentions — indeed they were no clearer nearly two years beyond then when the British Labour Government was defeated — but not before a re-emerging concern with security matters was restored to its former prominence, and with it, the fourth unsettling influence upon Anglo-Irish relations.

As with the previous factor, there appeared little good reason for security considerations to provide such a substantial cause for misunderstanding and tension. Certainly the irritation caused by the methods and practice of Border road closures continued to be an irritant, as did the steadily mounting toll of cross-Border incursions by the British Army, but of these only a small number constituted what Fitzgerald described as 'of a particular serious character involving assaults on members of our security forces or threats against them'.

Yet it is deserving of comment that these infringements, whether unintentional or deliberate, failed to prompt a 'troops out' demand by the Irish Government. On the contrary it appeared to be an almost whole-hearted supporter of the British Army's presence in the North. In the Northern Ireland debate of 26 June 1974 the Taoiseach was adamant that its presence was essential in the province to ensure the protection of the Catholic community:


99 In the period 1 January 1973 to 12 May 1976, 304 incursions by the British Army were registered by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. 261 of these incidents were taken up with the British, who expressed regret for 144; 19 (on 13 May 1976) were still under discussion, and on 117 there was disagreement as to the facts. By Irish Government estimates there were 22 Irish Army incursions into Northern Ireland in the same period. Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 290, 13 May 1976, cols. 1323-3.

Some people say that the British Government should be asked now to make a declaration of their intent to withdraw at some time in the future to be determined by parties in Ireland, or to withdraw their troops to barracks as a first step in a phased withdrawal. Suggestions of this kind ignore reality — for example, the reality of the exposed position of the minority in many parts of the North and the absence of any Northern Ireland security force acceptable to the whole community there.\textsuperscript{101}

On this at least there grew to be a close agreement — if there was not one already.\textsuperscript{102} After the failure of the first phases of the Constitutional Convention, Rees, in January 1976, denounced withdrawal as a 'short-sighted ... but above all ... an irresponsible policy' for the havoc its implementation would wreck, not only in Northern Ireland but also the Republic and mainland Britain.\textsuperscript{103}

In any event the Republic's endorsement of a British military presence was a natural consequence of its 'low profile' on Northern Ireland, which was further amplified by the Minister for Defence. On the occasion of an interview in September 1975, Mr Patrick Donegan disclaimed any foreseeable situation, specifically the 'doomsday' scenario, in which the Irish Army would receive orders to cross the Border in aid of the minority community. In Donegan's reckoning the Army was 'here to see that our citizens go to bed and sleep safely'.\textsuperscript{104}

In a positive sense also the Irish Republic's response on security matters during the period of office of the National Coalition reflected a general Anglo-Irish accord. Although many of the measures undertaken by the Irish Government fell short of the joint British Army/Irish Army patrols sought by Roy Mason in July 1974,\textsuperscript{105} there were,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102} i.e. Depending on the substance to the allegations of withdrawal previously referred to.
\item \textsuperscript{103} House of Commons, \textit{Official Report}, vol. 903, 12 January 1976, col. 51.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Irish Press, 11 September 1975, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{105} House of Commons, \textit{Official Report}, vol. 876, 2 July 1974, col. 195 (Mr Mason was then Secretary of State for Defence.)
\end{itemize}
nevertheless, substantial efforts made in relation to the overall resources of the Republic. In the space of the five years since the 'troubles' had begun in earnest (i.e. between 1969 and 1974), the Defence Budget was tripled — to over £40 million. Recruitment to the Army and Garda Síochána (Police) were also substantially increased: in the former from 8,252 in 1969 to 11,602 in 1974, and in the latter from approximately 6,400 in 1969 to approximately 8,300 in 1974. After explosions in Dublin and Monaghan on 17 May 1974 had claimed 28 lives the Irish Government recalled the more than 300 troops it had serving with the United Nations force in Cyprus and supplemented this measure with a limited call-up of the Forsáí Cosanta Áitula — the Irish Army Local Defence Forces. In the Dáil the Taoiseach made a plea to school-leavers to 'consider the desirability of a period of service in the Army' so that the security forces might be well provided with manpower to combat the terrorist threat to the country. The strength of the Army was then (June 1974) at its highest peace-time level since the Civil War half a century earlier, while that of the Garda Síochána was at its highest level since the foundation of the State. Of a combined military-police strength of 19,000, nearly 3,000 were on security duties in the Border areas. Measured simply in financial terms, the violence in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1974 was estimated to have cost the Republic £40 million in financing the

106 Comparison was made between the respective Appropriation Accounts of the Defence Vote for 1969-70 and 1974. Photo-copies of same were supplied by the Department of Defence, Dublin, but not with any full title reference.  
107 Letter to the writer from the Department of Defence, Dublin, 16 October 1980.  
108 Conor Brady, 'The Changing of the Gardaí', Irish Times, 24 September 1979, p. 10. Unfortunately no reply was received by the writer to his written inquiry of 25 July 1980, addressed to the Commissioner, Garda Síochána, regarding yearly increases in man-power levels and Appropriation Account. The police figures are, therefore, the result of interpolating figures as of 1973 and 1977 used by Brady.  
111 Speech by the Minister for Justice, Mr Cooney, ibid., col. 1604.  
112 Taoiseach's speech, ibid., col. 1576.
expansion of the security forces alone.\textsuperscript{113}

It was a response which was well received in London, as was indicated by the Prime Minister in the course of a Northern Ireland security debate in 1976, by which time the levels referred to in the foregoing had all maintained their steady increase.

I pay tribute to the co-operation we are receiving from the Government of the Republic of Ireland ... There is no doubt that the Government of the Republic are as determined as are this Government to stamp out cross-border banditry and murder. There is now close and valuable co-operation between the RUC and the Irish police.\textsuperscript{114}

By exclusion it was clear that the British Government was still not appreciably closer to its objective of Army-to-Army co-operation, a point which Wilson admitted later in the debate.\textsuperscript{115} However, it was not this shortcoming in Anglo-Irish relations which caused them to be further strained in 1976/1977, although both of the two causes of this process may be partly attributed to the frustration which a lack of bilateral military co-operation engendered.

The first concerned the consequences of incursions into the Republic of Ireland by two units of the British Army Special Air Service (SAS) on 5/6 May 1976. Despite a request from the British Under-Secretary for the Army, Mr Robert Brown, that the Irish Government take a 'constructive view' of the incident,\textsuperscript{116} the eight men concerned were tried in the Special Criminal Court in Dublin (which normally saw alleged IRA defendants before it) in March 1977. The charges they faced were: possessing arms and ammunition without a

\textsuperscript{113} ibid., col. 1574. In 1974 the Irish budget was approximately £1,500 million.
\textsuperscript{115} ibid., col. 33. See also House of Commons, \textit{Official Report}, vol.903, 22 January 1976, cols. 1515-18, for confirmation by Rees that cross-Border police co-operation was 'close', and in some areas 'excellent', but that bilateral Army co-operation was unlikely.
licences and possessing weapons with intent to endanger life —
the latter of which carried a twenty-year maximum prison sentence.\(^{117}\)
Perhaps fortunately for the whole spectrum of Anglo-Irish relations,
the SAS personnel were acquitted of this second charge, but found
guilty and fined £100 each on the other.\(^{118}\)

In the context of the hundreds of incursions by British Army
units into the Republic from Northern Ireland, the question arises as
to why these particular instances were subject to the full force of
Irish law. And, incidentally, why it was that two British patrols
which crossed into the Republic only the following day (7 May) were
escorted back to the Border without further action being taken by
the Irish authorities.\(^{119}\)

The answer is to be found, generally, in the context of what
the Minister for Foreign Affairs described as

> the firmest assurances [from the British Government]
>     that their activities would be confined to the other
>     side of the Border and that their method of operation
>     would be in accordance with the law in Northern
>     Ireland.\(^{120}\)

and the conflicting fact that, by the date of this statement, over
300 incursions had been reported.\(^{121}\) It is also to be found in the
suspicion with which the SAS are regarded in Ireland,\(^{122}\) which arose
from its justified reputation as an elite and unorthodox regiment.\(^{123}\)


\(^{118}\) \textit{Guardian}, 9 March 1977.


\(^{121}\) ibid., cols. 1325-6.

\(^{122}\) See for example, \textit{Dáil Éireann, Official Report}, vol. 271, 27 March

\(^{123}\) The SAS's unorthodoxy was testified to at the Dublin trial by Major
Brian Baty who was commander of the SAS in South Armagh at the time the
incursions occurred. He admitted that although his men operated under
the same rules and instructions as other army units, they used 'slightly
And finally, the answer is to be found in the clear belief in official circles in Dublin that the SAS had deliberately infringed the Republic's territory with an intent to operate therein.\textsuperscript{124}

The effect of this particular incident upon Anglo-Irish relations is difficult to assess. While it was Fitzgerald's opinion during the early controversy that it caused, that it would not significantly affect Anglo-Irish relations or co-operation against terrorism,\textsuperscript{125} the long delay between the incursion and the trial must surely have compounded the substantive issue with irritation. On the one hand the delay, and the imposed silence,\textsuperscript{126} may have led both parties to regard the incident as appropriately deserving of no further comment; and on the other it may be that the feelings to which it gave rise were sublimated and transferred, to be expressed on a later occasion. Indeed, and with no more than a modest claim in its favour, this conclusion may be inferred from the behaviour of both states on the subject of extradition, which overtook Border incidents as the principal focus of Anglo-Irish relations in early 1977.

This second security-related cause of poor Anglo-Irish relations was the result of the Irish Government's refusal, in November 1976, to vote in favour of the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, and consequent upon that, its refusal to sign the Convention.\textsuperscript{127} This Convention covered proposed co-operative measures against terrorism to be taken by the eighteen member countries of the Council of Europe,

\textsuperscript{124} See the report in the \textit{Irish Times}, 8 May 1976, p. 1 of Dr Garret Fitzgerald's interview on the BBC programme 'Newsday' also confirmed Mr Sean Donlon, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs (Interview, Dublin, 7 June 1978). But there was a measure of light relief: from August 1976 soldiers in Northern Ireland were required to carry a 'green card' advising them what to do if they strayed across the Border. This was in addition to a \textit{yellow} card (instructions on when to open fire), a \textit{red} card (instructions on when they could fire plastic bullets during riots), and a \textit{blue} card (detailing powers of arrest under Northern Ireland's emergency laws). \textit{Sunday Times}, 6 March 1977.


\textsuperscript{126} i.e. neither British nor Irish Government spokesmen commented during the period that the matter was '\textit{sub judice}'.

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Irish Times}, 13 November 1976.
and in refusing to vote in favour of it, Ireland was a minority of one. 128

The Irish decision neither to vote in favour of the Convention nor to sign it was explained in identical terms as its refusal, in the Law Enforcement Commission's Report, 129 to agree to the extradition of a particular class of fugitive offender, i.e. those who could claim that there was a political motive for their crimes. 130 The impediment to Irish accession was, therefore, Article 29 of the Irish Constitution of 1937, which states

Ireland accepts the generally recognized principles of international law as its rule of conduct in its relations with other states. 131

According to the legal adviser to the Department of Foreign Affairs in this matter, Mr Mahon Hayes, the Irish Government therefore

[had] no alternative but to refuse because the generally recognized principles of international law do not allow a country to extradite someone wanted by another country for a political crime. For us the matter is closed unless these should change in the next five or ten years. 132

What the Irish Government was prepared to agree to was also consistent with its stand on the Law Enforcement Commission: it sponsored a clause whereby a suspected terrorist could be tried in his country of origin rather than be extradited, but this failed at an early stage. 133 Furthermore there were indications from the Irish Government that they were prepared to sign the parallel EEC anti-terrorism convention, proposed for later in 1977, precisely because it accommodated the principle of 'aut dedere aut judicare' –

128 ibid., Ireland did not, however, vote against the Convention; it abstained.
129 see Chapter 2, pp. 139-41.
131 ibid.
132 ibid.
133 ibid.
'extradite or try'. \textsuperscript{134}

Neither measure was regarded as sufficient by the British Government, for there persisted in some official circles a belief that the Republic of Ireland was a 'haven' for terrorists.\textsuperscript{135} Moreover, even among those in the British Government who might be thought to have understood, if not sympathised with, the policies of extradition in Ireland, there was an attempt to belabour this issue as though it was, substantively, a central concern of Anglo-Irish relations and the affairs of the Council of Europe. Thus in the wake of Ireland's abstention at Strasbourg, the Northern Ireland Secretary voiced his hope that it would yet reconsider its position and join Britain in signing and ratifying the Convention.

In doing we shall take a major step forward in the capture of terrorists within Northern Ireland. Those that have fled to the South will have no political argument for remaining.\textsuperscript{136}

Callaghan, the Prime Minister, was even more forceful: he assured a questioner in the Commons

\begin{quote}
Everyone needs to ratify it. It is Britain's desire that they [the Republic of Ireland] should do so, and we shall place the maximum possible pressure on them to do so within the limits of our power.\textsuperscript{137}
\end{quote}

It was at this point that the feelings accruing to other issues in relation to Northern Ireland appear to have surfaced. Mason, in the course of informing the House of the outcome of his visit to Dublin on

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Financial Times}, 12 February 1977.

\textsuperscript{135} A belief which Scotland Yard fostered and repeatedly asserted. \textit{Times}, 18 February 1977; and \textit{Financial Times}, 24 February 1977. The latter reports that the briefing given to crime correspondents, by senior Metropolitan Police officers, after the Balcombe Street (hostage) trial suggested that 30 badly wanted terrorists were hiding in the 'haven' of the Republic.


24 January 1977, expressed a brief but angry opinion on Ireland's case, then before the European Court of Human Rights, concerning allegations against Britain of ill-treatment and torture of internees.\textsuperscript{138}

The more that they are pursued [the allegations] in the European Court the more that they serve only the cause of the Provisional IRA. Some years ago we recognised that we had been guilty of ill-treatment and that 14 prisoners had been ill-treated. We admitted that and have now paid compensation. I thought that was a first-class example of a mature democracy. Only the Provisional IRA can benefit as a result of pursuing this case.\textsuperscript{139}

In the context of developments in the Republic of Ireland such outbursts appeared to be insensitive and unjustified. Insensitive because, in 1976, the Irish Government had, at the cost of a constitutional crisis, passed three major pieces of anti-terrorist legislation which bestowed upon the security forces extraordinary powers of search, arrest and detention with regard to certain offences related to the security of the State. They were: the Criminal Law Act; the Emergency Powers Act; and the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act.\textsuperscript{140} The first mentioned, the Criminal Law Act 1976, provided for maximum penalties for certain offences, in particular those under the Offences against the State Act 1959, to be increased. This Act also created certain new offences in respect of incitement to join unlawful organisations, of aiding, facilitating or arranging escapes from lawful custody and of giving false information. The Garda Síochána were also given increased powers of search while members of the Defence Forces were given powers of arrest and search when acting under certain specified conditions.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{138} See Chapter 9.

\textsuperscript{139} House of Commons, \textit{Official Report}, vol. 925, 10 February 1977, cols. 1635-6. Mason was misleading. Britain had carefully agreed only not to contest the torture and ill-treatment findings. It did not admit them.

\textsuperscript{140} R.F.V. Hevston, 'The Legal Control of Terrorism in the Irish Republic', a paper presented at the World Congress on Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy (Paper No. 95), Sydney-Canberra, 14-21 August 1977, pp. 7-8.

\textsuperscript{141} ibid., p. 7.
The Emergency Powers Act 1976 gave increased powers to the Garda in respect of the arrest, custody, and questioning of persons suspected of certain offences. The third measure, the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act 1976, was the Irish counterpart to the British legislation which resulted from the recommendation of the Law Enforcement Commission to establish extra-territorial courts. Of significance to Anglo-Irish relations was that the second and third of these measures were regarded by the President of Ireland, Cearbhall O'Dalaigh, a noted legal authority, as possibly unconstitutional. While the first mentioned, the Criminal Law Bill 1976, was signed on 25 September of the same year, the remaining two were referred by him to the Supreme Court for a decision as to their constitutionality. In turn, these also received the Presidential assent but O'Dalaigh's initial decision was bitterly criticised by the Minister of Defence, which event, in the absence of a satisfactory apology from either him or the Government, resulted in the former's immediate resignation.

Hence, in early 1977, there was, in addition to the further controversy which would have resulted from any attempt by the Irish Government to amend the Constitution in favour of British demands for extradition, a residue of sensitivity from the recent attempts by the Head of State to ensure that legislation already passed was constitutional. Furthermore it is doubtful whether these circumstances, and those of the 'inter-state case' would have allowed the

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143 Cearbhall O'Dalaigh's legal (and cultural) accomplishments were outstanding. In 1946, at the age of 35 he was appointed Attorney General – the youngest in the history of the State. He held this position from then until 1948, and again between 1951 and 1953 – at which time he was appointed Chief Justice. In 1972 he became a judge at the European Court of Justice. (Ireland Today: Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, No. 927, 15 April 1978).

144 In the case of the Criminal Law Act and the Emergency Powers Act, advice was first sought by the President from the Council of State, an advisory body to the President.

145 On 18 October 1976, at the opening of an Army cookhouse at Columb Barracks, Mullingar, Patrick Donegan, a Minister with a justified reputation for 'foot-in-the-mouth' statements, described the President as 'a thundering disgrace'.

146 See Chapter 9.
Government to call the required referendum with any degree of confidence that it would yield a favourable result. This consideration had two aspects. The first was the effect that an unfavourable (negative) vote would have had upon the majority in Northern Ireland, and their attitude towards political progress. The second related to the approaching General Election in Ireland and the risk that the question of extradition might be removed from the realm of international politics, and further distorted by reducing it to one of several issues in a domestic election campaign.

That Callaghan and Mason were unjustified in their respective criticisms of the Irish Government is a conclusion which appears to be supported by reference to the available evidence on convicted terrorists and fugitive offenders. In October 1975 there were approximately 2,000 persons in custody in Northern Ireland for terrorist or terrorist-related offences. At the same time there were less than 150 such persons in custody in the Republic and only 49 extradition warrants to hand from the RUC, which suggests that the problem of fugitive offenders was not then a major contributing factor to the general problem of politically motivated violence. Moreover, as of January 1977, no attempt had been made by the British authorities to use the legislation that enabled an Irish court to try those charged with terrorist offences involving violence and which were committed in the United Kingdom. This reinforced the view of the Irish Government that British complaints about the use of the Republic as a safe haven by the IRA were exaggerated, which Fitzgerald confirmed.

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147 Cosgrave was not particularly impressed by the Unionists' attitude towards constitutional change in the Republic. It was his experience, based on the successful 1972 move to delete the provisions establishing the special position of the Catholic Church, that they adopted a 'just-as-well' attitude which did not bode well for future initiatives. (Interview with Liam Cosgrave, T.D., Dublin, 8 June 1978).


149 Times, 26 January 1977.
Despite repeated allegations that there are people in the Republic against whom evidence exists in respect of offences committed [since 1974], we are still awaiting the submissions of such evidence on which to charge any such people...

All my efforts when Minister for Foreign Affairs to secure either co-operation in prosecuting such people, or an admission that there was no one in the Republic against whom such evidence existed, failed.150

Finally there were indications that the principles adhered to by the Irish Government in refusing to sign the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism were accepted as valid by a number of the Council of Europe nations. Expressing its own point of view, France stated that it would not ratify the Convention until its EEC counterpart was ready,151 and issued a declaration that 'any person persecuted on account of his action for the cause of liberty has the right of asylum'.152 Norway and Italy reserved the right to use Article 13, which enables signatories to refuse extradition in respect of political offences, or offences connected with political offences.153 Portugal stressed that it would not extradite anyone for solely political motives, or to a country were capital punishment existed.154 Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Netherlands also reserved to themselves the right to decide whether or not to extradite their own nationals, irrespective of the offence.155 Thus the

150 Guardian Weekly, 1 April 1979, p. 4, Letter to same by Garret Fitzgerald.
152 'No Haven For Terrorists', Speech given by the Taoiseach, Mr Jack Lynch, T.D., at a meeting of the Fianna Fáil Party Committee on Northern Ireland in Leinster House on Thursday, 27 April, 1978. Statements and Speeches 5/78: Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, (hereafter cited as Lynch Speech, 'No Haven For Terrorists'). Substance of Taoiseach's remarks regarding nations entering reservations was confirmed in the Irish Times, 28 January 1977, p. 13. Malta also joined Ireland in refusing to sign the Convention but its reasons for doing so were not disclosed.
153 ibid.
155 Lynch Speech, 'No Haven For Terrorists'. In an attempt to obtain the sources of these claims the writer made three written requests of Mr Lynch between 27 June 1979 and 30 June 1980. Unfortunately, although
Republic of Ireland's action notwithstanding, the cumulative effect of these several reservations was, for practical purposes, to diminish much of the proclaimed force of the Convention.

In Dublin the response to British criticism was, therefore, angry (and well supported by the Parliamentary Opposition). Following a Cabinet meeting on 11 February 1977 a curt one sentence rebuttal was issued saying:

The determination of the Irish Government to deal with terrorism is well known and needs no further elaboration.

In sum, Anglo-Irish relations with regard to Northern Ireland were, in the spring and summer of 1977, in a noticeable state of disrepair. That they should have reached this point primarily as a result of the flux in British attitudes was not remarkable. Indeed, it was proof only that the processes at work in the period 1973-1977 were, cumulatively, a significant illustration of one of the fundamental truths of Britain's relationship with Ireland — what Oliver MacDonagh expressed in the context of earlier events as essentially a 'readiness to put off intractable political problems' in favour of policies which cannot ameliorate the underlying nature of the conflict.

The pattern of this characteristic has, in fact, three components. The more prominent is that of intervention, exemplified by such actions:

- Mr Lynch's office advised on two occasions that he would attend to the matter, no reply was forthcoming as of April 1981. Similarly a written request to Dr Denny Driscoll, Senior Lecturer in Law at University College Galway, who was reportedly engaged in a study of the extradition issue also drew no reply. Other attempts to obtain the necessary information through law journals also proved unsuccessful.

- The significance of remarks made by the Fianna Fáil spokesman on foreign affairs, Mr Michael O'Kennedy, is discussed later in the next chapter — as part of a broader discussion of Anglo-Irish relations in early 1978, by which time he was Minister for the portfolio.

- Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: The Union and its Aftermath* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977), p. 164. It is helpful if this observation is read in conjunction with MacDonagh's as yet unpublished 'The Grooves of Change', i.e. Lecture III of the Australian National University's Lecture of 1977 on the theme 'Ireland and England: Past and Present',
as the initial deployment of the British Army in 1969, the prorogation of Stormont, and the forcefulness behind the Sunningdale talks. The second and more usual component, however, is an accustomed stance of standing above or outside of the arena occupied by the competing factions. This was London's modus operandi in the period 1968-71, as it was during the UWC strike, and in the period following the Constitutional Convention. Indeed, that whole enterprise could be regarded as an exercise typical of British superintendence of Ireland. And finally there is that singular form of intervention, most vividly illustrated by the introduction of internment without trial in 1971, which is a resort to an emphasis on security concerns. Under this rubric the political reform which was the object of what might be called comprehensive intervention is deferred, and the otherwise corresponding 'observer status' of the British Government excused.

The combined effect of these three components was twofold. Protestant intransigence was increased and encouraged with the experience that Britain had not the will to enforce its writ over the long term, or would enforce it selectively, while among the Catholics the result was to further alienate the community and undermine its responsible representatives. Thus, irrespective of intentions in London the course of action undertaken by Britain was seen by Catholics in the North and by the Government in Dublin as in MacDonagh's description: 'inevitably both partisan and destructive in Irish terms.'

It was, therefore, relatively easy to account for the state of disrepair in Anglo-Irish relations in mid-1977. With an eye to predictions of greater accord between Britain and Ireland which accompanied the election of the Fine Gael – dominated National Coalition in 1973, this situation held so little apparent irony. For it had been brought about by misunderstandings and disputes over precisely those issues on which it had been mutually thought that

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pp. 21-4, (hereafter cited as MacDonagh, 'The Grooves of Change'). This paper, a copy of which is held by the writer, includes not only substantial portions of the section from which the above question was extracted, but also its further amplification by way of contemporary examples.

understanding, if not agreement, existed. The predictions, however, placed too high a discount on London's caprice and Dublin's ability to accommodate it. Hence they were fulfilled only in the short term, to founder along with the initiatives in Northern Ireland, thereby illustrating yet again that accord in Anglo-Irish relations was determined by progress in the North — rather than determinative of such progress.

If the record of Anglo-Irish relations between June 1974 and June 1977 was instructive of any further principle then it was so of the potential for limited issues to assume the importance of core issues in the absence of progress on the latter. And as a corollary it might be noted that the malaise in Anglo-Irish relations concerning Northern Ireland both influenced, and was influenced by, disagreements in otherwise discrete and unrelated issue-areas whose advent coincided with the foregoing. This was evident in the Rockall dispute, a blanket term used to cover a growing number of conflicting offshore zone claims extending from the uninhabited islet to Ireland's north-west, as far as the Western Approaches to the south-east. The argument grew in intensity in early February 1977, following a Whitehall decision to grant British Petroleum a drilling licence in two blocks off Scotland which Ireland had contested since 1974.

By one account this was seen in Dublin as a somewhat high-handed action and, again, an insensitive one for the challenge it represented to Irish hopes for economic development by an already oil-rich trading partner whose dominant economic position was resented.

There was, however, a promising development which suggested that this was appreciated in London and that steps should be taken to redress the situation. Less than three weeks after the BP decision, and reportedly at the urging of the Foreign Office, the British Department of Energy announced that it accepted that the whole question should go to international arbitration. In doing so it reversed its

previous opposition to this remedy, and adopted the policy which the Irish Government had advocated for almost a year.  

This concession to Irish sensitivities was timely, generous, and necessary. But it did not, for it could not, go any great distance in bridging the gap between British and Irish understandings of the issues at hand. Apart from the consultations with the Provisional IRA — which were discontinued in July 1976 — the general uncertainty as to British intentions in Northern Ireland, the susceptibility of the Labour Government to Unionist pressure, and the security-related disputes all remained as agents — in effect vagrant influences — which could bedevil Anglo-Irish relations beyond 17 June 1977 when a Fianna Fáil Government was returned with the largest majority in the history of the State.

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163 ibid.

164 Fianna Fáil's victory followed close upon the general strike in Northern Ireland, called in May 1977, by the United Ulster Action Committee. This attempt in support of a multiplicity of Loyalist demands, although based on the UWC forerunner, was a failure, and in terms of this work, irrelevant. It simply did not become an issue in Anglo-Irish relations.
NARRATIVE, JUNE 1977 - SEPTEMBER 1979
The division of Anglo-Irish relations between 1968 and 1979 into a fourth period (to cover June 1977-September 1979) has little, indeed almost nothing, to do with events in Northern Ireland. Where each of the preceding periods was punctuated, with tolerable precision, by developments in the Province, this period offered nothing to an observer which suggested that it should receive particular attention. Coincidentally, the preceding periods were not only chronological successions of time, but also, in terms of the developments contained therein and the consequences for Northern Ireland, of descending significance. It was as though nine years of frequently intense political activity had left most of the actors enervated.

This was most noticeable in the attitude of the British Government, which waited until the end of 1977 before it undertook anything approaching an initiative. And then only exploratory talks were held between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and four of the main political parties on a possible interim form of devolved government in the Province. But as might be expected of a system in which all of the components had reverted to states of low-energy, inertia was dominant. The talks failed.

Notwithstanding that, the period is deserving of attention in its own right for developments which took place outside of Northern Ireland. In June 1977 the National Coalition of Fine Gael and Labour, which had been the Government in the Republic since 1973, was voted from office and Fianna Fáil returned. In so far as Anglo-Irish relations were concerned, this held the potential for placing them on a somewhat different footing than had existed under the previous leadership of Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave and his Minister for Foreign Affairs, Garret Fitzgerald.

Fianna Fáil were, for the third time led by Jack Lynch, but it was more than his persona (although that, too, was to have its effect) which provoked the apprehension that Anglo-Irish relations could be headed for new and even turbulent times. This was due to the inclusion in his Cabinet of Charles Haughey and Jim Gibbons – whose involvement in the affairs which culminated in the Arms Trial of 1970 was noted
earlier, and whose likely influence on Northern matters, it was
presumed by many, would be uncompromising rather than conciliatory.
There was, moreover, a more recent justification for this view than
events which were seven years the past. Less than two years before,
in October 1975, Fianna Fáil had released a policy document on
Northern Ireland which was widely taken to be representative of the
Party's hard-line republican interests rather than of the more moderate
policies favoured by the Taoiseach. The situation therefore was similar
to that which existed in 1969, except that Lynch was now in an even more
unassailable position than before: he had led the Party, in opposition
and government, for over a decade, and under him Fianna Fáil had been
awarded the most decisive election victory of any party in the
history of the State. It was to be expected, then, that the overall
tenor of Anglo-Irish relations would be decided in no small part by
Lynch's ability to integrate the expressed wishes of his party within
his own inimical style of diplomacy.

Yet in Britain, too, there were influences which were to have
even more effect upon outcomes, or more correctly the lack of outcomes,
in Northern Ireland. The Labour Government leadership which was assumed
by James Callaghan in 1976 was not in a position of strength in
Parliament. After July 1977 it became increasingly obvious that certain
understandings had been, and would be, reached at Westminster which
would preclude any major initiative in Northern Ireland in the short
term.

In these circumstances the conditions existed for frustration on
central issues to be expressed on those of no great or lasting moment,
with the result that the latter tended to become exaggerated and
dominant. The cycle of diplomatic bickering may, however, be
considered complete, for the purposes of this work, with the return of
a Conservative Government in Britain in May 1979. It was not so much
that it did anything immediately to disturb the situation in Northern
Ireland, but it did bring to office views that were bound to break with
the patterns established during the Labour Government's period, even if
they were not to become apparent for some time beyond 1979.
CHAPTER FOUR

Anglo-Irish Relations, June 1977-May 1979
The early ramifications of Fianna Fáil's election victory in 1977 induced their own unsettling influences into Anglo-Irish relations, to compound those of a British origin. In the first instance the new Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, included in his Cabinet a number of Ministers whose appointment, if not quite provoking the intense feelings claimed by Conor Cruise O'Brien, was at least curious in terms of recent Irish political history.

I don't know how anyone with a clear recollection of the Arms Trial period can look at a picture of Fianna Fáil's new front bench without a sense of revulsion. There is Mr Gibbons who swore that Mr Mr Haughey's sworn testimony was untrue. There is Mr Haughey, who swore that Mr Gibbons's sworn testimony was untrue. There is Mr Lynch who dismissed Mr Haughey, put him on trial, and said he was not satisfied with the verdict that acquitted him. And look again at Mr Haughey who once publicly indicated that resignation was the 'honourable course' for the leader at whose hands he has now accepted reappointment ...

The fact that Mr Haughey, for example, was both able and well regarded by a section of Fianna Fáil and had therefore to be included in the Cabinet (as Minister of Health), that the 1977 election had been fought on issues other than Northern Ireland, and that the Taoiseach had given an undertaking not to ease-up on the IRA, was not necessarily reassuring. Principally this was because Fianna Fáil had published a major policy document in October 1975 which reportedly represented the party's hard-line Republican interests. It opened with a statement which left no doubt as to the priority accorded the Ulster Question.

*A central aim* of Fianna Fáil policy is to secure, by peaceful means, the unity and independence of Ireland as a democratic Republic. [emphasis added]

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Inter alia it also called upon Britain to 'encourage the unity of Ireland by agreement', and to declare a 'commitment to implement an ordered withdrawal from her involvement in the Six Counties'. According to Lynch, it did not, as some reports claimed, call for a 'declaration by the British Government of its intention to withdraw from the North', or for a 'declaration of a commitment to withdraw'. Indeed, according to two of his much later statements, as party leader and Taoiseach respectively, there was no question of requesting Britain to implement a speedy withdrawal, or even to set a date for a withdrawal, because of the dangerous effect this would have within Northern Ireland. As Taoiseach he claimed — somewhat unconvincingly in view of the foregoing and the currency of the term 'Lynchspeak' — that Fianna Fáil had made it clear, in its October 1975 statement, that it was urging that the British Government might declare its interest in the ultimate unification of Ireland and that it might take some specific steps in that direction.

The key to understanding these 'theological' distinctions between reported or presumed intentions, and actual intentions was to be found, as in Fianna Fáil's previous period of office, in the interaction between the personality of the Taoiseach and some of the more forceful members of the Party. From two accounts by three leading Dublin

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3 'Statement by Fianna Fáil on Northern Ireland', a two page document published by Fianna Fáil Research and Support Services, Leinster House, Dublin, undated, but released on 29 October 1975.
4 For example, the Irish Times, 30 October 1975, p. 1.
5 Irish Times, 7 July 1977, p. 1.
9 Description used by Mr David Barrie, a junior member of the British Embassy staff in Dublin, in 1978.
political journalists — one in October 1975 and the other in October 1977 — the October 1975 policy statement was forced upon a reluctant Lynch by a majority of Fianna Fáil members who favoured a return by the Party to its traditional line. But after leading Fianna Fáil to a massive election victory, Lynch's subsequent 'artful ambiguities' were held to reflect his attempts to evolve the 1975 policy away from its embarrassing commitment to seek a British withdrawal, however that phrase was qualified, and towards North-South economic co-operation.

As in 1969, however, these accounts which explained Lynch's statements in terms of strong Republican pressure were not altogether sufficient. Once more, they did not explain why it was that Lynch, to all appearances a calm and deliberative person not given to making 'off-the-cuff' remarks, persisted in his particular style of pronouncements long after the alleged reasons for doing so initially had passed. As was argued earlier, a more complete and satisfactory explanation would appear to be that 'Lynchspeak' was the result of a personal preference for a relatively passive style of leadership, and hence speaking style, being rendered negative and imprecise by what amounted to a lack of confidence in the face of pressure from his parliamentary colleagues. Within a relatively short time it was clear that the idiosyncracies so generated were to be important, as was demonstrated by the first post-election Anglo-Irish summit in London on 28 September 1977.

In the first instance some doubt exists as to what emphasis, if any, the Taoiseach placed upon the 'central aim' of Fianna Fáil's policy. Reportedly, at this meeting requested by the Taoiseach immediately following the election, he 'failed even to draw attention' to the unity plank. Lynch later disagreed with this account, or rather appeared to disagree with it.

10 Dick Walsh and Denis Coghlan, 'F.F. demands British intent to withdraw', Irish Times, 30 October 1975, pp. 1 and 5.
12 ibid., p. 9.
13 See Chapter 1, pp. 42-6.
... I told Mr Callaghan about our long-term ambitions and ah, I told him these would remain our long-term ambitions, that is, the ultimate unity of all the Irish people.15

Clearly the two reports were not fundamentally opposed: in the course of a day-long conference it would have been possible for Lynch to have done all that he claimed he did without really drawing attention to the goal of unity. But even if his report is accepted as the more reliable, the inference could still be taken that unity received less than the strong representation which might be expected of a 'central aim'. This question, however, cannot be decided with any greater certainty at the present time with the evidence currently available.

But a second example admits less doubt as to the ability of Lynch to create doubts on matters previously thought to be well understood. At the September summit the Fianna Fáil policy on British withdrawal, as expressed by the Taoiseach, bore little resemblance to that enunciated in 1975. Following the meeting he told RTE radio that the time had not yet come to call on Britain to declare its intention of withdrawing from Northern Ireland at some future date. He continued:

That can come in time. But we shall have to judge the climate, the circumstances in which such a request will be made ... I do not know when that day will come. But in the meantime there is no point in arousing expectations that what we are asking for can be achieved. This is a question of political and ordinary judgement as to when we can move forward to that position. I am not saying that position obtains at the present time.16

In the context of these modifications to the tough requirements of Fianna Fáil's policy in 1975, his decision to also accept British proposals towards an interim political settlement suggested a conciliatory, and even a concessionary, attitude on behalf of the Irish

15 Text of Taoiseach's radio interview on RTE news programme 'This Week', 8 January 1978, Irish Times, 11 January 1978.
Yet even in this third area there were inconsistencies. On two major and related issues -- the further integration of Northern Ireland into the United Kingdom and power-sharing -- Lynch claimed that British and Irish views were in accord when the evidence existed of a divergent tendency in both.

The Taoiseach's position on further integration at least was unequivocal: in the run-up to the election he had rejected it even if the minority community in Northern Ireland should feel that a solution to the province's problems lay in this course of action. Thus, his subsequent decision to support British proposals for locally-elected bodies was interesting because the Northern Ireland Secretary claimed that the minority community rejected them on the grounds that they were integrationist measures. Nevertheless, Lynch felt free to pass on, ex parte, the British assurance that there was 'not a scintilla of a move towards integration' intended.

Indications of a pact, or understanding between certain Ulster Unionists and the Labour Government, and the establishment of the Speaker's Conference 'to consider and make recommendations on the number of Parliamentary Constituencies that there should be in Northern Ireland' were reduced by him to mere 'appearances' or 'rumours' of integration. Yet, on a closer examination they were more than this.


20 'Northern Ireland: Statement by the Taoiseach, Mr Jack Lynch T.D. to Dáil Éireann, October 12th, 1977, following a meeting with the British Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. James Callaghan, M.P.', Government Documentation (JL1), (Dublin: Government Information Services).

21 ibid.
The first suggestion of an 'understanding' between the Ulster Unionists and the Labour Government arose as a result of a division forced by the Scottish Nationalists at Westminster on 4 July 1977, on a motion to reduce the Prime Minister's salary — in effect a motion of no confidence in the Government. Whereas previously the six Unionist MPs had split their voting strength, between abstention and voting with the Opposition, they on this occasion abstained as a bloc. According to their leader, Mr James Molyneaux,

> The Government has moved on administrative devolution and representation, and we, unlike other Opposition parties, have no vested interest in a general election.\(^{22}\)

The following day Molyneaux was more explicit as to what the Unionists' abstention signified. At his weekly press conference in the House of Commons he confirmed that the six MPs had agreed to a parliamentary pact with the Government by which they would not vote to bring it down, in return for progress on administrative devolution for Northern Ireland and an increase in the number of Northern Ireland seats at Westminster.\(^{23}\) He also indicated that, should the Government require positive support from the Unionists to remain in office, the price would be raised.\(^{24}\)

And so it proved to be. Throughout the succeeding nine months the Unionists exercised their prerogative of opposing the Government as they saw fit, but by means short of effecting its downfall. Thus, when in May 1978, they were aggrieved at the handling of local government and education matters by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), they expressed their displeasure in terms of support for a measure to reduce the basic rate of income tax by one penny and so inflicted an embarrassing defeat on the Government.\(^{25}\) Yet, at the same time, they made it plain that their action did not signify an irrevocable change of heart, as one of the leading Unionist spokesmen, Enoch Powell, explained:


\(^{23}\) *Irish Times*, 7 July 1977.

\(^{24}\) Ibid.

\(^{25}\) *Irish Times*, 10 May 1978.
We in the Unionist Party will have to wait and see whether there is any kissing afterwards.

But he added

If the Government now insisted on a Commons vote of confidence, it seems likely that some of those who voted against them tonight would not then do so.26

Nevertheless, that defeat was a portent of the determination of the Unionists to use their bargaining position to maximum advantage and of the Government's inability to rely on the acquiescence of that group in the event of the Lib-Lab pact breaking down. At the end of March 1979, when this condition was fulfilled, the increased, but to Callaghan, unacceptable price predicted by Molyneaux was held to include the sacking of Roy Mason from the Northern Ireland Secretaryship.27 And it is significant that the Labour Government fell in default of Unionist support.

There has, however, been no explicit confirmation by the British Government that a pact existed, but one normally reliable commentator on Northern Ireland reports of such an admission:

[Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives]
Tip O'Neill's visit to Ireland last month seems to reinforce this much more critical [of Britain] line, though here it should be said that his remarks about Northern Ireland being used as a political football appear to have stemmed from his meeting with Jim Callaghan during the election campaign. A source close to O'Neill told me that Callaghan had admitted to the Speaker (presumably as one seasoned wheeler dealer to another) that he had done a deal with the Ulster Unionist bloc at Westminster to keep his government in power without referring it to the Parliamentary Labour Party, and that this had shocked the other visiting congressmen sufficient for O'Neill to refer to it obliquely in his Dublin speech.28

26 ibid.
28 Mary Holland, 'Kennedy's New Irish Policy', *New Statesmen*, 11 May 1979, p. 679. On the face of it, O'Neill's breach of what must have been a confidence was difficult to understand unless reference is made to its forerunners. It appears that, earlier in 1979, the Speaker had raised the matter of a Callaghan-Unionist deal during a meeting with the then British Ambassador (and son-in-law of the Prime Minister) Mr Peter Jay. Jay denied this vigorously; moreover, claimed that the suggestion was a 'personal affront'. Consequently, when O'Neill was told by
Furthermore, the reduced priority and emphasis accorded power-sharing lent credence to the claims made by both Molyneaux and O'Neill. Specifically, if the Unionist MPs were able to dictate the boundaries within which the Labour Government was able to operate in Northern Ireland, then it would be logical to expect that this objective be reduced in priority, or even abandoned, and such appears to have been the case. In response to questions at the press conference of 6 July 1977, and at which he gave details of the Unionist-Labour pact, Molyneaux said he was convinced that the Government was moving away from its 'rigid attitude' to power-sharing in any future Northern Ireland administration, and further, that the NIO was 'moving into a more realistic situation' about setting up a structure to deal with local government problems.29

These statements were not lost on the SDLP leader, Gerry Fitt, who, only days before the September Anglo-Irish summit, called upon Callaghan to personally reaffirm that 'power-sharing' — the choice of words was deliberate — remained a British Government objective in Northern Ireland.30

It was surprising to note, therefore, that the communique released after the 28 September summit did not mention the term 'power-sharing'.31 Rather, it confined itself to stating that 'the British Government's policy was to work towards a devolved system of Government in which all sections of the Community could participate on a fair basis'32 (emphasis added) — a formula which was open to interpretations other than those which previously had been associated with power-sharing. That Lynch gave ex parte assurances from

Callaghan personally of the existence of just such an arrangement, he was incensed, and in this atmosphere one of his aids released the information although almost certainly not at O'Neill's direction.

[Interview; and David McKittrick, 'Horsemen of the Irish Apocalypse', Irish Times, 6 September 1979, p.10.]

29 Irish Times, 7 July 1977.
32 ibid.
Callaghan that power-sharing was a necessary pre-requisite for the return of a system of devolved government in Northern Ireland in no way altered the fact that the September communique constituted a departure from the firm and unambiguous language which had characterised British and Irish statements on the subject over the preceding five years.

Among the several explanations which could be offered for this development the most satisfactory appears to stem jointly from both Callaghan's need not to alienate the Ulster Unionists at Westminster, and Lynch's understanding of this and his evident desire to evolve his Government's Northern Ireland policy away from the embarrassment of Fianna Fáil's 1975 position. The equivocal language of the communique would be consistent with this explanation, although Lynch's acquiescence in it would depend upon his being able to claim that it continued to represent the substance of previous statements on power-sharing. (It also assumes that a British withdrawal was a 'negotiable' item in the Irish Government's Northern Ireland policy whereas power-sharing was not). Indeed it is possible to regard his claims to this effect as being in the nature of a challenge to the British Government to deny that it had strayed from the power-sharing line.

Any other approach than this requires either the imputation of an intent to deceive, to either (or both) Callaghan and Lynch, or that in an excess of enthusiasm to abandon the 1975 position, Lynch unguardedly sacrificed elements of power-sharing along with the withdrawal demands. There is, however, little evidence in support of

33 See, for example, the report of his press conference following the 28 September summit. Irish Times, 29 September 1977, pp. 1 and 11; Communique, 28 September 1977; and Lynch Statement, 12 October 1977; and his adjournment debate speech in Dáil Éireann on 28 June 1976, as reported in the Irish Times, 29 June 1978, p. 4.

34 A point well made by the Leader of the Fine Gael Opposition in Dáil Éireann in his 'Statement on Northern Ireland, 12 October 1977', pp. 20-2.

35 Three Inquiries by the writer were addressed to Mr Lynch in an attempt to ascertain why it was that the September 1977 Anglo-Irish communique was worded in the manner described above. Despite two replies that Mr Lynch would be forthcoming with an answer, nothing had been received by the writer as of April 1981.
these possibilities, but there was evidence to justify the apprehension felt in Dublin and Northern Ireland that the September communique signified a further reduction in the priority to be accorded power-sharing.

By early 1978 the transition was virtually complete as the Northern Ireland Secretary's avoidance of the term during Question Time indicated:

... I have never used the expression 'power-sharing': I have always insisted that it should be a case of partnership and participation in the administration of Northern Ireland. The House will remember that my predecessor, more than 15 months ago, had also dropped the use of that emotive term.

It is right to inform the House that the term 'power-sharing' tends to be taken in Northern Ireland as meaning the system laid down in the 1973 Act. The Government are in no way committed to this system or, indeed, to any other system.36 [emphasis added]

If that was the case Mason's answer comprised a rather belated obituary for an ideal which his predecessor, Merlyn Rees, had maintained in June 1974, was 'the one thing which has stayed on since the fall of the Executive'37 and which had never been officially repudiated by the British Government. This oversight notwithstanding, the transition was, without question, complete by mid-1978.38 Despite Lynch's continuing claims to the contrary,39 and, perhaps surprisingly,

38 In the following months Mason frequently took the opportunity to repeat his 12 January message. See also: 'Text Of A Speech By The Secretary Of State For Northern Ireland, Rt. Hon. Roy Mason MP, To The Doncaster Constituency Labour Party, At The King George V Hotel — 7.30 pm Friday, 3 February 1978' (Supplied by the British Embassy, Dublin).
apparent public support for power-sharing in Northern Ireland,\textsuperscript{40} Mason's moving of the extension of direct rule on 30 June 1978 contained no reference to the term — even in the passages which outlined the criteria for a locally elected administration as a forerunner of full legislative devolution.\textsuperscript{41}

The immediate effect of Lynch's attitude throughout these developments, until early 1978, was to encourage the British Government to believe that a modus vivendi had been established, at least with regard to short-term objectives such as the need for an interim settlement.\textsuperscript{42} This persisted despite indications throughout November and December that Lynch's patience with British inactivity in Northern Ireland was almost exhausted.

In mid-November he told a group of Fleet Street leader writers that if the administrative devolution talks failed — and he clearly expected that they would — then the Dublin Government would have recourse to its official policy.\textsuperscript{43} By late December Lynch was saying, with reference to the idea that Ireland should drop its constitutional

\textsuperscript{40} Three separate polls conducted between 1976 and 1978 revealed considerable support for power-sharing. In February 1976 a survey conducted for the London Weekend television programme, 'Weekend World', reported a 62% majority in favour of some form of power-sharing (Irish Times, 9 February 1976). The following month a National Opinion Polls survey, commissioned jointly by the BBC and the Belfast Telegraph, reported an even wider support for power-sharing, with a favourable reply from 70% of the respondents. (Irish Times, 20 March 1976). Finally, in February 1978, an Opinion Research Centre poll conducted for the Ulster Television programme 'Counterpoint', found a 63% majority in favour of power-sharing. (Irish Times, 10 February 1978). The significance of these findings is beyond the scope of this thesis but two further points are of interest: in the first poll 42% of respondents also supported the anti-power-sharing advocate, the Rev. Ian Paisley; and none of these polls revealed the same level of support for power-sharing that was reported during the term of the Northern Ireland Executive, i.e. 74%.


\textsuperscript{42} Financial Times, 12 January 1978.

\textsuperscript{43} ibid.
claims to the Six Counties, that an Irish Constitution acceptable to the Unionists could only be considered when

elected representatives of North and South get around a table to discuss the future of the country, following an indication by the British Government of its interest in moving forward by encouraging the unity of Ireland by consent and on the basis of agreed structures.44

Nevertheless, it appears that British officials continued to believe that Lynch's September silence on key issues in Northern Ireland signified his complaisant support.45 It is otherwise difficult to account for the surprise and consternation which greeted the Taoiseach's comments made during the course of a lengthy interview over RTE Radio on Sunday, 8 January 1978.

Apart from the timing of the Lynch interview, which the British found particularly distressing (see below), exception was also taken to

(i) his assertions on the subject of power-sharing: i.e. that Callaghan had assured him that 'there would be no devolved government without power-sharing.'

(ii) his references to possible British Government 'disengagement from involvement in Irish affairs' and its replacement by an 'interest in the unification of Ireland'. At one point he described the provisions contained in the Ireland Act 1949 as a 'negative guarantee' and later as 'a steel wall against which intransigent unionists can put their back'; and

45 Financial Times, 12 January 1978, carries a report in support of this interpretation, including an unattributed statement by a British official. The Times, of 8 February 1978 carries a similar report by its Northern Ireland correspondent, Christopher Walker.
46 The full text of the broadcast interview was reported in the Irish Times, 11 January 1978, (hereafter cited as Lynch Interview, RTE, 8 January 1978).
(iii) his cautious and modified reply to a question about a possible amnesty for Provisional IRA prisoners in the Republic. 47 (see pp. 215-16).

The objection as to the overall timing of the interview related to the talks on administrative devolution which Mason and NIO officials began with political leaders in the North on 6 December 1977. As a result of what was regarded as Lynch's interference, the administration at Stormont Castle postponed indefinitely the round of talks which was then imminent. 48 They in any case had little choice but to do so as three parties — the Official Unionists, the Democratic Unionists, and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) — had withdrawn, although for different reasons. 49 The impression given by the British Government was that the responsibility for this debacle lay with Lynch's statements which were, according to Mason, in breach of the summit 'understanding' established in September. The Northern Ireland Secretary was, therefore, 'surprised and disappointed by the unhelpful comments' 50 of the Taoiseach, who in turn, completed the mirror image of incomprehension by finding Mason's reaction 'surprising and unexpected'. 51

Given that Lynch had already started to make such obvious references to reunification, it was understandable that the Irish Government's first reaction to the attention his broadcast drew was that it contained 'nothing new'. Hence the burden of his statement two days later; in fact he could have claimed that such references as the

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47 ibid.

48 Irish Times, 10 January 1978.


'steel wall' of the British guarantee owed much to the inspiration of the Northern Ireland Secretary. Apart from the vexed question of a possible amnesty for Provisional IRA prisoners in the Republic, this was true, for in the kaleidoscope of Irish and Anglo-Irish politics the Taoiseach had in the past already said the things he repeated during the interview. The point was that Lynch on this occasion had chosen to say them while the talks on administrative devolution in the North were still in progress. For a man whose skill in verbal obfuscation was renowned, he had clearly chosen his time to be unequivocal, particularly since it provided the Unionists with a justification for withdrawing from talks to which, reportedly, Lynch had given some impetus.

The key to understanding this imbroglio was that Lynch believed that the administrative devolution initiative had broken down, while in Belfast the NIO maintained that it had not, and moreover that some chance existed of salvaging it. Thus Mason, during Question Time in the House of Commons on 12 January 1978, was careful not to preclude the resumption of talks with Northern Ireland's four main parties once the furore had subsided.

Lynch's certainty on this matter was well-publicised and widely shared. Apart from his statement to the Fleet Street leader-writers he had, only the day before his controversial interview, taken the time to inform the visiting United States Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, of the talk's lack of success. In this opinion he received

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52 Speaking at a lunch in Belfast for leaders of social and welfare organisations on 19 December 1977, Mason stated that the Border could not be forever regarded as 'a sort of Berlin wall dividing hostile peoples'. (Irish Times, 20 December 1977). It is thought that this was also intended to encourage the SDLP — who were on the point of withdrawing from the administrative devolution talks — to remain. See John Healy's column 'Sounding Off', Irish Times, 14 January 1978.

53 Irish Times, 14 January 1978.


wide-ranging support from disparate and usually opposing groups. Airey Neave, the Conservative Party spokesman on Northern Ireland, placed the bipartisan approach to the province at Westminster under some strain by describing the talks as 'waffle', adding that it was the correct description of circular conversations that led nowhere. The SDLP's lack of regard for the talks had been indicated at an early date — it sent a deputation comprising only two members to the exploratory discussions in December in what many took to be a studied insult towards the whole enterprise. Similarly Harry West, leader of the Official Unionists, expressed himself as bitterly disappointed with the results of his party's contacts with the NIO with the comment that 'I do not honestly believe there is any base in the talks'.

Inferentially, both the Home Secretary and the British Prime Minister appeared to exhibit signs of frustration with the lack of progress being made, even if they were not in full agreement with those forementioned. Mason's 'Berlin Wall' speech on 19 December provided one example, and Callaghan's address from the steps of Stormont Castle two days later, in which he demonstrated only his mastery of the obvious political facts of Northern Ireland, being another.

From these manifestations it seems likely that the talks had become, in the absence of a common level of understanding between the parties, a purely cosmetic operation. In these terms, Lynch's intervention appears not so much decisive as premature, and lacking in tactical acumen insofar as the Unionists were concerned. That the talks

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56 Times, 8 December 1977.
57 Irish Times, 19 December 1977, pp. 1 and 5.
58 Times, 8 December 1977.
59 See p. 213, note 59.
60 During a five-hour visit to Belfast, Callaghan claimed that Provisional IRA morale was 'on the wane'; that the people of Northern Ireland must 'give their full-hearted consent' to finding a political solution which could only be suggested, but not imposed from Westminster (Irish Times, 22 December 1977, pp. 1 and 13).
never resumed, even after the dust of the interview had long settled, upheld the claim that the deadlock between the Northern political parties, which existed before, during and after this period, was the deciding factor throughout.

The Taoiseach's remarks on a possible amnesty for Provisional IRA prisoners in the Republic are, however, deserving of further consideration, because they were illustrative of Dublin's changed attitude towards Northern Ireland in the face of the political stalemate there. As was noted previously, Lynch's remarks on a possible amnesty were both cautious and modified, yet it must be assumed that his decision to answer the question in the way he did was deliberate, which the following excerpt confirms. 61

Interviewer (Mike Burns of RTE):

Taoiseach, there are a number of Provisionals in jails in the Republic. If the Provisionals cease the violence, if peace did come, would you give an amnesty to those Provisional IRA prisoners in the Republic's jails?

Taoiseach:

That will remain to be seen. In most cases these people broke the ordinary law of the land and naturally enough if peace came, if there was a cease-fire, we'd look at the situation again. I can't say in advance what the Government would do. It's a matter for the collective responsibility of the Government. But again we're talking on the basis of a hypothesis but if there was a termination of violence and if it appeared that it was unlikely to start again naturally the Government would give careful consideration to some form of amnesty or some form of mitigation of sentences. 62

61 One, perhaps inconsequential indicator supports the view that the Taoiseach may have been unwell on the day of his interview: if the transcript carried by the Irish Times is correct, then he showed, it should be emphasised, an uncharacteristic inattention to historic details. Twice he referred to Fianna Fáil's 1974 policy statement when, in fact it was not promulgated until 1975. He also had some trouble matching dates and Acts of signal importance in Anglo-Irish relations. Thus, he referred to the '1920 Ireland Act', when presumably he meant the Government of Ireland Act 1920; 'the 1945 Ireland Act', which does not exist; and the 'Attlee Act whichever year it was' — by which he, almost certainly meant the Ireland Act 1949.

62 Lynch Interview, RTE, 8 January 1978.
Even so, such sentiments were contrary to the spirit of previous Irish Government positions on the British Government's concessions to the Provisional IRA, as well as recent British statements that no amnesty would be provided for convicted terrorists.  

Unfortunately a clear understanding of Lynch's motives was complicated by his subsequent statements on amnesty. Given the speed and the terms in which he retreated from his 8 January position the question arose as to why he introduced the issue in the first place. On the one hand, his statement of 10 January, and his further clarifications during an interview with Thames Television created the impression that he was extremely anxious to increase the distance from his original statement on every occasion; on the other, if the original reference to amnesty was intended as an (arguable) inducement to the Provisionals, he clearly lacked the courage to see it through the opprobrium, domestic and external, which it generated.

As regards amnesty, therefore, it must be concluded that Lynch had overreached himself. But more importantly his flirtation with it was to be seen as a consequence of the perceived failure of the low-posture-conciliatory policies which were adopted by the National Coalition Government following the fall of the Northern Ireland Executive, and by the Fianna Fáil Government during its first few months in power in 1977. Indeed, from a reading of both the Lynch interview and the subsequent amplification by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Michael O'Kennedy, it was evident that the Irish Government in 1978 were convinced that the only way forward was to persuade the British Government first, to stop its buttressing of the Unionists and, second, to declare its support for the eventual goal of a united Ireland.

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64 Lynch Statement, 10 January 1978.
65 For a report of these see the *Irish Times*, 15 March 1978.
As a strategy it failed: the British Government was simply no more forthcoming as a result of Irish assertiveness than it was of Irish quiescence. Instead, on 12 January 1978, in the House of Commons, Mason accepted Lynch's statement of 10 January as removing 'most of the ambiguity about amnesty'. From the parliamentary record it appears that, ten minutes into Question Time, the controversy which had consumed Anglo-Irish relations for the previous week was over. Or so it seemed.

The reality was that neither Britain nor Ireland was deterred from their mutually uncomplementary diplomatic practices of inactivity and assertiveness, respectively. In the prevailing circumstances this had two consequences: the first was to reduce, or even nullify the opportunity for political dialogue, while the second was to encourage the further intrusion into Anglo-Irish relations of surrogate issues for those of the future of Northern Ireland. Thus were the components of Anglo-Irish relations determined and thus they were composed — in the form of two cycles — throughout the remainder of the period up to, and beyond, the Conservative Party's victory in the British General Election of May 1979.

The first of these cycles which plainly exhibited the tendencies referred to in the foregoing, may be located in February 1978 with renewed criticism by Mason of Lynch's interview comments. These 'external utterances' he told the House of Commons during Northern Ireland Question Time, had caused parties in the North to 'stand back' from their round of talks on a future administration. Although he did not refer to it, the recent statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Michael O'Kennedy, that his Government no longer supported the Sunningdale Declaration on the status of Northern Ireland, must have contributed to the tenor of the Secretary's remarks. Thereafter, a

68 ibid., see cols. 1831-40.
70 O'Kennedy Interview, Sunday Independent, 29 January 1978.
reversal in the confidence in British security measures in the North and a further 'offensive' by the Taoiseach completed the movement towards deterioration in this cycle.

Ironically, the former arose from the indicators which, throughout 1977, tended to show an improving security situation. In terms of civilian and military casualties, shooting incidents, explosions, and the number of persons charged with serious security-type offences, the statistics were a marked improvement on 1976. Moreover, it took place at a time when any security anxieties which the British Government may have felt about the return to power of Fianna Fáil (the amnesty issue excepted) were not in evidence. In the House of Commons, the Northern Ireland Secretary acknowledged that since the advent of the new Government in the Republic there had been no lessening in cross-border co-operation; indeed he cited the co-operation of the Garda Síochána in a recent incident at Forkill, Co. Armagh. Nevertheless, whether the numerical indicators were sufficient to justify Mason's end-of-year statements that 'there [could] be no doubt that the tide [had] turned against the terrorist'; that 'the return to normality [had] begun'; and that 'the message for 1978 is one of real hope', must always have been open to question. Although he had conceded during the course of the debate in the House of Commons on the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Order some six months earlier, that such figures were to be 'used with care', he was obviously distressed when the caveat was necessarily applied to himself.


72 ibid., col. 1644.


The occasion requiring this was the gutting (by a Provisional IRA fire-bomb) of the La Mon House restaurant at Comber, Co. Down, on 17 February 1978. In terms of the 12 deaths and 30 injured, this incident was one of the worst since the violence erupted in 1969. Not only did it constitute a serious challenge to the optimism which had accompanied British security statements over the previous six months, it both undermined Mason's attempt to convince United States interests that Northern Ireland offered a worthy investment potential, and provided a somewhat macabre overture to Lynch's Presidential address to the Fianna Fáil Árd Fheis the following night. According to figures quoted by the Taoiseach to his audience, only two per cent of violence in the North emanated from the southern side of the Border.

In its context and timing it was a statement which could hardly have been more unfortunate. Despite the Taoiseach's condemnation of the bombing as a 'barbarous act', Mason determined to implicate the Republic in what he may have seen as the incipient collapse of the security achievements already referred to. (His position, undoubtedly, was not improved by the Provisional IRA's claim that they were also responsible for the downing of a helicopter on 17 February at Jonesboro, Co. Armagh, which killed the Commanding Officer of the Royal Greenjackets). He dismissed Lynch's claim saying that he disagreed 'absolutely and fundamentally' with the 'paltry figure' of two per cent, and then attempted to reactivate the extradition issue by giving notice of his intention to bring pressure to bear on the Republic to ratify the European Convention on Terrorism. And in an effort to justify the latter retrospectively, the Northern Ireland Secretary further implied that the IRA members responsible for the La Mon bombing had probably sought refuge in the Republic.

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75 See Mason Statement, 29 December 1977.
76 Dublin Sunday Independent, 19 February 1978, p. 4.
For Anglo-Irish relations, the difficulty with both of Mason's lines of argument was that at no stage did he provide the evidence which may have made his Government's case convincing. On the first — that of challenging Lynch's figure — he was at a particular disadvantage: the Irish Government claimed, and went to some lengths to substantiate, that the Taoiseach's remarks were a repetition of British statistics. Subsequently an official Irish Government spokesman not only repeated the statement made at the Árd Fheis, but described the means by which the figures were relayed to Dublin.

Mr. Mason's assertions about the number of terrorist incidents allegedly originating in the Republic are totally contrary to the known figures based on statistics provided by the British themselves.

Under a procedure instituted early in 1975 the British submit to the Irish authorities a weekly list of terrorist incidents which they allege have their origins in the Republic.

On the basis of these British lists, 28 incidents were alleged to have originated in the South last year. That was 1.06% of all incidents in the North. This compared with a figure of 82 for 1975, which was 2.1% of the terrorist incidents North of the Border.  

As regards the second line of argument — rather, the assertion that the La Mon bombers were sheltering in the Republic — the Irish Government was able to claim that 'not a shred of evidence' had been offered in substantiation. By inference, this response also disposed of the (British) qualifications applied to the two per cent estimate used by the Taoiseach. According to the Northern Ireland Secretary, this figure applied only to a very narrow definition of incidents — shots across the Border or terrorists captured or injured — but not to the 'use of the Border for terrorist activities in the north'. It was a point which made perfect sense, if only it had not, like Lynch's initial statement at the Árd Fheis, been preceded by, or placed in
company with events or ripostes which tended to divert the mind by stimulating the spleen.

Since Callaghan and Lynch had reported their satisfaction with security matters in their September communique; since Mason had acknowledged on at least two occasions subsequent to the La Mon bombing that there had been no lessening in cross-Border security co-operation, and since the legal machinery existed in the Republic, under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act and other legislation, for the consideration and bringing of charges where evidence warranted them, Mason's attempts to allocate a measure of responsibility to the Republic, by association or innuendo, were unacceptable in Dublin. In the light of the Secretary's characteristic cockiness, they appeared at best an arrogation of self-righteousness, or worse, a display of opportunism which could only hinder good relations between Britain and Ireland. As the Taoiseach chose to comment on them, 'we regard Mr Mason's ... speech as buck-passing by a man in deep political trouble.'

In the ensuing period, an element of distrust crept once more into Anglo-Irish relations. The extent to which it operated and was reinforced became apparent during the trial at Belfast City Commission of five men charged with the murder of Captain Robert Nairac, a British under-cover soldier who was murdered in the Republic. After nearly five hours of legal confusion and argument, the proceedings had to be adjourned because authorities in Dublin refused to release vital exhibits which, they claimed, would be needed at some unspecified date for the appeal of a man convicted in the Republic on a similar charge.


83 This term is used advisedly. In virtually every interview with British and Irish observers, comment was passed on Mason's attitudes in this term. One observer of the Northern Ireland scene, Christopher Walker, noted that in the Catholic enclaves of the Province this characteristic of Mason earned him the title '5ft 3in John Wayne' ('The American Threat to Ulster', Spectator, 3 February 1979, p. 11).

84 Times, 8 March 1978, p. 3.

85 ibid.
Thus the opportunity to test the possibilities of Anglo-Irish legal co-operation resulting from joint laws introduced in June 1976 and, thereby, to allay British reservations concerning the practicality of the arrangements so provided, was foregone.

In its stead Lynch continued to press the Irish Government's more forceful line, and with more positive results than might have been forecast given the preceding events. Interviewed on Thames Television's programme 'This Week', the Taoiseach said of the British presence

I honestly don't believe there can be permanent peace in Ireland because there will be, in future generations, people who will be prepared to take up arms, even though they will not have the support of the majority of the people to take up arms in such a situation.

Moreover, it was of significance that, on this occasion, the Irish Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the precaution of informing the heads of all diplomatic missions in Dublin of the Taoiseach's proposed statements for that evening. In a further move taken at the same time the Irish Government dismissed two claims made by the Northern Ireland Office, as to lists of actions originating in the Republic. In the first instance it denied ever having received the document in question (one purportedly delivered in December 1977), while the contents of the other were reduced to

... speculations, vague assumptions and unfounded deductions without a shred of evidence to support any of it.

Given the emphatic tone of these denials it was obvious that the tolerance of differences in Anglo-Irish relations was at a particularly low level. Diplomatic debate in any meaningful sense appeared to have receded — to be almost completely usurped by a confrontation between assertiveness and bluster. In the Republic the Government's attitudes were doubtless encouraged by the support lent by Fine Gael during this

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86 As reported in the Irish Times, 10 March 1978, p. 1.
period. Revelations concerning British attempted coercion during the period of the National Coalition, followed by Fine Gael's support of an eventual withdrawal and its leader, Garret Fitzgerald's criticism of Mason's recent security statements as 'unprincipled and less than honest' provided an indication of the extent to which Lynch's initiative was both drawing upon, and successfully operating within popular public opinion in the Republic. And since something less than a bi-partisan approach towards the North existed between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, it was clear that the burden would be chiefly upon Britain for retrieving the poor Anglo-Irish relations which had resulted over the first three months of 1978.

In an attempt to ease the situation, Mason denied three times in the House of Commons that relations between the RUC and Garda Síochána were anything but good, and even went so far as to say that co-operation from the Irish Army had improved in recent months. Further manifestations of this conciliatory mood were found in his reluctance both to respond to questions critical of the Taoiseach, and to dismiss

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89 A British threat made by the then Foreign Secretary, Mr Tony Crosland, that if Ireland did not support the UK stand on fisheries policy, it would have an 'adverse effect' on Anglo-Irish relations, was disclosed by the Fine Gael Leader, Dr Garret Fitzgerald in Dáil Éireann on 15 February 1978 (Dublin Irish Independent, 16 February 1978, p.1). Two days earlier he had stated that, although Northern Ireland was never mentioned, it was generally understood that Anglo-Irish relations with regard to this issue would be particularly prejudiced. (Interview with Dr Fitzgerald, Dublin, 14 February 1978.)

90 In announcing a major review of its policy on Northern Ireland, the party emphasised its aim to enable the Irish people 'to govern themselves without any involvement by Great Britain'. (Irish Times, 17 February 1978, p. 1).

91 Report of a speech delivered in Roscommon on 10 March 1978 (Irish Times, 11 March 1978, p. 1). See also his rebuttal of various security-related assertions by British Ministers in April 1978, in the course of an interview on the RTE radio programme 'This Week' of 30 April 1978 (Irish Times, 1 May 1978, pp. 1 and 6.)

92 House of Commons, Official Report, vol. 945, 9 March 1978, cols. 1593-1600. Four days later Mason was quick to praise the Garda Síochána for their quick response to two cross-Border shooting incidents (Irish Times, 14 March 1978).

93 ibid., cols. 1585-6.
out of hand, as he had done in the same place three days earlier, the two per cent figure cited by Lynch.94

There were two other hopeful notes amid the tedium of proceedings prior to this time. The first concerned the decision by Westminster to provide for a system of proportional representation in Northern Ireland for elections to the European Parliament.95 Contrary to some claims,96 the Irish Government's influence upon this decision had been, according to Garret Fitzgerald, to suggest not the system of election but the number of seats to be contested. In negotiations which covered a wide range of European representational matters it was also agreed that the Republic would make no claim as to its role in the matter.97

The other source of consolation was the discreet silence maintained by the British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, prior to his meeting with the Taoiseach at the EEC summit in Copenhagen in April 1978. In the event, this apparently amicable meeting,98 produced two immediate and tangible results: a decision that the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Northern Ireland Secretary should meet for discussions on political, economic and security matters as soon as possible,99 and an expressed desire to 'look forward' rather than dwell on past recriminations.100 Acting on this the Irish Government suggested a date

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94 ibid., col. 1601.
96 e.g. Those made by the leader of the Unionist MPs at Westminster, Mr James Molyneaux, as reported in the Irish Times, 9 January 1978; and Conor O'Clery, 'Westminster Notebook', Irish Times, 11 February 1978.
97 Interview with Dr Garret Fitzgerald, Leader Fine Gael Party, Dublin, 14 February 1978. Fitzgerald, however dispensed with this proviso in an address to the Atlanta (Atlantic?) Commission on Foreign Policy, in which he disclosed the Irish Government's role. (Irish Times, 16 June 1978).
98 See, Irish Times, 8 April 1978, pp. 1 and 6.
100 Irish Times, 10 April 1978.
early in May for the proposed Mason-O'Kennedy talks.101

For these reasons it was curious that the Northern Ireland Secretary should, only a few days later, express the view that it was unnecessary for him to meet with the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, thereby initiating the second cycle in Anglo-Irish relations in 1978-1979.102 This disturbance to the reassuring atmosphere created by the Copenhagen meeting had its origins in the aftermath to Lynch's 8 January interview but was supplemented by Mason's intermittent attempts to belabour security and related issues in bilateral contacts with the Irish Government.

Almost immediately after the RTE interview, Mason had sought a meeting with O'Kennedy but agreement could not be reached on either the agenda or the venue. The former sought to hold it in Belfast, with an emphasis on security matters. To this end he also sought to have present the Chief Constable of the RUC, Sir Kenneth Newman, and the Irish Minister for Justice, Mr Gerry Collins. None of this held any attraction for Kennedy: the trip North could be made to appear, even if it was not intended by Mason, as a 'summons'; besides, the practice of rotating the venue for Anglo-Irish meetings made Dublin the logical choice,103 and the Irish Government's view was that the agenda should embrace political developments, economic co-operation, and security in equal measure.104 Eventually, however, agreement was reached as to the date and venue — Dublin on 23 March 1978 — but the disagreements regarding the agenda persisted until a few days prior to the proposed meeting. They were then rendered academic, as that date was found to coincide with the State funeral of the former President, Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh. Accordingly the meeting was postponed.

Thus Mason's opinion and general tone in the Commons on 13 April

103 Since September 1977, Lynch had been to London once, and O'Kennedy twice. Neither Callaghan nor Mason had visited Dublin in that period.
104 Irish Times, 28 April 1978, p. 4.
was contrary to Dublin's interpretation of what had been decided upon in Copenhagen. On this occasion however, Mason's reluctance to meet with O'Kennedy was expressed at the same time as his criticism of parties in the Republic who publicly explored the themes of a united Ireland, and the suggestion that the Republic was under pressure from other European countries to sign the Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism.  

The Secretary's stance and views, therefore, were inconsistent with those of his Prime Minister. Where Callaghan and Lynch had agreed on an early meeting, Mason claimed that his previous arrangements — which were known at the time of the Copenhagen decision — were now redundant because of that meeting. In other words, what Mason had required exclusively to be discussed at length in the company of his security adviser had now, in his reckoning, been satisfactorily disposed of in the course of a 50-minute, far-ranging but incidental discussion in Copenhagen.

On the theme of the Convention — in effect extradition — Mason joined two weeks later by a junior Minister at the Home Office, Dr Shirley Summerskill and, somewhat elliptically, by the Prime Minister. According to Summerskill, who was speaking in the debate on the Prevention of Terrorism Bill which would enable Britain to ratify the Convention, the British Government had provided for the application of some of the Bill's provisions to the Republic of Ireland, even if the Republic is not party to the Convention, in case the Republic were willing to participate in an agreement outside the Convention but on similar lines.

She continued:

Discussions are at present taking place in the EEC about the possibility of concluding such an agreement between the Republic and the rest of the Nine.  

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As a result of these assertions, the Irish Government issued an official statement that:

There is no pressure and it is wrong to suggest that discussions are taking place between the other member States and the Republic. The discussions that are taking place are between all nine member-states.108

A more comprehensive reply was made the following day in what stands as the Irish Government's firmest denunciation of British attitudes on this subject.109 At a meeting of the Fianna Fáil Party Committee on Northern Ireland the Taoiseach cited both international, and particularly British evidence110 in support of his Government's position to emphasise that the Republic was 'no haven for terrorists'.111

Although in June, he was to refer to the attempts by the British Government to show the Republic in an unfavourable international light on the extradition issue as 'deplorable', and to question the motives for which they were made,112 further debate or reaction was precluded by an agreement to proceed with the ministerial discussions proposed at Copenhagen.113 On 5 May 1978 these took place in Dublin between Mason


109 'No Haven for Terrorists: Speech given by The Taoiseach, Mr J. Lynch, TD, at a meeting of the Fianna Fáil Party Committee on Northern Ireland in Leinster House on Thursday, 27 April 1978', Statements and Speeches 5/78: Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, (hereafter cited as Lynch, 'No Haven For Terrorists').

110 In particular part of a speech of a former British Solicitor-General, Sir Dingle Foot, and Britain's position on the 'Hi-jacking' Convention and in the discussion at the European Council of July 1976, on the taking of hostages. Also noted was Britain's failure to avail itself of the provisions of such acts as the Offences against the Person Act, 1861, and the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act, 1976.

111 Lynch, 'No Haven For Terrorists'.


113 The public debate continued in Ireland, however, and at some length, particularly in the columns of the Irish Times, during May and June 1978,
and O'Kennedy, with additional contributions from the Minister for State at the Foreign Office, Frank Judd; the Irish Ministers for Justice, Collins, and Economic Planning and Development, Dr Martin O'Donoghue; and the Minister for State at the Department of Foreign Affairs, David Andrews. Superficially these meetings, and the joint communique which followed them, were satisfactory to the purposes of reconciliation, indeed almost unctuously in this regard, as Mason's comments illustrated:

I am always pleased to come to Dublin. It's a beautiful city. Grand weather. Amiable ministerial colleagues. We have reached a remarkably high level of understanding.

If this was so, then why had there been the need for a meeting in the first place? The communique, after all, had only registered an agreement to differ on fundamental attitudes, but 'complete accord' on the need for short-term political activity in the North. Similarly, cordiality was recorded on security matters and imminent progress forecast in cross-Border economic development. In short, little of substance was agreed that had not already been agreed. Moreover, given the failure of Mason's previous initiative in Northern Ireland, the expectation at this time of a United Kingdom General Election and, therefore, a concomitant expectation that no strenuous British attempt could be expected in the province before the year's end, there was cause for some misgivings for the immediate future of Anglo-Irish relations.

For some time these may have appeared unfounded. The record shows that Mason returned to London 'completely aware' that the security forces in the Republic were 100 per cent committed to defeating

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115 As reported in the *Irish Times*, 6 May 1978, p. 1.
116 For the text of the communique, see the *Irish Times*, 6 May 1978, p. 6.
117 'Expectation' is the operative term. Callaghan eventually decided not to go to the country in the autumn, as most British observers anticipated he would, but to attempt to remain in office for a full term.
terrorism, and that subsequently, he demonstrated an increased resolve against Unionist demands. Indeed, it is possible to regard the Dublin discussions of May 1978 as the final, ameliorating exchange in the two cycles Anglo-Irish relations were subject to in 1978.

Hereafter, despite the fact that Northern Ireland receded as far as British interests were concerned, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs began to speak of 'greater hope' with regard to Northern Ireland, as in his 1978 address to the United Nations:

This year, I am pleased to be able to bring this Assembly a message of greater hope about Northern Ireland. It is true that it is violence generally which makes headlines in the world press. But it is important to look behind the headlines to the fact that, in Northern Ireland, violence is now clearly seen as futile, and that it is rejected and repudiated by all except a tiny minority.

There are signs of new thinking on the part of those concerned with this problem — within Northern Ireland as a whole, and in the United Kingdom — with which on this difficult subject my Government has regular and close consultation. The new thinking and the hope, to which I referred, derive in part from progress and new developments in Ireland. Today the Republic has one of the fastest growing economies in Western Europe. The problem of inflation and unemployment are being brought under control.

Now that both parts of the island are within the European Economic Community we have become more conscious than ever of the extent to which the problems and opportunities we face are similar in both parts of the island. There is a new mood which recognises that on many questions we have common interests which are best pursued in common. My Government would like to ensure that there is a clear awareness abroad of this new mood and of the new possibilities in Ireland.


119 ibid., col. 1389. The following day, in the course of a luncheon speech in Derry he had correspondingly bad news for those of an anti-Unionist persuasion, i.e. he would not seek to impose a constitutional settlement upon the province. (Irish Times, 13 May 1978.)

120 'Address to the 33rd General Assembly of the United Nations by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Michael O'Kennedy TD, on 28 September 1978', Statements and Speeches 7/78 : Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs.
Additionally, the Unionists were to be encouraged towards these 'new possibilities' by 'plain speaking' between 'both the main Irish Traditions' in the confident hope that the differences between them would be overcome.  

If anything, in 1979 the Minister's optimism was even more expansive. In an article which appeared in the New York Times on St. Patrick's Day his remarks included the following passage:

Some new developments in Ireland encourage the hope that the day of reconciliation is near. The fastest growing economy in Western Europe — with 7 per cent growth in 1978 — is that of the Republic, and this trend has had a significant effect on public opinion in Northern Ireland.

Common interests between North and South are moreover becoming more apparent because of joint membership of the European Community and when later this year, Ireland takes over from France the Chairmanship of the European Community, Dublin's international standing will not go unnoticed in Belfast.

Yet against all this emollient talk it was clear that nothing had changed which would alter the basic character of the diplomacy between Britain and Ireland for the remainder of the period under review. O'Kennedy, moreover, had succumbed to the temptation, previously noted in Mason's pronouncements in late 1977, of associating progress (in this case towards a united Ireland) with a diminution of IRA activity. By his own admission the 'new thinking' which he found in British attitudes was not based on any tangible expressions by

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121 'Text of an address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Michael O'Kennedy TD. to the World Affairs Council, Los Angeles on Friday, 6 October 1978', Statements and Speeches 8/78 : Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, (hereafter cited as Statements and Speeches 8/78),


123 Mason, in this respect was incorrigible. By mid 1978 he was again proclaiming that the 'improving trend is clear ... Gradually normality is returning'. (House of Commons, Official Report, vol. 952, 30 June 1978, cols. 1705-06).
British political leaders. Rather it rested on a 'renewal of interest' in solutions to the Irish Question which could be found in the British media, and on unspecified 'evidence of re-thinking on the part of some Unionist leaders.'

Notwithstanding these qualifications to his optimism there were two other surprising elements in his appraisal of the Northern situation in September-October 1978. The first was his investment of hope in the rather Marxist assumption that an increase in (principally) economic benefits would extinguish the other, Unionist tradition whose strength and place the Irish Government simultaneously claimed to respect. And the second was that he appeared not to take caution in these remarks from the increasing likelihood that the Conservative Party, with a respectable record of pro-Unionism under Margaret Thatcher, was going to be the Government.

While it was possible to dismiss some Tory statements in opposition as 'kite-flying' or lunatic fringe in origin, it was difficult to read into the majority of those made by Spokesmen, etc., as other than a positive hardening of a disposition against the immediate and long-term objectives of the Irish Government. In the period after Thatcher took over the Party leadership, only William van Straubenzee's notice to the Unionists that they could not expect a return to old-style Stormont rule under a Conservative Government was in any way supportive of O'Kennedy's view. All the other indications were that the trend in Tory thinking, or at least of those who were known to be close political allies

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124 *Statements and Speeches 8/78.*

125 In 1976 Marcus Kimball, Tory MP for Gainsborough, asked for an investigation into the possibility of creating a colourful new Colony 'like Hong Kong' in a sparsely-populated area such as the Ards Peninsula, and allow into it unlimited numbers of British passport holders who would not have the right of entry to the rest of the United Kingdom. (House of Commons, *Official Report*, vol. 916, Part 1, 27 July 1976, col. 969).

126 At the annual conference of the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland in 1978, van Straubenzee, vice-chairman of the Northern Ireland Committee of Conservative MPs, delivered the message that 'If the calculation is that a minority Conservative Government will trade a return to an old-age type Stormont Government for remaining in office, then the calculation is a false one'. Some doubt existed, however, as to whether this was an 'official' statement on behalf of the Conservative Party. (*Irish Times*, 12 September 1978, and *Times*, 27 September 1978).
of Thatcher, was away from the innovations of the Heath-Whitelaw era — the Irish Dimension, power-sharing, and the weakening of the Union. In this they differed from the Labour Party, with whom they shared a (generally) bi-partisan approach on Northern Ireland, only in the lack of equivocation with which they expressed their opposition to these formerly hallowed concepts. In fact the whole mood of the Conservatives Northern Ireland pronouncements in the period of the Thatcher ascendancy may be seen as complementing a repudiation of all that was attempted under Heath. 127

This was particularly noticeable in the appointment of the principal spokesman on Northern Ireland, Airey Neave. Despite his colourful name, obvious personal courage and adventurous wartime career 128 he was, as a politician, colourless and promoted for loyalty rather than drive. After assuming the spokesmanship on Northern Ireland he claimed to want good relations with the Republic 129 but his subsequent statements were not calculated to serve this purpose.

Neave, for example, claimed early on not to know 'exactly' what was meant by the Irish Dimension 130 — and if he ever found out it was obvious that he was never disposed favourably towards it. In his lexicon Irish unity was something rational Unionists would never contemplate: on the contrary it was a state of affairs into which they would need to be 'beguiled' 131 or even 'seduced'. 132 If Neave's

127 Apart from the evidence for this claim to be cited in the following pages, it was made abundantly clear during interviews — at the Conservative Party Research Office in London (August 2, 1978), and with John Biggs-Davison, Conservative MP for Epping Forest, and then junior spokesman on Northern Ireland. (House of Commons, 2 August 1978).

128 After being imprisoned in occupied Europe during World War II, he became famous for two escapes from Colditz Castle, the top security fortress in Silesia.

129 Interview on RTE Radio, 23 February 1975, as reported in the Irish Times, 24 February 1975.

130 Ibid.


statements on this aspect of the Northern Ireland Question had one
overriding theme it was that

\[\ldots\text{ we [the Conservative Party] stand four-square for the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.}^{133}\]

With equal force he dismissed power-sharing on the grounds that it
would need to be an imposed measure and, therefore, fiercely resisted
by the Protestant majority.\textsuperscript{134}

According to Neave, what was realistic was an increase in the
Northern Ireland representation at Westminster,\textsuperscript{135} a regional council
with restored local government powers,\textsuperscript{136} and 'decisive emergency
action' which included a resumption of internment, house-to-house
searches of the Catholic areas, and a full scale anti-guerrilla warfare
campaign by the Army.\textsuperscript{137} On related issues he was no less mischievous
in his pronouncements — claiming, in one instance, but somewhat out of
phase with Mason, that the La Mon bombers were 'now in the Republic'.\textsuperscript{138}
As with the Secretary's earlier (6 March) allegation to this effect,
Neave produced no evidence whatever, either to the House of Commons in
which he made this charge,\textsuperscript{139} or to the Irish Government, but appeared
to content himself with its repetition.\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{133} ibid.
\textsuperscript{134} ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} OUP Address, 7 April 1978.
\textsuperscript{137} Report of a speech at Abingdon (i.e. his Westminster constituency), on 26 May 1977, in the \textit{Times}, 27 May 1977).
\textsuperscript{139} ibid., cols. 1716-23 cover all of Neave's speech.
\textsuperscript{140} Neave made this assertion on several occasions, but as of 7 June 1978 no information had been received by the Irish authorities (Interview, Dept. of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 1978). Further, since this date, there is no public record of any such evidence having been forwarded.
Naturally, Neave as Conservative spokesman, was reflecting the
text views of his party and of its higher leadership. Accordingly, his
views were the repetition and amplification of those of Mrs Thatcher,
who was just as uncompromising on such matters as power-sharing\(^1\)
and the Union. As she told a meeting of businessmen in Belfast:

> We shall not consider any plans for the political
future of this part of the United Kingdom which could
result in the weakening of the Union.\(^2\)

It was no surprise, therefore, that the meeting at which this
affirmation was delivered should have been organised by the Official
Unionist Party (OUP),\(^3\) or that the full text of which it was part,
was circulated by the Party's publicity department.\(^4\) It was, after
all, an expression of sentiment quintessentially Unionist — notwith­
standing, that to remain absolutely true to the word of Thatcher's
undertaking, the Conservatives would be obliged to repeal certain
provisions of the Ireland Act 1949!

However, given that the same party which had facilitated Thatcher
during her visit had also refused to meet her spokesman the previous
year,\(^5\) it was clear that Conservative-Unionist relations had undergone
a marked reconciliation in 1978. Indeed this was confirmed by the OUP
leader at Westminster, James Molyneaux, who in view of the shadow­
Cabinet approval he assumed Thatcher's statements to have, spoke of a
possible 'working relationship' between his Party and a Conservative
Government.\(^6\) In his reckoning, the Unionists were closer to the
Tories than to Labour and had come closer since Thatcher had taken over
the leadership.\(^7\) It would, however, have been alarmist to infer from

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\(^1\) Mrs Thatcher, at her first meeting with the Taoiseach, is reported
to have told him that she believed power-sharing was no longer a possible
objective (Guardian, 30 September 1977).

\(^2\) As reported in the Irish Times, 20 June 1978.

\(^3\) ibid.

\(^4\) 'Northern Notebook', Irish Times, 24 June 1978, p. 5.

\(^5\) Report by David McKittrick to accompany OUP Address, 7 April 1978,

\(^6\) Irish Times, 22 June 1978.

\(^7\) ibid.
the foregoing that the possible need for parliamentary support had necessitated the reforging of the Tory-Unionist alliance. Although Thatcher had clearly played the 'Orange Card' during her visit to Belfast, she appeared not to be too anxious to repeat the tactic, or with the same enthusiasm anyway. At the Conservative Party conference in October 1978 her emphasis was on the consequences of withdrawal rather than any positive steps her Party would take in government. By then, also, her references to the future of the Union were couched in the familiar terms of the Attleean guarantee enshrined in the Ireland Act of 1949. Interestingly, as Conservative leader, she was following an almost parallel development in her attitudes to Northern Ireland as the man she had displaced, Edward Heath: initial disinterest in the issues, followed by an uncompromising affirmation of the Union, which was then overtaken, in effect compromised, by a willingness to contemplate a weakening of the union. Yet in all there was sufficient ambiguity in Conservative behaviour in Opposition for the Unionists to be anxious, and yet such a clear rejection of the terms in which Britain and Ireland had discussed the political future of Northern Ireland over the previous seven years, that O'Kennedy should surely have taken instruction from it. 148

To an extent this brief discussion of the Conservative's Opposition role in Anglo-Irish relations is redundant. Any impact Airey Neave might have had upon their course, as a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, cannot be considered in other than hypothetical terms: he was murdered in his car leaving the House of Commons car park on 30 March 1979. But his death cannot alter the fact that his views were of considerable significance to Anglo-Irish relations during his life, and that they were a necessary element of contemporary assessments of the future course of these relations. Similarly, the fact that the Conservatives became the Government in no way diminishes the relevance of their Opposition statements, except

148 Thatcher's possible election as Prime Minister was not the most daunting of prospects however. When the question was put to a senior Irish Government official as to how he viewed having to negotiate with her or Neave, he replied, 'nothing could be worse than dealing with Reginald Maudling'. (Interview, Dublin, 1978).
inasmuch as Opposition statements in general may be discounted as reflecting less than the full constraints of government.

Anglo-Irish relations, however, were blighted not by the Conservatives' statements in opposition, although these did not help matters, and really not by the surrogate issues which the Labour Government raised, although these also played their part in creating tensions. Fundamentally, Anglo-Irish relations developed, or rather settled, into their cyclical patterns of disturbance and quasi-harmony for the same reasons that had led to this state of affairs in the previous period — because Northern Ireland had virtually become 'any other business' on the British Government's agenda.

For this reason Anglo-Irish relations ceased to include, in any meaningful sense, a dialogue on the future of the Province. Overall on this matter they became more a series of 'silences punctuated with insincerities'. Silences, on the British side, because they had not the heart, nor perhaps the imagination, to construct new ideas; and insincerities, on both sides, because on the available evidence it is difficult to accept that the assurances given were really believed by those who gave them.

The period June 1977 — May 1979, therefore, was notable only in negative terms, being as one scholar put it, 'the years the locust ate'. Indeed, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this period reduced to just so much wasted time in terms of the situation in Northern Ireland. It lacked the topicality of the civil rights demonstrations, the outrage of Bloody Sunday, the hope of Sunningdale, or even the poor theatre of the Constitutional Convention.

In these two years, the policy-makers of Whitehall became paralysed by the knowledge that what happens on the Andersontown Road, the Falls, or the Shankill is more important than what is decided at Westminster, in Great George Street, or at Stormont Castle. In Dublin

149 The description only is taken from journalist John Whale's forecast of the 1977 Callaghan-Lynch summit (London Sunday Times, 25 September 1977.)

150 Coral Bell, 'Tribes That Lost Their Heads', Melbourne Age, 4 September 1979, p. 9.
this was never a welcome truth, more so under a Fianna Fáil Government than the National Coalition. It resulted, therefore, in a waiting triumvirate: the Irish Government waiting for a British initiative; the British Government waiting for the Protestants and Catholics to come to their respective senses; and the Protestants and Catholics waiting to see what would happen next from the British Government.

As with most extended periods of waiting, this one also became an experience in tedium for all concerned with both the domestic and international politics of the Ulster Question. As was noted earlier, it lacks a focus, a climax, or even an anti-climax. Nothing seemed to command the sort of effort or attention that could have produced any of these. This period — this chapter — ends with the return of the Conservatives to government only for one reason: the patterns of behaviour between Britain and Ireland immediately before, and after this event, deviated little from those already established, and they indicated that it may yet be some time before the moulds are broken.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE UNITED NATIONS
Unlike many issues in contemporary international politics involving disputed territory, the Ulster Question had not been placed before the United Nations prior to 1969. Although self abnegation on behalf of the Irish Government was sometimes cited for this state of affairs,\(^1\) the principal and overriding reason, as explained by the Irish Minister for External Affairs at the time the current decade of 'troubles' began, Mr Frank Aiken, was pragmatic:

... for the good reason that none of our Governments was convinced that during its period of office the adoption of a United Nations resolution would contribute to the restoration of Irish unity.\(^2\)

The events in Northern Ireland in late 1968-early 1969, however, rendered these conditions temporarily inoperative — a likelihood anticipated by the British Government.\(^3\) Although Aiken had 'briefed' the Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant, in April 1969, on the situation in Northern Ireland,\(^4\) it was not until three days after the first British troops had been deployed 'in aid of the civil power' that a concerted Irish initiative was attempted. On 17 August 1969, Cornelius Cremin, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN,

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1 Dr Patrick Hillery, Minister for External Affairs (appointed July 1969), makes a claim on these lines by citing the consensus of Dáil Éireann in July 1946, when a debate took place on whether Ireland should seek admission to the UN, that 'it would be wrong to look to the Organization for national advantage only ...' However he also cites the more compelling reason offered by Aiken (above). [United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Official Records, 1768th Plenary Meeting, 26 September 1969, para 64.]


requested, by virtue of Article 35 of the Charter, "an urgent meeting of the Security Council in connexion with the situation in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland."  

In his letter, Cremin referred to a statement by the Taoiseach of 13 August, according to which the events set off by a parade in the city of Derry on 12 August had made it evident that the Belfast Government was no longer in control of the situation, that the Royal Ulster Constabulary was no longer acceptable as an impartial police force, and that the employment of British troops would not be acceptable and would not be likely to restore peaceful conditions, and certainly not in the long term. In these circumstances, the Irish Government requested the British Government to apply immediately to the United Nations for the urgent despatch of a peace-keeping force to the Six Counties of Northern Ireland. The British Government rejected that request. Subsequently my Government proposed that there should be a joint peace-keeping force in the area composed of members of British and Irish Defence Forces. This proposal was likewise rejected by the British Government.

Cremin also expressed the hope that his delegation might be permitted to be heard at all stages of the discussion by the Security Council of his Government's request.

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5 Article 35 provides that any Member of the United Nations may bring any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute to the attention of the Security Council or of the General Assembly.


8 S/9394.

9 Ibid.
Thus Patrick Keatinge noted of the Irish initiative:

It was a move made only under the pressure of events, when the Irish Government, after fifty years of irredentist talk, had to give the appearance of doing something.10

Moreover, as he pointed out, there were three further observations which were to be made of this drama over the month-long period in which it attracted interest at the UN.

It was a move in which the diplomatic courtesies were more than preserved ... Dr Hillery's tone in the Security Council was almost apologetic. The amount of pressure it exerted on the British Government is debatable; indeed its primary purpose may have been to placate domestic opinion11 ... But, above all, it was not typical of Ireland's role in international institutions ...12

(Although Keatinge's observations were directed towards the Security Council proceedings, they may, without distortion, be taken to apply with equal force to the sequel which occurred in the General Committee of the General Assembly.)

The first is particularly interesting although a reservation may be entered concerning Keatinge's description of Hillery's tone as 'apologetic'. From the Minister's speech during a debate in Dáil Éireann later in 1969, it appears true that Ireland was concerned that its approach to the UN was 'reasonable and not at all disruptive'.13 And it is difficult to escape taking the inference from his statement that Ireland had 'no desire to bring Britain unnecessarily before the

10 Patrick Keatinge, 'Irish Foreign Policy', Collected Conference Papers on Ireland, Britain, and Europe (London: University of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1971) p. 64 (hereafter cited as Keatinge, 'Irish Foreign Policy').

11 Keatinge observes, in this regard, that the Security Council proceedings were broadcast direct on the national radio network, a 'not usual occurrence', ibid., p. 71, note 23. (Confirmation of the importance, if not the primacy of domestic considerations was provided in an interview with a senior official of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs in June 1978).

12 ibid., p. 64.

bar of world opinion', that there was something faintly distasteful or vulgar about raising the issue of Northern Ireland at the UN. But in these respects only did Hillery's tone approach the apologetic. Certainly his statement to the Security Council may, in retrospect, appear restrained in tone (but not apologetic) if compared with his utterances at the UN following Bloody Sunday, but these were made after the publication of Keatinge's paper.

Nevertheless, the central observation remains true, that the diplomatic courtesies were more than preserved, or as Andrew Boyd phrased it

... Hillery got together with [Lord] Caradon for a quiet talk in which he and the British representative evidently found that, while their positions could hardly be reconciled, they could trust each other to play their parts in the Council with dignity and what may be termed style.

The 'dignity and ... style' of these proceedings, was, however, not always guaranteed. Indeed the treatment accorded by the British Government to the first two Irish approaches to it as regards a peace-keeping force was lacking in either quality. The initial request that Britain should seek a UN force was subject to such an extraordinarily quick rebuttal that Lynch later claimed it was rejected even before it was formally put. The second request – this time for a joint British-Irish peace-keeping force, on 15 August – was similarly refused.

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14 ibid., col. 1475.


17 On 13 August, Mr Kevin Rushe, an official of the Irish Embassy in London, presented to Lord Chalfont an aide memoire about the request to Britain to seek a UN peace-keeping force. An aide memoire differs from a formal Note in that it requires no reply, but one was forthcoming, within a mere four hours, asserting the essentially domestic (UK) nature of the issue at hand. (Irish Times, 14 August 1969, pp. 1 & 4).

But it was significant that both were made in the context of developments in Anglo-Irish relations which could have determined an almost complete breakdown in diplomacy.19

Essentially, the Security Council proceedings of 20 August 1969 were concerned with the competence of that body to inscribe the 'situation ... in Northern Ireland' upon its agenda; it was concerned, therefore, with the force of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter which states:

Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII. [emphasis added]

Accordingly, Lord Caradon, representing the United Kingdom, invoked a 'principle which is of the greatest consequence to the United Nations, and indeed to every Member State'. Furthermore, he spoke of the most serious consequences 'for the United Nations and for all of us' if this principle were breached and if 'this necessary safeguard were no longer accepted and respected and effective'. Thus, in his view, the inscription of the item on the agenda '... would undermine the agreed basis in international law on which the United Nations rests'.20

In pursuing this line of argument, Caradon disclaimed any intention to challenge the substance of the Irish letter to the President of the Security Council, but only to reassert the principle involved. And this, of course, precluded UN intervention. In Caradon's estimation

Northern Ireland is and has long been an integral part of the United Kingdom. Events in Northern Ireland are accordingly an internal matter for the United Kingdom Government. It is within the competence of the Government

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19 For an account of these developments see Chapter 1, 'Anglo-Irish Relations, 1968-1972, pp. 34-5.

of the United Kingdom to restore and maintain order. That we are doing. A United Nations force is unnecessary and inappropriate. It is unnecessary because my Government is already taking action. It is inappropriate because United Nations intervention against our wishes would be in violation of Article 2(7) of the Charter.

The raising of the lack of competence of the Security Council based on the domestic jurisdiction clause was, and remains a very common occurrence and the United Kingdom statement was in line with similar objections made by the governments concerned in other cases. Caradon, however, exaggerated the force of Article 2(7), as in his reference to the Irish Government's invocation of Article 35 of the Charter.

In any event, Article 2(7) is clearly overriding. Neither Article 35 nor any other article can possibly be regarded as prevailing over the specific provisions of Article 2(7).

In doing so he appeared not to recognise that Article 2(7) itself expressly provides that the principle on which it is based 'shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.' Moreover, from a procedural point of view, when a matter is brought before the Security Council under Article 35, and the Council is considering its inclusion in the agenda, it is not known whether the matter will be disposed of under Chapter VI (pacific settlement of disputes) or whether action under Chapter VII (action with respect to threats to the peace, etc.) will be envisaged. Thus Egon Schelbel concluded that Caradon's claim regarding the precedence to be accorded the respective Articles was 'unwarranted' because

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21 ibid., para 7.

22 For a brief reference to such cases see Egon Schelbel, 'Northern Ireland and the United Nations', (under the head 'Shorter Articles, Comments and Notes') International and Comparative Law Quarterly 19 (July 1970), p. 484, (hereafter cited as Schelbel, 'Northern Ireland and the United Nations').

23 UNSC, Official Records, 1503rd Meeting, 20 August 1969, para 9. It might be noted that throughout these proceedings, Lord Caradon repeatedly referred to the letter to the president of the Security Council from the Irish 'Foreign Minister', when in fact it was as a result of a letter from the Permanent Representative that the above debate took place.
If it were held that Article 2(7) overrides Article 35 at the stage of the adoption of the agenda, the whole of Chapter VII would become inoperative in cases of claims of domestic jurisdiction.  

The presentation of the Irish reply to the United Kingdom’s arguments is deserving of comment as much for its substance as for the fact that it were heard at all by the Security Council. Generally speaking, it was the practice of the Security Council not to permit the participation in procedural debates of States not represented on the Council and to limit their right to speak to matters of substance. The adoption of the agenda is considered to be a procedural question. For this reason the representative of Finland, Max Jakobson, who professed to have doubts about the right of the UN to intervene in the Northern Ireland Question, expressed nevertheless his concern about the possibility that, in the event of the agenda not being adopted, the Security Council would dispose of the matter without hearing the representative of the Member State which had raised it. He therefore proposed, successfully and without objection from Caradon, that the Security Council listen to a statement from the Irish Minister for External Affairs which 'would in no way prejudge' the question of competence raised by the former, nor 'constitute a precedent for future procedure.'

Hillery’s statement, which Caradon later described as 'careful and restrained', consisted of an argument in two parts, the first legal, the second substantive. As regards the first, he stated that Article 2(7) had in fact not always been applied in the clear-cut, rigid manner which the United Kingdom representative had implied. He recalled, for instance, that the General Assembly was accustomed, and rightly so in the view of the delegation of Ireland, to discussing year after year the question of apartheid in South Africa. He also pointed out that in 1964 the permanent representative of the United Kingdom had suggested that the Security Council should deal with the tension existing between the Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus, a sovereign

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State and Member of the United Nations. In doing so Hillery recognised that in 1964 the United Kingdom representative had invoked the fact that the United Kingdom was a guarantor under the Treaty of 1960, but could not see how the delegation of that State could reconcile the stand taken by it, to the effect that the internal tensions in Cyprus were a proper matter for discussion by the Security Council, with its rejection of any competence of the Security Council in the matter of Northern Ireland.

On matters of substance, Hillery made four main points. The first was that the situation in Northern Ireland was 'grave and could become aggravated to a degree which would create a major problem ... in relations between Great Britain and Ireland.' In the closing paragraph of his statement this was further portrayed as an anxiety to find through the United Nations a means of defusing the tensions which prevail in the North of Ireland and obviating the risk of those tensions mounting, spreading beyond the area itself and leading to friction between two neighbouring Member States.

The intention here was obvious: it was an attempt to justify Security Council consideration of Northern Ireland in terms of Article 35 of the Charter.

Secondly, Hillery repeated a claim, found in the Taoiseach's 13 August broadcast (and repeated in Cremin's letter of 17 August) that Ireland's recourse to the Security Council was necessary because it had exhausted the remedies available through its bilateral relations with the United Kingdom, and consequently feared for the future of the minority community.

28 ibid., para 29.
29 ibid., para 43.
30 ibid., paras 31-32.
The third was yet another claim: that the minority in Northern Ireland was denied basic civil rights in voting, was discriminated against in employment and housing, and was denied the rights of equal access to the fundamentals of a dignified life and citizenship. The Government in Northern Ireland was, moreover, 'lukewarm' in its commitment to reforms and by allowing the provocative parade in Derry had aggravated the situation and sparked the ensuing conflagration.

Hillery concluded from this that an impartial peace-keeping force was required, and that the persistent denial of civil rights to a large part of the population of the Six Counties was sufficient in itself to justify the Security Council's consideration of his Government's request. In support of this proposition, he quoted a statement made only the year before, during the general debate of the General Assembly, by the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Michael Stewart), to the effect that

Article 56 of the Charter makes it clear that no country can say that the human rights of its citizens are an exclusively domestic matter. A country that denies its citizens the basic human rights is by virtue of Article 56 in breach of an international obligation.

Finally, Hillery raised the whole validity of the partition of Ireland:

Although we in Ireland have lived for some time with the reality of British control of the North of our country, we do not in any way concede to them the right to exercise jurisdiction there.

The claim of the Irish nation to control the totality of Ireland has been asserted over centuries by successive generations of Irish men and women, and it is one which no spokesman for the Irish nation could ever renounce.

31 ibid., paras 32 and 41.
34 ibid., para 26.
Ireland was divided as a result of an Act of the British Parliament in 1920, an Act in favour of which not one Irish vote, either North or South, was cast and I might say incidentally, an Act which explicitly contemplated the reunion of Ireland.35

As regards the last two points, the Minister for External Affairs presented what may be termed a 'two-bite' approach to the Security Council. Thus, on the one hand Hillery alleged violation of human rights in Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom, and on the other, he challenged the proposition — more, the 'reality' — that Northern Ireland was a part of the United Kingdom. He nevertheless realised the implications of the latter for the proceedings before the Security Council as in his recognition that

... certain members of the Council may pause before they agree to inscribe the item, inasmuch as by doing so they might feel that they would seem to be taking sides on a territorial issue.36

As was expected, Lord Caradon, in his reply, made no concessions which were likely to alter the pre-ordained outcome of the meeting. Notwithstanding that he departed from his declared intention of focusing only on the procedural question, by discoursing briefly on aspects of the partition of Ireland, he offered a three-part rebuttal of the Irish Representative's arguments. These included the obvious fact that, whatever the Government of the Republic of Ireland claimed to be the theoretical position of Northern Ireland, it recognised the fact of partition. Furthermore, and to preclude external intervention, he gave notice of his Government's determination to pursue the necessary reforms in Northern Ireland 'relentlessly'. And, quite validly, in the light of contemporary circumstances, he added that the civil rights movement in the North was directed 'not to the transfer of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom but to internal reforms'.37

35 ibid., para 33.
36 ibid., para 40.
37 ibid., paras 48-61.
In the normal course of events the Security Council, having heard the relevant Statements, would have proceeded to vote on the adoption of the provisional agenda. Lord Caradon, however, concluded his reply with reference to a suggestion made in the course of consultations which had taken place that day concerning an adjournment. On this prospect he stated that if such a course of action were to be adopted, he would not complain, provided that there was 'a clear understanding that the wish of the Council [was] not to accept and proceed with the item proposed.'

To this end, the Zambian representative, Lishomwa Sheba Muuka, formally proposed that the Council should simply adjourn, *sine die*, without a decision being taken on the question. As Muuka had proposed this motion in accordance with rule 33, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure, the Zambian motion was required to be adopted without debate, which it was, unanimously. Since that date the Security Council has not returned to the Northern Ireland situation.

A short time after this adjournment, Ireland made one more effort to bring the Northern Ireland situation before the United Nations. On 5 September 1969 Cremin requested the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly and item entitled, 'The Situation in the North of Ireland'. Generally, the arguments adduced in the Permanent Representative's Explanatory Memorandum which accompanied his letter were a reiteration of those made in the proceedings of the Security Council, both regarding the alleged violation of human rights in Northern Ireland and the partition of Ireland.

There were, however, some differences of emphasis. As Schwelb observed, the human rights aspect was somewhat more stressed in this

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38 ibid., para 65.
39 ibid., para 70.
second request — a development he attributed to the different competences of the Security Council and of the General Assembly.\textsuperscript{41} And it was probably in recognition of these that the provision of a peace-keeping force was not mentioned. Significantly, the title of the proposed General Assembly agenda item was 'The Situation in the North of Ireland', while the request addressed to the Security Council had referred to 'the situation in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland, which may be taken as an indication of the increasing tendency of the Irish Government to portray partition as being 'the root cause of the demonstrations and unrest in the North ...'\textsuperscript{42}

According to the Explanatory Memorandum the reunification of Ireland, by peaceful means, gave the only hope for the evolution of balanced political and social relations between all sections of the Irish people. Accordingly, Cremin's letter invoked, as had his earlier one to the Security Council, Article 35 of the Charter. But also cited in support of the request on this occasion were a number of the Human Rights provisions of the Charter (Articles 1(3), 13, and 55), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 60 of the Charter,\textsuperscript{43} and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples of 1960.\textsuperscript{44} In regard to this last-mentioned Declaration, particular attention was paid to its paragraph 6 which states that

\begin{quote}
Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

Thus, like Spain before it on the question of Gibraltar, Ireland invoked the 1960 Resolution in support of a claim to be protected against

\begin{footnotesize}\textsuperscript{41} Schwelb, 'Northern Ireland and the United Nations', p. 488.\textsuperscript{42} A/7651, p. 4.\textsuperscript{43} Article 60 relates to the responsibility of the General Assembly in economic, social, and human rights matters.\textsuperscript{44} A/7651, pp. 4-5.\textsuperscript{45} General Assembly Resolution 1514(XV), 14 December 1960.\end{footnotesize}
Procedurally, the case for any such request was required to be made before the General Committee (or Steering Committee or Bureau), which is the organ specified to make recommendations to the General Assembly as regards the inclusion or rejection of items for the Agenda. At the subsequent meeting of the General Committee, the Irish Minister for External Affairs attempted a different approach in regard to the competence of the General Assembly to discuss the item. He referred to the comment of the United States representative during the Assembly's 832nd Plenary Meeting, that in the years since the establishment of the United Nations, certain principles and rules had emerged concerning the application of Article 2(7) of the Charter and it had become established, for example, that inscription and the discussion of an agenda item did not constitute intervention which lay essentially within domestic jurisdiction. Thus, according to Hillery, Article 2(7) had to be read in the light of Articles 55 and 56 under which all Member States had pledged to promote 'universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.'

Naturally this proposition was once more challenged by Lord Caradon for the United Kingdom, and just as extensively as before. He argued that

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46 For a brief reference to the role of this Resolution regarding Gibraltar see Schwelb, 'Northern Ireland and the United Nations', pp. 488-9.

47 The General Committee consists of the President of the Assembly, its 17 Vice-Presidents, and the Chairmen of the seven Main Committees. (Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, UN document A/520/Rev 9, rules 38 and 40).

48 The statement referred to was made by Henry Cabot Lodge, Representative of the United States, in connection with the question of Tibet. (UNGA, Official Records, 832nd Plenary Meeting, 20 October 1959, para 83).

It was surely the duty of Member States not to flout the principle of domestic jurisdiction but to support it ... To do away with the protection contained in Article 2(7) would be to bring internal disputes into the United Nations, and no Member State could long remain immune to the consequences of such a breach of the Charter.50

Yet it was evident from the qualification which immediately followed that the British were reconciled to accepting that some discussion at the UN of at least part of the multi-faceted situation in Northern Ireland was inevitable.

If the question raised by the Irish delegation referred solely to human rights, there would be no need for a separate item as it could be dealt with by existing machinery or brought up under existing agenda items.51

Presumably Caradon was implying that the United Kingdom would be unable to prevent a General Assembly discussion on Northern Ireland should one arise in the course of a consideration of agenda items already accepted. In this case, however, he qualified his qualifications with the claim that the Irish proposal 'raised issues far wider than human rights, ... which were incontrovertibly within the domestic jurisdiction of the United Kingdom.'52 He therefore appealed to Hillery 'in the general interests of the people of Northern Ireland,' to rise 'above the spirit of dispute', and withdraw his Government's request.53

Hillery, faced with the difficult choice of either acceding to a request based on a flattering appeal to his country's contributions to the UN, or risking an unpredictable outcome in the event of a vote, did neither. And that was not surprising given the precedent of the

50 ibid., para 45.
51 ibid., para 46. Of this Schwelb wrote, 'Lord Caradon apparently referred to a series of human rights items the inclusion of which the General Committee had already decided to recommend, such as the "question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms ... in all countries".' ('Northern Ireland and the United Nations', p. 489, note 25).
52 ibid.
53 ibid., para 47.
Security Council proceedings and the consultations which took place outside these. He opted instead to 'reflect further' on the consequences that withdrawing the Irish request would have upon the introduction of reforms in the North. 54

Thereupon, after receiving the briefest of cautions against haste in making a decision on the Irish proposal by the Representative of Chile, Jose Pinera, 55 the Committee accepted an adjournment motion by E.O. Ogbu of Nigeria. 56 No action in the matter was subsequently taken by the delegation of Ireland or by the General Committee, and the item has never appeared on the agenda of the General Assembly.

Clearly, 'the diplomatic courtesies were more than preserved'. And it was indicative of the overall tenor of these proceedings that the US Representative on the General Committee, William B. Buffum, was permitted to escape from what he termed 'a very unhappy dilemma' by not being required to take a stand on the inscription issue. 57

Only the clumsy, and for Ireland, embarrassing support for its proposals registered by the Representatives of the Soviet Union, A.V. Zakharov in the Security Council 58 and Y.A. Malik in the General Assembly, 59 could qualify the above verdict but not to any marked extent. From their statements the USSR (publicly) subscribed to the view that it was the United Kingdom Government's policy to maintain inequality in Northern Ireland, and to permit the right to form a government to only the Protestant community — a view which certainly exceeded the formulation of the Irish Government, and probably many a

54 ibid., para 53.
55 ibid., para 50.
56 ibid., para 56.
57 ibid., para 49.
northern republican! Even then Lord Caradon felt sufficiently moved to note the former's 'unusual restraint'. In analytical terms, however, the record of proceedings was less than clear. Was it the 'solemn farce' or 'charade' its detractors claim, or was it more properly characterised by Boyd, who saw it as an admirable illustration of the way in which an apparently empty exchange of words in the [Security] Council, leading to no formally identifiable agreement or action, can sometimes help to stabilise a dangerous situation — if the trick is worked neatly, by people who understand how to operate the UN mechanism without letting it get out of hand? 

The answer must lie in the extent to which the UN proceedings induced the United Kingdom Government to introduce reform measures in Northern Ireland. In effect this is to test Keatinge's 1971 claim that the amount of pressure they exerted upon Britain was debatable and that their primary purpose may have been to placate domestic opinion.

Quite obviously, the Irish appeal to the United Nation's based on the situation in the Six Counties constituting a source of international friction, or a threat to international peace and security, failed miserably. While the statements of the various parties admitted that there was 'situation' it was apparent to all that

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60 The two statements were very similar but Zakharov's was the more tendentious. In the General Committee, Malik's contained slight alterations which suggested that the Soviets had realised some, if not all, of their previous overstatements.

61 UNSC, Official Records, 1503rd Meeting, 20 August 1969, para 62. Caradon found Malik's statement, on the other hand, to contain 'two calumnies' to which the British Representative objected, and which he attempted to dispose of. (UNGA, General Committee, Official Records, 180th Meeting, 17 September 1969, para 51). The reason for allowing Zakharov to make his statement without challenge but to challenge Malik's probably lies in Caradon's declared intention of speaking only to the principle in the Security Council, which he fulfilled, whereas he departed from this in the General Committee.

62 Boyd, Fifteen Men on a Powder Keg, p. 329.
... there [was] no valid threat to the peace ... for neither the possibility of a British-Irish war nor the belief that Catholics in Europe and throughout the world [felt] 'threatened' by the tragic events in the North [was] very realistic.63

And it was probably not realistic to the Irish Government either. Despite the internal developments which led to the Arms Trial, the mobilisation of the army reserves and the deployment of Irish Defence Forces in Border areas (all of which were discussed in Chapter One), its lack of emphasis upon Article 35—related matters was such as to question whether Dublin raised them only pro forma, so as to be heard before the UN.

As regards human rights, no UN member disputed the facts prevailing in Northern Ireland. There was, correspondingly, little doubt expressed at the time that the United Kingdom Government would take positive and urgent action to remedy the situation.

Although Ireland may have prejudiced a UN discussion of human rights by its determination to link them always with the wider issue of partition, it is arguable whether this was a significant forfeiture. On the contrary, the Taoiseach felt free to claim that Hillery's odysseys to New York were a 'success', for by these, and the efforts of the expanded Government information service

the facts of the ... Six County situation [were]
better known than ever before, not alone to the member Governments of the United Nations but to the world at large.64

Moreover, given the United Kingdom Government's proclaimed determination, there was probably little to be gained from a UN consideration of human rights since, at best, the international body would recommend that Britain do what was already its stated policy. And Caradon, in the course of his statements, had given what amounted to British assurances on the restoration of human rights in Northern Ireland


before an international audience of the highest standing. The resulting responsibility was recognised by the Home Secretary who wrote

We had no doubt that we [the United Kingdom] would be able to argue successfully that this was a domestic matter. But that argument in itself, especially with the eyes of the world upon us, meant that we would have to show that the Government at Westminster was effectively able to intervene, control the situation and introduce policies that would remove the causes of the revolt.65

Thus, there was an admission, if not of 'pressure' from the Republic of Ireland, then of an additional responsibility imposed by developments at the UN as a direct result of action by that state. It was, however, no more than that. From this it followed that it was barely tenable to claim a causal relationship between Irish 'pressure' and the particular efforts, referred to in Chapter One, made by the United Kingdom Government to define the problems of Northern Ireland and arrive at appropriate policies. Furthermore the available records by prominent British Cabinet members at the time simply do not support this proposition either.66 Collectively, these accounts demonstrate that there existed sufficient motivation, without external influences, to ensure that initiatives, such as produced the Cameron Report,67 Hunt Report,68 Scarman Report,69 and

65 Callaghan, A House Divided, pp. 28 and 93.
67 Government of Northern Ireland, Disturbances in Northern Ireland: Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland, Cmd.532 (Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, September 1969), also known as the Cameron Report, after its Chairman, Lord Cameron. Also referred to in the Narrative to Chapter One.
69 The short reference for a Tribunal of Inquiry under the Chairmanship of Sir Leslie Scarman, established 27 August 1969, to inquire into
established joint Stormont-Whitehall working parties,\textsuperscript{70} were taken. Hence Keatinge's claim is upheld: international pressure was more than incidental but less than decisive in terms of affecting outcomes in Northern Ireland.

The question as to whether the UN initiatives succeeded in placating domestic opinion in the Republic, or even whether they were intended to, is beyond the particular concern of this thesis. However, it is worthy of comment that, even in 1978, the precise motives for Ireland's action at the UN in 1969 were still unclear. According to a senior member of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the need for Ireland to take its case to the UN was determined by factors already considered, but also by an understanding of the Northern Ireland situation in terms consistent with the Irish Government's arrogation of the role of 'second guarantor' of the minority community.\textsuperscript{71} Thus it sought to use its constitutional position as, for want of a more appropriate term, the moral government of the Six Counties, in such a way that the Catholics would be reassured, and without conceding, by default, the initiative to the IRA.\textsuperscript{72}

The historian T. Desmond Williams does not accept these reasons unconditionally. In his view there was, neither then nor since, an indication as to how well thought out the Irish moves had been, nor how far the full and possible consequences of a UN peace-keeping force had been envisaged, nor whether the Government's action had been a response to those 'hot days of August' or as a device to defuse a dangerous situation.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{70} Callaghan, \textit{A House Divided}, pp. 94-5.


\textsuperscript{72} Interview, Dublin, June 1978. Note: The interviewee did not use the term 'second guarantor' in relation to the matters discussed, but it is suggested that the actions taken were entirely consistent with this role.

\textsuperscript{73} Report of a Thomas Davis lecture on Irish foreign policy since the Second World War, delivered on 9 April 1978, in the \textit{Irish Times}, 10 April 1978.
Having concluded this, the question might be raised, again with regard to international pressure, as to whether it was necessary or desirable for the United Kingdom to defend its position on the question of domestic jurisdiction in the somewhat immoderate terms that it did. This is not to deny that any government would use Article 2(7) in the circumstances which the United Kingdom was placed in — indeed Article 2(7) was written into the Charter for just such purposes — but it is to question the need to justify its use in such extreme terms. Thus, was it appropriate to speak of the 'overriding importance' of this principle, to speak of the undermining of the agreed basis in international law on which the UN rests, to view an accession to the Irish request as a threat to the sovereignty of Member States and to denounce 'such a breach of the Charter' as a danger to which no Member State could long remain immune.

As Schwelb observed:

It [was] hardly in accordance with the status of the United Kingdom in international affairs to appeal in a human rights context to the solidarity, as it were, of member States in protecting themselves against 'the most serious consequences' which would follow if 'the principle of domestic jurisdiction', fundamental for all, were breached and eroded. Nor [was] it desirable for the United Kingdom to lend its prestige and authority to an excessively wide interpretation of the domestic jurisdiction clause. It might also be doubted whether it [was] good policy for the United Kingdom to use the type of defence which [had] become so familiar as the almost instinctive reaction of States whose record and reputation is entirely different from that of the United Kingdom.  

And to this overreaction by the United Kingdom there was also the suggestion of confusion in presenting its case for not having the Northern Ireland situation inscribed upon the agendas of the Security Council and the General Assembly, respectively. It might be argued, for instance, that it was not necessary to have recourse to Article 2(7) because there were convincing grounds for objecting to the inclusion of an agenda item which was directed against the territorial integrity of a Member State. Moreover, it could be argued that the

75 ibid.
invocation of Article 2(7) in this context did not strengthen the case against the inscription of such an item because the (Irish) claim for the change of an international boundary cannot be classified as a matter which is within the domestic jurisdiction of either Britain or Ireland. 76

In sum there were grounds for suggesting that the United Kingdom, an experienced and competent actor in the UN, was unsettled by the situation in August and September 1969. The only recorded intimations to date which lend a measure of support to this were Callaghan’s and these, it must be admitted, concerned only his assertion that there were nations represented in the UN with whom there was always a latent sympathy for any other nation with a grievance against the United Kingdom. 77 From such scattered and not entirely convincing indications it may be unwarranted to draw the conclusion that the United Kingdom was subject to international pressure in its institutional behaviour, but it is, nevertheless, worthy of note that its behaviour was at least uncharacteristic on those occasions.

If the attitude displayed by the United Kingdom has had any lasting effect upon the international treatment accorded the Northern situation since then, it is that Ireland was discouraged by the tenacity with which the Article 2(7) position was adhered to. This is a judgment inferred from the record, but it is to the point that Dublin has not again mounted a challenge to it. Furthermore this decision to forego UN initiatives has been maintained since 1969 despite the obvious dissatisfaction of the Irish Government with the pace of reform in Northern Ireland, a factor which then was held to be a major consideration in any contemplated referral of the issue. 78

British attitudes alone, however, have not determined this exercise

76 ibid. See also Hull, *The Irish Triangle*, pp. 237-55, for a summary of the arguments challenging the absolute primacy of Article 2(7), and particularly p. 254 for a further opinion that the UN was 'not estopped by Article 2(7) or by British actions to ameliorate the situation from exercising its competence short of dictatorial interference.'


in self-abnegation: the realistic appraisal of Ireland's inability either to influence the Security Council or to rely upon a favourable outcome of a vote in that body or the General Committee, expressed by Hillery in 1969, has remained and also ensured this. And the unwillingness of governments, friendly to both Britain and Ireland, to appear to take one side or the other has required that the latter reserve its international appeals for only the most serious of developments in Northern Ireland. Indeed, the only other occasion on which this prerogative appeared to have been exercised was following Bloody Sunday, when Hillery embarked on a tour of North America and Western Europe to publicise the Northern situation and denounce British policies there, and with results quite predictable from a reference to the precedents of 1969. Sympathy for the Irish viewpoint and concern for the suffering in the North were always in evidence, but such sentiments presaged nothing, or almost nothing, in the way of a sustained international campaign to influence Britain's policies in the province.

Consequently, the events in New York of August-September 1969 have served to emphasise the uniqueness of the Irish initiatives, or to confirm in a positive sense, Keatinge's fourth observation that they were 'not typical' of Ireland's role in international institutions. The two appeals to the Security Council and the General Assembly, remain the first and last time in which the Northern Ireland question appeared to be about to assume a central position in international affairs. Moreover they underline the curious ambivalence with which Britain and Ireland have tended to regard this question and which has been one of the constant characteristics of Anglo-Irish relations throughout not just the period under review, but since the beginning of partition. Thus the British Governments have normally maintained that Northern Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom, but have on occasions

79 ibid., and cols. 1477-9.

80 The decision by the Irish Government to pursue its allegations of torture against the British Government at the European Commission (and Court) of Human Rights is not regarded in the same light as the appeals to the UN, for the reasons that the former was more obviously 'international' and 'political', whereas the latter was 'regional' and 'judicial'. 
not hesitated to absolve themselves from the responsibility which this entails, and have frequently gone so far to proclaim that the Northern Ireland problem is one that can only be solved by the Irish themselves. Similarly, successive Irish Governments have adopted a 'Britain first' strategy — based on the fact that since partition was established by an Act of the British Parliament and Government, it can be terminated in like manner — but have, as occasion demanded, denied the United Kingdom's claim of domestic jurisdiction.\(^1\)

In accordance with the experience outlined and the expectations so engendered, the pattern in the intervening years since 1969 has, very largely, been determined by both British and Irish inactivity and has, therefore, conformed to the pattern noted by Aiken of the period between 1955 and 1969 — that Northern Ireland was raised at the UN only when it appeared 'relevant and useful to do so'.\(^2\) Thus British interest in UN intervention has been voiced on only two occasions — inconsequentially and certainly not by Government — by a Westminister group of Peers and Commons members in 1971,\(^3\) and, four years later, by a parliamentary member of the (Labour) Troops Out Movement.\(^4\)

On the Irish side, only the introduction of internment without trial in August 1971 and the events of Bloody Sunday in January 1972 have caused the Government to seek assistance from the UN. In neither case was the approach along the lines of 1969. Indeed, it was significant that Ireland's response at the UN to internment was almost negligible, notwithstanding the fact that Dublin had, for some time prior to its introduction, been dissatisfied with a situation in the North which had steadily deteriorated through late 1970 and 1971. Apart from an approach by the Taoiseach to the British Prime Minister, in September 1971, for a UN Observer Group along the Border, so as to reduce the 'threat to

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\(^3\) *Irish Times*, 5 May 1971.

\(^4\) *Irish Times*, 26 February 1975.
international peace' caused by the 'troubles', internment was not the central concern of Hillery's General Debate speech of 7 October 1971. On that occasion it warranted only three quite brief references, with the result that an observer might have justifiably inferred from the address as a whole that the Minister for Foreign Affairs was more interested on rebutting the earlier contrivance of the British Foreign Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, to present the conflict in Northern Ireland as principally a 'religious confrontation'.

Following this it took the shock of Bloody Sunday, when thirteen Catholics were killed during a civil rights demonstration by soldiers of the Parachute Regiment, to prompt a further appeal to the UN. Or was it an appeal? When Hillery arrived in New York on his international mission to obtain support for Ireland's policies neither of the forums of the General Assembly was available to him. The former was not in session, while the latter was meeting, but in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia! Perhaps it was as well, for the Minister's statements could in no way have drawn from the United Kingdom representatives the compliments ('careful and restrained') which Lord Caradon bestowed in 1969.

According to Hillery, Britain's policy in Northern Ireland had been changed 'by stealth' so that the British Army had become 'an instrument of coercion,' comprising forces of repression'. Moreover

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87 ibid., paras 154, 156, and 164.
88 UNGA, Official Records, 1944th Meeting, 29 September 1971, paras 82-84.
89 Irish Times, 3 February 1972.
91 ibid., p. 1.
92 ibid., p. 8.
this policy had evolved so as to include deliberate provocation of
the Irish in a way which threatened international peace and security.93
The British Government had, therefore, 'gone mad', even 'crazy',94 and
its policies (not surprisingly) were 'lunatic'.95

In these circumstances it might reasonably be expected that no less
a request would be forthcoming from the Irish Government than was made
to the Security Council in August 1969. And with additional cause.
Not only had the Irish Ambassador to the Court of St James been recalled
following the events, but the mood within the Republic had taken on a
decidedly Anglophobic hue, of which one of the more extreme
manifestations had been the burning of the British Embassy in Dublin.96

On the contrary, however, it was not Hillery's purpose in New
York to propose that the UN consider the Northern Ireland situation.
After meeting with an Under-Secretary-General, Chakravarty Narasimhan,
he claimed to have established for himself, 'the limitation of this
Organization' and that it would be of no use, to either Ireland or the
UN, to seek an action which could be blocked by the British Government's
invocation of Article 2(7).97 Rather, it was apparent that the Irish
Government's intentions encompassed no more than to impress the
international community with the urgency of the situation and to call
upon its 'active goodwill and cooperation ... in accordance with the
purposes and principles of the Charter'.98 In the course of the press
conference this hoped-for role of other governments was mentioned no
less than eight times by the Minister for Foreign affairs.

The effectiveness of this response, in UN terms alone, was

93 ibid., pp. 6 and 10.
94 ibid., p. 5; as he told the conference, '... we have given them
advice, we have told them what should be done ... only God can give
them sense now'.
95 ibid., p. 4.
96 For an account of the national mood in Ireland at this time see
Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (Frogmore, St. Albans, Herts:
97 Hillery UN Press Conference, 2 February 1972, p. 3.
98 ibid., p. 2.
difficult to judge. Although Stormont was prorogued a short time afterwards, this event was also to be seen in the context of an increasing likelihood that the British Government would need to assume a more direct role in Northern Ireland, and of the Irish Government's wider efforts, including the remainder of Hillery's European and North American tour, to bring international pressure to bear on Britain. Nevertheless these particular UN endeavours did at least involve the Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, to a greater extent than his predecessor, U Thant.\(^9\) Whilst in Addis Ababa he had, as a result of a suggestion by Hillery, indicated to the British Government his willingness to involve the UN in measures designed to alleviate the situation in Northern Ireland, provided both Britain and Ireland were in agreement on them.\(^10\) On two subsequent occasions, in July 1972 and January 1973,\(^11\) he reiterated this offer of assistance, even proposing on the former, to send Lester Pearson and Earl Warren to mediate the conflict and assist in arranging a political settlement.\(^12\) None of the three offers were taken up.

Two consequences have proceeded from these generally frustrating experiences for Ireland at the UN on the matter of Northern Ireland. The first was that, with the exceptions of 1969, 1971, and 1972 (discussed above), the treatment accorded the issue has taken the form of ritual exchanges of viewpoint between the Representatives of Ireland and the United Kingdom respectively, and usually in the General Debate of the General Assembly. Given the view of the latter, that it was not properly

\(^9\) There are reports that U Thant, after resigning from the position of Secretary-General, disclosed an offer, made during his period of office, of the good services of the UN with regard to Northern Ireland, but further evidence than that cited below has not been discovered by the writer. Furthermore, in reply to questions in Dáil Éireann on this, Hillery was not prepared to comment on what he regarded as confidential discussions, although it appeared from what he did say that U Thant spoke to both the British and Irish Governments respectively. (Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 262, 27 June 1972, cols. 8-9.

\(^10\) Times, 8 February 1972, p. 2.


an issue which should be aired at the UN, it has received markedly more attention from the former. For the most part these addresses have consisted of a reiteration of the concerns each has had for Northern Ireland, so that in 1973, the hope of the proposed Northern Ireland Executive was prominent in Garret Fitzgerald's, as was the message of 'greater hope' in Michael O'Kennedy's in 1978. And in this regard it was also interesting that even in 1969, 1971 and 1972, the General Debate speeches by the Representatives of Ireland and the United Kingdom were virtually devoid of the antagonism which could reasonably have been expected to follow upon the more traumatic events in Northern Ireland. These facets aside, the record since 1969 has, overall, been unremarkable.

The second consequence was that the possibility and prospect of UN intervention has retained an official but somewhat limited appeal in Ireland. Following the third rejection of Waldheim's offers, the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, dismissed any possible role for the organisation in a restatement of the 'British first' strategy (noted earlier), in which he claimed that the Irish people did not believe that the problem was a matter for the UN but rather a matter that should be solved by negotiations between Westminster and Dublin. Although Fianna Fáil were turned out of Government the month after, the National Coalition (Fine Gael - Labour) were no more enthusiastic about the UN than had been its predecessors. Perhaps in partial reflection of the experience and opinions of Conor Cruise O'Brien, a Cabinet member

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103 UNGA, Provisional Verbatim Record, 2125th Meeting, 24 September 1973, p. 46.


105 1975, however, provided an outrageous but highly incidental occasion: Uganda's Idi Amin took the opportunity, presented to him by his UN appearance, to compare his own country's 'measures to restore ... cultural values and establish justice' with Britain's 'blackmail' and 'decadence' in Northern Ireland. (UNGA, Provisional Verbatim Record, 2370th Meeting, 1 October 1975, p. 67.

(1973-77) and former UN Representative in the Congo, it eschewed any suggestion that the British Army should be replaced by a UN Observer Group on the grounds that this was not 'in the interests of the minority in the North'.

When Fianna Fáil returned to Government in 1977 there was a suggestion that Irish faith in the efficacy of the UN had been renewed. During its period in Opposition in the mid-1970s it had formulated a new, more assertive policy in Northern Ireland, in which was included a proposal to seek support for the achievement of its objectives by 'political and diplomatic endeavour at the United Nations', and further, to obtain the good offices of that body towards developing a British initiative. Although it has, in office, continued to seek the UN's benediction for its policies, and the UN's forums for the expression of its concerns, it could not be said to have kept with the electorate on either of the above pledges. Apart from a thinly disguised request at the UN in 1977 for friendly persuasion to be

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107 His controversial views on the UN Operation in the Congo are contained in his To Katanga and Back (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1966). Additionally, he viewed assumptions that a UN force could control the North in the event of a peremptory withdrawal by the British Army, as 'untenable'. (Report of a memorandum on the Coalition's policy on Northern Ireland, presented to the Administrative Council of the Irish Labour Party, Irish Times, 25 September 1974).

108 Surprisingly, in view of Lynch's January 1973 statement, this was proposed by a Fianna Fáil spokesman on Northern Ireland, Ruairi Brugha (Daily Telegraph, 27 August 1975). However, it may have been an early indication of the change, which was to become evident in October 1975 (see Chapter 4, pp. 200-02), to a more assertive policy on Northern Ireland by that party.

109 Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 277, 5 February 1975, col. 1716. According to one report, however, the Coalition had, some time prior to this statement, been involved in consultations with the Secretary General, i.e. in 'the most informal, personal, and hypothetical way', over an eighteen-month period in 1973-74. (Times, 7 June 1974).

110 Fianna Fáil Research and Support Services, 'Statement by Fianna Fáil on Northern Ireland'.

exerted upon the British Government;¹¹² there are no indications that the UN's support, however defined, or its offices, have been requested in terms of the policy statements previously mentioned.

From an Irish perspective, the most likely reason for this was that the Party's leader at the time these policies were formulated (and later, Taoiseach), was less than convinced of their likely success. Indeed, he prefaced his pledge to seek the good offices of the UN with the following statement:

> International statesmen have intervened in Rhodesia and the Middle East — I do not say with conspicuous success so far — but at least some effort is better than none.¹¹³

This, of course, raises the question as to why the UN should be mentioned at all in Fianna Fáil's policy if such a pessimistic view was held of the likely outcome. The answer appears to lie in the natural tendency of opposition parties to present an alternative to the government, which was in this case not interested in UN intervention, and in the apparently strong Republican feeling among an influential group of Lynch's parliamentary colleagues that it was necessary to bring international pressure from several sources to bear upon Britain as regards the Ulster Question.¹¹⁴

But the failure of the Irish Government after 1977 to implement its pre-election pledges was also to be seen in the wider context of the place that the Ulster Question holds among the states of Western Europe and North America. This is considered in several of the following chapters, but it will suffice at this point only to note that it was not generally an issue which they were prepared to involve themselves in. The same national attitudes which held sway in 1969 — of a reluctance to take sides in a dispute between two states, Britain and


¹¹⁴ See Chapter 4, pp.201-02; Chapter 8, pp.318-21; and Chapter 11, pp.495-6.
Ireland, with which they had friendly relations — was a caution against any attempt to internationalise the issue. Thus the UN may be regarded as the first litmus test of the international political (and strategic) significance of the conflict, or more precisely, of the limits within which it was an international issue at all.
CHAPTER SIX

The Ulster Question and the Countries of Western Europe
Frequently throughout the period under review a whole range of politicians, scholars and commentators — British, Irish and European — have seemingly accepted as an article of faith and also encouraged their audiences to believe, or to accept, that Ireland was part of that loosely defined entity, Western Europe. Whatever reservations may have been held about the substance of their assertion (and these will be considered in this and later chapters), they were at least formally correct. Ireland, for example, was a founder member of the Council of Europe and, since 1 January 1973, a member of an enlarged European Economic Community (EEC). Nevertheless, they have remained assertions which in the light of Irish history and the concept of the Nation State which they embody, could be accepted only with considerable misgivings by anyone concerned with the Ulster Question. The reason for this was well captured in the words of a French writer, Jean Blanchard: 'L'Irlande est une île derrière une île'.

Blanchard, of course, was referring to more than Ireland's geographical location west of Britain. He was noting the historical fact that British influence and Britain's experiences tended to isolate Ireland from continental Europe, with the further consequence that Ireland could not properly be regarded as a European nation. In terms of a participatory interest by the countries of Western Europe in the Ulster Question this has been reciprocal. The troubles in the North of Ireland have simply not

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1 For the purpose of the following discussion Western Europe will be defined as comprising: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the Vatican. It is conceded that the last-named is barely a state, much less a nation, as these entities are generally understood within the discipline of International Relations. However, the writer has included it in this chapter because it both facilitates analysis and because any injury it does to either the discipline or the Vatican is, in the terms of this thesis, minimal.

achieved a central or even an abiding position of any interest in the international politics of these countries. And this occurred despite attempts by the Irish Government, particularly following the introduction of internment in August 1971 and Bloody Sunday in January 1972, to 'Europeanise' the conflict in Northern Ireland. In short, the 'diplomacy of protest'\(^3\) which was the Irish Government's response to these events, failed to engage the governments of Western Europe in any sustained or systematic programme towards action in Northern Ireland.

A different interpretation, however, was presented by the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, who, following his Minister for Foreign Affairs' February 1972 tour of North America and Western Europe, concluded that there existed a considerable measure of international support for the Irish Government's objectives:

The attempt to reimpose traditional Unionism whose vision is narrow and self-defeating, will certainly end in total failure. I have no doubt about this. The political leadership of the non-Unionist community in the North have no doubt about it. Indeed, no objective observer — even though he might be British-European, American, or otherwise, doubts that this cannot happen either. It would be fair to say, in fact, that the published comments of most journalists, and the private views expressed to me and to the Minister for Foreign Affairs by most political leaders in other countries, are insistent that the policy of return to monopoly Unionist Government is now impossible.\(^4\)

It should be noted that the Taoiseach was not here claiming more than a sympathy of views, nor could he be, for Stormont had yet to be prorogued and the indications given 'by most political leaders in other countries' were best summed up in the sibylline phraseology of the French Foreign Minister, Maurice Schumann:

We [the French Government] would not dream of interfering in the internal affairs of a friendly and allied country. However, when such a painful difference separates a friendly and allied country from another with whom we have such close


links, and when they are both about to join the EEC, we have the duty to listen with attention and sympathy, a sympathy that should be translated into words and into facts.  

How France was going to translate its sympathy into words and deeds without interfering in internal British affairs was not explained by Schumann. But an indication of what probably lay behind his statement was given by Patrick Hillery at a press conference on 8 February. The Irish Foreign Minister appeared to go out of his way to emphasise that he was fully aware of the fact that no government could tell any other what to do about its internal problems. According to Hillery the purpose of the discussions he had had in various countries— all friendly to Britain— was to inform them of the Irish point of view in the hope that they might be able to persuade Britain to examine a political solution of the Irish problem. Moreover, he realised that if Britain refused to take any advice from others his efforts would have been to no avail.

Elsewhere in Europe the diplomatic response was no greater than it had been in France. In the Vatican, Pope Paul VI expressed his sorrow, although some time after Hillery’s audience with him, he felt sufficiently moved by events to refer to 'the deplorable delays or even ... continuous disregard' of the problems in Northern Ireland which were contributing to the violence. It was the nearest any head of government in Western Europe came to an overt criticism of the British Government.

At the time (early 1972) it was difficult to tell whether these developments, or rather the lack thereof, signified that Hillery’s efforts were to no avail. Stormont was prorogued but this was not necessarily as a result of external pressure upon the British Government. Indeed this appears to have been recognised in Dublin. A senior official of the

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5 Times, 9 February 1972, p. 2.
7 Telegram to Cardinal Conway, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, as cited in the Daily Telegraph, 1 February 1972.
Department of Foreign Affairs claimed only that the 'prorogation door was bound to open' and that the international initiative taken by the Irish Government ensured that this happened sooner rather than later.9

Non-government reaction to the events of late 1971-early 1972 were, on the other hand, more pronounced; Bloody Sunday touched off a spark of activism among a host of disparate organisations throughout Western Europe, though it has to be said that these would probably have occurred without the efforts of the Irish Government to bring its views before a wider audience. In general these consisted of locally (i.e. non-Irish) organised demonstrations, marches, and even a small number of explosions directed against property that was identified as British, sometimes wrongly.10

Thus, by March 1972 a pattern was established which was to be repeated throughout the remainder of the period under review. Governmental response in Western Europe with but one principal exception — the Vatican, which has maintained a constant interest but low profile regarding Northern Ireland — has been determined very largely by the inhibitions expressed by Schumann. And almost all non-governmental responses with the notable exception of efforts by various organisations in the Netherlands, may be cynically but accurately categorised as no more than 'the politics of the last atrocity'.11 By this expression is meant the transient interest which was shown only as a result of particularly traumatic events in Northern Ireland and which subsided in the period between such events. (It might be noted at this point that this was not a phenomenon peculiar to Western Europe: in later years it became almost a truism that American interest in Northern Ireland was directly related

9 Interview, Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 1978.

10 For example, in Bonn, West Germany, a home-made explosive charge blew out the windows of an antiques shop, Italian-owned in spite of its name, British Trade. (Times, 4 February 1972).

11 An expression used by Erskine Homes, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, in reproaching Conor Cruise O'Brien for his willingness to respond to the prevailing mood of his own community to the point of losing sight of the legitimate reactions of the other. See Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (St. Alban, Herts: Granada/Panther, 1974), p. 265.
to the frequency or magnitude of what were euphemistically termed 'spectaculars'). From 1972 onwards, therefore, it was remarkable if the representative of any Western European government said anything publicly about Northern Ireland. It was truly an area in which, figuratively, statesmen feared to tread.

Only two dared speak of Irish unity and they, interestingly, were heads of State who fused temporal position with spiritual leadership: Pope Paul VI, and Archbishop Makarios, President of the Republic of Cyprus. Of the two, Makarios was the less equivocal statement; the Pope's left some room for doubt as to whether he meant political union or harmony. Whatever his intention, the Pontiff was at least demonstrating the abiding interest which he and his successors took in the conflict in Northern Ireland.

As early as August 1969 he was reported to be 'gravely concerned' about the civil strife in the province and to be following it 'with extremely close attention'. At the same time he expressed his sadness — in effect his criticism of the Stormont Government — at the 'bitter riots and harsh repression' which were then regular features of life in the North.

Similarly, the violence which followed the introduction of internment was seen as being 'greatly aggravated [by] the adoption of...exceptional security measures'. But in a later, authorised statement a Vatican press spokesman explained that the Pope's attitude was that 'history teaches that attempts to redress injustice by force and terrorism cause more, and increasingly grave, injustice'. Thus the Vatican sought both

14 According to one report, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office strove to persuade inquirers that the Pope, who spoke in Italian, used the word 'unione', which could be taken to mean harmony — and not an unambiguous word like 'unificazione' which signified political union. (Times, 18 September 1973).
15 Sunday Telegraph, 17 August 1969.
17 International Herald Tribune, 30 August 1971.
a non-violent solution to the 'grave historic, political and social problems of Northern Ireland', and to reject any suggestion that the Vatican was in any way condoning violence perpetrated by Catholics.

With the passage of time, however, the Pope came to a position supportive of British policies in Northern Ireland. Although his Easter messages, proclaimed from the balcony of St. Peter's, were usually couched in such general terms that even the most devout Roman Catholics were tempted to take them as read, his 1973 pronouncement was a significant departure. In that year he inserted a sentence which could only be construed as expressing specific approval of the British Government's White Paper's proposals for Northern Ireland.

Later still, in 1977, it was reported that Prime Minister, James Callaghan, had received papal approval for the British Government's policies in Northern Ireland. Apparently this was based on Callaghan's declared intention of 'working towards a power-sharing solution'—which immediately rendered questionable any benediction the Pope may have bestowed upon them. As was discussed in Chapter 4, the British Government's commitment to 'power-sharing' in this period was a matter about which the gravest doubts could be held.

In other instances the Pope has appeared as an actor only in the imaginings of those who thought his intervention would somehow succeed where that of others had failed, or at some remove. As unlikely as it may have sounded his name was suggested as an intermediary to set up the 1974 talks between Provisional Sinn Fein and British Government officials.

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20 Times, 24 September 1977, p. 3.
21 See Chapter 4, pp. 204-10.
22 John Whale and Cris Ryder, 'What Did We Promise the Provos?', Sunday Times, 18 June 1978, p. 17. The Pope was not the only unlikely candidate: according to this report Lady Falkender, Harold Wilson's political secretary, was suggested — not surprisingly, by herself!
But in 1978, Archbishop Tomas O Fiaich, Primate of All Ireland, acted on a recommendation of the Vatican's representative in Ireland, Archbishop Gaetano Alibrandi, to intervene in the matter of prisoners being held in the 'H' Block at the Maze Prison in Northern Ireland. Whether the Vatican approved of the manner in which this intervention was carried out is another matter, but what its record indicates is that, of the states of Western (Continental) Europe, it alone has maintained the nearest to what may be termed an active interest in Northern Ireland. Such a judgment is, of course relative; the descending order of interest recorded by those which follow, in this regard, after the Vatican, has but two entries: the Netherlands and Sweden.

The Government of the Netherlands stands alone in having attempted an intervention with the purpose of achieving an accommodation between the factions in Northern Ireland. In early 1975 the three parties to the United Ulster Unionist Coalition (UUUC), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland (UPNI), the Alliance, and the Northern Ireland Labour Party were invited to visit Holland for a study tour to be totally financed by the Dutch Government. The purpose of this visit, to be conducted under the auspices of the Netherlands Institute for Education and Democracy, was to allow the Assembly parties in Northern Ireland to examine the system of coalition and accommodation which the Dutch had evolved in response to their own long history of religious differences.

Apart from what appeared to be a genuine attempt to contribute constructively to the beginnings of a solution, the Dutch initiative was also interesting from another perspective. In a green paper published

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23 Donal Foley, 'The Saturday Column', *Irish Times*, 23 September 1978, See also, pp. 345, of Chapter 9 for a brief mention of O'Fiach's intervention.


25 According to the *Irish Times* of 27 February 1975, the invitation was extended through this institute. However, according to a later report the visit itself became the responsibility of 'de Haaf', a joint Catholic-Protestant organisation, which was funded 70 per cent by the Dutch Government. (Conor O'Clery, 'When Irish Eyes were Opened', a Special Report on the Netherlands, *Irish Times*, 1 July 1976), (hereafter cited as O'Clery, *Irish Times*, Special Report, 1 July 1976).
around this time, the Netherlands was one of three areas specifically selected by the British Government as an example of how opposing groups had been accommodated. However it was and remains a matter of pure speculation as to whether the invitation which ensued was a result of British-Dutch diplomacy. In any event many of the hoped-for benefits of the visit were reduced when the most intransigent parties in the Assembly, the UUUC, declined the invitation while the others accepted it.

Sweden's 'contribution', on the other hand, was both passive, and from a British perspective at least, negative. In the main it consisted of accepting deserters from the British Army and granting them 'residence on humanitarian grounds'. What was to be noted was that the Swedish authorities eschewed the word 'asylum', with its precise legalistic implications — among which would have been an implicit accusation of dictatorial oppression against Britain. The number of deserters involved was not great: by July 1973 five had been granted residence in the terms described above and another five had filed an application for similar treatment.

Clearly, British soldiers were not the first deserters to be granted refuge in Sweden. About 400 American deserters were allowed in during the period of the war in Viet Nam, but a certain marked difference was apparent between them and the British. The latter joined the Army voluntarily, whereas the former had been conscripted; they could not, therefore, claim to have been taken against their will. However, the argument was advanced that the only way for a British serviceman to obtain

26 The other two were Belgium and Switzerland.
30 ibid.
a discharge was to buy himself out, and that this was beyond the means of working class Britons, to whom the deserters were acknowledged to belong. Consequently, it was possible to allow that their continued membership of the Army was determined by coercion and hence, that they were entitled to 'residence on humanitarian grounds'.

According to Huntford's report, the Swedes seemed to have been persuaded in their decisions by two arguments. The first was the moral objection of employing the Army to maintain peace in Northern Ireland, and the second was the prospect of going into action, which was apparently considered a valid ground for desertion. They may also have been swayed to make a gesture by two other considerations which had little or nothing to do with morality or the trauma of a military engagement.

The first of these was the force of domestic radical opinion, of some importance to the then ruling Social Democratic Party, and within which a certain romanticisation of the IRA was noticeable. According to another report filed by Huntford, Swedish radio and television not only paid Northern Ireland considerable attention, but also devoted most of the air time allocated to a presentation of the IRA viewpoint. Thus they recorded exclusive interviews with members of the illegal paramilitary force, described its members as 'resistance men' or 'freedom fighters', and placed them in the best possible Swedish light.

The second consideration was the likelihood that its decisions would be favourably received in (say) the Eastern bloc. By granting what was in reality a form of quasi-political asylum to British deserters, Sweden could justifiably claim that its acceptance of Americans had been less of

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33 ibid.
34 ibid. It should be noted in this regard that West Germans, for example, who sought refuge in Sweden to escape military service because they objected to it in principle were not allowed to stay.
35 ibid.
36 ibid., and the Observer, 5 March 1972. According to the second report, support for the IRA in Sweden was also accompanied by the suppression of opinion critical of their activities.
a special case and more of a precedent, thereby reinforcing its neutrality by demonstrating a certain impartiality in the definition of those fleeing from persecution.

As an issue between Britain and Sweden, the acceptance of deserters assumed no great proportions. The most which was said of it was that it caused a minor irritation in their relations.\(^{37}\) And it follows that even less did it enter into Irish-Swedish relations. Indeed, the only comment available in Dublin as to the general interest shown by the Scandinavian countries (at an official level) in Northern Ireland, was that no readily apparent reason existed for it.\(^{38}\)

When it is considered that, after these brief instances the record shows little more than that Walter Scheel, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, praised the Irish Government's 'moderation' on Northern Ireland,\(^{39}\) and that Prince John, Grand Duke of Luxembourg, made a brief but surprising reference to the conflict in the course of a State dinner speech,\(^{40}\) it is difficult to accept without equivocation Lynch's claim that 'European leaders are not afraid of the problems.'\(^{41}\)

Undoubtedly for different reasons, the record of non-State actor involvement in Northern Ireland, after 1972, was equally lacking in substance. Apart from denunciatory exercises by various intellectuals,\(^{42}\)


\(^{38}\) Interview, Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 1978.

\(^{39}\) Irish Times, 8 February 1977.

\(^{40}\) In pleading for peace in Northern Ireland the Grand Duke drew a parallel between his country's centuries-long struggle for independence with that of Ireland. (Irish Times, 22 September 1978, p. 8).

\(^{41}\) Irish Times, 9 September 1972, p. 9.

\(^{42}\) In 1975 Jean-Paul Sartre, the French existentialist philosopher, announced the establishment of an 'international commission for the study of oppression in Ireland'. Associated with him in this venture were Vladimir Dedijer, vice-president of the so-called 'Russell tribunal' and Noam Chomsky, the American linguist. (Daily Telegraph, 7 April 1975). This was Sartre's second foray into the Northern Ireland situation: in 1970, in company with writers Simone de Beauvoir and Michel Lefris, and numerous lesser luminaries, he had presented a petition to the British
an attempt to raise the issue of human rights at the Commission of the European Communities, efforts by Swedish pacifist groups to persuade British in Northern Ireland to desert, and infrequent indications of trade union interest in various aspects of the situation, only the activities centred in the Netherlands were deserving of more extended comment.

The Dutch initiatives comprised two markedly different types of non-governmental activity. While both must be regarded as 'political' in the widest sense of the word, the first — an initially secret attempt to provide mediation was more so. It consisted of a seemingly innocent seminar convened in Bergen/Binnen (Holland) by the Dutch Council of Churches, and at which the official topic for discussion was 'Co-operative Housing Schemes'. Although it was not a government undertaking, it was fully

(42 cont'd.) Embassy in Paris which condemned 'the Fascist methods — which in no way [fell] short of those of the Greek colonels — employed by the Northern Ireland Government.' (Guardian, 27 October 1970).

43 Two Italian deputies in 1972 asked what action the Commission intended to take in view of the obvious violations of human rights they asserted were occurring in Northern Ireland. (Irish Times, 17 February 1972).


45 Following the UWC strike a joint meeting of British and Italian communists pledged their support for the struggle in Northern Ireland (Morning Star, 1 July 1974), and in 1977 the European Trade Union Confederation offered a similar pledge (Morning Star, 14 January 1977). Perhaps of more significance though, was the declined offer made by union leaders in Holland and Germany, during the UWC strike, to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, to place embargoes on goods exported to Northern Ireland and to 'black' goods leaving it. (Robert Fisk, The Point of No Return: The Strike which broke the British in Ulster (London: Andre Deutsch, 1975), p. 238.

46 Norway is perhaps deserving of a mention at this point although, in the context of international politics, it has no more than a tenuous connection to Northern Ireland. Its inclusion here rests on the fact that in October 1977, two founders of the Peace People Movement, Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1976 (Times, 24 October 1977, p. 16).

47 Guardian, 28 November 1975. Another report claims that it was arranged through the European Conference of Churches by the Protestant mediator, the Rev. William Arlow (Times, 29 November 1975).

subsidised by the Dutch Ministry of Culture. Among the thirty or so delegates who attended were such notable authorities on Catholic-Protestant co-operation as Andy Tyrie and David Payne of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), and Seamus Loughran, Northern Organiser of Provisional Sinn Fein. As was suspected from their presence, the seminar was a well-intentioned cover for a meeting between some of the leaders of rival paramilitary organisations which included the Provisional IRA, the Ulster Volunteer Force and, of course, the UDA.

Whether it achieved anything was open to question. Because of the publicity which it attracted — the element of secrecy was poorly maintained — it broke up in confusion after four days of discussions. Nevertheless, the fact that they took place at all was in itself significant, for one of the tragedies of Northern Ireland has been that the two communities, and by extension the extremists within them, have seldom, if ever, been given the opportunity to meet in an environment untainted by hostility and tension.

It was out of the need to ameliorate this condition that the second initiative drew its inspiration. The 'HulpNoord Ierland' foundation (HuNI) undertook a programme, between 1972 and 1976, whereby over 2,000 children from strife-torn areas were given 'integrated' community holidays in Holland. As with the other Dutch measures discussed previously, the motivation for this action appeared to be provided by the

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49 Times, 29 November 1975.
51 ibid.
52 A Utrecht-based umbrella group which included the Catholic organisation Pax Christi, the Dutch Protestant League of Churches, 'Churches and Fugitives' (affiliated to the Dutch Council of Churches), and Lions, Round Table, and Dutch Rotary Clubs.
53 O'Clery, Irish Times, Special Report, 1 July 1976. Note 1: A similar joint programme was commenced in 1972 by the Netherlands Society for Religious Freedom and Terres des Hommes (Times, 7 August 1972), but it is not clear how, if at all, 'HulpNoord Ierland's' programme related to it. Note 2: A total of 5,000 children was claimed in the Irish Times, 18 August 1976, and the Times, 18 August 1976.
natural and spontaneous sympathy which the Dutch felt for another community sorely afflicted by what they saw as a religious conflict. The impetus to aid Northern Ireland children, therefore, had come naturally from churchmen in Holland, historically linked with Northern Ireland through William of Orange — better remembered perhaps in Belfast than in Amsterdam for his contribution to the North's divisions.

But neither the motivation nor the impetus were sufficient to allow the enterprise to escape criticism in Northern Ireland. The fault appeared to lie with what some observers noted as the colonial attitude of HuNI itself. It was accused by some of its detractors of paying too little attention to local advice, and by others of having no lasting effect on the children who were meant to be its beneficiaries. According to this latter objection there was more to be said for the children meeting their ghetto counterparts for holidays inside Northern Ireland, and getting them to experience peace in their own country rather than in unrelated surroundings.

In response to these criticisms the objectives of the foundation were redefined but to no great effect. In August 1976 further extensive projects were abandoned following a reported disagreement among the joint Dutch-Northern Irish organisers. According to the foundation's chairman, Cornelius Van Bockel, the fault lay with the 'Irish churches', which, he claimed, wanted complete control over the spending of the funds raised in Holland. And there was also the suggestion that the foundation's campaign organiser, Onno De Haan, was too left in his political complexion for the comfort of Northern Ireland churchmen. Although the parties concerned, including Van Bockel and De Haan, then

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54 ibid.
55 ibid.
56 ibid.
57 Irish Times, 18 August 1976.
58 Times, 18 August 1976.
59 ibid. De Haan's official title, according to HuNI, was Executive Director.
tried to resolve matters at a meeting in Belfast in September 1976, during which they discussed recent media reports, the tone of the resulting press statement only served to confirm that the underlying grounds for discontent remained substantially untouched. The statement, signed by both of the above on behalf of the HuNI Executive and Board made no mention of the abandoned projects, nor of the political complexion of De Haan, and went so far as to state that 'any suggestions that the Irish Churches had attempted to seek control of [HuNI's] activities [i.e. the very suggestion that Van Bockel was reported to have made] ... were entirely without foundation.'

However, the activities of HuNI did continue but at what level it is difficult to say since the organisation itself eschews publicity in the belief that it hinders, rather than assists, in the work of inter-community reconciliation. The measure of this belief may be that it was not until 1980 that the writer became aware that HuNI was also running 'encounters, etc.,' for local leaders and community groups from the North.

Ironically, this information came to the fore only as a result of further criticism of the organisation's activities. In April 1980, 26 community workers in Northern Ireland put their names to a declaration of support for HuNI in response to their understanding that it was about to consider disbanding its operations. This action may not have had the desired effect: in August 1980, the Secretary of HuNI advised that:

It is hard to say if our work will continue in the coming periods ... because both policy and finances are subject to further investigation and discussion.

61 Letter from Onno De Haan, Executive Director, HuNI, to the writer, 30 July 1980 (hereafter cited as De Haan letter, 30 July 1980). As of this date De Haan claimed that 7,000 teen-agers and 1,500 adults had been involved in the various programmes.
62 Community and Youth Service Association (CYSA), statement in support of HUNI, dated April 1980 (hereafter cited as CYSA statement, April 1980); and De Haan letter, 30 July 1980.
63 ibid.
64 Letter from Jo. C. Van Loveren, Secretary, HUNI, to the writer, 3 August 1980.
As of November 1980, no further information was to hand as to what these reviews had produced by way of decisions or recommendations. Nevertheless, even if they were to lead to the end of HuNI's involvement, they should not detract from the fact that the Dutch organisation had, for over a decade, provided one of the more impressive examples of concerned Christianity to have been associated with the conflict.

Perhaps in this light it was to be expected that Western European involvement in Northern Ireland should have been minimal. Although it was little referred to by heads of government, Britain's dismal record in Ireland must have been at least vaguely familiar to them all and, thereby a strong caution. Any assessment of the role of the non-state actors must be tempered by what could be reasonably expected of them. With the Dutch examples excepted, almost none of them could claim that the issues in Northern Ireland were even a principal concern. Within their respective frames of reference it was surely expecting too much of them to practise more than the 'politics of the last atrocity'.

But then it was not really from the countries of Western Europe, or from its non-state actors, that the region derived its significance in relation to Northern Ireland. That quality arose from the institutional arrangements and international agreements which the countries of Western Europe have erected and which, more properly, are discussed in the following four chapters. Thus, they are concerned with the treatment accorded the Ulster Question within such entities as the Council of Europe and the European Economic Community (including the European Monetary System), and its relationship to the European Convention on Human Rights.
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Ulster Question and the Council of Europe
Following the frustrated attempts by the Irish Government to internationalise the Northern Ireland situation at the United Nations in 1969, it began to focus more on the international political institutions of Western Europe as a likely alternative forum. At the Council of Europe in Strasbourg the first indications of this were found in the action of the Irish delegation following the introduction of internment in August 1971. It promoted a motion for the establishment of a representative group to be appointed by the Political Affairs and Legal Affairs Committee of the Consultative Assembly to study the situation in Northern Ireland and recommend appropriate legal and administrative provisions that would guarantee the involvement of the northern minority in all decision making and administrative processes. This motion was then referred to the Political Affairs Committee for a report and the Legal Affairs Committee for an opinion — developments which, according to the Taoiseach, were 'evidence of the serious concern of European countries with developments in Northern Ireland'.

Thereupon, it took some four years for this 'concern', in the form of an Order adopted by the Standing Committee on behalf of the Assembly, to achieve a more tangible expression. During this period, in which investigatory sub-committees undertook their tasks in accordance with

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2 ibid.

3 Order No. 319 of 16 December 1971. By this order, the Political Affairs Committee and the Legal Affairs Committee were instructed:—
   i. to appoint Sub-Committees on Northern Ireland, on the understanding that the two sub-committees shall meet jointly, ...
   ii. to study any problems, relating to the situation in Northern Ireland which may be referred to them by the abovementioned sub-committees'. [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Report on the situation in Northern Ireland and the activities of the Sub-Committees on Northern Ireland, Document 3696, 28 November 1975, para. 4 (hereafter cited as Document 3696).]
the Order, the Council of Europe's role in events in Northern Ireland was minimal although not necessarily passive. In January 1972 it provided an occasion for a bitter exchange between British and Irish delegates to the Consultative Assembly on the matter of IRA activities and British policies and, also in 1972, one of its committees, established to hear complaints of discrimination on religious or political grounds from Northern Ireland citizens, welcomed the prorogation of Stormont and the assumption of Direct Rule by Westminster. But perhaps of a wider, and in the long term, greater significance, the European Parliament held a debate on 13 November 1974, on a 'development programme for areas adjoining the border between the United Kingdom and Ireland'.

The Report which was eventually presented to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 28 November 1975 was notable in two ways. First, if affirmed that

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\text{just as there is an 'Irish dimension' ... there is a 'European dimension' to the problems of Northern Ireland which can be seen on three different levels.}
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These levels, or aspects, of the European dimension extended from, in the first instance, British and Irish membership of the Council of Europe, an organisation which was established, inter alia, to guarantee the principles of democracy and respect for human rights. It was thus regarded as inconsistent if that organisation did not consider the problem of Northern Ireland as a common European concern. From this responsibility the second level was determined according to which the Council of Europe had an interest in matters concerning legislation and

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5 Times, 11 April 1972. It is not clear from this report whether the committee in question was one of those established by Order No. 319 or a different committee.

6 Document 3696, para. 9.

7 ibid., para. 6.

8 ibid., para. 7.
the administrative and judicial practices obtaining in Northern Ireland.\(^9\) And finally, a European aspect arose from the common membership of Britain and Ireland in the European Communities which imposed upon them (and, indeed, provided the opportunity for) 'an even higher degree of obligation to co-operate than is the case between sovereign states in general'.\(^10\)

The second distinguishing feature of the report was to be found in the quality of understanding which the Rapporteur, Piet Dankert,\(^11\) brought to its compilation. In this he was undoubtedly assisted by the opportunities to discuss the issues presented by twenty-two meetings of the sub-committees and their visits to Belfast, Dublin, and London. Yet it is still deserving of comment that so many of the important facets of the situation were appreciated by one whose involvement was, in historical terms, brief, and at some remove.\(^12\) The Report's conclusions, therefore, were consistent with Dankert's understanding of political realities and possibilities in Northern Ireland. It came down unequivocally in favour of 'strong coalition government', in which power would be shared between the Protestant majority and the Roman Catholic minority, and which should develop 'technical, social and economic' co-operation between North and South.\(^13\) After being unanimously approved by the Political Affairs Committee it proceeded to the full Parliamentary Assembly for debate on 29 January 1976.

This occasion was in effect a debate in two parts — relating, in the first instance, to the Report in General and in the second to the draft

\(^9\) ibid., para. 8.

\(^10\) ibid., para. 9. The Report was here quoting from: Report of a committee to consider, in the context of civil liberties and human rights, measures to deal with terrorism in Northern Ireland, Cmnd. 5847 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, January 1975), para. 10.

\(^11\) A Dutch socialist parliamentarian.

\(^12\) Perhaps the best testimonial to Dankert's report was that only one of the speakers in the January 1976 debate on Document 3696, the British Conservative MP, Julian Critchley, failed to extend his congratulations to him for a difficult task well completed. Critchley's references to the role undertaken by the Council of Europe could be best described as patronising.

\(^13\) Document 3696, para. 81.
resolution which had been proposed in the Report, and the four amendments thereto. Neither part was the cause of any great moment so far as the Council of Europe and Ireland was concerned. The first, which lasted little more than two hours, attracted contributions from only four speakers from outside Britain and Ireland; the second, which occupied the Assembly for even less time, attracted none.

Perhaps that was not unusual. Although the immediate outcome (a resolution, see below) was to a degree more decisive than the adjournments which had taken place at the United Nations, it was clear that the principal antagonists were well aware of the limitations of any 'Europeanisation' of the Northern Ireland situation. Thus, as with the ritual exchanges which ensued between United Kingdom and Irish representatives at the UN after 1969, the Council of Europe debate in 1976 was conducted without rancour and as if it was a microcosm of prevailing views among parliamentarians from each side of the Irish Sea. It would, however, be misleading to equate the forums, for their respective natures are quite different. In particular allowances must be made for the fact that party-political considerations can sometimes come to the fore as a result of the mixed composition of national delegations. Nevertheless, it was generally true that, as with the annual exchanges in New York, those in Strasbourg in 1976 essentially reflected a two-fold purpose:

14 ibid., paras. 1-11.
16 Andrianopolis of Greece, Dankert, van Ooijen of the Netherlands, and, briefly, Vedovato of Italy, Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee.
17 At the request of the President, Dankert occasionally represented the views of the Committee but it could not be said that he participated in the debate.
18 As in the speech of Padhraic Faulkner, of the Irish delegation, who sung the praises of Fianna Fáil. (Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Official Report of Debates, pp. 981-4).
the constructive presentation of broadly agreed national objectives and, for the edification of the international audience, the correction of 'misunderstandings' attributed to the presentations of the other party involved.

In its final form, therefore, the resolution adopted by the Assembly was of a type which could well have followed upon an Anglo-Irish summit. In its condemnation of violence, its exhortations to the people of Northern Ireland to find a democratic accommodation, and in its recognition of the spirit of Anglo-Irish reconciliation evident at Sunningdale, it differed in no substantial way from anything which had previously emerged as a result of bilateral discussions between Britain and Ireland. Once again, that was probably not unusual. Affirming that there existed a 'European dimension' to the problem of Northern Ireland was never meant to convey the impression that it was a European problem. More positively, nothing had changed during the period in which the Council of Europe had seized itself of the situation which could have altered the obvious fact that it was an issue to which Britain and Ireland held pre-emptive international rights.

If the Council's approach was in any way open to question, it was so in this last regard, but only slightly. While giving due weight to the role of political forces inside Northern Ireland, the resolution implicitly supported the concept (but not by name) of the 'Irish dimension' which was by then in tatters insofar as the British Government and, more importantly, the Northern Unionists were concerned. Indeed, it was by then even de-emphasised as a matter of policy by the Irish Government. Thus, there existed the possibility that the interest of the Council of Europe would be that much less acceptable to those it intended to help. However, the resolution adopted was less than what was nearly carried. An amendment explicitly mentioning the 'Irish dimension' as an essential element in any permanent settlement was

19 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Twenty-Seventh Ordinary Session, Resolution 612 (1976) on the situation in Northern Ireland (hereafter cited as Resolution 612 (1976)).

20 See Chapter 3, p. 162.
passed, only to be superseded by a further amendment in which the (Sunningdale) spirit of reconciliation was recognised without reference to the 'Irish dimension'.

Given the relative lack of acclaim or criticism the Report and the resolution received at the time (and since), and given the success of the further amendment (noted above), it is extremely doubtful whether the aforementioned 'blemish' held any significance. The Constitutional Convention, towards which the low profile of the Irish Government was principally directed, had reported back some two months before the Council of Europe debate. And it was abundantly clear from the Convention's proceedings that resolutions adopted in Strasbourg, or for that matter in Westminster, were of little consequence to Unionists who perceived their majority position as a mandate for intransigence.

Any further discussion of the impact of the Council of Europe's interest in Northern Ireland between 1971 and 1976 must be foreshortened at this point for two reasons. After 1976 The British Government was unable to sustain an initiative in Northern Ireland and this obviously rendered any Council of Europe activity inappropriate, if not meaningless, in the short term. Furthermore, under the terms of reference established both in December 1971, and January 1976 (Resolution 612), the sub-committees and the Political Affairs Committee, respectively, had no greater charge than a study brief prescribed as their future course of action. It follows that the Parliamentary Assembly's involvement has been similarly curtailed. Despite the final paragraph of the resolution, which instructed the above committees, 'as a matter of urgency' ... to 'follow the development of the situation in Northern Ireland', and despite

21 The draft resolution contained no reference to the 'Irish dimension'. Most likely it was excluded as a result of Dankert's view that it was necessary for this to be de-emphasised if progress was to be made in the North (Document 3696, para. 48). Two Irish delegates, Crowley and Faulkner, then successfully moved an amendment which specifically mentioned it in the terms above. But this was then superseded by another Irish-sponsored amendment — this time by Collins. Interestingly, all three were Fianna Fáil TD's.

22 Order No. 319, 16 December 1971, (ii).


24 ibid.
occasional heated outbursts between British and Irish delegates to the European Parliament on matters indirectly related to the conflict, the Council has not again returned in any major sense to the 'troubles'.

25 e.g. During Question Time on 14 June 1978, alleged cross-border smuggling provided the cue for a bout of Anglo-Irish verbal fisticuffs, some of the points in which were a repetition of those made by British and Irish Ministers responsible for security (Irish Times, 15 June 1978).
CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ULSTER QUESTION AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
Ireland's entry into the European Community (EC)\(^1\) in 1973 was subject to considerable and prolonged debate, particularly in the period leading up to the referendum on Irish membership in May 1972. Most of it, according to Patrick Keatinge, was poorly based in conceptual terms as regards what membership would entail, but nevertheless concerned with the consequences of membership for national sovereignty and neutrality.\(^2\) Although some members of the Government had, in the most general terms, implied that the EEC would be the institutional framework in which Irish unity would be achieved, this was seen more as 'an association of ideas with some electoral appeal than as evidence of policy on the North'.\(^3\)

In the main, the possible effect of membership on partition was not the issue upon which the referendum was decided.\(^4\) However it was inevitable that the consequences of membership would include a broadening of perspectives from which to view the Ulster Question, and an increase in the external influences upon possible answers to it. These may be regarded as extensions of the two principal reasons which Taoiseach Jack Lynch adduced for the overwhelming approval given by the Irish electorate for the move into Europe.

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1 Strictly speaking, the European Community (EC) refers to the common political structure established to make economic decisions for the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community (EEC), and the European Atomic Energy Community. However, with the passage of time, and as the EEC developed into something more than an economic community, it became quite common practice to use EEC and EC interchangeably — the Taoiseach's message described in note 5 is a good example. In this thesis, therefore, both terms will also be used interchangeably — so as to preserve the terminology of the documents and statements referred to.


The first was:

a strong desire on the part of the Irish people
to play their part in the development of a new
Europe.

And the second:

the conviction which had been growing for some
time, that in modern circumstances Ireland could
best promote her own interests and simultaneously
make a worthwhile contribution in international
relations, as a member of a larger European entity,
firmly based on democratic principles.  

Both of the above held implications for Anglo-Irish relations
in general and Irish unity in particular. As Queen's University,
Belfast, political scientist E. Moxon Browne noted:

One of the main attractions of Community membership
for Ireland was the chance of freeing herself from
an essentially unequal trade relationship with the
United Kingdom.
The Community provides Ireland with a new fulcrum
on which to exert leverage against her more powerful
neighbour.  

But it would be misleading to accept this as implying that Ireland saw
EC membership solely, or even predominantly in terms of an opportunity
to improve its position vis-à-vis the United Kingdom as an adversary.
Indeed there were indications that both parties looked forward to their
membership of the EC as facilitating an easier working relationship.

To an extent Browne acknowledged this himself when he observed that,
within the Community, issues between the two countries could be raised
without some of the 'acrimony and claustrophobia' which had characterised
them previously. However, during his period as Vice-President of the
Commission of the European Communities, Patrick Hillery presented a

5 'Ireland's Membership of the EEC 1973/1979: Message from An
Taoiseach, Mr. J. Lynch TD', Ireland Today: Bulletin of the Department
of Foreign Affairs, No. 935, 1 July 1979.
6 E. Moxon Browne, 'Ireland in the EEC', The World Today, 31 (October
1975): 431 (hereafter cited as E. Moxon Browne, 'Ireland in the EEC').
7 ibid.
fuller and more positive assessment of this development when he wrote that it was, perhaps, paradoxically reinforced by mutual recognition that the process concerned was one which would give Ireland a more independent position in the world.\(^8\)

In 1978 this was given further confirmation by the British Ambassador to Ireland, Robin Haydon, who claimed that membership of the EC had been good and healthy for Anglo-Irish relations, giving them 'a new and wider perspective'.\(^9\)

Insofar as Irish unity was a consideration in applying for membership, the Taoiseach, in 1972, was quite definite as to what could be expected.

Apart from any political contribution which it may make, EEC membership will also mean the economic unification of our island.\(^10\) [emphasis added]

His then Minister for Foreign Affairs was even more optimistic: according to one report, Brian Lenihan claimed that Irish cross-Border co-operation within the EEC would evolve into a 'United Ireland'.\(^11\)

In view of the Taoiseach's reluctance to make such a claim it is unclear whether this statement was a result of incorrect reporting or an insufficient understanding of the issues involved by a recently appointed

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\(^8\) Patrick Hillery, 'Ireland and Britain in the European Community', text of the third Sean Lemass Memorial Lecture, delivered at the University of Exeter, 1 March 1976, Administration 24 (Spring 1976), p.8.

\(^9\) Luncheon Address to the Association of European Journalists, Dublin, 19 July 1978, as reported in the Irish Times, 20 July 1978.

\(^10\) 'Address by the Taoiseach, Mr. John Lynch, at a luncheon given by the Anglo-American Press Association in Paris on Wednesday, 18th October, 1972', Statements and Speeches, 5/72 (Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland), p. 5.

\(^11\) Interview of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Brian Lenihan, by Olivia O'Leary on the Radio Eireann programme. 'This Week of 31 December 1972', as reported in the Irish Times, 1 January 1973.
Minister. In any case, the view which prevailed within Fianna Fáil more closely reflected the Lynch statement than any other.

Interestingly, a compromise between these two views, perhaps leaning slightly more towards Lynch's, was taken by Garret Fitzgerald, a leading Fine Gael spokesman and later Minister for Foreign Affairs in the National Coalition. (Fitzgerald, it should be noted, is the son of Northern Presbyterian mother and a Southern Catholic father. He is widely respected, North and South, for his conciliatory views on the matter of Irish unity which have found expression in a number of well publicised speeches and pamphlets, and in one book.) According to him, the EEC could not solve the problem of Northern Ireland; it was not to be seen 'as a panacea', but it was, nevertheless, 'likely to prove helpful to the cause of a peaceful reunion of the Irish people, rather than otherwise'.

The bases for Fitzgerald's cautious optimism were derived from what he saw as the increasingly 'anachronistic character' of the whole partition issue within a modern, European context, and the particular EEC influences he expected would work upon it. Not the least among the factors guiding his arguments was a wholehearted commitment to economic determinism — as was evident in his reply to an Irish Times reporter in 1978.

In the long-term, economic interests determine the actions of States and, while at the moment other interests will be uppermost in Northern Ireland minds, these economic considerations will determine things.

12 Lenihan had then only recently succeeded Patrick Hillery who had been appointed to Brussels when Irish membership of the EEC was effected on 1 January 1973. The former's tenure in office was short due to his Party's failure in the General Election of February that year. He was, however, re-appointed to the position in the Cabinet selected by Charles Haughey in December 1979.


15 Irish Times, 30 May 1978, p. 1. Possibly, the belief noted above reflects Fitzgerald's somewhat late academic interest in the discipline of Economics. In 1946 he graduated from University College, Dublin, with first class honours (and first place) in both History and French. In 1969, however, he supplemented this with a Ph.D. in Economics from the same university.
Thus, while Fitzgerald allowed that such factors as the decreasing importance of 'cultural differences based on religion, ... the growth of a more liberal Catholicism and of ecumenism in the Republic ... [and] further education,' would contribute towards an atmosphere in Northern Ireland which would be better disposed towards Irish unity, it was clear that he saw such a change of attitude being worked primarily as a result of financial benefits. As he put it:

[The] economic rationale for Partition will not exist within the EEC.

Objections to this view, arising from the Northern Unionists' identification of themselves as being separate at both an individual and a political unit level, would be overcome, according to Fitzgerald, by an 'objective assessment' on their part that their economic well-being would be better served within a Federal (united) Ireland. Even the repugnance for anything resembling Dublin control of Northern Ireland through this arrangement was robbed of much of its potency by Fitzgerald's argument that, since so much of the sovereignty historically exercised by Dublin and Stormont would have passed to Brussels anyway, there could be little objection to a partnership between them over what remained.

Of Fitzgerald's writings, this much must be said: they were eloquent and comprise some of the most persuasive arguments in favour of eventual Irish unity by agreement between the two traditions. If they admit any weakness, other than that they are couched optimistically, it

17 ibid., p. 105.
18 ibid., pp. 104-5.
19 This expression is found in a later repository of Fitzgerald's thoughts on Irish unity, i.e. Fine Gael, *Ireland — Our Future Together* (Dublin: Fine Gael Press and Information Services, 1979), p. 18 (hereafter cited as *Fine Gael, Ireland — Our Future Together*). Although this booklet appears under the name of the Fine Gael Party, it is clear from the Preface written by Fitzgerald, and from numerous statements made by him before and since, that it reflects not only an official Party viewpoint but also his personal ideas.
is the rather obvious one that, if the trends and influences were in fact to lead to a situation where the Unionists could contemplate Irish unity with equanimity, the concomitant need would then surely exist, in the North and the Republic, to ask 'why?'. With so many sovereign powers of the nation state vested in Brussels, or at least shared with Community organs so as to make distinctions between reserved and shared powers extremely difficult to delineate, and with the expected emergence of a European identity, would not the attempt to reunite Ireland be not only unnecessary but also reactionary? And perhaps one further criticism could be made of Fitzgerald's formulations, at least from the point of view of the Northern Unionists. Although his background and record would contradict it, there was, in the reliance placed upon the efficacy of economic incentives, something of the familiar contempt that the loyalty of the Unionists was to the half-crown rather than the Crown. Moreover, in view of major policy statements in this same vein throughout 1978 and 1979 by Fitzgerald's successor at Iveagh House, Michael O'Kennedy, the view may have been fostered, or reinforced in the North, that the EEC was just another means which the Catholic Republic of Ireland would seek to use against 'the other tradition' while disingenuously claiming to respect it. This is not so much a claim as a suggestion, but the fact that the two Unionists elected to the European Parliament from Northern Ireland in 1979, Ian Paisley and John Taylor, could fairly be described as 'hard-line' gave some idea of the regard in which the Community was then held.

If the views of Lynch, followed by Fitzgerald and Lenihan, are regarded as being in an ascending order of expectations of Irish unity consequent upon EEC membership, then the views of Dublin Senior Counsel and Fianna Fáil adviser, Donal Barrington, would be placed above all three previously mentioned. In the context of direct elections to the European Parliament the thrust of his argument was that the nation state, and hence the 'Sovereign Irish Republic', was 'already becoming irrelevant'. The emerging identity for Ireland as a state, he

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21 See Chapter 4, 'Anglo-Irish Relations, 1977-1979', pp.229-31. (Iveagh House is the building on St. Stephen's Green in which is located the Department of Foreign Affairs.)

22 Donal Barrington, 'After Sunningdale?', Administration, 24 (Summer 1976); pp. 255-6.
suggested, lay in a 'European Federation', and the destiny of the Irish in an emerging 'Republic of the European Peoples'. As was befitting one of Ireland's leading legal counsels, he quoted an eminent English judge as to the effect of the Treaty of Rome on the English legal system, suggesting that the words applied equally to all spheres of Irish life.

The Treaty is like an incoming tide. It flows into the estuaries and up the rivers. It cannot be held back.  

Barrington, however, disagreed with Fitzgerald and Lenihan as to the kind, rather than the degree, of expectations which would follow from EEC membership. He held that it would be wrong to think that the European movement must bring about the political unity of Ireland; 'to say that', he claimed, 'is like saying that Germany joined the EEC in the hope of 'getting back' Alsace-Lorraine. To a considerable extent this position reflected Barrington's abdication — virtually to the point that he was an advocate of despair — of ever finding a 'solution' to the problems of Northern Ireland within an Irish context. An indication of this was provided by his statement that Europe may seem a vast and frightening place. But it may turn out to be much safer than an Ireland in which we have all turned in on each other, seduced by the false but easy comfort of an ancient hate.

It was all a long way from what had originally been the hopes of former Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, when Irish membership of the EEC was first considered. According to a letter by Lemass's daughter, Peggie Lemass O'Brien, published in the correspondence columns of the *Irish Times*, her father saw in the EEC 'the strongest single instrument which could help persuade the British to withdraw from Ireland'. After the

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23 ibid., p. 256.
24 ibid. (the name of the eminent English judge is not cited.)
25 ibid.
26 ibid., p. 257.
27 *Irish Times*, 5 January 1978. This correspondence arose from two reviews of Kevin Boland's book *Up Dev!* — by Paddy Hart, TD, and journalist John Healy. Both claimed that Sean Lemass changed the direction of Fianna Fáil and that he abandoned the idea of Irish unity. Peggie Lemass O'Brien thereupon felt compelled to write in reply, and to 'set the record right for once and for all'.

first British application for membership had been vetoed by France. Lemass evidently saw this view enhanced if Ireland should obtain membership ahead of Britain. To this end, his daughter declared, and

In an effort to copper-fasten that idea he paid a visit to the leaders of the six EEC countries and told them that when we [i.e. Ireland] came to conduct our negotiations we would insist that, if at some later date Britain's application was accepted, the Six would have to ensure the departure of British troops from Irish soil before we could accept partnership with her in the EEC.

Both Adenauer and de Gaulle promised enthusiastic support for this stance as did the other leaders of the Six.28

In the event, neither Lemass's reported insistence on a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland, nor the 'enthusiastic support' of Adenauer and de Gaulle for this measure, were put to the test. All had departed public life before the Irish negotiations took place and their respective successors gave no indication of adhering to their views. Furthermore, the fact that Ireland sought membership of an enlarged Community virtually in tandem with Britain, invalidated the premises upon which Lemass's hopes were based.

Notwithstanding those developments, unforeseen in the time of Lemass, all of the formulations referred to with perhaps the exception of the economic unity forecast by Lynch, appear unreal given the continuing social and political climate of Northern Ireland. While it is probably a requirement of a settlement in the province that no one is entitled to be pessimistic, there is nevertheless an odd logic to the notion that, somehow or other, quite undefined (although Fitzgerald's writings may be an exception to this condition), common membership of the EEC must lead inexorably to Irish unity, or alternatively, its irrelevance. As Brian Garrett, Secretary of the Northern Ireland Council of the European movement has observed of the former proposition:

28 ibid. As various other statements made on this subject in January 1978 complicated, but did not contradict Mrs O'Brien's assertions, it was useful to refer to John Mulcahy's column, 'The Last Word', in Hibernia, 20 January 1978, p. 40, for an account which clarified matters.
It is a sort of Irish political version of the Indian rope trick — perhaps better described as the Brussels trick. Like most tricks it will require an extraordinary deftness and sleight of hand.29

And of the latter, concerning the irrelevance, or even the diminution of the importance of Irish unity, even greater reservations may be held. Indeed, in the discussion which follows, the proposition that nationalism is irrelevant within the EEC will be confronted with the contrary view — that it may well be that it is the EEC which is irrelevant to the deep divisions of Ireland. To explain and justify this statement it is necessary to briefly digress upon attitudes which have emerged since the beginning of the period.

In 1976 Conor Cruise O'Brien, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs in the Irish Government, addressed the students of University College, Dublin, on a text from Yeats' poem 'September 1913':

> Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
> It's with O'Leary in the grave.

The burden of O'Brien's speech then, as of numerous essays, articles and books both before and since, was that Romantic Ireland was not dead and gone. And that was to be regretted. According to O'Brien, Ireland would not be at peace until the ideology of Romantic Ireland — with its reverence for men of blood and violence, its English demonology, and its vision of history as a sequence of glorious but failed revolutions — was abandoned.30

O'Brien, therefore, urged the Irish to postpone indefinitely the question of England's departure from the North. In the words of Denis Donoghue, he urged them to

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29 *Irish Times*, 9 October 1978, report of a conference on the theme 'Irish Political Evolution in the European Context', organised by the Irish Association for Cultural, Economic and Social Relations.

30 As reported in Denis Donoghue, 'Drums Under the Window', review of *The Damnable Question* by George Dangerfield (and *Mother Ireland* by Edna O'Brien), in *The New York Review*, 14 October 1976, p. 12 (hereafter cited as Donoghue, 'Drums Under the Window').
... attend to the chore of making daily life more equable, more tolerant ... to live by bread alone.31

Now, of course, it is something of an understatement to say that the views of Conor Cruise O'Brien are considerably removed from those of the Irish Government. But in 1976 his address could not so easily be dismissed: he was both a central figure in the Cabinet of the National Coalition, and, arguably, the most prominent member of it in articulating its philosophy as regards the aspiration of national unity. Thus Donoghue observed at the time:

Dr. O'Brien's speech embodies the policy of his government, and of many people who do not support the government in any other respect. 'They have gone about the world like wind', Yeats wrote of the fame of Ireland's revolutionary heroes, but in Ireland today it is increasingly common to say that this wind brought good to nobody.32

It is when O'Brien's views are placed alongside those of his then colleague, Fitzgerald (and Barrington for that matter), that the grounds for reservations become defined. O'Brien, obviously, was disgusted by the consequences of a myth and admonished the Irish to live, in Donoghue's paraphrase, in 'a clean air, humanist and secular, without complaint or nostalgia'.33 In a different vein Fitzgerald offered a new, safe symbol in the ostensible unity embodied in the EEC. Yet this, too, in the context of Irish history was essentially a negative proposal. Whereas O'Brien appeared almost to disown the past and to advocate a future devoid of myths, Fitzgerald sought more to replace — in effect to degrade — the myth of nationalism with another which not only had yet to be held as sacred, but given the richness and potency of the old myth, was unlikely to be held as such.

Specifically expressed, the first reservation concerning these approaches to Irish history and to EEC membership, arises from the attempts to persuade the Irish people that their particular lot lay with

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31 ibid.
32 ibid.
33 ibid.
the social democracies of Western Europe — those whom Anthony Cronin described as

[having] forgotten not only ancient dreams and delusions but much else as well in favour of contentment with the material convenience and prosperities of what is called the 'free world'.34

According to Cronin, in the interests of this sort of persuasion a view of Irish history was presented which attempted to 'tranquilise' the more brutal aspects of the British exploitation of Ireland, to portray as a 'mere shibboleth' the 'vital necessity' of national unity, and which ignored the profound differences in the matter of natural historical development between Ireland and the countries it was proposed that it join and emulate.35 Ireland, it should be noted, was, apart from being a fractured country, not an ex-Imperial industrialised power like Belgium, Britain, Germany, France and the Netherlands. Moreover, as to the minimum conditions necessary for national development, certain forms of economic and social attainment, and freedom from exploitation, it was far from being in the position of the Scandinavian countries it was principally asked to look upon as models.

Cronin, thereby, argued from a position contemptuous of Fitzgerald's views and diametrically opposed to Barrington's and O'Brien's. Fundamentally, it was an extension of the importance which he vested in the nation.

It may be that some of us delude ourselves about the nation, but let us be clear about this. The importance of the nation as a matrix of human expression, endeavour and association can hardly be exaggerated. It is impossible to conceive of Shakespeare as other than an Englishman; or, for the matter of that, of James Joyce as other than a product of Ireland. Without England the one could not have happened; nor without Ireland, the other.36

34 Anthony Cronin, 'The Nationalism that never was: 1916 and the Cultural Decline', an edited transcript of a lecture given in 1976 at Liberty Hall, Dublin, titled 'The Relevance of 1916', published in Hibernia, 2 July 1976, pp. 16-17 (hereafter cited as Cronin, 'The Nationalism That Never Was').
35 ibid., p. 17
36 ibid.
It was an awareness of the past which was perhaps best encapsulated by Frank O'Connor's conclusion to his analysis of Irish literature, *The Backward Look*.

I am not sure that any country can afford to discard what I have called 'the backward look', but we in Ireland can afford it less than any other because without it we have nothing and are nothing, and we must not cease to remember Yeats' final words:

Cast your mind on other days  
That we in coming days may be  
Still the indomitable Irishry.  

If Cronin's basic contention is accepted, and it seems reasonable that it should be, then the full significance of Ireland's move into Europe becomes apparent. Put quite simply, Ireland entered the EEC without having completed its nationalist revolution. As events since Partition have confirmed, neither state in the island of Ireland has successfully or properly subsumed its dreams of nationality into its respective state structures. Indeed, it appears that in the Republic, among certain writers and politicians, the components of nationality were progressively modified and abandoned.

What replaced them was a concept of Man merely as an economic actor who, deprived of a national identity because the Irish nation remained divorced in the form of two Irish states, was disposed to assume an international identity. This gives rise to the second reservation, which derives from the fact that the EEC was never a matrix of human expression and association, but basically a political notion (Europe) given economic functions. Hence the view of Man envisaged by Barrington and Fitzgerald in relation to this entity is necessarily impoverished and, as it concerns his nature, boring and bleak as well.

As a consequence, from a cultural and social, but particularly a political perspective, the incomplete bonds which have at least allowed the development of a limited sense of community in Ireland to this time

will be placed under stress by progress towards an assumed internationalism. In the context of the EEC this is both inappropriate and misdirected for that organisation will not in the foreseeable future be able to replace them with the relevant Euro-identities nor, because of its nature, even facilitate the development of what currently passes for an Irish identity. The significance of this may well be that Ireland will be in that position described by Cronin —

... open to exploitation by larger forces which we are not even in the position of the old state ...

to resist.38

In that event the opportunity to develop a sense of nationhood in Ireland, North and South, will have become a casualty to a faceless and perhaps even an inhuman bureaucracy.

These ideas, however, have yet to be realised. The period in which the two states of Ireland have been part of the EEC is as yet too short for them to be regarded as applicable or otherwise. In any case, they were not presented by their protagonists as immutable laws, but rather as hopes or fears. But their consideration was required nonetheless. For Barrington, the Dublin Senior Counsel, this was determined by the position of influence he was held to enjoy vis-à-vis the Fianna Fáil leadership — under Lynch at least — although it is conceded that this may have suffered with Haughey's succession. Cronin's case rested not on his association with any political party, but on the fact that he is an articulate and widely read intellectual, and like Barrington, presented an argument which demanded a closer examination.

The views of leading politicians were at once more compelling in this regard, even if they were not in every case as well presented, and even if, as was the case with Lynch and O'Brien, they could not at the time of writing (early 1981) still be regarded as central figures in political life. As statements of exhortation and expectation as to how a centuries-old dispute might be resolved they simply could not be overlooked. Moreover, all the views discussed were representative of the range of hopes and fears which obtained (and still obtain) with respect to Ireland's unknown European future.

38 Cronin, 'The Nationalism That Never Was', p. 17.
To date (January 1981) the record of Irish membership of the European Community has provided few indications that would tend to support the more optimistic formulations discussed in the foregoing. However, given that the record is based on only a seven-year period this is not surprising, but it is surely of interest to note that progress towards an even lesser objective than political unity, has been sufficiently troubled to question just exactly what progress should be expected realistically within (say) the next decade or two.

In the period before Irish membership of the EEC a brief but promising attempt was made to establish some form of economic co-operation between the Republic and Northern Ireland. Towards what Lynch (as Taoiseach) termed 'a new kind of Irish society ... equally agreeable to North and South', he, in early 1971, offered to make available to the Stormont the collected experience and knowledge of the Irish Government 'at any times and on any subject' relating to the development of all Ireland in the EEC. This offer was accepted in principle by Brian Faulkner, the new Northern Ireland Prime Minister, and talks at 'senior official level' were initiated. In April of 1971, Lynch referred to this development as an

expression of what can be called political confidence
that the North is now capable of setting its face on a
different kind of future for all its people ...40

Later that year, in August, he extended his original offer by proposing a joint economic council and suggesting that

... giving representatives both North and South the
opportunity of working together in a formal way would expand the scope of their functions and further bring about efforts to reconcile views North and South.41

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40 ibid., p. 53, Speech at the Speakers' Club, Cork, 30 April 1971.
41 ibid., p. 69, Statement in Dáil Éireann, 6 August 1971.
It was, therefore, a recourse to the strategy of functional co-operation which had marked North-South initiatives in the Lemass period and which then had seemed to hold so much hope. While subsequent events—such as the introduction of internment and the prorogation of the Stormont Government—had the effect of rendering this offer inoperable, a stimulus towards broadly similar objectives was provided by the decision of the EEC Commission to designate the entire island of Ireland as a single region in the planning of regional policy.

In this the Commission reflected the widespread accord which was to be found in both British and Irish Government statements (particularly during the period of the 1972-73 initiative) and in Anglo-Irish communiques since then. In the debate on the Green Paper of 1972, the Northern Ireland Secretary, William Whitelaw, noted that

in the context of the European Economic Community, there is a clear opportunity for developing co-operation on economic and social issues which could bring considerable benefits to the people in both the North and the South of Ireland.

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42 Keatinge, Issues of Irish Foreign Policy, p. 118.

43 Two attempts to inquire further into the North-South politics of this period as they related to Lynch's offers proved unsuccessful. The former Department of Foreign Affairs senior civil servant, Eamon Gallagher, declined to offer any information on the grounds that, as Director-General for Fisheries in the Commission of European Communities, he had 'no access to official sources of information' of the time (letter to the writer, 6 May 1980). More promising replies were received from Jack Lynch, both as Taoiseach and as TD on his retirement, who agreed to provide written answers to questions submitted by letter (letters to the writer from the Private Secretary to the Taoiseach, dated 'August 1979'; and his Personal Secretary, 31 March 1980, respectively). However, as of June 1981, despite a further written request on 30 June 1980, no reply had been received.


Even in Europe a cautious endorsement of this hope was expressed in the Report adopted by the Council of Europe in 1976:

The unexpected pro-marketeer majority that came out of Northern Ireland at the EEC referendum can perhaps be taken as an encouraging omen. For once forgetting party directives, the new, cross-barrier majority that materialised at the polls shows that the people of Northern Ireland are not entirely hostile to accepting a wider dimension and to co-operation with other neighbouring European countries. 46

But it would be misleading to draw from such indications any more hopeful conclusions. In the referendum on the EEC in Northern Ireland, 49 per cent voted against entry and the sentiment expressed was not lost on political leaders in the province, who continued to tread very warily whenever the prospect of cross-Border co-operation was raised. Thus in 1976, serious reservations about the EEC's cross-Border regional development study were made by a delegation of Official Ulster Unionists on a fact-finding mission in Brussels. Foremost among its membership were Harry West and John Taylor, both of whom stressed that the study should be proceeded with only after exhausting the possible uses of regional aid within the two separate states in Ireland, and then only after consultation with the Northern Ireland people and their representatives. 47

From subsequent statements it was clear that this caution extended even to those who were regarded as enthusiastic supporters of Northern Ireland's (strictly speaking, the United Kingdom's) membership of the EEC. Both Roy Bradford (chairman) and Brian Garrett (secretary) of the Northern Ireland Council of the European Movement have respectively held that it was not only 'unhelpful' to the aims of the EEC to regard it as a vehicle for Irish unity, but have also implied that it was antithetical to its true aims. 48 The awareness of these views also accounted

46 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Report on the situation in Northern Ireland and the activities of the Sub-Committees on Northern Ireland, Document 3696, 28 November 1975, para. 82.


48 Irish Times, 9 October 1978; report of a conference on the theme 'Irish Political Evolution in the European Context', organised by the Irish Association for Cultural and Social Relations.
for the reluctance of Northern Ireland Secretary, Roy Mason, to have the matter of cross-Border co-operation discussed in 1978, when his Government was particularly vulnerable to Unionist pressure. 49

Nevertheless, the Irish (National Coalition) Government, with less to lose than Mason in 1978, were not so easily intimidated by Northern attitudes. As early as 1974 the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Garret Fitzgerald, had promoted the regional fund interests of both the Republic and Northern Ireland at a meeting of the EEC's Council of Ministers. 50 Yet in time he, too, appeared to modify his enthusiasm and to appreciate more keenly the limits to which the interest of his Government was acceptable in the European affairs of Northern Ireland. In reply to a question in Dáil Eireann in 1976, John Kelly, his Parliamentary Secretary, stated that because of British sovereignty over the province it was 'not ... appropriate' for the Irish Government to make representations to the EEC on its behalf for special loans and grant assistance. To do so, he claimed, would be to

invite a rebuttal from the Community in the first place, a complaint from the other [British] Government concerned in the second and would probably cause a great deal of resentment among the population of the area, ... in the third place. 51

In the place of such efforts, Kelly suggested only the possibility of joint approaches being made with a view to cross-Border projects. 52 But given that Fitzgerald has since acknowledged the unwillingness of Unionists to publicly recognise the advantages which might accrue to Northern Ireland from political association with the Republic, 53 and that in describing the political situation in the six counties over the


52 ibid.

last six years, the term 'stalemate' has so readily come to mind, it is difficult to foresee how and where substantial development may take place on a cross-Border theme.

Admittedly two somewhat ambiguous reports were produced towards the end of the period which could possible temper this judgment. The first, produced in 1977 under the aegis of the Governments of the United Kingdom and of Ireland and the Commission of the European Communities, was the result of the first specific attempt at a cross-Border study since Partition. And that fact alone should have given some idea of the historical difficulties which had beset this type of initiative. However, almost with a disregard for that caution, it was contended by David Andrews, Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs, that the report, which pointed to a similarity of problems across the Border region and the involvement of local administrators to solve them, was evidence of 'vision and goodwill' and a 'general commitment to cross-Border co-operation'. But this view was illusory. It derived its optimism from documents which were no more than EEC-financed studies, or their like (such as the aforementioned UK-Ireland-EC report of 1977) and was excessively dependent on the enthusiasm generated for cross-Border co-operation in Dublin and among the local groups who stood to benefit.

Perhaps in numerous other settings Andrews' formulation would have been a logical deduction, but in Northern Ireland, with its record of opposition to the EEC, and in the wider context of the British Government's reluctance to pursue cross-Border developments because of this, a conservative, and hence pessimistic judgment appears more justifiable. Subsequent events have added strength to this conclusion.

54 See: Cross-Border Communications Study for the Londonderry and Donegal Area, Vol. 1, Summary Report, prepared for the Governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland and the Commission of the European Communities, by: Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co. (London), and Stokes Kennedy, Crowley & Co. (Dublin), October 1977.

55 'Speech by Mr. David Andrews, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs, at the Ardara Comhairle Ceanntair Annual Dinner Dance in the Nesbitt Arms Hotel, Ardara, Co. Donegal.' (Text issued by the Government Information Services, Dublin, on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs, 3 February 1978).
The wording of the joint communique issued after the Mason-O'Kennedy talks in Dublin on 5 May 1978 must rate as a model study in the politics of procrastination. The part dealing with cross-Border co-operation read:

The Ministers announced that there would be an early application for EEC funds with a view to starting a study of the Erne catchment area. The study was a major proposal contained in the report and followed an initiative by local authorities on both sides of the Border. Consultants would be employed to assess and report on the development potential of the Erne catchment area with references to the development of tourism amenities in matters such as accommodation, access and marketing and the development of land resources through actual drainage. [emphases added]

While, in other circumstances the wording of this statement could have been interpreted as a declaration of intention to act speedily, it has not been so regarded here because of the context in which it occurs.

If each of the sections italicised is analysed in terms of the likely speed with which action could be expected, the results are hardly promising. At best, there are at least four stages at which the study could be delayed, and even then, it would be concerned only with potential, rather than actual areas of co-operation. Thus while O'Kennedy may have won his Government's battle to include cross-Border matters in the controversial meeting, he may also have signalled their demise, for the terms of the communique commit neither Government to a firm course of action. There is not even a commitment to a study: while the funds may be applied for and set aside, the date of any further action (including the date of application for that matter) was not specified. This significance of these omissions was not lost on the political commentator, John Healy, who, in characteristic fashion, provided the following obituary of the whole study enterprise:

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56 i.e., the report of a Steering Group set up, following the September 1977 meeting between Callaghan and Lynch. See Reports on Economic Co-operation (also titled Reports on Anglo-Irish Economic Co-operation) issued June 1978, and obtained from the Office of the Taoiseach, p. 33 (hereafter cited as Reports On Economic Co-operation).

57 Text of the joint communique, as published in the Irish Times, 6 May 1978, p. 6.
... it bids fair to be 1990 before it gets back to the politicians and the decision makers in Parliaments where it must be Green-Papered and White-Papered and, if things are getting sticky funds-wise in Dublin and London, you can always depend on a Minister for Finance announcing that he was decided — and this is really the bit that buries it — to do a cost-benefit analysis on the proposed Erne catchment area scheme ...

By that time Roy Mason will be where the chickens won’t find him, the Dublin altar boys will be writing their memoirs, the Erne will remain undisturbed ...

He had, thereby, highlighted two principal characteristics of international functionalism which must condition any assessment of North-South relations based on cross-Border co-operation. The first, as Keatinge pointed out, is that progress in this type of endeavour, 'is by its nature slow'. The second, as Inis Claude observed in a more general context, is that such activity is

at least in the short run, more dependent upon the political weather than determinative of the political weather.

The value of functional co-operation is not, therefore, the question so much as it is the willingness of all parties to exploit the opportunities for it within a reasonable time frame. And even then, as the second report illustrated in a North-South context, the results lend themselves to a number of interpretations.

58 A term applied by Healy to some of the younger and more prominent members of the Irish Government. In particular he used it to describe Michael O’Kennedy, then Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Lynch Government.

59 John Healy's column 'Sounding Off', Irish Times, 8 May 1978, p. 11. His prediction of 1990 was not the exaggeration it may have appeared. For just one section of the Ballinamore/Ballyconnell Canal it was estimated that 'about 3 years' will be required before a scheme of works with estimated costs could be produced. (Reports on Economic Co-operation, pp. 30-1, and 40.) It is conceded, however, that this could equally happen in a national enterprise, but this would not alter the effect that the time for such could have on the eventual project.

60 Keatinge, Issues of Irish Foreign Policy, p. 124.

The second report was the one referred to in the 6 May communique. It was not so much a development in itself but a collection, in great detail and perhaps with some unnecessary padding, of communiques, minutes and reports on the series of exchanges which followed the September 1977 meeting between Callaghan and Lynch. On first perusal it was a prosaic, not to say boring, document; indeed the most enthusiastic section was that where Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and the Irish Revenue Commissioners indulged in mutual congratulation. Yet the list showed thirty-three existing contacts, ranging from North-South trade promotion through off-shore oil, drainage, fire services, education (almost nil) to statistics, Geological Survey, and the Public Record Office. Obviously, this record included a considerable number of little publicised contacts, but overall, their effectiveness was not then apparent nor has it been since. Certainly, it was open to the interpretation that even the mundane trading of information which it chronicled was at least helpful to both sides, even on the basis of a mere comparing of notes among professionals. And it may yet advance the cause of better living for people on both sides of the Border and that also would be a welcome move.

However, the very extent of the contacts listed provides a cause for reflection, and emphasises the ambiguity which obtains to so many developments in Ireland. Put simply, the evidence of extensive co-operation was capable of supporting both an optimistic and a pessimistic construction on the hopes of cross-Border co-operation. On the one hand it could be argued that examples of such wide ranging co-operation suggested a decrease in North-South antipathies, while on the other, it was equally valid to suggest that they implied nothing of the sort — other than that they existed concomitantly despite these feelings. In support of the latter it was also pertinent that a great many such contacts existed before the current outbreak of the 'troubles', and these appear not to have been an effective restraint over the past ten or twelve years.

Furthermore, in seven of the past twelve years, these tensions were maintained coterminously with a dramatic improvement in the Republic's prosperity as a result of its EEC membership. Indeed, the economic progress made by the Republic has matched the enthusiasm with which its entry was supported by the electorate, and gives some credibility to Donoghue's cynical assessment that the Irish are in the EEC 'only for the money'.

With just under a quarter of its working population on the land, the Republic's prosperity has received a remarkable boost as a result of the Community's agricultural policies. Between 1970 and the end of 1977, beef exports were quadrupled and dairy products increased by 40 per cent. Total agricultural exports in the same period rose from £197 million to over £700 million. The main reason for this was that the EEC set a guaranteed price for farm products, irrespective of the volume of production. Produce not sold was put into 'intervention' — i.e., stored. The Irish farmer, thereupon, hit a bonanza; in contrast to non-EEC times, however much he produced he was guaranteed an economic price.

The farmer in Northern Ireland was less fortunate for two reasons. First, the United Kingdom is a net importer of food, and second, extending from this, the British agricultural policy, dictated by London, favoured the consumer and not the producer. For the period under review, British farmers did not receive the full European price. Yet, because of political pressure from the North, the British Government felt compelled to redress the balance between the farmers there and those in the Republic. This of course proved a costly exercise (£50 million in 1977) and one which also generated resentment in the rest of the British farming community which was not so treated. In turn, this had the effect of making the subsidy of Northern Ireland farmers politically unpopular at Westminster, and called into question how long it could be continued. To complete the cycle, this then raised an uncertainty with the Northern

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65 ibid.
farmers as to whether Westminster could be relied upon to maintain their standard of living.

The prosperity of the Republic's agricultural sector has also led to spin-offs in other areas. In 1977 the country had the highest growth rate in the EEC, which no doubt contributed to Lynch's confidence to announce tax cuts and improved social security benefits in his 1978 budget. Industrially too, the EEC benefited the Republic — allowing it to retain its fifteen-year tax holiday on exports as an enticement to new firms, an incentive which no other EEC member country offers. Thus, in the years since the two Irish states joined the EEC the wealth gap between them has narrowed to the point where, for the first time since Partition, there are grounds for challenging its economic justification.

Naturally, such economic progress allowed the Taoiseach to proclaim his confidence in the EEC, which he did in 1979 with a statement that Ireland's expectations of the Community had been 'fully justified'. Somewhat surprisingly, this was intended to apply across the whole range of expectations, because it was clear from a close reading of his statements throughout 1978-79 that, in terms of Northern Ireland, his views reflected less of the certainty which was found in those of other Irish political leaders.

Notwithstanding the hopes that were voiced at the start of the decade, the Community itself underwent only a slow development from the time of Ireland's membership in 1973. As Keatinge observed, it was then — and still is [1978] — rather more than a purely economic system and a good deal less than a European Federation.

Whether Community membership facilitated Anglo-Irish relations is open to question, but there were examples wherein it allowed other

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66 ibid.


68 Keatinge, Issues of Irish Foreign Policy, p. 78.
relationships to flourish — for example with France in ensuring that the item of regional policy was placed on the 1974 Paris Summit agenda, or when Ireland's position was opposed by Britain. A lack of certainty also applies to any conclusion concerning the effect of Community membership on the specific issue of Northern Ireland within Anglo-Irish relations. Initially it was thought by some commentators that the wider forum provided by the Community would remove some of the acrimony and claustrophobia which it tended to engender within a bilateral setting. But the record of Anglo-Irish relations since 1973 is ambiguous on this point as well. While the EEC has sometimes provided the occasion for a much needed reduction in tension — as in the Copenhagen Summit of 1978 — the dynamics of the situation in Northern Ireland, and hence of the diplomacy which concerns itself with this, have been 'sui generis'. The diplomacy of the Ulster Question may, therefore, be regarded as having been conducted with minimal reference to Community politics in general.

These factors, even if they did not find expression in the 1979 statement, no doubt influenced Lynch's views. Fundamentally, it was obvious that he simply did not subscribe to propositions which relied on the efficacy of economic measures. As he told Dáil Eireann in June 1978:

> We share common interests with the North ... in a whole range of issues which are now increasingly being determined in Brussels ... But to suggest that present divisions are economic or can be solved by economic measures alone is not enough. There are social, psychological, religious and moral differences between the different sections of the community in this island. Most of these divisions are based on misapprehension — or even on fear.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Michael O'Kennedy, was, however, clearly more impressed with economic progress and the promise he saw it

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69 See: E. Moxon Browne, 'Ireland in the EEC', p. 429. More recently the Irish and French have organised their own sheepmeats protection scheme and prompted a 'lamb war' with Britain.

70 See Chapter 4, p. 224.

71 Adjournment Debate, 28 June 1978, as reported in the Irish Times, 29 June 1978, p. 4.
to hold for North-South relations. His address to the General Assembly of the United Nations some three months later pointed to this, but by way of a slight difference of emphasis.

The new thinking and new hope, ... derive in part from progress and new developments in Ireland. Today the Republic has one of the fastest growing economies in Western Europe. The problems of inflation and unemployment are being brought under control.

Now that both parts of the island are within the European Economic Community we have become more conscious than ever of the extent to which the problems and opportunities we face are similar in both parts of the island. There is a new mood which recognises that on many questions we have common interests which are best pursued in common. My Government would like to ensure that there is a clear awareness abroad of this new mood and of the new possibilities in Ireland.\(^2\)

Subsequently, the Irish Government's policy was to admit more than differing emphases. Whereas O'Kennedy had, a few months prior to his UN address, stated his Government's strong opposition to outside parties — such as the United States Government or the European Commission — attempting a solution to the Northern problems, it became apparent, throughout 1979, that this position was being abandoned. (As an aside, it should be noted that O'Kennedy drew a distinction between the Commission, which is an executive organ of the EEC, and the EEC itself which, he hoped, would provide a role through which a North-South accord could be achieved.\(^4\)).

The first indication of this was provided on 19 July 1979, when the Taoiseach, as President-in-Office of the European Council, addressed the opening session of the European Parliament in terms which did not specifically mention Northern Ireland, but must have been clearly intended to apply to it. He spoke of the 'onus' upon the Community to end the


\(^3\) Times, 18 May 1978.

\(^4\) ibid.
'dark shadows and divisions' which existed in any part of the countries which comprised it. Towards 'the progress of Europe', he called upon the new European Parliament, as the 'most widely-representative, freely-elected international assembly in the world', to use its 'great influence and powers to help to root out' the causes of disruption. In all, it was a cryptic but unmistakeable appeal for international assistance towards an initiative in Northern Ireland, and very much consistent with the return to the assertive posture adopted by the Irish Government in Anglo-Irish relations in early 1978.

Following this, Richard Burke, the Irish member of the European Commission, expressed what he called a 'personal' view, to the effect that it was legitimate to ask what Europe and the United States could do towards a solution in the North. Although couched in cautious terms, and notwithstanding that it was a private opinion, Burke's remarks constituted a departure. By tradition, European Commissioners kept well clear of domestic political issues and issues between member states.

By the end of 1979 there was no question that the two statements above reflected a profound change in the Irish Government's position. According to O'Kennedy, Northern Ireland was

the last remaining problem in the community for peace, it is an exception to the pattern in the rest of the EEC. The goodwill in Europe and the United States is there to be tapped to support a return to normal politics in the North.

A reasonable inference was that Ireland had decided upon a campaign to 'Europeanise' (and 'Americanise') the Northern Ireland problem inasmuch as it plainly aimed to generate pressure upon Britain to provide some

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76 See Chapter 4, pp. 210-17.

77 Address to a meeting of European and American journalists, Waterville, Co., Kerry, 21 September 1979, as reported in the Irish Times, 22 September 1979.

78 As reported in Geoffrey Barker, 'Unity: An Irish Dream', Melbourne Age, 1 November 1979, p. 9.
Somewhat disingenuously this was obscured, even denied, but unconvincingly. O'Kennedy and Desmond O'Malley, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Energy, continued to claim that they could not contemplate any form of direct intervention — and that, of course, was consistent with their Government's previous position. But it was only possible to accept their statements if the meanings commonly associated with the expression 'tapping the goodwill' were debased so as to preclude many of the meanings commonly associated with 'direct intervention'. O'Malley for one, did not intend this. As he explained to a group of (mainly European) journalists:

Northern Ireland is not just an Anglo-Irish problem. It is increasingly a European problem ... It is the one small place in the EEC where there is no peace, and I think the nine member states can make a contribution by making their views known, by expressing their inability to accept the situation, by using the economic muscle to encourage a coming together of the two traditions in the North. We would welcome that. [emphasis added]

Moreover, the very fact that Europe and the United States were invoked, not in the spirit of anger and revulsion, as was the result of an event such as Bloody Sunday, but with a view towards a settlement of the problems in Northern Ireland, was an invitation to regard their dimensions as having been definitely expanded. Even if this was to consist of nothing more than bilateral discussions of the issues between (say) a European party and Britain, the public manner in which these statements were made suggested a greater determination by the Irish Government to internationalise matters, and thus a conclusion that it had adopted a policy which was not previously evident.

79 ibid.
80 ibid., (Geoffrey Barker, Chief European correspondent of The Age, and writer of the article noted below, was the only non-European present.)
81 ibid.
Lynch's role, or lack thereof in this development, can only be a matter for speculation for the present time. Moreover, this particular aspect of policy cannot be viewed in isolation from either the remainder of his Government's Northern policy, or, for that matter, from the declining popularity of his domestic policies. In brief, it is not yet apparent whether Lynch moved to extend the international dimensions of the issue himself or whether he was obliged by pressure within his Cabinet to do so, perhaps as part of a general policy revision. A precedent for the latter existed: the uncompromising terms of Fianna Fáil's 1975 policy statement on the North were reliably reported as not being his own, but those of (later) Ministers such as O'Kennedy who advocated a more forceful line. And after the fact, his unexpected resignation as Taoiseach in late 1979 would also support the suggestion that he was obliged to accommodate stronger views for a while prior to this.

Whatever the influences, the policy itself denoted more than a recrudescence of the belief in the 'Brussels rope trick': that device, as Brian Garrett had pointed out, relied on undefined forces or mechanisms to levitate Ireland into a unified state. Instead, what O'Kennedy and O'Malley had proposed, all euphemisms aside, was to bring to bear such political pressure upon the United Kingdom, that it would be required to force an accord in Northern Ireland. Thus, what the British Government had seen itself as incapable of imposing in 1974, and indeed throughout this century, was to be effected through a 'deus ex machina' two steps removed from the scene. How this would be wrought was, and remains, unclear. And to this extent the proposition, if it may be called one, was simply not credible. At least the 'Brussels rope trick' posited a convergence of interests, North and South, as a basis for unity, whereas the 'international' solution had only a reliance on the existence of a dubious 'force majeure' to recommend it.

From such formulations, and the many others alluded to in the course of this chapter, it is obvious that the Community has been invested, by both optimists and pessimists alike, with something approaching a totemic

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significance. While that may be particularly appropriate to a country whose conflicts are so frequently portrayed as 'tribal', it is also a measure, not only of the uncertainty, but of the hope, surrounding the EC. That is understandable, because hope simply makes no sense if the issue in question is settled beyond doubt. And though many of these hopes appear unrealistic, they have at least one advantage for those who hold them: by their very nature, and the period in which the states of Ireland have been in the EC, they are less susceptible to analysis than are statements as to fact, or of intention. They stand, accordingly, as future possibilities rather than history. History, as was frequently noted in the preceding text, is on this matter too short and too recent to permit the clear discernment of patterns or forces which might influence the possible answers to the Ulster Question.

The European Monetary System (EMS): A Brief Note

In early July 1978 at the European Council (i.e., Heads of Government) meeting in Bremen, it was agreed that the establishment of a zone of monetary stability in Europe was a highly desirable objective. Thereupon, approval was given to Finance Ministers to prepare a plan of action to establish such a zone which could itself be approved by the following European Council in early December 1978. In addition, studies of what action should be taken to aid less prosperous member countries were to be carried out.

At the time it was widely believed in both Ireland and the United Kingdom that both countries would be founder members of the new system. There were, however, significant areas of disagreement between member States over the way in which the system would operate. In particular, some members proposed that the system should be based on a 'basket' of all national currencies within the System, while others advocated a 'parity grid' approach which would oblige member States to maintain their currency within a fairly narrow band relative to each other's currency within the System.83 In the former approach a strong currency would be

83 Brendan Dowling, 'The European Monetary System', Ireland Today: Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, No. 947, 1 April 1979, p.2 (hereafter cited as Dowling, 'The European Monetary System').
identified if it rose relative to the basket and the obligation to take corrective action would fall on that country alone. Similarly, a weak currency would fall relative to the basket. In the latter approach it would not be possible to distinguish between weak and strong currencies, and there would be a tendency for the system to move (relative to non-System currencies) in line with the strongest currencies. Thus a deflationary bias would be imparted to many of the European economies, especially those with currencies which had depreciated significantly in recent years.  

Following the September 1978 meeting of Finance Ministers in Brussels, Ireland was faced with the realisation that what had been generally expected of itself and the United Kingdom was only half true: i.e., it was apparent that, while Ireland viewed the likely terms of its membership as favourable, and remained committed to a European Monetary System, the United Kingdom was implacably opposed to it. Thus the prospect of a break with sterling appeared likely.

The political connotations of such a move were unknown, but in relation to Irish unity they appeared immense whatever formulation was arrived at. There was, on one hand, an undeniable sense of excitement about the prospect of finally ceasing to be an economic province of Britain, of severing financial chains which had bound Ireland to Britain not just since the foundation of the State, but for over one hundred and fifty years. But, as Paul Tansey noted, there was a large, unspoken assumption which underlay this line of thinking. It was this: Britain was a declining economy, whilst the Deutschmark zone was on the crest of an economic wave. Protagonists of this view argued that the resurgence of the British economy was only a temporary phenomenon which would recede in the 1980s, whereupon it would return to the same difficulties which had plagued it in the mid 1970s. And in support of their position they could point to an EEC Commission report which drew

84 ibid.
85 Paul Tansey, 'North is at core of EMS decision', News Focus feature, Irish Times, 26 October 1978, p. 12 (hereafter cited as Tansey, EMS Decision').
less than optimistic conclusions about even the short-term future of the British economy.86

From this it followed that Ireland was urged to depend for its economic well-being upon a linkage with the growth centre within the EEC. Obviously, if the principal assumption proved correct, the economic growth resulting in Ireland would allow it to extend the range and content of its social services. Hence it presented the Lynch Government with what economic commentator Tansey somewhat extravagantly described as

the opportunity to write themselves into the history books as the men who finally prepared the ground for the reintegration of the national territory by peaceful means.87

But on the other hand, the risks involved in an EMS entry without the United Kingdom gave the move many of the qualities of a gamble. Foremost among these was the lack of knowledge, even among those intimately involved, of the consequences of membership.88 This allowed virtually every point in favour of membership to be countered by an argument the other way.

Economically, a case could be made that Ireland would not so much rid itself of the British influence as merely disrupt a relationship which accounted for nearly 50 per cent of its trade, and which, because of the levels of trade and investment (not to mention social and political relations) inherent in it, was unlikely to admit radical change anyway. Similarly, and in the short term, the Republic would stand to lose its best 'foreign' market, Northern Ireland, the only area with which it consistently ran a large balance of payments surplus.89 And then there was always the question posed in numerous articles at the time (late 1978), of whether a break with sterling would in fact signify

86 ibid.
87 ibid.
88 ibid.
89 ibid. It was presumed that a revaluation of the Irish 'punt' would initially effect the competitiveness of the Republic's goods in the North, while Northern goods would become cheaper in the Republic.
Ireland ceasing to be an economic province of Britain, or only the trading one external influence for another — perhaps West Germany.

Ironically, it was possible for a situation to ensue in which the worst of both worlds was true. According to Tansey:

A break with sterling would permit Ireland to exercise a credit (interest rate) policy independent of Britain's for the first time, but it would also involve branches of Irish banks in Northern Ireland coming under the sway of the Bank of England.\(^90\)

Administratively also, the difficulties, as they related to dual currency systems within Ireland, and their attendant exchange control, appeared to be formidable. In the resulting cumulative web of inconvenience and confusion, one certain result was posited (again in the short term): with the creation of different financial and currency systems, the divide between North and South would be reinforced both in real terms and psychologically.\(^91\)

Presented in these terms, it may appear as though the unity aspect was a central element in Ireland's decision to join the EMS. It was not. The question of Northern Ireland only lingered at the periphery of the technical debate on membership; indeed, it received very little attention in official Government statements in the period leading up to the December 1978 decision. Although Lynch claimed that the 'aspiration for the unity of Ireland by consent' was a 'vital element'\(^92\) in whatever decision would be taken, there were sufficient indications that Lynch was paying little more than lip-service to it. Within days of his statement, his Minister for Foreign Affairs, Michael O'Kennedy, dispelled any misconceptions to the contrary with a strong denial from Brussels that his Government would 'use' the issue of unity as an excuse for remaining outside the EMS. Consistent with his previously mentioned views on the effect of economic progress in the Republic on North-South relations, he proclaimed that Ireland would

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\(^90\) ibid.

\(^91\) ibid.

\(^92\) Address to the Fianna Fáil Gaullist Convention in Cork, as reported in the *Irish Times*, 20 November 1978.
further influence Northern attitudes by taking 'a full, positive and confident role' in the EMS.\textsuperscript{93}

Moreover, it appears reasonable to infer from the report in which this was carried that O'Kennedy intended to convey the message that unity was only one of the vital elements which would be considered. Subsequent events confirm this. The newspaper reports covering the period September-December 1978, and Brendan Dowling's brief resume of Irish entry, point to the fact that, however vital unity was, it was not as vital as the more immediate financial considerations.\textsuperscript{94} Indeed, it was a result of dissatisfaction over 'resource transfers'\textsuperscript{95} that the Government decided it could not recommend Irish membership of the EMS to Dáil Éireann; and similarly, it was on the basis of an improved offer on this outstanding issue that it decided to accept membership.\textsuperscript{96}

This decision was made on 16 December 1978, with effect from 13 March 1979.\textsuperscript{97} It was made the more historic because the United Kingdom had, earlier that month, decided against entry, and thus the century-and-a-half link with sterling was, in effect, broken.\textsuperscript{98} In the absence of

\textsuperscript{93} Remarks at a press conference following a meeting of European foreign ministers in Brussels, 20 November 1978, as reported in the \textit{Irish Times}, 21 November 1978.

\textsuperscript{94} i.e., Dowling, 'The European Monetary System'.

\textsuperscript{95} Resource transfers: substantial transfers of resources in the form of cash grants from the Community in order to strengthen the economy for participation in the EMS and to offset any balance of payments difficulties which the System might create.

\textsuperscript{96} Dowling, 'The European Monetary System', p. 3.

\textsuperscript{97} Originally, it was expected that Irish entry would be implemented on 1 January 1979, but a dispute between France and Germany over the impact of the currency changes on farm prices caused the delay.

\textsuperscript{98} At the time, parity was maintained between the Irish pound and sterling but the Irish Government and the Central Bank were no longer committed to maintaining this parity if it conflicted with obligations within the EMS to keep the Irish pound in line with other European countries. Within months this formal break was reinforced by the actual break in parity between the 'punt' and the pound.
evidence which would suggest otherwise, it is reasonable to conclude that the question of unity was irrelevant. Put quite simply, as the debate over entry proceeded, whatever significance the unity issue initially held, it receded to the point where it barely warranted a mention.

There was nothing in this decision that changed the conclusions which were to be drawn from the record of Ireland (and the United Kingdom) in the EC. The reintegration of the national territory, although a question for Britain, Ireland and Northern Ireland, did not become a question for the EC. Those in the North who had political power were opposed to that, and by extension, so was the British Labour Government, particularly after 1976. Exactly what was implied by the apparent change in the Irish Government's attitude in, and after, 1978 is so far not clear — certainly no new 'European' strategy was in evidence in this time.

But unity is only one of the questions which comprise the Ulster Question. And it is possible to construe most of the statements which indicated a changed Irish position as referring primarily to the notion that the Community could effect an improvement in the Northern situation itself, rather than achieve a North-South rapprochement. Yet here, too, this lesser objective was invested with little in the way of an identifiable strategy by Dublin, nor was there any suggestion as to how the Community would triumph where all others had failed.

All that seems certain is that Ireland (the Republic) appeared, on balance, to be doing very well financially out of its entry into the EC. It was, therefore, to be expected that many of the country's political leaders would see therein only another advantage of the North uniting with the Republic. But it must be emphasised that they do so in the absence of any indication by Northern Unionists that they are sufficiently impressed with this performance to forego their reservations on issues which have kept Ireland partitioned for nearly sixty years. There is, therefore, scope for encouragement in the belief that the EC may provide a stimulus towards a greater harmony of interests between North and South, but, if history is any guide, substantially more grounds for concluding that those who hold such hopes are likely to be disappointed.
CHAPTER NINE

THE ULSTER QUESTION AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (AND COURT) OF HUMAN RIGHTS
In August 1971, against a rising tide of violence, and perhaps as a result of Brian Faulkner's personal commitment to it as a proven anti-IRA measure, the Northern Ireland Government introduced a system of internment without trial. Internment under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922 had been a traditional weapon at the disposal of the Stormont Government in dealing with threats against the security of the state. Indeed internment, or measures substantially similar to it, had been the recourse not only of the Northern Ireland Government but also of successive Governments (British, Irish Free State, and Republic of Ireland) in Ireland on at least eight occasions since 1916. Although, for the greater part of their respective durations, it was introduced on an all-Ireland basis, and this accounted for its success in military terms, it was traditionally operated by the Northern Ireland Government exclusively against the Catholic population. There was no exception to this rule in 1971.

The underlying official rationale beneath its introduction that year was primarily to obtain more intelligence about the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and to detain individuals on a preventative


basis who could not be dealt with by the ordinary means of law.\textsuperscript{3}

This inadequacy of the normal legal processes in times of emergency was further elaborated in the Gardiner Report of 1975:

When times are relatively normal, the needs of ordered society may be met by the criminal courts functioning with a high regard for the Common law's presumption of innocence and a strict observance of the rules of evidence and the standards of proof. But when normal conditions give way to disorder and lawlessness, with the extensive terrorism causing widespread loss of life and limb and the wholesale destruction of property, the courts cannot be expected to maintain peace and order in the community if they have to act alone. The very safeguards of the law then become the means by which it may be circumvented. Terrorism means widespread intimidation in all sections of the community. Material witnesses refuse to testify on the peril of their lives, and the law will not accept hearsay evidence; and furthermore police officers who have knowledge and belief about the commission of certain offences may find their conclusions inadmissible in court, because they cannot satisfy the law's necessarily stringent requirements.\textsuperscript{4}

In response to this situation 'Operation Demetrius' was mounted in the early hours of Monday, 9 August 1971, with the objective of 'lifting' some 450 men who were known, or suspected by the security forces, of being threats to the security of the state. In the event 345\textsuperscript{5} were arrested and transported, first via Prisoner Collection...
Points, then Regional Holding Centres,\(^6\) and finally (if they were to be detained beyond 48 hours) to places of detention — either the Crumlin Road Jail in Belfast or the hulk HMS 'Maidstone' in Belfast Lough.\(^7\)

The introduction of internment produced an unexpectedly violent reaction from within the minority community in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, soon after the arrest operation of 9 August, reports were published in Irish newspapers, and subsequently also in Northern Irish and English newspapers, about persons making allegations of brutality and ill-treatment by security forces during their arrest, interrogation, and otherwise.\(^8\) In particular these centred around the treatment undergone by fourteen men, at various identified and unidentified centres, who had been selected for what was referred to as 'interrogation in depth.'\(^9\) As a result of the storm of protest which ensued, a Committee of Enquiry under the chairmanship of the British Ombudsman, Sir Edmund Compton, was established with the following terms of reference:

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\(^6\) Ballykinler Weekend Training Centre, Co., Down; Girdwood Park Territorial Army Centre, Belfast; and Magilligan Weekend Training Centre, Co. Derry. After August 1971 these centres were closed down, but replaced by others at Palace Barracks, Holywood, near Belfast; Girdwood Park, Belfast; Gough, Co. Armargh; and Ballykelly, Co. Derry. In July 1972, these centres were replaced by police offices at Castlereagh Police Station, Belfast, and at Ballykelly Military Barracks (Commission Report, pp. 1-2).

\(^7\) Subsequently Magilligan Camp, Co. Derry was used by it, the Crumlin Road Jail and the 'Maidstone' were eventually replaced as places of internment by Long Kesh Internment Camp (now, with internment ended, a prison for those convicted of terrorist-type offences, and known officially as The Maze Prison).

\(^8\) See Sunday Times, Ulster, pp. 280-97. Note: allegations were also made of late releases from Girdwood Park, but these did not comprise as significant a number of complaints as did those with which this chapter is concerned.

\(^9\) The generally accepted figure is fourteen. However, John McGuffin, *The Guinea Pigs* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1974), pp. 76-7, and pp. 81-2 (hereafter cited as McGuffin, *The Guinea Pigs*), names a total of 17. The discrepancy is accounted for by the fact that, in the Compton Report, one person is unaccountably omitted despite evidence that he was subject to the treatment referred to, and in relation to two others, it took place while the Committee of Inquiry was sitting. Nevertheless, the accuracy of these figures is not helped by the acceptance,
To investigate allegations by those arrested on 9th August under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922 of physical brutality while in the custody of the security forces prior to either their subsequent release, the preferring of a criminal charge or their being lodged in a place specified in a detention order.10

It investigated allegations from forty men and concluded that eleven of them had been subjected to methods of treatment which included:

(i) keeping the detainees' heads covered by a black hood except when being interrogated or in a room by themselves;

(ii) submitting the detainees to continuous and monotonous noise of a volume calculated to isolate them from communication;

(iii) depriving the detainees of sleep during the early days of the operation;

(iv) depriving the detainees of food and water other than one pound of bread and one pint of water at six hourly intervals;

(v) making the detainees stand against a wall in a required posture (facing wall, legs apart, with hands raised up against wall).11

The Committee concluded that each of these measures, known collectively as the five techniques, constituted physical ill-treatment, and that certain other actions taken in regard to prisoners constituted measures of ill-treatment or of unintended hardship, but that in no case had any of the grouped or individual complainants suffered physical brutality as the Committee understood the terms.12

10 in the Commission Report (p. 2), of 12 instead of 11 in the Compton Report (p. 11); or of the former's claim (p. 2) that two further cases were added (so as to give 14), when McGuffin names three others (p. 77).

11 ibid., pp. 15-17.

12 ibid., pp. 71-2. A second Compton Report, not available to the public, considered the case of three other men who had been subjected to the five techniques. There was one finding of ill-treatment. See the Times, 17 November 1971, p. 5.
distinction, according to the Report, lay in the minds of the interrogators, which they explained by the following excursion into psychoanalysis:

Where we have concluded that physical ill-treatment took place, we are not making a finding of brutality on the part of those who handled these complainants. We consider that brutality is an inhuman or savage form of cruelty, and the cruelty implies as disposition to inflict suffering, coupled with indifference to, or pleasure in, the victim's pain. We do not think that happened here.  

As regards the number of other allegations, some of which were divorced from interrogation in depth, the Committee concluded either that it was unable to make findings as to their validity because of a conflict of evidence, or that although substantiated, the treatment inflicted constituted no more than 'a measure of ill-treatment', or 'some measure of unintended hardship'. The Compton Report, therefore, was not so much concerned with the law as it was with what Ian Brownlie referred to as the 'normative fulcrum it took to be the concept of "physical brutality" contained in the terms of reference.' Further, as this observer also noted, the conclusion it reached seemed to say that what is believed to be necessary cannot be brutal.

But the Report was deficient in many other areas besides. For example, its credibility was challenged by the procedural limitations under which it operated. The hearings were held in secret, and although a complainant was allowed to be accompanied by a legal representative, he was not permitted to cross-examine witnesses or to have access, as of right, to transcripts of evidence. Consequently,

\[13\] ibid., p. 23.

\[14\] ibid., pp. 30-1, 33, 35, 51, 52, 56, 58, and 63.

\[15\] ibid., pp. 26 and 30. These applied, respectively to the 'Helicopter Incident', in which hooded detainees were forced to take part in a deception operation without knowing what was happening to them; and the 'Obstacle Course', in which barefoot men were forced to run along a route consisting in part of granite chippings and a hardcore path.


\[17\] Compton Report, p. 1.
the inquiry was unacceptable to the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association and to all bar one of the complainants: only one of the latter appeared before the Committee.

In its examination of the five techniques the Committee chose to conclude only as to their separate application, despite the fact that, taken together, they comprised a regime of very severe sensory deprivation. Since it was widely accepted that many of the lasting effects of sensory deprivation were psychological, Compton may have construed the Committee's terms of reference as precluding an investigation into this aspect. But given that the refinement between physical and psychological was, in this case, semantic rather than operational, the decision not to consider the psychological impact of the five techniques upon the detainees, by whatever course of logic it was arrived at, was surprising. Moreover it even appeared to be at odds with the 'Note on Interrogation' — in effect an extract from the official 'rules' to be observed in such matters — which the British Government requested it to receive. Among the actions expressly prohibited were 'outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment'. Yet several detainees complained they had received treatment of this kind, or something similar to it.

However, the Report was wanting in other areas besides. It did not, for example, say how many others (if any) besides those named in the Report, were subjected to deep interrogation. And although it included the 'Note on Interrogation' it neither published it in the full context of the 'general rules governing the custody of detainees' from which it was extracted, nor did it say whose responsibility it was to see that its requirements were adhered to. Thus the State appeared to be in default of its obligations within the area of authorised procedures (in the special sense that they were service policy), and in a wider sense, as pointed to in the following passage:

18 See Brownlie, 'The Compton and Parker Reports', pp. 502-03; and McGuffin, The Guinea Pig, pp. 82-4.
19 Compton Report, p. 12.
Still less did the three commissioners address themselves to the question of whether the State, as the guardian of law and civilized dealing, was justified or wise in subjecting to the routine described — a punishing routine, by any standards — men who were not proven criminals, and who were not even provenly in possession of the knowledge sought from them.20

While many of the deficiencies noted could be held to be derived from the vastly inadequate terms of reference or the difficulties under which the committee operated, it would have been a distortion to have concluded that the absence of these factors could have substantially altered the opinions which were expressed. Throughout the Report, especially in the 'Conclusion' sections, there was demonstrated an overwhelming willingness to accept the evidence presented by official witnesses without comment or apparent scepticism. It was a habit of mind well captured by a Sunday Times team of journalists who described the Compton Report as a 'credulous' document: in their view 'the committee was disposed to believe that because a rule existed, it was therefore kept.'21

The problem with this attitude was that it was neither appropriate nor politically desirable. Though they may not have appeared before the committee, too many people had in other places given detailed accounts of what they alleged had taken place, and these had been widely circulated by the media throughout Ireland and the United Kingdom. Furthermore it was clear even from Compton's jesuitical distinctions and understated conclusions that many authorised interrogation procedures had been misapplied.

Indeed, the very justification for their use in the first place was challenged by the evidence which the committee had available to it, but no opinion was entered thereupon. According to the Report, the official justification for the use of the five techniques was as follows:

20 Sunday Times, Ulster, p. 296.
21 ibid., p. 294.
They had been used in support of the interrogation of a small number of persons arrested in Northern Ireland who were believed to possess information of a kind which it was operationally necessary to obtain as rapidly as possible in the interest of saving lives, while at the same time providing the detainees with the necessary security for their own persons and identities.  

But at the time at which the Report was completed, 3 November 1971, the indications were that this was invalid, as instanced by the 'Insight' team's report:

... if any such information was elicited, it does not seem to have invariably led the forces of order to the people they wanted: of the more than 1,500 people arrested within four months of the internment sweep, well over half were released again fairly quickly without charge. And Ministry of Defence figures show that arms, ammunition and explosive finds were at a scarcely higher level after than before internment, until there was a sharp rise in November – three months after, the only acknowledged instances of 'deep interrogation'.

Even then, the significance of the November figures was open to question, but in the aftermath of internment two facts of the situation admitted little or no doubt. The first was that the operation had immeasurably set back the cause of a peaceful settlement in Northern Ireland. Not only were there spectacular increases in the incidence of rioting, the burning of houses, shootings, bombings and violent deaths, but Catholic refugees from the State fled south across the Border for temporary shelter in the Republic. And the second fact was derived from both these developments and their cause. Irrespective of the 'successes' which the security forces attributed to internment and interrogation in depth, there existed in Britain and Ireland a sense of unease about what had taken place. Stated plainly, a number of citizens – innocent because not proved guilty – in a corner of the United Kingdom had been subjected to treatment which at the very least constituted a grave injury to their persons and their community.

23 Sunday Times, Ulster, p. 295.
Thus, from whatever perspective the Compton Report was viewed, it was virtually impossible to see it in a favourable light. In terms of the psychological impact of the treatment to which certain detainees were subject, it was manifestly a non-event. And with regard to treatment which was about as psychological as a well-aimed blow to the stomach, it demonstrated what Michael O'Boyle has charitably termed an 'unsatisfactory, unconvincing, and limited approach.' Nor could these perceptions have been allayed by further sworn allegations, in October 1971, of cruelty to detainees, and disclosures by the International Red Cross that the detainment conditions in the Crumlin Road Prison, Belfast, required improvement.

In recognition of this situation, and less than two weeks after the Compton Report was presented, the British Government established a second committee, chaired by Lord Parker of Waddington to consider whether, and if so in what respects, the procedures currently authorised for the interrogation of persons suspected of terrorism and for their custody while subject to interrogation require amendment.

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27 Sunday Times Ulster, p. 295.

28 Comité International De La Croix-Rouge, Report on the visits carried out by the delegates from the International Committee of the Red Cross to places of detention in Northern Ireland, October 1971, pp. 4-5. Note: Whether this Report was made available at the time to all interested parties (e.g. the Irish Government) is unclear. The writer experienced some difficulty in obtaining copies of this and other similar Reports as late as 1978.

The Irish Government remained unimpressed. Well before the committee had reported back to the Taoiseach, John Lynch, had delivered himself of the expectation, that because of its serious procedural defects, it seemed 'highly unlikely that an inquiry so restricted can achieve the truth'. Later in the same adjournment debate he likened procedures which were supposed to protect a detainee against wrongful internment to those which Franz Kafka described in The Trial, so hopelessly loaded were they against the individual concerned.

It followed, therefore, that the Report, when eventually released, was hardly welcomed in Dublin. The Tanaiste, speaking on behalf of the Taoiseach, declared that it had 'not in any way' alleviated the grave concern felt in Dublin by the allegations which the Committee had inquired into. It thereupon took the decision, while the so-called Parker Committee was deliberating, to challenge the exercise of the emergency power of internment and, in particular, the legitimacy in international law of the five techniques and other methods of interrogation, under the European Convention on Human Rights. In answer to suggestions that this move had 'surprised' the British Government, the Taoiseach claimed that repeated warnings of such a course of action had been given it following the introduction of internment — in the context of what he called 'private diplomacy.' On 16 December 1971, the Government of Ireland filed with the European Commission on Human


31 ibid., col. 17. On this he appeared to be well supported. Dr Claire Palley, then Professor of Public Law in Queen's University, Belfast, was of the opinion that 'in World War II better safeguards relating to internment existed in the United Kingdom than do now in Northern Ireland'. (Claire Palley, 'Internment: the need for proper safeguards', in the Times, 23 November 1971, p. 14).

32 Deputy Taoiseach.


34 Dáil Éireann, Official Report, vol. 257, 1 December 1971, col. 907. 'Private' it must have been; there is no reference to such representations having been made in any other official source.

35 Hereafter in this chapter cited as the Commission.
Rights an interstate application in accordance with Article 24 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.  

This international treaty which the Irish Government invoked was, like many similar efforts in the field of human rights, a post World War II development. It had been in force only since September 1953 when the 17 signatory states, Ireland and the United Kingdom among them, agreed to ensure protection through their domestic law of certain rights and freedoms drawn from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Convention differed from some other attempts in this field, however, in that it was recognised as the most advanced of any such treaty in terms of the individual rights it guaranteed and in its enforcement machinery. Including in the former was the right to life and personal liberty, fair trial, freedom of speech and assembly, family rights, and the prohibition of torture. Certain provisions including the prohibition of torture was declared to be absolute, while other rights including freedom of speech and the right to a fair trial were able to be suspended, according to Article 15, 'at times of war or other public emergency'.

In choosing to complain about alleged breaches of the Convention within the territory of another state (i.e. to bring an 'interstate' application) the Irish Government were acting in a manner seldom resorted to: prior to the Irish applications, only five interstate cases had been considered whereas, by the end of 1972, the Commission had declared admissible over 100 petitions brought by individuals against their governments.

In their original submission the Irish Government outlined in what way it considered that breaches of Articles of the Convention had occurred.

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36 Hereafter cited as the Convention.
38 ibid., p. 154.
39 ibid., pp. 154-5. Even then, the number accepted by the Commission constituted less than 2 per cent of all (5960) petitions.
Referring to the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922 and to the related Statutory Rules, Regulations and orders, it submitted that they contained provisions which were of themselves a failure by the United Kingdom Government to comply with obligations imposed on it by Article 1 (to secure to everyone the rights and freedoms defined in the Convention). Further, that the methods employed or permitted by that Government in the implementation of emergency legislation, constituted an administrative practice in violation of the Convention. ⁴⁰

In relation to Article 3 of the Convention (proscription of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment), Ireland submitted that the methods of treatment of persons in custody, in particular the methods of interrogation, constituted an administrative practice which did not comply with its provisions. ⁴¹ As to Articles 5 (right to liberty and security of person) and 6 (right to a fair trial), it was submitted that the powers of detention and internment without trial considered in the cited emergency legislation, and their operation, were in breach thereof. ⁴² While it was conceded that an emergency existed for the purposes of Article 15 (derogation of a state from its obligations in time of public emergency), the Irish Government also claimed that the emergency measures taken by the United Kingdom Government, derogating from its obligations under the Convention, were not strictly required by the 'exigencies of the situation'. ⁴³ It further submitted that the exercise by the United Kingdom Government, and by the security forces under its control, of the powers to detain and intern persons had been, and was still being carried out with discrimination on the grounds of political opinion and was, therefore, in violation of Article 14 of the Convention (proscribing discrimination on such grounds) read in conjunction with Articles 5 and 6. ⁴⁴ Ireland

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⁴¹ ibid., p. 221.
⁴² ibid., pp. 18-26 and pp. 35-43.
⁴³ ibid., pp. 65-9.
⁴⁴ ibid., pp. 105-06.
also finally claimed a violation of Article 2 of the Convention (right to life) in relation to the deaths of certain persons in Northern Ireland. These matters were the substance of the Irish Government's application, No. 5310/71.

At a later date the Irish Government made further submissions in support of their claim, in particular regarding the deaths in Derry on Bloody Sunday (30 January 1972), and also added allegations of breaches of Articles 5 and 6 of the Convention in relation to powers conferred by legislation subsequently passed by the United Kingdom Government. These referred to the Detention of Terrorists (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, and the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973. Additional complaints and material relating to an issue under Article 7 of the Convention (non-retroactivity of crimes and punishments) were registered as a separate application, No. 5451/72.

Between the 25-29 September 1972 the critical admissibility hearings were held in Strasbourg and resulted in a decision that the Irish application was partially admissible. The Commission declared inadmissible those parts of the applications which contained allegations under Article 2 of the Convention in relation to the deaths of certain persons in Northern Ireland on the grounds that 'substantial evidence' had not been adduced to support them. A complaint about discriminatory searches of Catholic homes by the security forces, brought under Article 14, was abandoned. In view of a satisfactory undertaking at the oral hearing before the Commission, by the United

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46 ibid., p. 48.


48 Annexes, pp. 120-1.

49 The decision is found in Annex II of Annexes, pp. 31-2.

50 ibid., p. 115.

51 ibid., pp. 118-20.
Kingdom Attorney-General, to the effect that no one would be held guilty by reason of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence at the time it was committed, application No. 5451/72 was withdrawn. The Commission thus retained, for consideration of their merits, the following allegations:

(i) that the treatment of persons in custody, in particular the methods of interrogation of such persons constitutes an administrative practice in breach of Art. 3 of the Convention;

(ii) that internment without trial and detention under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922 and the Regulations made thereunder constitute an administrative practice in breach of Arts. 5 and 6 of the Convention in connection with Art. 15;

(iii) that the exercise by the respondent Government of their power to detain and intern persons is being carried out with discrimination on the grounds of political opinion and thus constitutes a breach of Art. 14 with respect to the rights and freedoms guaranteed in Arts. 5 and 6 in conjunction with Art. 15 of the Convention;

(iv) that the administrative practices complained of also constitute a breach of Article 1 of the Convention.

The Irish Government had thereby succeeded, where others had failed, in bringing before the Commission the question of human rights in Northern Ireland. However, previous attempts, which became known as the 'Northern Irish Cases', had failed because of a protracted conflict about legal fees between the Commission and the American lawyer engaged by the applicants — i.e. before even the formal admissibility hearings.

52 ibid., pp. 120-1.
53 ibid., pp. 120-2.
54 Boyle, Hadden, Hillyard, Law and State, pp. 155-6. This source (p. 157) also records the seven individual applications, Donnelly and others v. the United Kingdom, Applications numbered 5577/72-5583/72, complaining of 'torture and inhuman or degrading treatment'. A decision on these cases was reached on 15 December 1975 by the Commission: it reversed the 1973 decision in which they were declared admissible and declared them inadmissible on the grounds of non-exhaustion of domestic remedies (in the case of three applicants), and, in the case of the other
Following the above decision, the Commission proceeded to an investigation of the allegations made by the Irish Government. These took the form of submissions, both written and oral, and hearings which lasted from 29 November 1972 through until 20 March 1975. As it took another ten months beyond this date for the Report to be submitted and adopted, and a further eighteen months before its contents became public knowledge, two aspects of the entire interstate case were highlighted. The first was the extended period which the case took just to be partially completed, and the second was the observation that it should have been persisted with, from late 1972-mid 1974 particularly, during a time in which Ireland and the United Kingdom were enjoying both a substantial measure of political cooperation and what Keith Kyle described as 'intimate judicial partnership.' The suggestion, of course, was that the pursuit of the case at Strasbourg was inconsistent with developments which they together had wrought towards the long-term objective of Irish unity. While this course of action may have appeared impolitic in the context of Anglo-Irish relations, a critical examination of the context in which the allegations were made, and the British reaction to these and the events to which they related, both of which are outlined in the following pages, required a conclusion that the abandonment of the application was a less than tenable proposition for the Irish Government.

four applicants, on the ground that they had already received compensation in full satisfaction of their claims. See Kevin Boyle and Hurst Hannum, 'Ireland in Strasbourg: Final Decisions in the Northern Irish Proceedings Before the European Commission of Human Rights,' The Irish Jurist XI Part 2 (1976): 260-2 (hereafter cited as Boyle and Hannum, 'Ireland in Strasbourg').

Although the Report was adopted by the Commission on 25 January 1976, and thereupon transmitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, it was not made public until September 1976. In the interim the Irish Government, anxious to avoid a political decision on the Report's findings, exercised its alternative prerogative, and referred them to the European Court of Human Rights, in March 1977. (See pp. 367-8, this chapter).

Keith Kyle, 'Sunningdale and after: Britain, Ireland, and Ulster', World Today 31 (November 1975): 447. The reference here is to the decision by Anglo-Irish Law Enforcement Commission to recommend the extraterritorial method of trying fugitive offenders for certain offences, and the subsequent legislation passed in Britain and Ireland to give effect to this measure. (See Chapter Two, Anglo-Irish Relations, March 1972-June 1974).
What needs to be established at this point is that the conflict which has been under way in Northern Ireland since 1968 has been distinguished by being both brutal and brutalising. Moreover, the catalogue of such incidents, alleged and proven is substantial in terms of the number cited, and impressive as to the range of people who have accused the security forces of them.

Certainly it is tempting to adopt a comfortable cynicism towards the pronouncements of a number of these occasional 'dramatis personae' — such as Herbert Marcuse, Jean Paul Sartre, and Angela Davis — as their interest in Ireland may be measured in direct proportion to two variables: the 'popular' revulsion an atrocity may arouse beyond the thirty-two countries, and the period since its occurrence. Because they lack a sustained interest they appear as bit players who, to continue in the metaphor, observe the otherwise 'normal' circumstances of the country as 'personae muta'.

Nevertheless there are many among those who have brought accusations against the security forces in Northern Ireland whose credentials are

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59 In 1978 all three were associated with an International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland, 'formed to investigate charges of violation of Irish human rights by methods including torture, special powers legislation, forced confessions and judicial abuse, crimes against women, denial of free speech and the extraordinary powers of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.' (Source: undated broadsheet issued on behalf of tribunal; see also the Irish Times, 11 February 1978). A number of prominent Irish men and women were also associated with the tribunal but it is not suggested that their interest was less than sustained. However the writer is not aware of any reports as to the findings of the tribunal, nor indeed, of one relating to an earlier attempt by Satre to study such matters as 'cultural genocide by the English establishment', and 'Ireland as a training ground for British imperialism.' Both were to be considered by an 'international commission for the study of oppression in Ireland' whose sponsors included Vladimir Dedijer, vice-president of the so-called 'Russell tribunal', and American linguist Noam Chomsky. Irish and British participants were excluded to ensure its 'complete independence'. (Daily Telegraph, 7 April 1975).
not so easily dismissed. Arguably they would include the panel of Belgian, French, and Spanish lawyers which sat in Dublin in May 1978 and presented a report which concluded that Long Kesh was 'the only official concentration camp in Europe', and that the treatment of Republican prisoners therein amounted to 'systematic torture'. Without doubt a list of such accusers would also include the Roman Catholic Primate of All Ireland, Dr Tomas O'Fiaich, whose denunciatory statements on the same issue attracted so much controversy in August 1978.

Further down the ecclesiastical scale several volumes of allegations have been published by two Northern Ireland priests, Father Denis Faul and Father Raymond Murray. While they might not all be accepted as authentic accounts, by (say) a court of law, of each case that they claim to document, so many of their cases are well-documented with independent medical and other testimony that they cannot be readily dismissed. Moreover, they contain allegations of brutality brought by

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60 Irish Times, 27 May 1978. The panel, which also included Irish members, was presided over by the French judge, Etienne Bloch, was supported by the French League of Human Rights and the French Reformed Church.

61 Specifically, these statements, etc., relate to the condition of prisoners confined in the H-Blocks of Her Majesty's Prison, The Maze, Long Kesh, Northern Ireland. Between 1972 and 29 February 1976, prisoners convicted in the special non-jury courts were treated almost as prisoners of war, or at least as being within a special category. This status was ended for those convicted after 1 March 1976. In protest, Republican prisoners refused to cooperate in any way with the prison authorities: the result was that the H-Blocks which house these prisoners have deteriorated to the point where their conditions have been delicately described as 'inhuman'. Although it warrants no more than a brief mention in this work, the H-Blocks issue has assumed considerable proportion in the domestic politics of Northern Ireland. The measure of this may be gauged from the fact that Archbishop O'Fiaich's statement resulted from a visit to the Maze undertaken on the recommendation of the Vatican representative in Ireland, Archbishop Alibrandi, who was voicing the Pope's concern for the prisoners. See the Times, 2 August 1978, p. 1; Irish Times, 2 August 1978, pp. 1 and 5; and 23 September 1978 ('Saturday Column'). The controversy is recorded in both papers between the first and last dates mentioned.

62 A third priest, Father Brian Brady, is also listed as a co-author on some publications.
Loyalists as well as Republicans. And substantially the same type of charges have been levelled at the security forces since 1968 from a more secular quarter, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA).

In 1973 NICRA was joined by two other British organisations — the National Council for Civil Liberties and the Association for Legal Justice — again in making substantially the same allegations — in support of their request for a United Nations investigation into human rights violations in Northern Ireland. To this end they also forwarded a comprehensive dossier to the Secretary-General, Dr Kurt Waldheim, but it appears to have met with no greater success than attempts by the Irish Government to place the whole question of the Six Counties before the international body. However, the failure was not total: throughout the period under review both the International Red Cross and Amnesty International have given voice to their criticism of conditions in the Province. Insofar as the former was concerned, this took the form of reports of visits to prisons and places of detention. As a rule these tended to be more concerned with the physical conditions under which detainees and internees were kept; but, as internment continued, they increasingly contained references to the psychological state of those incarcerated and, finally, conclusions as to the desirability of retaining the policy of detention/internment. Thus, in an early report, there was a finding that the Crumlin Road Jail was overcrowded, while later reports concluded that, although this deficiency had been remedied, the poor morale which was evident in early 1971 had


64 These may be found in a number of broadsheets and pamphlets, but particularly in Civil Rights, the association's journal.


66 All reports were styled as follows: Comité International De La Croix-Rouge, Report on the visits carried out by delegates from the International Red Cross to places of detention in Northern Ireland, followed by the date of the visit. Hereafter they will be cited as International Committee of the Red Cross, Report, date and page no.

67 International Committee of the Red Cross, Report, October 1971, p.4.
become an entrenched characteristic. As a result, a 1974 conclusion implied that detention in the Maze was proving to be 'counter productive, sterile and even destructive', and recommended, in the case of Her Majesty's Prison, Armagh, that the British authorities 'should not lose sight of the psychological and moral problems of prolonged detention.

Amnesty International's two missions and subsequent reports have been in marked contrast to those of the International Red Cross, both in their concerns and in the manner in which their conclusions are stated. Essentially, they were concerned with the same issues — torture and inhuman and degrading treatment — which gave rise to the Irish Government's application. In 1971, the Amnesty Commission found that persons arrested under the Special Powers Act had been subjected to brutal treatment by the security forces during arrest and transport. It also concluded that there were cases where suffering had been inflicted on those arrested to obtain from them confessions or information.

In the light of allegations which were made to the organisation in later years, Amnesty International, with the ostensible cooperation of the British Government, sent a research mission to Northern Ireland in November-December 1977. Its findings were not altogether different from those which had been reached some six years earlier, as follows:

(i) On the basis of the information available to it, Amnesty International believes that maltreatment of suspected terrorists by the RUC has taken place with sufficient frequency to warrant the establishment of a public inquiry to investigate it.

68 International Committee of the Red Cross, Report, December 1972, p.5.
69 International Committee of the Red Cross, Report, May 1974, p.10 (of the Maze section).
70 ibid., pp. 6-7 (of the Armagh section).
(ii) The evidence presented to the mission does not suggest that uniformed members of the RUC are involved in the alleged maltreatment.

(iii) The evidence presented to the mission suggests that legal provisions, which have eroded the rights of suspects held in connection with terrorist offences, have helped create the circumstances in which maltreatment of suspects has taken place.

(iv) The evidence presented to the mission suggests that the machinery for investigating complaints against the police of assault during interview is not adequate.72

The evidence collected in support of the conclusions made the Amnesty International report a damning indictment: it showed the basic pattern of ill-treatment alleged in the Irish application to have remained the same. If anything, the intensity, viciousness and degree of ill-treatment recorded were far more extreme than that alleged in 1971-72. According to a member of the Irish Government's team at Strasbourg for the interstate case, Aidan Browne, S.C.,73 the Amnesty report was

immeasurably stronger in its detail and supporting medical evidence than ever was the initial ... case.74

Of course, a different view was taken by the British Government. Secretary for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason, described it as an 'unsubstantiated Report' but nevertheless felt obliged by its contents to promise an inquiry into the allegations it contained by an 'eminent judicial figure'.75 And well he might have. In the four year period between ending in October 1975, individual applications alleging ill-treatment or making complaints in respect of detention without trial had


73 Senior Counsel — the Irish equivalent of a Queen's Counsel.


been lodged in Strasbourg at the rate of approximately one per week.\textsuperscript{76} As with the cases cited by Fathers Faul and Murray, a number of these applications were lodged by Loyalists.\textsuperscript{77} Although the vast majority of them were to be rejected without any further action, the residue of new and original complaints concerning British treatment of Irish prisoners was still a substantial 30 in December 1977.\textsuperscript{78} Furthermore, in that month two test cases were referred by the Commission to London for a detailed reply concerning submissions on the operation of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act.\textsuperscript{79}

Throughout 1978 further developments had the effect of embarrassing the British Government and of foreshadowing the report of the judicial commission. In July Donal Murphy, a member of the Northern Ireland Police Authority, the body with responsibility for the overall administration of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, disclosed that the force's Chief Constable had refused to allow the Authority access to files concerned with the alleged ill-treatment of suspects.\textsuperscript{80} At the same time it emerged that the Chief Constable had also, without consulting with the Authority, requested Mason to hold a private inquiry into the Amnesty International allegations, and that this had led to the withdrawal from Authority meetings of Murphy and another member.\textsuperscript{81} Four months later a Resident Magistrate at Newtownards found that a suspect had been beaten during questioning by police but that he could not allocate the blame between the five detectives involved. As he explained, 'the guilty escape with the innocent.'\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{76} The figure cited is 'about 200' (Boyle and Hannum, 'Ireland in Strasbourg') p. 263.
\textsuperscript{77} ibid., no specific figure is mentioned.
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Irish Times}, 20 December 1977, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{79} ibid., the referral of cases to an accused Government is the first step in declaring the case admissible.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Irish Times}, 5 July 1978, pp. 1 and 6.
\textsuperscript{81} ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Irish Times}, 1 November 1978, p. 1.
Immediately prior to the release of the judicial commission’s report such charges received important support. Dr Robert Irwin, a police surgeon in Belfast, said that he had examined 150 prisoners whom he believed had been ‘physically ill-treated’ during police questioning in the Castlereagh detention centre. In considerably milder language, the Bennett report itself came to some of the same conclusions, finding injuries that ‘were not self-inflicted and were sustained during the period of detention at a police office.

The picture, then, whether viewed from Belfast, Dublin or London, was disturbing. It was one of apparent unremitting infringement of the human rights of large numbers of people who might or might not have been guilty of terrorist-related offences, but whose right to humane treatment was not diminished. Thus although many of the events referred to took place after the Irish case was brought, it would have been a nonsense for Dublin to have withdrawn its application: this action would have been done in the face of mounting evidence that nothing, or too little, had changed.

Nor was this view relieved by the proven criminal behaviour of the security forces in Northern Ireland, particularly the British Army, which included: armed robbery, arson,

85 The effect of unilateral action by Dublin may have been questionable: the Commission advised the Irish Government that, even if it chose to withdraw its application, it (the Commission) would pursue it in any case. (Interview).
86 Committed by no less a personality than Costas Georgiou, subsequently Colonel Cullen, and then Colonel Callan of Angolan mercenary, and late of firing squad fame. As a member of the Parachute Regiment in Northern Ireland, the Cyprus-born soldier had threatened the staff of Clandeboye sub-post office with a weapon, relieved them of their cash, and made a getaway in an Army jeep. (*Irish Times*, 12 February 1976).
87 In October 1976, the British Army admitted (and charged) that eight soldiers of the King’s Own Borderers and the 2nd Light Infantry had been involved in the burning of the Gaelic Athletic Association Club in West Belfast. (*Irish Times*, 14 October 1976, p. 4).
assault, blackmail, kidnapping, perjury, the unwarranted seizure of political documents from the SDLP, theft, and the needless taking of human lives. And this leaves to one side the conduct of the RUC during the Ulster Workers' Council Strike of 1974, which the Irish (and the British) Government found less than

88 In one case the victims were two teenage girls (Irish Times, 12 November 1976), while in another it was a severely handicapped man, and holder of the MBE, for which he received damages of £150 (Irish Times, 11 January 1978).

89 Admitted by Lord Carrington, Secretary of State for Defence, in reference to a 16-year old Belfast hotel porter. (Times, 10 May 1973).

90 Irish Times, 15 December 1978, pp. 1 and 6; and 18 December 1978, pp. 1 and 5.

91 In October 1976 a former paratrooper gave evidence of officially-ordered perjured testimony during his period of service in Northern Ireland which was sufficient to reverse the conviction it initially helped achieve (Irish Times, 22 October 1976), pp. 1 and 4.


93 Irish Times, 3 February 1978.

94 A case (of several) in point was the death of William Hanna, a passer-by, who was killed in the cross-fire of an Army ambush of Provisional IRA bombers at a Belfast postal depot in June 1978 (Times, 22 June 1978). What was not generally known at the time was that Hanna, a Protestant, was also on the Army's list of suspects but it lacked sufficient evidence to 'lift' him. According to an official who described himself as the 'Foreign and Commonwealth Office's expert on terrorism', the Army considered Hanna's death a 'bonus' to the operation in which three IRA members were also killed. However, in doing so the Army breached the 'yellow card' instructions, carried by each soldier in Northern Ireland, which define the occasions and circumstances in which he may open fire. After recounting this event, the official then described his department as frequently having to 'watch' the British Army and to act as its 'conscience' (Interview).


96 Ibid., p. 100.

97 Ibid., pp. 186-7.
comforting. The purpose of citing these instances is not to indict the security forces. Just as Edmund Burke remarked in another context that he knew of no 'method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people', there is no way of, indeed, no purpose in indicting the entire British Army or RUC. They are mentioned because they appear to be representative of the allegations made against the security forces since 1968 and because certain of them commended themselves to the memory by their nature.

But it is here that the attitude of the British Government warrants closer attention. In both its general reaction to the seamier side of operations in Northern Ireland, and in its conduct of the interstate case in particular, it has consistently displayed a disposition which was far from reassuring. The Compton Report was but one indication of this; the Parker Report which followed was only a re-run. This document on interrogation techniques, published in March 1972, claimed that an extraordinary volume of information came from the exercise which began with the 9 August 1971 sweep: identification of 700 Provisional and Official IRA members, 40 sheets of information on the organisation of IRA units, the discovery of individual responsibility for about 85 incidents, and a wealth of details on possible IRA operations, arms, casks, safe houses, morale, etc. The Report claimed there was no doubt that the information had directly and indirectly saved the lives of innocent civilians, although somewhat hypocritically, it went on to disavow the principle that the end justified the means. Thus it concluded that:

99 Parker Report, pp. 4-6. Once again this justification was challenged, as it had been in the Compton Report, but this time on a basis of less documentary evidence (John McGuffin, The Guinea Pigs, pp. 107-08). Also the Parker Report ignores the fact that internment itself escalated the conflict in Northern Ireland.
100 Ibid., p. 6.
there is no reason to rule out [the five] techniques on moral grounds and that it is possible to operate them in a manner consistent with the highest standards of our society.101

It may come as a surprise, therefore, to observe that the authors of this opinion, Lord Parker and J.A. Boyd-Carpenter, also considered that some of the techniques could constitute criminal assault.102 To remedy this they proposed, not that the techniques be abandoned, but that they should be incorporated into law and so as to indemnify in advance those who might apply them!103 It was all within that less than commendable tradition of trying to make the law accommodate crude necessities — which Ian Brownlie characterised as rather like peopling a monastery with prostitutes and publishing the mere change of lodging as an exemplary rehabilitation.104

In justice it must be recorded that one of the three Privy Counsellors comprising the Committee, Lord Gardiner, strongly dissented from the opinions of his colleagues. He closed his minority report with the following statement:

The blame for this sorry story, if blame there be, must lie with those who, many years ago, decided that in emergency conditions in Colonial-type situations we should abandon our legal, well-tried and highly successful wartime interrogation methods and replace them by procedures which were secret, illegal, not morally justifiable and alien to the traditions of what I believe still to be the greatest democracy in the world.105

What followed saw the blending of further hypocrisy with obfuscation. On 3 March 1972, when the Parker Report was released, the British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, made a statement to the House of

101 ibid., p. 7.
102 ibid., p. 8.
103 ibid.
104 Brownlie, 'The Compton and Parker Reports', p. 507.
105 Parker Report, p. 22.
Commons in which he both concurred with the Majority Report but accepted as an operating principle, the Minority Report of Lord Gardiner.\textsuperscript{106}

This did not mean that the British Government repudiated the five techniques, only that, if it was found 'necessary to use some or all' of them in the future, it would also be necessary 'to come to the House first before doing so.'\textsuperscript{107} Nor did it mean that interrogation-in-depth was to be discontinued in Northern Ireland; on the contrary, Heath gave notice that it would continue. However he did not specify by what means, despite the fact that allegations were then current that RUC Special Branch interrogators still used the wall-standing technique, and reportedly, had added electric shocks and electric heat treatment to their range of persuasive measures.\textsuperscript{108} And Heath's statement certainly did not mean that British servicemen were no longer permitted to use the five techniques. In September 1976, the Minister of Defence confirmed that military personnel were still being trained in their use and resistance thereto.\textsuperscript{109}

For all that, Heath's decision illuminated the transcending reality of one of the central issues with which this chapter is concerned: courts and tribunals of inquiry have not prevented, and cannot prevent the ill-treatment of persons in the custody of the security forces. More positively, governments can, but unfortunately the record since Compton/Parker has not been encouraging.


\textsuperscript{107} ibid., col. 748.

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Sunday Times, Ulster}, p. 307.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Irish Times}, 4 September 1976, p. 1. Not long after this disclosure a British Labour MP, Tom Litterick, accused his Party's Army Undersecretary, Robert Brown, of being 'less than honest' because of his inconsistent answers on a related matter — 'psychological operations'. In one reply Brown had advised Litterick that 262 civil servants had attended courses at the joint warfare establishment at Old Sarum in Wiltshire (House of Commons, \textit{Official Report}, vol. 918, 27 October 1976, cols. 262-264. A week later, in answer to a further question on this matter, the number had been drastically reduced to 22 — leading Litterick to complain of the Ministry of Defence's dishonesty (House of Commons, \textit{Official Report}, vol. 918, 4 November 1976, cols. 694-85.
Within weeks of that episode Lord Widgery presented his findings on Bloody Sunday, and gave to the English language a new verb. It was clearly not acceptable to the large majority of people in Ireland, as Conor Cruise O'Brien's moderately expressed view indicated:

... the introduction to the Report reflects the fact that a report unacceptable to the Army would have been extremely inconvenient.

I shared therefore in the scepticism with which the Catholics of Ireland, plus category two, received the Widgery report, largely exonerating the paratroops.

Even four years later the reluctance of the judiciary to grapple with similar problems remained undiminished. After a lengthy debate in 1976 by, first, the court of Criminal Appeal for Northern Ireland, and then the House of Lords, no agreement was forthcoming on

(a) whether a soldier commits a crime when he fires to kill or seriously wound an unarmed person because he honestly believes that the person is a member of a proscribed organisation who is seeking to run away, and the soldier's shot kills that person; and,

(b) whether, if a soldier commits a crime in killing a person at whom he shoots in the circumstances set out in (a), he is guilty of murder or guilty of manslaughter.

As a result of this collective indecision by eight of the United Kingdom's leading jurists one of the outstanding issues relating to the use of force by the British Army in Northern Ireland remained unresolved.

110 Known officially as the Report of the Tribunal appointed to inquire into the events on Sunday, 30th January 1972, which led to loss of life in connection with the procession in Londonderry on that day, by the Rt. Hon. Lord Widgery, OBE, TD, HL 101/HC 220 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, April 1972).

111 'to widge: deliberately to draw conclusions totally at odds with the evidence hitherto presented — specially during what are termed "whitewash operations"' (John McGuffin, The Guinea Pigs, p. 117).

112 Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (Frogmore, St. Albans, Herts: Granada, 1974), pp. 263-4. The reference to 'category two' is to 'people of settler stock ... and Protestant religion' in Ireland who have generally cast in their lot with the descendants of the 'native' Irish (see pp.51-2). And presumably the attitudes of neither category were improved by the conferring of a knighthood on the Commanding Officer of the paratroopers, within a year of Bloody Sunday.

113 Irish Times, 10 July 1976, p. 4.
And it also provided an understanding of why, by 1976, of the sixty fatal shootings involving soldiers firing at innocent persons, only seven had resulted in charges of unlawful killing being laid against military personnel.114

This brief list of unsatisfactory (at least to the Irish Government) reports of tribunals of inquiry is not exhaustive. The National Council of Civil Liberties, for example, found shortcomings in both the Gardiner and Bennett inquiries — to the extent that it refused to appear before the latter.115 And despite the Shackleton review116 and the fact that mainland acts of terrorism related to Ireland have diminished significantly since the Birmingham pub bombings of 1974,117 the Prevention of Terrorism Acts continued to operate almost exclusively against young, working class Catholics in Britain.118

Since these reports were the conclusions of 'independent' inquiries, the objection that the British Government should not have been held responsible for their findings appears to be sustained. And yet it cannot be entirely. Irrespective of whether they were officially or independently arrived at, the quality of their findings is not altered. Furthermore, the independent nature of the inquiries (and the heavy criticism their findings attracted) raises the question as to just who should be entrusted to undertake them in the first place. It might be

115 With regard to the Gardiner inquiry, the NCCL opposed its recommendations that detention and no-jury trial be continued (Irish Times, 1 February 1975). The NCCL's decision not to take part in the Bennett Committee's inquiry was based on that body's inability to 'consider the substantive working of emergency legislation in Northern Ireland' (Irish Times, 30-31 October 1978).
117 Four in 1979, according to the Guardian Weekly, 13 January 1980, p. 5.
argued that, if the work of those whose livelihood and eminence as jurists is not to be accepted, then either the standards of acceptability are ludicrously high or there is nothing further that can be done. Both suggestions are misleading. As two of the leading instances cited in this chapter indicate, the British Government contravened its own guidelines for the conduct of an impartial inquiry. In the case of the Compton Committee this has been well publicised: on at least seven counts, this report failed to comply with even the basic standards laid down by the Royal Commission of Tribunals, established under Lord Justice Salmon. Similarly, more attention could have been paid to the appointment of J.A. Boyd-Carpenter to the Parker Committee: according to McGuffin's account, his only son, Thomas, was Company Commander of the First Battalion, Scots Guards, stationed at Lurgan, Northern Ireland.

Admittedly, a closer attention to the detail of these matters would not necessarily have ensured different findings in the various reports. That type of outcome is hypothetical. But it might have reduced the degree of callousness and insensitivity to suffering which are characteristic of the Compton and Parker reports. In default of this, far too many observers were left not only with the impression that torture and inhuman and degrading treatment was officially tolerated in Northern Ireland, but also that those who were in a position to cast judgment on such activities were no better disposed to do so than Shakespeare's Mercutio, of whom Romeo said 'He jests at scars that never felt a wound.'

But a concentration on the technical inadequacies of the British Government in appointing the committees of inquiry, and upon their resultant unsatisfactory and inadequate findings, should not imply that the desire to see justice done in Northern Ireland was frustrated only by unintentional oversights in London. On the contrary, the conduct of

119 See McGuffin, _Internment_, pp. 128-9; and McGuffin, _The Guinea Pigs_, pp. 79-81.
120 McGuffin, _The Guinea Pigs_, p. 105.
121 Also cited by McGuffin (ibid.) in this context. The quote is from _Romeo and Juliet_, Act II, Scene II.
the British defence in the interstate case indicated an attitude consistent with the most cynical interpretations placed upon the aforementioned reports.

This was readily apparent in the resort which the British Government had to delaying tactics throughout the nearly five years that the case was before the Commission. These began when the Commission found that the Irish Government's application was admissible, in October 1972. In conformity with the rules of procedure, both the applicant and respondent Governments were requested to submit written observations on the decision to proceed with the application — the British to have theirs with the Commission by 1 February 1973. It was not received until 15 March 1973.

In the same period the Irish Government was requested to submit a list of '15 representative cases of alleged ill-treatment, and in respect of each case the names of witnesses whom they proposed that the Commission should hear.' This list was then forwarded to the British Government with a request to furnish 'the names of any other witnesses and to indicate any other evidence in respect of these cases' by 14 June. It was the intention of the Commission to proceed with its hearing on receipt of such evidence, on 10 July 1973. On 12 June the British Government replied by requesting permission to make 'submissions, following the July hearing, on questions of procedure including matters relating to the hearing of witnesses.' Ten days later they successfully requested an adjournment of the July hearings on the grounds of the impending Northern Ireland Assembly elections.

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122 Annexes, p. 6.
123 ibid., p. 7.
125 ibid., p. 225.
126 ibid., p. 226.
127 ibid.
128 ibid. The Assembly elections were held on 28 June 1973.
On 25 September, and again on 28 September the British Government again advised the Commission of their concern for the safety of witnesses, and on the latter date submitted an 'outline of evidence' which their witnesses would give. However the names of these witnesses were not supplied; instead each was designated by a code, and it was proposed that members of the security forces should be screened 'from the view of all but the members of the Commission ... and there should be such arrangements as will not prejudice the security of such witnesses.'\(^{129}\) Proceedings were then subjected to further delays by the 'inadequate' provision of information by the British Government,\(^{130}\) and by the difficulty it found in arranging for its counsel to appear on behalf of its witnesses who were due to go before the Commission from 4-9 February 1974. The hearings were then postponed until 25 February-2 March 1974.\(^{131}\)

However, when that date arrived, the concern which the British Government had evinced since early 1974 for the security of its witnesses culminated in a refusal by it to allow them to attend that part of the hearings which required them to appear in Strasbourg. Neither the living accommodation available in Strasbourg, nor the Human Rights Building itself (including the Commission room and movement in and out of the building), nor the method of arrival at it were found to meet with the demands specified by the respondent Government.\(^{132}\)

The purpose of this move may be inferred from the following account of the matter by the Commission:

> the [British] Government considered that, apart from the political difficulties of holding a hearing in the United Kingdom at that time, security reasons prevented them from providing a venue in the United Kingdom.\(^{133}\)

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129 ibid., p. 227-8. This proposal was agreed to with the proviso that the Irish Government's leading Counsel was to be allowed to see the witnesses (ibid., p. 236).
130 ibid., p. 228.
131 ibid., pp. 231-2.
132 ibid., p. 232.
133 ibid.
Once again the hearings were cancelled and 'extensive efforts' were made by the Secretary to the Commission to find, in consultation with the British Government, an alternative venue which would enable the latter to substantiate its claim that it would do 'everything appropriate to facilitate the hearing of witnesses.' It was not until 10 April 1974 that the locality was selected as Sola Airbase, Stavanger, Norway. Still further delays caused by the British Government followed — mainly because of its refusal, in breach of the Commission's rulings, to furnish proofs of evidence by the date the Commission had fixed.

Delaying tactics aside, two other devices were employed which complemented them and which deserve brief consideration. The first concerned the questionable practice engaged in by the British representatives of allowing their witnesses, against whom allegations had been made under Article 3 of the Convention, to read the transcript of the evidence given by previous witnesses for the Irish Government. This put the Commission in a dilemma. Such transcripts were meant to be confidential and any breach of their confidentiality, as the Commission pointed out, could have prejudiced the outcome of the hearings. On the other hand these breaches had already occurred and to allow them to dominate proceedings would have been to complicate matters further. Consequently, the Commission ruled that 'in the circumstances' the British practice was permitted, but expressed its regret that the British Government did not consult with it beforehand. In effect the British representatives emerged from a situation in which they had taken considerable liberties with only a mark of mild displeasure recorded against them.

The second device made use of related to the proposal of the British Government to designate their witnesses by an alpha-numerical code rather

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134 ibid.
135 Annexes, p.19.
137 ibid., pp. 238 and 239.
than by name. Although this was agreed to by the Commission, the British embellished it further by allocating different code-numbers to the same officer or soldier, according to the case with which he was listed. In turn this caused confusion among the Irish representatives, only one of whom was allowed to see the British witness he was cross-examining.138

In the case of three witnesses heard in London in 1975 not even this 'concession' applied: they were heard in secret, and then only by the Commission. Moreover, an official request from Strasbourg to allow senior Cabinet ministers and a former Northern Ireland Prime Minister to give evidence before the Commission was blatantly, but nonetheless successfully obstructed.139 It was developments of this nature that, in September 1974, prompted the Irish Government to complain, through its Agent, to the Commission of:

the attitude of the respondent Government at all stages of the present case which, in their submission, resulted in the requests, decisions and directions of the Commission and of its delegates being met by the respondent Government by (a) failure to comply, (b) seeking extension of time to permit compliance, and (c) inadequate compliance.140

Finally, it is necessary to consider three elements of the British defence and their effect upon the willingness of the Irish Government to persist in its complaint at Strasbourg. The first consisted of a

138 While it is clear from a close reading of the Commission Report (e.g. p. 464) that this practice occurred, it is not as clear as was claimed in Jack Holland's knowledgeable article, 'Strasbourg Report Decoded', Hibernia, 8 October 1976, p. 5. The reason for this is that, although Holland implies his argument is based on the Commission Report, it is obvious to anyone familiar with that document that his sources were wider than this. Indeed it is suggested that the conclusions he draws (more comprehensive than those above) could only have been predicated on (unacknowledged) access to the voluminous working papers, and perhaps a member of the Irish delegation.


140 ibid., pp. 241-2. The Commission's response was to take note of the matters raised and to express 'its hope for the parties' co-operation in carrying out its tasks under Article 28 of the Convention.' (ibid., pp. 242-3).
categorical denial by British witnesses that the allegations of ill-treatment were true. In support of this they referred to the fact that all of the Irish witnesses had signed a 'no complaints' form on leaving the detention centres, and that the doctor who was in residence at the Crumlin Road Jail where they were sent after their interrogation at the various holding centres had not taken exception to the state of the prisoners when he examined them.

Neither was convincing; the objection to the first was well outlined by Jack Holland.

As regards the first argument, it is so transparently weak as to suggest that the British were not prepared to take the proceedings seriously. A man who has been held, beaten and threatened for 48 hours will in all likelihood sign a No-Complaints form if he thinks that will help him to get out, and especially if it is put to him in the form of a threat as to what might happen to him if it is not signed.

The Commission agreed, finding the value of such forms 'questionable'.

As regards the second element — medical evidence from Crumlin Road — the Commission was again openly critical of the reliability which could be placed upon it. Under cross-examination, the medical doctor concerned (referred to as 'Dr M' in the Report) admitted that he had not recorded any complaints in his log concerning injuries allegedly caused by the security forces, despite the fact that all of those brought before him may have so complained. The essence of this situation, according to the Report, was the antipathy with which the detainees regarded the doctor ('part of the establishment which they were against'), and which he returned to them ('a specially treated group, namely IRA

141 ibid., pp. 404-5. See also those sections of Part Two, II, (C) of the Commission Report, headed 'The Evidence of the Security Force Witnesses', pp. 418-54.
I regretted that these things had to be done but they had to be done. This was not what was done all along the line.\textsuperscript{146}

The Report therefore concluded

If one puts these statements into the context of security operations in the Autumn of 1971, it seems highly probable that Dr M. just did not care to investigate into or even to report facts which he rightly thought to be outside his medical competence.\textsuperscript{147}

The third element was covered by the general description 'preventive and remedial action already taken.'\textsuperscript{148} This included legislation and a considerable number of directives, issued by the British Government, with the objective of securing the protection of human rights contemplated by the Convention. Foremost among these, or at least the most publicised and, perhaps, the most successful, was the practice of settling, frequently for considerable sums of money, actions brought against the British Government by persons alleging ill-treatment by the security forces. Between 9 August 1971 and 30 September 1975, 798 actions were commenced, of which 11 went to trial; nine were dismissed, and judgment was given for the claimant in two; 220 cases were settled out of Court, and at period's end, 567 cases were still outstanding. In the 220 cases disposed of, over £420,000 had been paid in compensation for wrongful arrest, false imprisonment, and assault and battery.\textsuperscript{149}

In the light of these developments the Commission reported that

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{145} ibid., p. 417.
\item\textsuperscript{146} ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{147} ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{148} ibid., p. 485.
\item\textsuperscript{149} House of Commons, Official Report, vol. 898, 21 October 1975, cols. 97-8. Read in conjunction with Council of Europe, European Court in Human Rights, Case of Ireland against the United Kingdom: Judgment (18 January 1978), p. 49, (hereafter cited as Judgment). In the only case of alleged physical ill-treatment which seems to have been fought, namely the case of Moore \textit{v.} Shillington, the judge disbelieved the evidence of the security forces. (Judgment, p. 49).
\end{itemize}
... important measures have been taken to meet the complaints of the applicant Government, in particular as regards the individual victims who have been cited in the application ... the respondent Government have repeatedly manifested their intention and good will to do anything that is reasonably possible in order to ensure the observance of their obligations under the Convention.150

Nevertheless the Commission was also obliged to include the observation

It is true that in most cases no criminal or disciplinary punishment has been imposed on persons who have committed acts of ill-treatment.151

In doing so it lit upon the substantial mote in both the British position and its own appreciation of that position. In general terms, the Irish Government did not regard the action taken as sufficiently preventive or remedial.152 More particularly, there was an objection to out-of-court settlements (apart from the pardonable inference that these awards somehow absolved the British Government of further responsibility in the matter of the treatment of detainees), and it was this: in the absence of action against those who otherwise should have stood accused, the British Government was seen to be buying protection, not to say disguising the real motives it had in making the settlements.

Hence, there existed the most unlikely grounds for the Commission to have effected a 'friendly settlement' between the parties.153 On the contrary, the reasons adduced in the foregoing indicate both the strength of the Irish case in terms of the evidence of the detainees

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151 ibid.
152 ibid.
153 Discussions between representatives of the British and Irish Governments, respectively, took place with a general view to such an outcome (allowed for in Articles 28 and 30 of the Convention). The record of these discussions comprises Annexe III of Volume II of the Commission Report (as per Commission Report, p. ii). But, according to advice received by the writer, this document has not been made public (Letter from G. Guarneri, Principal Administrator, Directorate of Human Rights, Secretariat General, Council of Europe, 21 November 1980).
and the unsatisfactory response by the British Government. However, it is emphasised that these arguments were distilled principally from the Report of the Commission and with a view to the broad politics of the issue raised. To the extent that these arguments exclude whatever motivating influence was provided by legal considerations it is a single factor analysis. Yet anyone who would argue from this latter standpoint would need, first to discount the force of the political arguments presented, and second, to develop it in the face of such obstacles to inquiry as the Irish Government's silence throughout the period in which the application was 'sub judice' the Commission. And then they would still need to account for developments following the publication of the Commission's findings which tended rather more to support the arguments which were the principal concern of the chapter to this point.

In September 1976 these findings were published as follows:

1. Article 3 of the Convention (torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

   (a) Cases involving the five techniques:
The Commission was of the opinion that the combined use of the five techniques in the cases before it constituted a practice of inhuman treatment and torture.154

   (b) Other Cases: The Commission, by unanimous votes, was of the opinion

      (i) that in a further 11 of the cases examined in depth, violations occurred by inhuman treatment of the persons in question at the hands of the security forces.

      (ii) that there was a violation of the Convention by a practice of inhuman treatment by members of the RUC in connection with the treatment of prisoners at Palace Barracks in the Autumn of 1971.

      (iii) that no practice in breach was found arising out of other individual cases of treatment in breach, or in the conditions in Girdwood Park in August 1971.

      (iv) that there was no violation by the conditions at Ballykinler Regional Holding Centre.155

155 ibid., p. 473.
2. Articles 5 (personal liberty) and 6 (fair trial) of the Convention taken in conjunction with Article 15 (derogation in emergency) regarding internment.

    unanimous decision: no violation as the measures, although contrary to Article 5, were permissible under Article 15.156

3. Article 14 (discrimination on political grounds) regarding the implementation of internment.

    unanimous decision: no violation.157

4. Article 1 (obligation to secure the rights embodied in the Convention)

    by 12 votes to 1: no violation as this Article does not impose a separate obligation from the rights Articles and cannot therefore be separately breached.158

Essentially, these conclusions represented a successful application by the Irish Government although it preferred to comment no further than to say that an examination of the report justified the proceedings it had taken.159 By its own measure it may have expected more. In fact the Irish Government had submitted written evidence in respect of 228 cases of alleged ill-treatment, only 16 of which were ultimately examined in detail by the Commission as 'illustrative' cases. Thus the Commission's findings were specific to them, not the 'overall situation',160 and then mainly to the period of autumn 1971.161

Subsequently it became clear that Dublin had sought a more complete measure of satisfaction than was found in the Report. On 10 March 1976, before the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe had considered the Commission's findings, the Irish Government invoked the appealate

156 ibid., pp. 92, 94, 99 and 103.
157 ibid., p. 220.
158 ibid., p. 485.
161 ibid., p. 459.
jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights,\(^{162}\) which was its prerogative under the Convention. It thus achieved a redirection of the case away from a primarily political forum in which the balance of political power could possibly tell against the moral and legal suasion which elements of the case were seen to have before the Commission.\(^{163}\) But this was not openly admitted at the time: instead the object of the application was described as follows:

> to ensure the observance in Northern Ireland of the engagements undertaken by the [British] Government as a High Contracting Party to the Convention and in particular of the engagements specifically set out by the [Irish] Government in the pleadings filed and the submissions made on their behalf and described in the evidence adduced before the Commission in the hearings before them.\(^{164}\)

To this end the Irish Government invited the Court

> ... to consider the report of the Commission and to confirm the opinion of the Commission that breaches of the Convention have occurred and also to consider the claims of the [Irish] Government with regard to other alleged breaches and to make a finding of breach of the Convention where the Court is satisfied that a breach has occurred.\(^{165}\)

Thus, the Irish Government's application may be summarised as requesting the Court not only to confirm those findings of British guilt which had been reached by the Commission, but otherwise to overrule or reject, as appropriate, those Commission findings which were contrary to the substance of the original complaints.\(^{166}\) In January 1977 it also

\(^{162}\) Hereafter referred to as the Court. The Court has jurisdiction over the interpretation and application of the Convention and may also render limited advisory opinions at the request of the Committee of Ministers; its decisions are final. (Boyle, Hadden, Hillyard, Law and State, p. 155).

\(^{163}\) Interview with Dr Garret Fitzgerald, former Minister for Foreign Affairs (1973-1977) and Leader of Fine Gael, Dublin, 14 February 1978, (hereafter cited as Fitzgerald Interview, 14 February 1978).

\(^{164}\) Judgment, p. 2.

\(^{165}\) ibid.

\(^{166}\) The full submission to the Court is found in the Irish Times, 8 February 1977. They are also found at various points in the Judgment but not in as consolidated a form.
requested that the Court address a consequential order to the British Government ordering the prosecution of officers involved in the aforementioned breaches of the Convention. 167

So much for the forum and the application. The question that still remained to be answered was why the Irish Government continued to press its case at all. The Northern Ireland Secretary, Roy Mason, was obviously irritated by it as was evident in a statement to the House of Commons.

The more that they [the allegations against Britain] are pursued in the European Court the more they serve only the cause of the Provisional IRA. Some years ago we recognised that we had been guilty of ill-treatment and that 14 prisoners had been ill-treated. We admitted that and have now paid compensation. I thought that was a first-class example of mature democracy. Only the Provisional IRA can benefit as a result of pursuing this case. 168

However, statements of this type appear to have been rare occurrences as there are few recorded instances of the British Government criticising or pressuring the Irish Government to desist with its Court action. But, according to Fitzgerald, Irish civil servants involved in bilateral relations across a wide range of activities, were left in no doubt by their British counterparts as to the displeasure being expressed at ministerial level in Whitehall. 169

Added to this there was the general suspicion at large in Britain, and acknowledged by Declan Costello, the Irish Attorney-General, in his summing up in Strasbourg, that the Irish action had been motivated by 'malice or spirit of vindictiveness.' 170

This, despite the landmark circumstances of the case in Strasbourg, it was, in terms of Anglo-Irish relations, a manifestation of the well-established tradition of mutual misunderstanding, here encapsulated by Oliver MacDonagh:

167 Judgment, p. 62.
169 Fitzgerald Interview, 14 February 1978.
170 Times, 23 April 1977.
Britain is engrossed with an immediate problem. She assumes a common war effort because there is a common general interest. She sees herself as readily forgiving past transgressions, and therefore entitled to ready pardon. But these are not pleas which can be heard clearly by Irish ears. They are drowned or distorted by the noises of old coercion, old condenscension, old colonialism and old battles for parity and the rule of ordinary law.171

In the particular circumstances of the interstate case, the Irish could, and did invest their actions with the quality of virtue and denied the force of ulterior motives imputed to them. Indeed, Garret Fitzgerald attempted to turn claims of this nature back upon his Government's accusers — describing them as 'propaganda'. Yet always he and other Ministers could point, with considerable logic in their favour, that the issues to be settled demanded a conclusion in law, and to the consistency of successive Irish Governments' concern for the civil and human rights of the minority community in Northern Ireland.172 The difficulty with such assertions, as it was also with the British assumption of ready forgiveness by the Irish, was that neither was completely deserved. Both admitted flaws which confirmed MacDonagh's observation that 'it is perhaps the mass of commonplace, unnoticed discordance of meaning and connotation which has set and still sets Anglo-Irish communication most askew'.173

While the substance of the Irish reasons for proceeding to the Court were demonstrably true they did not comprise the whole truth. In fact, before the formal Court proceedings had ended in Strasbourg, the Irish Government was itself embarrassed by allegations that a 'heavy gang' in the Garda Siochana had been systematically beating up

171 Oliver MacDonagh, 'Time's Revenges and Revenge's Time: A View of Anglo-Irish Relations', Anglo-Irish Studies IV (1979) : 15, (hereafter cited as MacDonagh, 'Time's Revenge and Revenge's Time').

172 Fitzgerald Interview, 14 February 1978; and comments made by Fitzgerald on the BBC Television programme, 'Tonight', of 18 January 1978, and of which a BBC transcript is held, (hereafter cited as BBC 'Tonight' transcript, 18 January 1978).

173 MacDonagh, 'Time's Revenge and Revenge's Time', p. 22.
Provisional IRA suspects. To many the charges bore an uncanny resemblance to the allegations of torture which the British Government were facing: prisoners were allegedly locked in cupboards, deprived of sleep, threatened with guns, and denied water in over-heated rooms. Dublin, moreover, refused an inquiry.

This position became less tenable in June 1977 with the rendering of a report to the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International by a mission which visited the Republic that month. In a letter to the Taoiseach of 26 August 1977, Amnesty International stated an opinion

... that the attached report constitutes grounds justifying an impartial investigation into the alleged maltreatment, in keeping with the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from being subjected to Torture or Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 9 December 1975...

As with the allegations against the security forces in Northern Ireland the Amnesty report noted:

Most of these allegations have concerned persons who have been arrested on suspicion of involvement either in terrorist offences or in other serious crimes where there has been a suspected political motive.

By its timing and its contents the report became a particularly sensitive document. Its communication to the Irish Government coincided with the expectation that a verdict would be forthcoming from the European Court of Human Rights within a matter of weeks, and demands that sections of the Republic's year-old emergency (counter-terrorist) legislation not be renewed.

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175 ibid.
176 Letter from Martin Ennals, Secretary General of Amnesty International, to the Taoiseach, of 26 August 1977, and enclosing the report.
The Irish Government, therefore, was in no hurry to respond to the Amnesty report. It took until 7 October 1977 for Gerard Collins, the Minister for Justice, to announce, first, the establishment of

... a special Committee to consider the situation arising from serious allegations and make recommendations as to whether — and if so what — additional safeguards are necessary for the protection against ill-treatment of persons in Garda custody and for the protection of members of the Garda Siochana against unfounded allegations of such ill-treatment.

and second:

... special arrangements whereby such allegations from identifiable persons can be speedily investigated and submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions who is, by law, the authority in whom is vested the duty to decide if the evidence is sufficient to justify a prosecution.179

What the wording of these announcements implied — an official scepticism bordering on indifference — subsequent developments confirmed. By late February 1978, only the committee to advise on safeguards had been appointed but little had been attempted to expedite the investigation of charges against the Garda Siochana.180 According to Collins the need to do so no longer existed as none of the complaints made to Amnesty International had later become the subject of a specific complaint.181 However, in June 1978 this position was no longer tenable. In the face of persistent allegations over four years that Gardai in Monaghan had been ill-treating suspects, a Chief Superintendent was appointed in accordance with a measure that had been promised nine months before.182

These episodes demonstrated a remarkable similarity in the reactions of both the British and Irish Governments to essentially the same issue. While it is not claimed that the extent of ill-treatment

179 Statement issued by the Government Information Services on behalf of Mr Gerard Collins, T.D., Minister for Justice, p. 1.
180 Irish Times, 28 February 1978.
181 Irish Times, 6 May 1978.
was as widespread or as scientifically applied in the Republic as it was in Northern Ireland, it was nevertheless instructive that, in each case, the attempts by third parties to interest themselves were resisted. Moreover, when this proved unsuccessful, both governments reacted with measures designed to protect the perpetrators as much as to identify and prosecute them. And at the official level this appeared to be best explained by a belief that the complainants were probably deserving of no better treatment than they got anyway.

Beyond these similarities the differences are profound — especially the difference in the resultant proceedings. The allegations concerning the Garda Síochána did not find expression against the Irish Government in an application before the European Commission of Human Rights, and, what is more, appear unlikely to do so. If Aidan Browne's observations are accurate, then the return of a Fianna Fáil Government in June 1977 heralded a cessation of the 'official tolerance' of such acts as led to the allegations, and hence, of the acts themselves. But then this observer also had to admit that, in the prosecution of one's own guilty parties, there was no more enthusiasm to be found in Ireland than in the United Kingdom.

In these circumstances the decision to proceed with the interstate case to the Court lost a slight measure of the strength of its position which it otherwise accrued from an appeal to legal justice and morality. While to continue the action against Britain may have been reassuring to the Republican/Nationalist tradition throughout the 32 counties — particularly in view of the Irish Government's pressure against the IRA through emergency legislation — it could not help, to the extent its higher motivation was impugned, but appear as perplexing, or even hypocritical.

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184 ibid.
185 In one regard the direction of the case to the Court may have been an obligatory course of action. The Economist, 30 April 1977, reported that it 'was the only way open to the Irish to get the commission's findings published and placed on record ...' However, the fact that in
The British, if anything, displayed even more ambivalence. Their submissions may be summarised as a request that the Court uphold the findings of the Commission in respect of Articles 1, 5, 6, and 14 of the Convention and which were in their favour. As regards the one article of which they were found seriously and extensively in breach, Article 3, they submitted that while the findings of the Commission were not contested, the Court should 'decline to exercise its jurisdiction' on the grounds that the objective of the original application had been accomplished. This was principally a reference to the 'solemn and unqualified undertaking' not to reintroduce the five techniques, given by the British Attorney-General, Sam Silkin, on 8 February 1977. Accordingly the subject-matter of the Commission's findings 'belonged to past history'.

In large part, therefore, the official irritation expressed by Mason (cited above) was accounted for, but both his statement and the posture of the British Government on the matter of Article 3, were misleading. The British Government did not, as Mason claimed, admit that 'prisoners' (who were, in fact no such persons — but detainees) had been ill-treated. As a rule, where large sums of money had been paid in settlement, it specifically denied that this signified an admission of guilt, as the following two examples indicate:

1978, Ireland had not ratified (although its Ministers had signed) either of two UN Covenants — on Civil and Political and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, respectively — the UN Convention on Racial Discrimination, did nothing to mitigate the above judgment. See 'The UN Declaration of Human Rights Thirty Years After', Text of address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Michael O'Kennedy, TD, at the International Consultation on Human Rights, Irish School of Ecumenics, on 30 November 1978, Statement and Speeches 1/79: Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs; and Mr Sean McBride's reported comments on the same occasion, Irish Times, 1 December 1978.

The full submissions are found in the Irish Times, 8 February 1977. As was noted with the Irish submissions (note 152), the British submissions are also found throughout the Judgment but not in as consolidated a form.

Judgment, pp. 52 and 53.
(i) Finally, with regard to these cases, the [British] Government submitted that the Commission should not assume from the settlements in the case ... that the large sums of money were in any way an admission of the assault ... 188

(ii) With regard to the settlements in the civil actions ... the [British] Government submitted that the fact that damages had been awarded was not evidence of admission of the cases. Settlement could be reached for a number of reasons. One reason was that it could be cheaper to settle the case and to avoid increased expenses by bringing in a lot of witnesses, particularly in the County Court where the limit was £300. Another aspect of the matter was the probability that the plaintiff might succeed in his causes of action. Finally the fact that a settlement was reached meant that the plaintiff deprived himself of conclusive evidence as to his allegations in the present case. [emphasis added].189

Hence, far from admitting the ill-treatment of detainees, the British Government had sought, as a matter of policy in so many instances, to preclude an almost certain guilty verdict against itself by purchasing a settlement which could be cynically exploited before international forums. It was a type of logic more often found in, and certainly more suited to the writings of Lewis Carroll, for where else would a defence be predicated on probable guilt yet distorted to represent its opposite.

A similar reservation applied to the British decision not to contest the Commission's findings of torture (Article 3). It was a matter of opinion whether this constituted an admission that torture had previously been used, but it might be noted that it was never positively expressed as such by the British Government. To this extent Britain avoided the painful experience of having to confront the fact that some of its citizens had received treatment at the hands of its own security forces which was thought to be appropriate in Aden and Kenya, for example, but not in the United Kingdom in the latter half of the twentieth century.

189 ibid., p. 293.
However, the avoidance was not complete: in an ironical and, one supposes, an unintentional characterisation in 1976, the British Army described the five techniques as the 'type of treatment' which a prisoner of war might be subjected to 'in the hands of an unscrupulous enemy'.\textsuperscript{190} Evidently this was a sentiment which had permeated wider afield in Whitehall because Silkin's undertaking of 8 February 1977 effectively made redundant Heath's undertaking of March 1972, which promised only that the five techniques would not be re-introduced without parliament being informed. In doing so Heath had strengthened Ireland's case for taking its case to the Court in the first place, for there was no indication prior to the date of Silkin's announcement that Britain would so act.

This could be inferred from the developments in one other area also — namely the Irish Government's demand that the individuals guilty of torture and ill-treatment be prosecuted. This the British rejected, most probably on the grounds that it would involve an uncertain process of inquiry into matters some six years past, but also out of a less worthy concern for the effect that it might have on the morale of a reforming Royal Ulster Constabulary.\textsuperscript{191} The Court proceedings, if they did not effect a prosecution, at least made the respondent's dereliction the more obvious.

In terms of the Judgment which the Court delivered on 18 January 1978, most of these developments, subsequent to the Irish Government's application to the Court, were either irrelevant or to no effect. With the exception of decisions made in respect of Article 3 (torture and inhuman treatment), the Court upheld the conclusions of the Commission.\textsuperscript{192}

With regard to Article 3 it reached what must be described as a surprising decision. Having taken note of the British undertaking, it held unanimously that, although certain violations were not contested,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{190} \textit{Irish Times}, 4 September 1976, p. 1. Such was the wording used on the consent form signed by military personnel being trained in the use and resistance of the five techniques.
  \item \textsuperscript{191} \textit{Economist}, 30 April 1977.
  \item \textsuperscript{192} \textit{Judgment}, pp. 82-3.
\end{itemize}
a ruling should nevertheless be given thereon. That, perhaps, was not surprising. But having then proceeded to note that the techniques (i) were applied in combination, with premeditation and for hours at a stretch, caused if not actual bodily injury, at least intense physical and mental suffering and led to acute psychiatric disturbances during interrogation, and (ii) were such as to arouse in their victims feelings of fear, anguish and inferiority capable of humiliating and debasing them and possibly breaking their physical or moral resistance, it held, in respect of the unidentified interrogation centre or centres:

(1) by sixteen votes to one, that recourse to the five techniques amounted to a practice of inhuman and degrading treatment.

(2) by thirteen votes to four, that the use of the techniques did not constitute a practice of torture since they did not occasion suffering of the particular intensity and cruelty implied by the word torture.

The Court also held, unanimously, that there had existed, at least until the Autumn of 1971, a practice of inhuman treatment at Palace Barracks, but by fourteen votes to three, decided that it did not constitute torture since the severity of the suffering capable of being caused by the acts complained of did not attain the particular level inherent in the notion of torture.

With regard to the treatment of detainees at Ballykinler, in August 1971, which included the compulsory performance of painful exercises and which the judgment described as 'a discreditable and reprehensible' practice, the Court held, by fifteen votes to two, that this practice did not infringe Article 3.

Finally, it was the unanimous verdict of the Court that it could not direct, as the Irish Government had requested, the United Kingdom

193 ibid., pp. 52-3.
194 ibid., pp. 56-7; and 82.
195 ibid., pp. 58-9; and 82.
196 ibid., pp. 60-2; and 82.
to institute criminal or disciplinary proceedings against those who had committed, condoned, or tolerated the breaches of Article 3 found by the Court. 197

Undaunted by these findings, the Irish Government claimed

The Case made by the Irish Government has stood up to rigorous, international examination and the judgment of the Court, which is final, must be welcomed by all who are interested in the protection of human rights. 198

Yet, when stripped of all the proaganda, statements of vindication, and other claims and counter-claims, the Judgment was hardly satisfactory to the Irish Government. Garret Fitzgerald, the Foreign Minister throughout most of the period in which the case ran its course, accurately expressed the general reaction in Ireland as follows:

There is some surprise here about the torture decision, simply because in fact the decision of the Commission that the acts constituted torture was not contested by the British representatives, and naturally there is an assumption that if it wasn't contested the Court would accept it and of course the verdict seems by our legal standards a little eccentric in those circumstances. 199

It was a decision which tended to be explained in official circles in Dublin by reference to very broad political influences. The eighteen judges who made up the Court were portrayed as being elderly, mostly former civil servants whose familiarity with torture was limited to a knowledge of Nazi methods and not with modern, scientifically applied variants. 200 It could, therefore, be assumed that they reflected the political attitudes of their home countries which, conceivably, would account for the votes of Greece and Cyprus in favour of a torture verdict – the suggestion being that an earlier Cypriot case alleging

197 ibid., p. 62.
199 BBC 'Tonight' transcript, 18 January 1978.
200 Interview, Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 1978.
torture by Turkey was not unconnected. Conceivably this might also have explained why the Irish and British members of the Court followed their respective government's line and why they chose to file separate opinions to this effect.

For the British, however, the outcome must have been more than pleasing. If the British newspapers were any indication, the mood it engendered was one of understandable relief and gratitude, compromised by a noticeable propensity towards gloating. Officially, the response in Whitehall was one of satisfaction, as was apparent in Mason's initial statement on being notified of the findings.

I have not yet seen the full text of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg on the allegations made by the Government of the Republic of Ireland relating principally to certain events which took place in Northern Ireland some six years ago. However, it is a matter of satisfaction to HMG that the Court has rejected the charge of torture; has agreed with the Commission that the introduction of detention did not go beyond what was strictly required, and that there was no discrimination in its use; and has rejected allegations that the Commission's other findings did not go far enough. I regard this as a chapter now closed.

Indeed, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was right: the chapter was closed. But it remains to consider its significance in, and its implications for the international politics of the Ulster Question. Of itself it was a hallmark for two reasons.

First, as Boyle and Hannum observed, it may be regarded as a triumph of and another step forward in the progress of international organisations:


202 This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the media coverage of the interstate case. The above assessment therefore must stand as an assertion — but an assertion nevertheless based on an examination of voluminous clippings from the main English dailies. For a brief survey of coverage in support of the above claim, see the Irish Times, 20 January 1978.

... in the larger view of human rights and international institutions, perhaps the fact that the Commission was able to deal at all with such a sensitive political issue as the Northern Irish conflict is the most significant aspect of the proceedings. Despite the most serious allegations, intense legal argument, and extremely embarrassing publicity, no governments have fallen; diplomatic relations, while strained, have not ruptured.204

Second, and more particularly, whatever other reservations may be held about it, the interstate case was the first-ever non-British judicial inquiry into the conditions under which Northern Ireland was governed. Thus it emphasised both the erosion of domestic sovereignty which the Convention itself represented, and the operation of that condition as a feature of the politics associated with Northern Ireland since 1968. The force of the two in conjunction was manifest in the 1972 Green Paper:

For the future any arrangements must ensure that the United Kingdom Government has an effective and a determining voice in relation to any circumstances which involve, or may involve in the future, the commitment of the Armed Forces, the use of emergency powers, or repercussions at international level.205

Furthermore, it was the opinion of some law scholars that the 'preventive and remedial action' taken by the United Kingdom (and noted earlier), was a result of a Strasbourg-induced consciousness of the anomalous conditions under which Northern Ireland was governed.206

For all that the Strasbourg decisions cannot truly be construed as the victory of an Irish David over a British Goliath. One obvious consideration precludes this: the arguments presented by each Government were legal arguments which, despite the adversary relationship

204 Boyle and Hannum, 'Ireland in Strasbourg', p. 267.
206 Boyle, Hadden, Hillyard, Law and State, pp. 159-60. The same conclusion is found in Boyle and Hannum, 'Ireland in Strasbourg', p. 267. Note: the author Boyle is different in each case.
that existed throughout the proceedings, ultimately appealed to, and depended on the Convention for their validity. Their force was neither enhanced nor diminished by the international status of whoever uttered them. From this it followed that 'victory' was a concept much out of place, and that the encounter was, in terms normally associated with the study of international politics, or even with the international of the Ulster Question, 'sui generis'.

But this should not imply that the conclusions and verdicts reached during the proceedings were an absolute triumph of justice and human rights either. Against the welcome developments which undoubtedly flowed from them must be laid the scholarly caution that the 'impact of the Strasbourg cases must not be exaggerated.' Although published in 1975 — before the conclusions of the Commission or the Court's verdict were formulated — thus warning proved to be prescient.

The Court, it should be remembered, eventually sat in deliberation of issues which had been raised over six years before. Although it was known by many other appellations the most common of these denoted its principal concern: it was the 'torture case'. Yet it must be regretted that, for whatever reasons, it avoided giving to the people of Western Europe an operational definition of torture. All it accomplished in this regard was an opinion on what was not torture: it was not any practice which conformed to the descriptions in (i) and (ii) previously noted. Also to be regretted was that the Court, having seized itself of the need to give a ruling on practices which the Commission decided were torture (and which the British Government did not contest), not only retreated to a position similar to that adopted by the Compton Committee, but failed to provide an objective basis for a definition. However there was some consolation in that the Court resisted the invitation, and thus the insensitivity of findings, presented by British Judge, Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice, 'to wonder whether Christ was really degraded by being made to don a purple robe and crown

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207 ibid., p. 160.

208 For a wider discussion of this matter see, Barry M. Klayman, 'The Definition of Torture in International Law', Temple Law Quarterly 51 (1978): 449-517.
of thorns and to carry His own cross.' To this extent the Judgment admitted a touch of 'deja vu' for this very deficiency had been, in part, responsible for the unsatisfactory nature of the Compton Report, and hence, for the Irish Government's application in the first place.

Furthermore it could be argued that shortcomings were to be expected of the Strasbourg proceedings because the Convention itself does not mention specific sanctions which may be taken against an offending party. The Committee of Ministers is empowered to take 'measures' but the weakness of its position was apparent in the Court's negative finding in relation to offenders against Article 3.

In the absence of a willingness to prosecute such persons in the United Kingdom, the progress towards the guarantee of human rights which was hailed by many following the Commission's and the Court's deliberations, was surely to be questioned.

Thus, in the final analysis, the particular failure to remedy matters set in motion by the excess of Operation Demetrius was most appropriately Britain's, or to be more precise, that of successive British Governments. They had no need to rely upon the 1978 decision of the Court, for they had in any case, defaulted in this obligation long before then. In part no action was taken out of a belief that the end

210 Boyle, Hadden, Hillyard, Law and State, p. 158.
211 ibid.
212 For a brief period on the night of 18 January 1978 this position was in doubt. On the RTE programme 'Politics', the late Airey Neave, then principal Opposition (Conservative) spokesman on Northern Ireland, said he 'would consider' Garret Fitzgerald's proposal to investigate those involved in the 1971 ill-treatment cases with a view to ensuring that they did not remain in positions of responsibility. Obviously this fell short of actual prosecution but was a measure seen in Dublin as going some way towards the reform of the RUC. (Tape of 'Politics' programme of 18 January 1978). Within the hour, however, and before a predominantly British audience, he gave Fitzgerald a different answer to the same proposal:

'... I don't think six or seven years afterwards it is open ... to take any further action about this, insofar as no prosecution is intended ... no doubt under the Articles of the Convention the British Government can
justified the means; that there was a need to react to the situation in Northern Ireland in a manner 'appropriate' to the atrocities that were being committed there. Successively, in political, military, and legal terms this proved illusory, but the illusion was obviously more agreeable to many than the reality afforded by all that followed Operation Demetrius, Internment, and Application No. 5310/71. From canvassing the British reaction throughout the period of the case, it was clear that the initial decision to introduce measures such as the five techniques was popularly received.

Furthermore, from the official and semi-official inquiries into allegations of brutality in 1978 and 1979, it is clear that the undertakings given by two representatives of the British Government deserved no better description than Aidan Browne's: 'a sham'. While they emphasise that such decisions and the actions which logically proceed from them are government prerogatives, they also underscore the cynicism and scepticism which so easily obtains in Britain's political and moral standards in Northern Ireland. But such reports are possessed of their own irony: they document not the sophisticated manipulation of mind and body by sensory deprivation which was current in 1971, but blatant physical abuse seemingly without regard for the consequences.

In all, this behaviour is probably less a reflection on human rights in Northern Ireland than it is on the British presence in the province. And this may be the most significant feature of the interstate case. The bringing of it by the Irish Government did nothing to advance, nor probably, to retard the objective of national unity. Yet it did raise the question once more as to how and why Britain's charge of Northern Ireland could have become so overborne with misrule, and more importantly, why it should continue. It has become a truism in the last decade that the behaviour of the security forces which has been condoned there would not have been tolerated in (say) Birmingham, London, or Manchester. About this behaviour there was, and as Lord Gardiner so impressively argued in his dissenting opinion to the Parker Report,\(^\text{213}\)

\[\text{consider what action to take if they see fit and that is not a matter for the Opposition.}^\text{'}\]  
(BBC 'Tonight' transcript, 18 January 1978, p. 4).

\(^{213}\) See p. 337.
something intrinsically alien to British traditions of justice and democracy as they apply in mainland Britain. From this it follows that Northern Ireland is such a special case within the United Kingdom that it should more properly exist outside that entity. This is a notion as old as the Ulster Question itself; indeed it is a form of the Ulster Question expressed as a statement. It is the particular sadness of Ireland that the Irish complaints, and the proceedings and judgment at Strasbourg which ended in 1978, should have posed it so starkly. Sad also that they should have done so in a manner which recalled, and affirmed, Macaulay's sorry view of Ireland, not only in 1844, but in times 'anterior even to the Reformation'.

I conceive that Ireland is in a most unsatisfactory, and indeed, alarming condition ...

How do you govern it? Not by love, but by fear; not as you govern Great Britain, ... not by the confidence of the people in the laws and their attachment to the Constitution, but by means of armed men and entrenched camps.214

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214 Hansard's Debates (Commons), vol. 72, 19 February 1844, cols. 1170-1.
CHAPTER TEN

THE AMERICAN DIMENSION

PART I: CRUSADERS, CRIMINALS AND CRAZIES

1968 – MARCH 1976
The travails of Ireland have not very often impinged upon the attention of the American people. Even less have they commanded the attention of the politicians of the United States or the country's Government. But since the re-emergence of communal violence in Northern Ireland in 1968-69, the troubles have been accorded a special, if not always undivided and sustained, attention, albeit from different perspectives and towards divergent and frequently conflicting ends, at all three levels. Thus, while it was not surprising that surnames such as Kennedy and O'Neill should recur in accounts of Irish-American activity, it was curious that they should do so in competition with say a Flannery or an O'Dwyer for the right to interpret the will of Catholic Ireland and to be heard as the Voice of Irish America. It was still more bizarre that they should have been in competition with those whose names suggested interests which were hardly Hibernian — Biaggi, Nedzi, Wolff, and Zefereitti — to name but a few.

In other circumstances such situations might have qualified as 'ephemeral' and, accordingly, not warranted a mention. However, in the context of this analysis, it is clear that at each level of the particular external interests which gave rise to the situations instanced in the preceding paragraph not only became the concern of international politics, but also in some cases exerted considerable influence upon the course of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Basically these effects were in direct proportion to the support or commitment each interest group could marshal in support of four very general, and sometimes over-lapping objectives, which were, in descending order of influence:

1. A united Ireland predicated on an immediate and total British withdrawal from the Six Counties.

2. A united Ireland brought about by what might be termed non-violent due process.

3. The acceptance of the situation in Northern Ireland as being entirely an internal matter for the British Government either out of conviction, or the belief that to do otherwise
would be to unduly disturb the trans-Atlantic (Anglo-American) relationship.

4. The achievement of short-term specific objectives in Northern Ireland which may or may not have related to the future constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

It is from this miscellany that the sub-title of the Chapter (Crusaders, Criminals, and Crazies) takes its inspiration. Certainly it is not suggested that those people who are the concern of this chapter were terrorists; nevertheless it is suggested that in the period 1968-March 1976 all, or nearly all, of the activities of Irish-Americans mentioned in the following pages were consistent with those of people who could justly be described as crusaders, criminals, or crazies. Some, unfortunately, were all three, but the extent to which they may be precisely located, if at all, under any one head (particularly that of 'crazies') is very largely intuitive. Notwithstanding this, the evidence presented in the following pages, and in the relevant appendices which follow the thesis proper, renders the collective description no less appropriate. However, what needs to be emphasised is that the impression intended to be conveyed by the subtitle is one of the ascendancy of crusaders, criminals and crazies rather than their absolute dominance over the period.

The starting point, inevitably, is the Irish-American community, but since this is not the place to digress on the political sociology of Irish-Americans, the need to extract from authoritative sources those factors which contributed to their mental framework, and ultimately to the determination of the role and influence of the American Dimension, has been recognised in Appendix I. In many instances, therefore, references made in the following pages of this and the succeeding chapter proceed from the material and conclusions presented therein.

1 The term is not original to the writer: it was in fact the main title of Frederick Hacker's 1976 work on terrorism, Crusaders, Criminals, Crazies (New York: Norton, 1976).

The interest evinced by Irish-Americans in events in Northern Ireland in 1969 was hardly a new development. Neither was it unusual that it should be expressed by some in cash and kind. In times of strife in Ireland since last century it had virtually defined the relationship between the Irish at home and those in the United States to the point where, in the Declaration of Independence of 1916, the support of Ireland's 'exiled children in America' was especially recognised. In December 1969 the breakaway Provisional Army Council, in the face of overwhelming evidence that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) which had existed prior to that time was unable to provide the maximum defence for the Republican population of Belfast, made a plea which, although less specific, was clearly directed at the USA.

We call on the Irish at home and in exile for increased support towards defending our people in the North and the eventual achievement of the full political, social, economic and cultural freedom of Ireland.³

The message was clear: it was a call to provide aid for military action. And given the militant attitudes of a significant number of the Irish American community there was probably little chance that it could have been interpreted in any other way, although the likelihood that it would produce an effective and immediate response in military terms was not overwhelming.⁴

This was a consequence of a number of factors, perhaps the most important being the attrition due to Americanisation of the ethnic Irish.⁵ But it also reflected the overall inability of the Northern Ireland conflict itself to inspire and mobilise, in any sustained fashion, groups (journalists, civil libertarians, American radicals, the Democratic Party, etc.), which by tradition and/or their principal interests, might have been expected to have provided sympathy and assistance.⁶ This meant that no more than an 'emaciated framework' was

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³ *Irish Times*, 29 December 1969.
⁴ See Appendix I, pp. 605-13.
⁵ *ibid.*, pp.605.
available upon which to build an aid network in 1968-69.7

The organisational malaise was exacerbated by the fact that, despite the claimed predominance of those with North of Ireland ties within it, it also included what Clark observed as an '... estrangement, confusion of viewpoints, and a general perplexity about what could be done in any practical way.'8 In turn, this determined the essentially negative character of the support network which resulted, and its aversion to any cognitive effort with regard to the future of Ireland—as instanced by its recourse to slogans—'England Get Out of Ireland' (or its equivalent).

It was probably no surprise, then, that James Bowyer Bell's 1971 edition of his standard history of the IRA should have contained the following passage:

Any kind of armament acquired in Ireland is very dear indeed (a revolver may cost eighty pounds), and outside Ireland there are few sympathetic sources or sponsors. American money flowing into Dublin in response to the troubles in the North was far less than the English Sunday papers liked to believe ... [emphasis added]9

The amount which Bell thought fit to dismiss thereby was of the order of 'hundreds of thousands of pounds'.10

It was a surprise, therefore, to find that the English papers were in fact closer to the mark, in their estimate of a general American willingness to contribute funds to relief programmes in Northern Ireland, and, more particularly to the IRA. In late August 1969, Bernadette Devlin, then visiting the United States on behalf of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) claimed to have received 'pledges' totalling $US650,000 for the 'homeless' of the Six Counties.11 In October of the same year the actual amount estimated

7 ibid., p. 34.
8 ibid.
10 ibid., p. 372, note 12.
to have been raised was a considerably less, but still substantial $US92,000. The following year, total US funds for a multiplicity of uses was estimated at $US450,000, an amount which was consistent with Mick Flannery's claim that, for the three years to October 1972, the organisation which he represented (the Irish Northern Aid Committee) had been responsible for forwarding some $US500,000 to the North.

Evidently, the IRA did not miss out on the bonanza. In Bell's 1974 edition of The Secret Army his 1971 opinion was noticeably changed in respect of the US financial response to the Provisional's appeals of 1970:

> Already some money had begun to flow through a variety of pipelines, in some cases to independent defense groups in the North but increasingly through overt or covert conduits to Dublin G.H.Q. or various Republican aid committees. The response from America was like nothing since the Troubles ...

Exactly how much the Provisional IRA received Bell did not divulge (if he knew). Indeed, apart from the inference that the financial aid it received was substantial, the only conclusion which can be drawn with any certainty, even at this time, is that stated by Clark — that 'the full record of assistance to the Catholic minority and to the IRA will ever remain obfuscated'.

Nevertheless, there were patterns and influences clear in those early years which were to govern American influence upon the Northern Ireland conflict until the mid-1970s. First, despite Bernadette Devlin's

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12 *Sunday Telegraph*, 19 October 1969. This may be an understated figure; Clark (*Irish Blood*, p. 19) claimed Devlin raised $US200,000 from her American visit.
14 *Daily Telegraph*, 26 October 1972.
The fund-raising success of August 1969, the socialist views she
professed were anathema to the essentially conservative Irish-Americans
who were the large majority of contributors. Indeed, in view of
subsequent events, the latter's generosity at that time must be seen
as an indiscriminate outpouring of sympathy for the plight of the
Northern Catholic community. The measure of American opposition for
Devlin's goals may be gauged from a report that a visit by her in
1971, during which she met Black Panthers and hippies, and after she
had given birth to a child out of wedlock, yielded only some £150 after
expenses.

Second, it followed that the Official IRA, with its openly
socialist orientation, was unlikely to be popular with the Irish-
American community, and this was, and remains, the case to this day.
By the same logic the Provisionals should also have been excluded from
the financial benevolence of that community. But they didn't, and the
reason was to be found in their not entirely deserved appearance as a
more 'traditional' Republican organisation. While the Provisionals
were certainly closer to the mainstream of Republic tradition than
their Official counterparts, their philosophy and policies, such as
they were, admitted some of the same left-radical elements which the
Irish-American community found so unacceptable.

The Provisionals, however, were possessed of more fore-thought
guile, and dishonesty. They contrived, and quite cynically at that,
to enhance their appeal to those who lived in the past while muting
their adherence to socialist principles — both being undertaken in the
belief that the end, however ill-defined, justified the means, however
disagreeable. It worked, as Maria McGuire testified:

17 ibid., p. 19. (See also Appendix I, pp.606-10).
18 Daily Telegraph, 9 September 1971.
19 The clearest exposition of Provisional Republican socialist
principles is to be found in a document published by (Provisional) Sinn
Fein, from whom the Provisional IRA is only notionally separate, i.e.: Eire Nua [New Ireland]: The Social and Economic Programme of Sinn Fein (Dublin: Sinn Fein, 1971).
There should be copious references to the martyrs of 1919 and 1920-22 — the period most of the audience would be living in. Anti-British sentiment, recalling Cromwell, the potato famine, and the Black and Tans, could be profitably exploited. By no means should anything be said against the Catholic Church. And all references to socialism should be strictly avoided — tell them by all means that the Ireland we were fighting for would be free and united, but say nothing about just what form the new free and united Ireland would take.

The formula was in general, very successful ... 20

Indeed, so successful was it that the Official's network of support in the United States could not be described as other than modest. Unless specifically excepted, all references to the IRA in the succeeding pages of this and the next chapter are to its Provisional wing.

The financial brokers for the Provisionals' trans-Atlantic fund-raising is the Irish Northern Aid Committee — NORAID, also known as INAC. According to its statement of registration with the US authorities under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, 1938, (FARA), it was founded in New York City in April 1970 by three IRA veterans of the civil war period, Mick Flannery, Jack McCarthy and John McGowan, 21 'in response to an urgent call from its foreign principal, the Northern Aid Committee, Belfast.' 22 Accordingly, since its foundation, NORAID's record has been consistent in four aspects: it has:-

(i) boasted of the large amounts it was remitting to persons such as Joe Cahill 23 in Northern Ireland,

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21 Irish Northern Aid Committee, Registration No. 2239, two public files designated Section I and Section II respectively, held by the US Department of Justice at the Federal Triangle Building, 315 9th Street, Washington, D.C., (hereafter cited as US Department of Justice, NORAID files).

22 Focus: The Irish Question, by NORAID, 1975.

23 A Provisional IRA leader, who had barely escaped hanging for his part in the murder of the policeman in 1942, and who in 1973, was convicted of gun-running for his part in the 'Claudia' affair (Cahill was the ranking Provisional on board the vessel when it was intercepted).
(ii) insisted that while these funds were intended for 'relief', it was up to 'the people on the other side' to decide how to spend them,

(iii) agreed that part of the money was used for the purchase of arms; and

(iv) repeatedly, and without reservation, supported the Provisionals' campaigns.

The organisational structure upon which NORAID's efforts are based has been variously estimated at 100 chapters (in 1972, by Flannery) and 80 chapters (in 1975, also by the NORAID source). The latter is generally regarded as the more reliable figure. Similarly, the NORAID claim of 80,000 members throughout the US has been discounted by official sources as an absurd exaggeration which was probably based on a paper estimate of members attending social functions over a period. The estimate which is favoured is 'several thousand ... possibly upwards of 2,000', who are sufficiently numerous and active to have a considerable effect on most Irish-American organisations in the United States. Of this number the largest concentration is in New York and the National headquarters is in the Bronx. Otherwise the most important centres are Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Baltimore, and various towns in New Jersey and Connecticut. Among those who have spent some time observing its activities, NORAID has acquired a reputation, based on an apparently high level of visible co-ordination, as a close knit and disciplined group. In short, even if it drew its support from a wide spectrum of Irish America, its complexion was indisputably 'Old Irish'.

24 See the Sunday Telegraph, 10 December 1972, and New York Times, 16 December 1975, respectively.
26 ibid.
27 ibid.
28 See Appendix I, pp. 606.
In support of its activities NORAID appears to command the full-time attention of Flannery, its President, and McCarthy and Mathew Higgins, its Vice-Presidents. It also runs to a weekly newspaper, The Irish People, with a full-time editor. In addition, in 1975 Flannery was known to have a telex machine in his home in the Bronx and, according to journalists who visit him there, received continuous reports on it from Provisional sources in Ireland. Unfortunately the use of modern technology has frequently failed to advance NORAID's understanding of the issues in Northern Ireland: for example, one report carried in the Irish People claimed that the Irish Special Branch had attempted to break an IRA ceasefire by organising sectarian murders in collusion with the Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party!

To further sustain the fund-raising and lobbying operations, NORAID has played host to a number of prominent Provisionals such as Billy Kelly and Ruairi O Bradaigh, but they and others were hampered by the US Immigration and Nationality Acts which exclude aliens 'connected with organisations which advocate the killing of government agents or the unlawful destruction of property.' While this provision undoubtedly had an effect on the guest-of-honour lists for money-spinners such as dances and dinners, it probably had little impact on the other main source of finance, direct subscriptions.

To judge by reports and the schedules attached to NORAID's more recent six-monthly returns under the FARA, most contributors are

29 Higgins was McGowan's successor on the death of the latter in 1974.
30 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975.
31 Irish People, 26 April 1975. For an account of Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien's comments on such 'infamous inventions', see the Irish Times, 30 April 1975.
32 Described as being the former 'commander of the Provisionals' Third Belfast Battalion' and also the 'first Chief of Staff of the Provisionals in Belfast' (Sunday Times, 'Insight' Team, Ulster, (Hammondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), pp. 25, 189.
33 IRA Chief of Staff in 1958-59 and 1961-62. In the period with which this discussion of NORAID is concerned (1970-76), O Bradaigh was President of Provisional Sinn Fein.
working-class Irish Americans. In some cases the arrangements are institutionalised: a number of Locals of the Transport Union and the Longshoremen's Union in New York are said to contribute fixed weekly amounts to the organisation (NORAIM has close links with the national presidents of both unions). In addition, a small number of wealthy Irish Americans such as hotelier Billy Fuller are known to be contributors, as are some Irish-born owners of chains of bars in New York who both contribute funds themselves and allow their establishments to be used as collection centres. However, it is understood that the larger contributors in America, like those in Ireland, try to maintain anonymity by insisting that their contributions be 'laundered' secretly.

The results of these combined efforts have been summarised in the following table:

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34 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975.


36 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975.
IRISH NORTHERN AID COMMITTEE

REPORTED DETAILS OF FINANCIAL UNDERTAKINGS

(All amounts in US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six month period ended</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Disbursements to N.I.</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 July 1971*</td>
<td>no information</td>
<td>4,575</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 1972</td>
<td>no information</td>
<td>12,738</td>
<td>128,099</td>
<td>not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 July 1972**</td>
<td>no information</td>
<td>25,440</td>
<td>312,700</td>
<td>not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 1973</td>
<td>172,000</td>
<td>41,388</td>
<td>150,438</td>
<td>-19,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 July 1973</td>
<td>159,617</td>
<td>19,581</td>
<td>121,723</td>
<td>18,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 1974</td>
<td>129,968</td>
<td>10,826</td>
<td>99,966</td>
<td>19,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 July 1974</td>
<td>121,822</td>
<td>8,193</td>
<td>110,833</td>
<td>2,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 1975</td>
<td>115,522</td>
<td>11,620</td>
<td>102,648</td>
<td>1,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 July 1975</td>
<td>130,852</td>
<td>44,472</td>
<td>70,977</td>
<td>15,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 1976</td>
<td>no information</td>
<td>24,955</td>
<td>64,205</td>
<td>not known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimum Total          | $829,781       | $203,788    | $1,173,089            | $56,942     |

* Information taken from document entitled 'Supplemental Statement'.
** Information taken from hand-written draft.

As may be seen, Flannery's October 1972 claim (cited earlier) that NORAID had sent close to $US500,000 to Northern Ireland in the three previous years was probably not excessive; in just the eighteen month period ended 29 July 1972 the total remitted was $US452,299. But there were, and remain, reservations about accepting many of NORAID's claims.

37 US Department of Justice, NORAID files.
38 Daily Telegraph, 26 October 1972.
The above, for instance, mentions a three year period — presumably from October 1969 — yet NORAID's statement of registration also claims that it was founded some seven months later, in April 1970. Furthermore it is obvious from the table that, in default of income figures for the first three reporting periods, and of a complete absence of reliable information before that time, even the most informed estimates of NORAID's financial dealings could be hopelessly wrong.

In this regard it is useful to refer to the return for 29 January 1973, in which it will be found that nearly $US20,000 in excess of reported receipts was remitted. This suggests what latter figures detailed under 'Surplus' appear to confirm — that part of each six months takings are retained, to bolster poor performances, aid special projects in the future, or establish a capital fund.

For undefined reasons this latter of a steadily accumulating NORAID fund has received no attention from commentators, yet it is, potentially, of some significance. At the very least it could, if NORAID chose to falsify its returns, be used for a period of one — two years to disguise the falling away of financial report from the average level since 1976. On the other hand, there is a widely held belief that 'blood on the streets' (of Northern Ireland), or what are euphemistically termed 'spectaculars' (particularly daring IRA operations), induce the sympathetic Irish-American community to renew or increase its contributions, and the suggestion cannot be discounted that some of the surplus has been used in sustaining or enhancing this. And if it should

39 US Department of Justice, NORAID files.
40 Daring as opposed to stupid — although the difference very often escapes the writer: the term murderous could be applied with equal validity to many of the operations in either category. Nevertheless, if the distinction is made, it might be noted that following the Birmingham bombings of 21 November 1974, the amounts reported by NORAID decreased and this trend may have been assisted by the narrow escape of Miss Caroline Kennedy from a London car-bombing in October 1975. On the other hand the murder of Lord Mountbatten in August 1979 evidently met with approval, if the returns are any indication (see next Chapter, pp.456). It is likely, of course, that other influences contributed to these results, but these appear not to have detracted from the strength of the perception noted in the above text.
be thought that such suggestions unwarrantedly impugn the honesty of NORAID's officials, there is always the caveat provided by the attorney responsible over some years for the monitoring of the organisation's compliance with the FAR, that they were of a type who 'just can't treat straight with any government'.

Thus it is only prudent to conclude that the figures produced in the foregoing represent less than accurate accounts of NORAID's transactions. Indeed NORAID personnel were reported, in 1975, to have boasted in private of much greater sums than those found in the table — up to $US4 million per year — being remitted to Northern Ireland. As these claims were generally held to be more in the nature of romantic speculation, the conservative 'official' figures remain as the best available, albeit probably understated, indication of the intensity and fluctuations of popular Irish-American support for the Provisionals.

By way of comparison, it is interesting to note the extent to which the potential of Irish-America was not realised, as illustrated by the following examples. Throughout the entire period which is the concern of this thesis, the best NORAID appeared capable of, insofar as attracting public figures in support of its fund-raising, was to interest actor Richard Harris, thriller-writer Len Deighton and Longshoremen's President, Teddy Gleason, in attending a dinner for which the Provisional Republican faithful paid $US18 per head. Yet an Ireland Fund Dinner, organised by Tony O'Reilly, probably the most

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41 Interview, United States Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 1979 (hereafter cited as Department of Justice Interview, 1979).

42 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975. Publicly (in 1975), Deidre O'Connaill, wife of Daithi O'Connaill (then a member of the Provisional's ruling Army Council), admitted that NORAID was sending $US36,000 per week ($US1,872,000 per year) to Northern Ireland, *Daily Express*, 4 February 1975.

43 *Daily Express*, 4 February 1975.
prominent and successful Irishman living in the United States, could count on the presence of leading members of the Irish-American establishment — such as Speaker 'Tip' O'Neill — and would command $US175 per plate.

The distinctions, needless to say, were only superficially of a culinary nature. What they attested to was the failure, foreshadowed at the outbreak of the troubles, of the aid network to expand its following beyond the narrow confines of the sectional 'Old Irish' (Republican) interests. In general, neither the politicians nor the wealthy Irish-Americans, nor the Catholic Church found the prospect of associating with NORAID worth the opprobrium it would have earned. It was to be expected, therefore, that the isolation of the

Anthony John Francis O'Reilly, an outstanding international rugby footballer in the mid 1950s and early 1960s, whose achievements in business matched those in sport. His life and business interests require him to live both in Ireland and the United States — in the latter of which he is widely known as President of the Heinz Foods conglomerate. According to an associate editor of Fortune, 'O'Reilly, ... figuratively speaking, has the longest reach of any living Irishman'. See Thomas J. O'Hanlon, The Irish: Sinners, Saints, Gamblers, etc. (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 256.

David McKittrick, 'Irish Everywhere in the land of Immigrants', the first of four major articles on the Irish in America, Irish Times, 3 September 1979, p. 10. The proceeds of such functions go towards Irish charities and, according to McKittrick's report, 'O'Reilly's efforts raise much more than those groups associated with Republican causes'.

See Appendix I, pp. 609-10.

Clark, Irish Blood, p. 40. Although the Catholic Church in America was one of the principal agents in breaking down the ethnic identity of Irish-Americans since the late nineteenth century, and although it avoided taking up the issue of Northern Ireland after 1969 (see Appendix I, pp.605), certain clerics within it have provided what might be termed 'moral' support which may have been sufficient, when viewed through some eyes, to have countered any residual qualms about supporting organisations which subsidised or engaged in violence. In this three clerics were prominent: Bishop Drury of Corpus Christi Diocese, Texas, who appeared at NORAID functions; Ruairi O Bradaigh and was a frequent speaker at NORAID functions; Fr. Sean McManus, national chaplain to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and National Co-ordinator of the Irish National Caucus in the US: and Sister St. Hugh of NORAID, New York, who was at one time editor of the Irish People (Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975).
activists should have extended to non-Irish-American organisations and
the higher reaches of the US Federal Government, although the former
was the more difficult to account for. After a promising beginning in
which specialised groups of humanitarians concerned themselves with
Northern Ireland, their interest withered; apart from a brief rally
in support of the Fort Worth Five (see pp.447-9), groups working in the
fields of foreign policy, interreligious understanding, and anti-
colonial concerns avoided the issues of Northern Ireland with a
consistency that was quite inconsistent with their stated objectives. 48

If there was any one reason for this behaviour it was to be
found in Northern Ireland and in the terror bombing campaigns of the
IRA. As Clark wrote of these other, influential and many 'friends of
Ireland' and their view of the network:

... they saw it as tied to more of the same murderous
violence without solution that they recoiled from in
Viet Nam.49

In this they were perceptive. While NORAID spokesmen were wont
to pretend that its funds were used purely for relief, there were far
too many instances in which the lie was given to this claim. As one
anonymous representative explained in 1971:

Our job is to get up the money and send it to the people
over there. What they use it for is up to them. We
attach no strings. Everything we do in this country is
aimed at assisting the final phase of the struggle for
freedom in Ireland.50

But there is irrefutable evidence that NORAID and several of its local
officers were implicated in numerous arms offences which led to trials
in Canada and the United States. The following year the same
manifestation of support without responsibility was clear in Mathew
Higgins' statement that:

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48 ibid., pp. 33 and 67.
49 ibid., p. 75.
50 As reported in the *Irish Times*, 20 October 1971.
We're involved in supporting the activities of the Provisional I.R.A. and that Branch of Sinn Fein which supports the Provisional I.R.A. We provide what funds we can and the people on the other side have to decide what has to be used for what purpose.51

In 1975 he was even franker:

We have no objections to it [the purchase of guns] if they have money to spare. They've got to get them from somewhere. If the overall kitty is big enough to buy weapons that's their business. We were formed for the purpose of supporting the Irish Freedom movement. We still support the Provisional I.R.A. — no ifs and buts about that ...52

There is no irrefutable evidence that NORAID has engaged in activities other than fund-raising and supply.53

According to a report of testimony given in the trial of Frank Grady, convicted in New York in March 1976 for illegally exporting arms and falsifying documents, the organisation's intentions were clear from the earliest days of its existence.

Shortly after the formation of the [Yonkers] branch, they [Grady and others] were approached by Martin Lyons, then a senior official at Northern Aid headquarters and one of the founders of the organisation and asked to assist in the purchase and export of guns for use by the Provisional I.R.A. in Northern Ireland.54

Thereafter, the most notorious case involved the 'Fort Worth Five' in 1972. This became a cause célèbre in both Irish-American and US civil rights circles because of, from the viewpoint of the former, the issue of the supply of arms and ammunition to the IRA and, from the latter

53 On the other hand, there appears to be little refuge for the organisation in Mick Flannery's protestations that allegations of gun-running were 'terrible' (Daily Express, 8 January 1976) and 'vicious' lies (International Herald Tribune, 14 January 1976) and his appeal to the Scottish juridical prerogative that 'no one has ever proved a thing' (International Herald Tribune, 14 January 1976).
54 Dublin Sunday Independent, 14 March 1976.
Among other cases which came to light were those of Charles Malone, a NORAID member living in San Francisco, and James O’Gara, a New York NORAID official, both of whom were convicted on arms charges in 1973. And within a year, four people — two Irish and two Irish-Americans — were convicted in Baltimore, Maryland, of conspiring to smuggle 158 semi-automatic rifles (worth about $US30,000), plus armour-piercing shells and other explosives from New York to Ireland. According to reports this was the United States biggest case of gun-running, and although there was no indication in the course of the trial as to who or what provided its financial backing, the Baltimore District Attorney, Jeff White, left little doubt as to what inference should have been taken:

The statements [at the trial] didn't actually mention the Irish Northern Aid Committee, but it was clear who was meant ... We didn't make radical distinctions between the two groups [NORAID and the IRA]. Statements made at the trial in reference to the group which came up with the money were to 'Irish' and 'I.R.A.', but we considered them to mean the Irish Northern Aid Committee.

Further grounds supporting this conclusion were provided by three instances in the two succeeding years. The first concerned the 1975 conviction of Joseph Myles, described by police as 'an executive officer of a US organisation, Northern Irish Aid' (sic), on a charge of conspiracy to export arms to Ireland. The second was the Grady case,

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55 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975. It is regretted that, in relation to the above trials, it has not proved possible to obtain evidence from official US sources. Unfortunately, the writer's written and verbal requests to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), Department of the Treasury, met with no success in this regard. Information concerning Malone, O’Gara, and two others not cited, was refused under the general provisions of the Privacy Act 1974, and by the specific requirement that the written consent of those whose record was to be examined, be obtained. [Letter to the writer, from the Assistant to the Director (Disclosure), BATF, 12 October 1979.]

56 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975.


58 *Times*, 7 June 1975.
already mentioned, while the third related to two Philadelphians — Neil Byrne and Daniel Cahalane (head of NORAID's Delaware County Chapter) — who were found guilty of illegally exporting arms to the IRA.60

Such examples not only highlighted the value of the United States as an armoury to the IRA, but also pointed to the potential which existed for a widening of the conflict by involving American citizens in ancillary, or actual, fighting roles — or at least the fear of this development. In this regard even the (Protestant) Ulster Defence Association (UDA) warrants a mention: in October 1972, it announced that American Vietnam war veterans were training its members in weapons usage and guerrilla warfare.61 However, the reliability of this claim was somewhat weakened by the knowledge that the UDA had within its own ranks many men who had served with the British Army in Aden, Cyprus and Malaysia, and thus possessed a residue of knowledge and experience that was in many ways, and in the Northern Ireland context, superior to that available from Protestant sympathisers in the US. Similarly, earlier reports that a group calling itself the United Ireland Committee of New York had enlisted volunteers to fight in aid of the Catholic population in the North, seem now to be either overstated or simply patriotic fiction.62 Scepticism, also, was attached to reports that the IRA had obtained the services of 'former American servicemen',63 and that some of them were under investigation by the Army Council for spying and treachery:64 they relied heavily on the judicious

59 Cahalane had previous spent five-and-a-half months in jail in 1973 for refusing to testify to a Federal Grand Jury.

60 For a brief reference to this case, the recovery by the British authorities in Northern Ireland of almost half the arms in question, and the subsequent loss of Byrne and Cahalane's appeal to the Supreme Court, see the Times, 24 January 1978.

61 International Herald Tribune, 16 October 1972.

62 Times, 16 August 1969.

63 Sunday Telegraph, 18 February 1973. A denial by the IRA was reported in the Daily Telegraph, 30 March 1973.

64 Sunday Telegraph, 1 April 1973.
use of statements (by unidentified British military and IRA personnel)
which did not necessarily confirm the claim of the articles, and
they appear to have been carried only in the papers of the Berry group. 65

The same dismissive attitude was not appropriate to, nor was it
adopted by any of the governments concerned, in respect of the Trans-
Atlantic traffic in arms for the IRA. According to Stanley Orme, a
Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, the evidence from
recovery operations conducted by the security forces in the Province
indicated that 85 per cent of the Provisionals' weapons originated in
the United States, 66 thus establishing that country as its most
important single source of supply. 67

The American Government, notwithstanding the seriousness with
which it viewed this matter, disputed the British estimates. One agent
of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Don Zimmerman,
countered that a claim of even 75 per cent was 'a ridiculous
exaggeration'. 68 Moreover, the available data appeared to support his
position, although certain juxta-positions of time are required to do so.
In the same June 1975 article which carried Zimmerman's statement, it

65 Proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*.

66 As reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, 10 January 1976, Prime Minister
Harold Wilson made a similar claim at this time which deserves inclusion
because of the different inferences, emphasised in the following, which
he appeared to draw from recovery information: 'The fact is that most
of the modern weapons now reaching the terrorists in Northern Ireland
are of American origin, possibly as much as eighty-five per cent of them.
They are bought in the United States and they are bought with American
donated money' (London Press Service, Verbatim Service, 'IRA Fund
Raising', 243/75, 17 December 1975, an extract from Wilson's speech to the
Association of American Correspondents, Savoy Hotel, London, 17 December
1975).

67 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, *Official Report*, vol. 901,
4 December 1975, col. 1924, (hereafter cited as House of Commons, *Official
Report*). See in conjunction with R.D. Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry in
as Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry in Northern Ireland').

68 As reported in the *London Sunday Times*, 2 November 1975.
was reported that 1,581 'guns of American manufacture' had been found in Northern Ireland connected with the IRA. This figure, when compared with the overall (Ulster-wide) total of 4,974 for the period 1971-1975, \(^{69}\) represented a proportion of approximately 30 per cent. (And this appeared to be a steadily decreasing ratio over time: when figures to 1979 were taken, it fell as low as 23 per cent, for weapons which were 'said to be of US manufacture'. \(^{70}\))

If allowance is made for the fact that the 1971-75 percentage was artificially high because of the figure of 1,581 included recoveries of US arms for 1969 and 1970 as well, but omitted total (Ulster-wide) recoveries for the same period which must have increased the figure of 4,974, then it would seem that there was a wild divergence between the competing British and American estimates. And irrespective of the interpretation given to the statistics of arms recoveries, they confirmed in a rather obvious way the relative ease with which the IRA was able to replenish and maintain its fighting requirements in Ulster, a point made by Bell and Jones. \(^{71}\) Indeed, some arms were reported to have travelled the greater part of their journey in style — aboard the Cunard liner, Queen Elizabeth II. \(^{72}\)

It is possible, however, to effect a reconciliation between the American and British claims by reference to the impressive record of the actual weapons which the IRA came to use. In 1969 it was poorly armed, where it was armed at all. \(^{73}\) By 1971 it had introduced the Armalite AR 130 (the civilian, semi-automatic version of the selective fire AR 15)

\(^{69}\) Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry in Northern Ireland', p. 24 (See Table).

\(^{70}\) International Herald Tribune, 25 September 1979, p. 3. According to this report 2,300 of a grand total of 10,000 weapons conformed to the above description.

\(^{71}\) Bell, The Secret Army, p. 373; and Jones 'Terrorist Weaponry in Northern Ireland', p. 24.

\(^{72}\) Interview with William V. Shannon, United States Ambassador to Ireland, Dublin, 24 April 1978, (hereafter cited as Shannon Interview). The Ambassador also mentioned the involvement of some stewardesses of Aer Lingus in smuggling small quantities of arms into Ireland.

\(^{73}\) See Chapter 14, pp. 549-50.
and the M1 Garand into its arsenal. From 1972 on these were supplemented by military surplus and commercial variants of the M1 carbine, the AR 15, and the M3 SMG ('Grease Gun'). As from 1974, recoveries in Northern Ireland included the above weapons plus small quantities or single examples of the following:

- AG 42b semi-automatic rifle (Swedish Army surplus)
- NATO M1A semi-automatic rifles (commercial name for M 14 US Army rifles).
- GA1/42 semi-automatic rifles (Wehrmacht surplus)
- SAFN semi-automatic rifles (Venezuelan Army surplus)
- M 62 semi-automatic rifles (current Finnish Army rifle)
- NATO Beretta 59/69 semi-automatic rifle (current Italian Army rifle).

According to R.D. Jones of the British Intelligence Corps, the above list was 'very significant'. Apart from the M3 SMG, all the weapons listed were available over the counter in the United States — with the last two having the names of firearms dealings engraved upon the receiver. If to this is added the knowledge that the AR 180 was made under licence in Japan for sale and distribution by the Armalite company at Costa Mesa, California, and hence forwarded to the IRA from the US, and the claim made by (US) Assistant Attorney-General, William Olsen, that some Americans were involved on behalf of the IRA in attempts in Mexico to illegally purchase, inter alia, this same weapon, then it is possible to understand how the differences between the British and United States Governments may have arisen. Whether or not such factors fully accounted for the conflicting views is not clear, but it may be inferred that they were substantially a consequence of the

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74 Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry in Northern Ireland', p. 17.
75 ibid., p. 19.
76 ibid. Note: the M3 SMG was capable of automatic fire and hence illegal in the United States; nevertheless it was believed by the British authorities that this weapon was also obtained in the US, probably on the Black Market (ibid., p. 17).
British Government's position that the term 'American arms' should be interpreted so as to encompass those which were 'modern' (as per note 66) and to include weapons which were not only of US manufacture, but also of a loosely defined US origin.

But the list also indicated that the IRA possessed a multiplicity of types and calibres among both their longarm and pistol weaponry. In Jones's opinion this reflected the success of the security forces in repeatedly depriving the IRA of its weapons, and its subsequent recourse to piecemeal procurement. The further consequence was that insoluble problems of maintenance were created, which in turn exacerbated the supply situation by rendering useless weapons with relatively simple faults. 79 Thus, despite its success in obtaining arms and ammunition in quantity, it was evident by 1978 (the year of Jones's article) that the IRA had probably failed in its objective of obtaining them according to its criterion of 'identical ... and recent manufacture.' 80

From the vantage point of 1981 this conclusion is confirmed only more so. The record of US financial and material assistance of the early and mid-1970s now appears as a guttering of a candle rather than the advent of a truly trans-national movement. Although the figures do not show it, it is Clark's contention that 'apathy reconquered the spirits of many' in the Irish-American support network after the Ulster Workers' Council Strike in mid-1974. 81 Certainly NORAID's reported disbursements to Northern Ireland show a dramatic tumble in 1975, and by that time, too, the major attempts at running guns to the IRA were, apparently, a matter of history. An American interest in Ireland was to be revived, but as will be seen in the next chapter, the initiative that accompanied it was undertaken by those who were more pragmatic, and ultimately, more responsible than those whose activities so coloured this early period.

79 Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry in Northern Ireland', p. 24. As this is not a technical discussion, specific reference to calibre types has been omitted, but they (eight pistol and nine rifle calibres) are to be found in the article cited. Note: Jones makes no mention of where the IRA's pistol inventory was obtained from, but it is clear from his account (when used in conjunction with a small arms reference manual) that it was predominantly of non-US manufacture.

80 McGuire, To Take Arms, p. 40.

81 Clark, Irish Blood, p. 69.
It was ironic, therefore, that when militant support was so clearly on the wane among the Irish-Americans, NORAID should have proved capable of a misleading expression of vitality that was both innovative and politically astute: the founding of the Irish National Caucus in September 1974. Prior to that time the successes which could be attributed to the 'Irish lobby' (if this is defined so as to exclude politicians) were few in number and slight in content. Although the powerful American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) had, in 1971, passed a unanimous resolution condemning 'the policy of internment and the torture in Northern Ireland' and had demanded 'the end of the Stormont Government, the establishment of a United Nations peace-keeping operation, the withdrawal of British troops and the establishment of a free and united Ireland',\(^8^2\) all that resulted, and those mainly after Bloody Sunday, were small scale anti-British campaigns.\(^8^3\) The International Longshoremen's Association, supported by the Transport Workers Union, carried out a one-day strike against British exports,\(^8^4\) but the limitations of this type of pressure were apparent when the American Committee for Ulster Justice (ACUJ — see Appendix II, 'Notes on Paul O'Dwyer', pp. 614-19) evidently failed in its attempt to introduce an embargo on the supply of American-made rubber bullets being used by the British Army in the North.\(^8^5\) In these circumstances it was of little consolation that ex-Beatle John Lennon and his wife Yoko Ono joined a

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83 Clark, Irish Blood, p. 42.
84 Times, 7 February 1972.
85 Irish Times, 3 February 1972. The qualification was made because obviously the British Army have continued to use rubber bullets throughout the period under review. However, one reason for the ACUJ's failure may have been that the British Army were either not being supplied from the USA, or were not dependent on them if they were: see Carol Ackroyd, Karen Margolis, Jonathon Rosenhead and Tim Shallie, The Technology of Political Control (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1977), p. 210.
86 Times, 7 February 1972. At this same time another former Beatle, Paul McCartney, with his group 'Wings', recorded a song entitled 'Give Ireland back to the Irish' — and promptly had it banned on BBC, ITA and Radio Luxembourg.
demonstration in New York, or when, in 1975, no less a Republican supporter than Teddy Gleason, President of the International Longshoremen's Association, Vice President of the AFL-CIO, and Vice-President of the Irish National Caucus, announced that he thought boycotts were unlikely to either save lives in Ulster or bring the sides to the bargaining table.\textsuperscript{87}

In terms of a demonstrable political effect the advent of the Irish National Caucus would appear to have made little difference. Certainly, its very foundation was a recognition of the shortcomings of the support network which were obvious in earlier years, as illustrated by its pledge to:

\begin{quote}
establish Irish freedom as an American moral issue through every possible legal avenue at our disposal.\textsuperscript{88}
\end{quote}

But, when refined, its objectives of:

\begin{enumerate}
\item the release of all internees and an amnesty to political prisoners;
\item the withdrawal of British troops from the streets of Northern Ireland by a specific date; and,
\item a British declaration of an intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland in general.\textsuperscript{89}
\end{enumerate}

were the same as those of the Provisionals.

No doubt this reflected the fact that the Caucus's leadership was of the same complexion. Its Executive Council included Sean Walsh (National Director), Father Sean McManus (National Co-ordinator), Fred Burns O'Brien (Information Director), Brendan McCusker (National Liaison Officer), Jack Keane and Teddy Gleason.\textsuperscript{90} All were closely identified with the Provisional cause as was the membership of the

\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 16 October 1975. 'Republican' in the above refers to his Irish, and not his American, political sympathies.
\textsuperscript{88} As cited in Clark, \textit{Irish Blood}, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{89} Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975.
\textsuperscript{90} ibid., see in conjunction with Clark, \textit{Irish Blood}, p. 69.
Caucus's Board of Governors, among the membership of which was Bishop Drury (see note 47), Paul O'Dwyer (see pp. 614-19) and Philadelphian Daniel Cahalane. The Caucus also claimed the 'endorsement' of a wide range of Irish-American groups such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), of which Keane was the National President in 1975-76, ACUJ, Conradh na Gaeilge, the Celtic Cultural Society, the Irish Arts Centre and, of course, NORAID. Gleason's membership was alleged to place the AFL-CIO in this same category of support.

However, in the opinion of some knowledgeable observers of the Caucus, it was important not to overestimate the extent to which it was representative of quite disparate Irish-American groups. They believed that it consisted of those whose motivation was 'personal vanity' (Keane, O'Brien and Walsh), or were in reality 'interested hardliners' who just happened to be members of the groups, rather than the groups themselves. This interpretation is at least consistent with the appeal that the Caucus's objectives had held for the majority of the Irish-American community before 1974. It was in those years clearly limited and there was no reason to suspect that they became more attractive simply because they were espoused by a new organisation. The Caucus, after all, was the creation of an older organisation which had been isolated from the mainstream of that community. And it was surely significant that none of the ranking Irish-American Democrats in Congress at the time the Caucus was founded — such as Mike Mansfield and Thomas P. ('Tip') O'Neill, Majority Leaders in the Senate and House, respectively — had found the new organisation any more attractive than the other manifestations of the support network. They kept their distance. Notwithstanding this, after only six months in existence the Caucus claimed to represent 30 Irish-American organisations, which emboldened it, no matter how spuriously, to speak as if this was a matter of fact.

91 Clark, Irish Blood, p. 70.
92 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975.
93 ibid.
94 ibid.
In testimony that it had learned of the need to sharpen its focus and provide a 'unified' front the Caucus obtained the ear, indeed the energies and undivided attention, of a small number of local and national-level politicians who came to behave as though the woes of Ireland were one of their constituencies' larger worries. But, whereas it was difficult, it not impossible, to make the distinction between the Caucus's endorsement of the IRA's ends and its means, these men from American public life — with but one clear exception — attempted to maintain a discreet distance, through their disavowal of terrorist violence, and their abhorrence of the abuse of state force, between support for the end, however defined, and the methods by which it was to be achieved. In short, they sought to practise advocacy without responsibility.

The one clear exception was that luminary of the New Irish — New York City Council President, Paul O'Dwyer. But even he, though holder of the second-highest elected office of America's most populous city, was unable to give any significant political advantage to the Irish-American support network. It may have been that his close association with NORAID, combined with his somewhat clouded and confused views of the situation in Northern Ireland, were sufficient disincentives for the majority of Irish-Americans to change their attitudes about organisations they already held in disfavour.

O'Dwyer was at least a Mayoman by birth. But the early 1970s saw the beginning of the involvement in the troubles of some most unlikely (and unknowledgeable) Hibernians who, with their frequently apocalyptic vision of events in the North, and their diverse ethnic backgrounds, were reminiscent of what the Book of Revelation described as 'a great multitude ... of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues ...'. Their relevance to this analysis arises from their habit of regarding disdainfully the activities of the British and Irish Governments, respectively, and from their attempts to have the Ulster

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95 See Appendix I, p. 607, and Appendix II, 'Notes on Paul O'Dwyer' (hereafter cited as Appendix II).
96 See Appendix II.
97 Rev. 7:9.
Question transcend ethnic politics in the United States and take a place as an issue of truly national concern. Hence it is in consideration of such *dramatis personae* that the focus of this chapter shifts—from that which predominantly was, or approximated to, the criminal—to that which predominantly was, or approximated to, the crusading.

Foremost in this category was the Congressman from the 10th Congressional District, New York (East Bronx and North Queens), Mario Biaggi. Before being elected to Congress on a hardline law-and-order ticket, he had been a member of the city's police force. His campaign literature described him as 'New York's legendary hero cop', in support of which he claims to have been wounded 10 times and decorated more than any other law enforcement officer in the United States. Biaggi's record in this regard was also commented on by David McKittrick who, when presenting a profile article of him, observed that he 'seems to have shot more people, in the line of duty, than just about anybody else.'

The same unreflective disposition was evident in his stands on Northern Ireland, but on which subject it was inexcusable. They appear to have begun in the wake of the introduction of internment without trial, with a demand that United Nations Secretary-General, U Thant, intervene immediately to end the 'Gestapo-like arrest binge' of the security forces in Northern Ireland. Thereafter, with the tone thus set, Biaggi's sympathies led him to associate increasingly with the American-Irish support network—first with NORAID, then with the Irish National Caucus. He was, for example, in attendance at several of the former's functions, and in 1975 described activities such as a then...
recent trip to Dublin in the company of Dr Fred Burns O'Brien, and a letter to Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, as having been undertaken 'at the request' of the latter.

During that visit, the purpose of which was to 'personally investigate' certain visa refusals by the US State Department to prominent Provisionals, Biaggi associated publicly with well-known supporters of the IRA's campaign of violence — among them Ruairi O Bradaigh (with whom he co-chaired a press conference), and Joe Cahill, Maire Drumm, Sean Keenan and Seamus Loughran (with all of whom he was photographed.) Evidently, the company was persuasive: before leaving Ireland he stated his intention of presenting a case for allowing the otherwise prohibited Republicans into the United States to appear before a Congressional Committee so that their cause might be explained and better understood there. To further this end he began to press, but without success, for the convening of Congressional hearings on Northern Ireland.

In this venture he was aided by other Congressmen, of whom the two most notable were Benjamin Rosenthal, Chairman of the House Sub-Committee on Europe, and Lester Wolff, his successor to that position in 1975. Both were Democrats from the State of New York. Their involvement signified a reciprocity in what might be termed ethnic politics. Just as O'Dwyer, who was Irish-American, had a record of Zionist sympathy,

101 *New York Times*, 1 May 1975, Fred Burns O'Brien was the Information Director of the Irish National Caucus.

102 (United States) *Congressional Record — Extensions of Remarks*, 18 June 1975, p. E3294; and cable from Kissinger to the United States Embassy in London (Ref: State 95093, 0 291327 Z APR 75), as published in the *New York Irish People*, 7 June 1975, respectively.

103 Notes: 'Biaggi'.

104 As reported in the *New York Irish People*, 17 May 1975.

105 By that time, however, the name of that body had been changed to the Subcommittee on Future Foreign Policy Research and Development; like its predecessor, it was a subcommittee of the House Committee on International Relations (previously, Foreign Affairs).
Rosenthal and Wolff, who were identified as part of the Jewish lobby in the United States, lent their support to the cause of a united Ireland. And in this there was no little irony: all three would have been embarrassed severely had it become common knowledge that the Provisional aid network in which they were enlisted was at the same time associated with militant Arab regimes and organisations in its quest for further funds and bulk supplies of arms (see pp. 564-83).

Of the two Congressmen, Wolff was the more active, and probably the more strongly influenced by NORAID. He was it seems inspired by a sense of the melodramatic (and encouraged by the knowledge that he represented a heavily Irish district). In 1972, after having failed to obtain permission to visit the Long Kesh detention camp, he posed as a family friend of one of the detainees, adopted the alias 'Joe Brannigan' and, restricting his conversation to mono-syllables so as to avoid this being discovered, entered the establishment to hear complaints of rough treatment.

In other respects the successes of the Caucus and its Congressional auxiliaries were limited. The Irish Government, in a letter from its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, as well as in numerous representations by its Embassy in Washington to both Rosenthal (once in the presence of Secretary Kissinger) and Wolff, stated its opposition to proceedings which would in any way recognise or advantage the IRA.

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106 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975.
108 ibid., and (United States) Congressional Record - House, 9 April 1979, p. 42113 (speech by Wolff alluding to 1972 episode). Hereafter this source will be cited as Congressional Record - House.
109 Letter from Garret Fitzgerald, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, originating from the Embassy of Ireland, Washington, D.C., 10 October 1975, and addressed to the Hon. Lester Wolff in his capacity as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Future Foreign Policy (cited in Congressional Record - House, 4 December 1975, p. 38722).
110 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975.
On this Dublin and London were agreed, and it was a tribute to their respective abilities to mobilise counter forces in the Congress and the Administration, considered later in this and the succeeding chapter, that the hearings so sought after by the Caucus, Biaggi, et. al., were literally a non-event. All that took place was a 'special ad hoc pre-hearing' in New York on 15 October 1975 at which a group of 12 already-converted Congressmen from the metropolitan area indulged representatives from various Irish-American/Provisional support groups to present testimony which the former were already well aware of.  

Obviously, if these politicians thought it necessary to exploit the Northern Ireland situation, the results they achieved were disappointing in terms of a demonstrable effect upon the issues involved, or even upon the United States Government. There was, therefore, little that Wolff, for example, could boast of to the sizable Irish component of his electoral district. But that begs the question as to whether his action, or that of his colleagues, was determined by electoral imperatives.  

But the stands taken by such politicians as Biaggi, Rosenthal and Wolff were worthy of more than an out-of-hand dismissal. Consider these extracts from Rosenthal's opening address to the hearings of his Subcommittee in 1972:  

The hearings which begin today represent a deep and continuing concern by the American people, and their Congress, for the tragic situation in Northern Ireland.  

By historical and cultural ties, and because many of our antecedents came from England and Ireland, this country sees itself as a close friend and a sympathetic witness to the terrible human, social, and political problems which engage both countries in Northern Ireland.

111 For an account of these proceedings see Congressional Record — House, 4 December 1975, pp. 38721-35.  
112 Where this motivation could be imputed to (say) Wolff, Biaggi on the other hand, could be excused — at least insofar as it applied to his district: the Irish component comprised only 6 per cent of the total constituency. (McKittrick, 'Biaggi').
The burden of finding solutions to these problems rests primarily on the countries involved. Yet no man of conscience can rest easy with that assertion and no country can subsist any longer behind the fiction that the nation-state system demands or even allows that injustices can continue simply because they occur wholly within national borders ...

For practical, as well as for moral reasons, we are all involved in the rights of other men. And when men begin to question the system of national authority protecting those rights, the legitimate interests of other nations are engaged as well.

The only apology, therefore, of Americans viewing the tragedy in Northern Ireland is that they know not how to help. Our country which still endures its own burden in a small country half the world away, cannot and should not maintain that questions of self-determination and peace-keeping in the world community must stop at the edge of the Atlantic. Vietnam is the world's concern; so is Ireland.

Hopefully these hearings will point out some directions for the proper route to the goals of human freedom and justice. But if these hearings serve only to show our concern for these values and for the people in Ireland and England who must, in the first rank pursue them, our work in the next 3 days is justified as a testament to the common interests of world and community peace which we all share.113

Clearly, they comprised an eloquent, diplomatically sensitive, and compassionate approach to the issues from the other side of the Atlantic. Both Biaggi and Wolff expressed similar sentiments, although it must be admitted that they also tended occasionally to adopt a demonology in which the former would impute Nazi tactics to Britain for its operation of the Special Powers Act and the introduction of internment,114 while the latter would envision the same country as a threat to the 'very health and welfare of American families and their relations' because it (and France) operated the Concord supersonic transport into the United

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The most important weakness of these and similar politicians was their abdication of the practice of the politics with which, they were all familiar with. By this is meant their refusal, on the one hand, to discriminate between the IRA's objectives and its method of attaining them, and on the other, their habit of viewing the struggle in Northern Ireland according to Maria McGuire's contemptuous description of them.

... like spectators at a Morality Play, with right and wrong, good and evil, delineated in black and white.¹¹⁶

Between being unable to forgive the violence of the state, and being unwilling to absolutely condemn the terrorist violence of the IRA, they were forced to take up a poorly constructed position antithetical to those of the British, the Irish, and their own Government. Among the senior and more influential members of Congress - such as Brooklyn Representative Hugh Carey and Connecticut's Senator Abraham Ribicoff - they were unable, despite the former's interest, to command a commitment beyond what was really a brief flirtation rising out of the sense of outrage following internment and Bloody Sunday (see Notes 118 and 128 below). Accordingly, their effectiveness as a political lobby in Washington could not but be reduced. And if McGuire's remarks above were any indication, their status among those with whom their sympathies lay was as little more than dupes.

But not all American politicians interested in Northern Ireland were similarly deceived. They were, however, distinguished by three characteristics. First, unlike the federal representatives associated with NORAID and the Caucus, this group included prominent congressmen who tended to be Irish-American. Second, most of them were Senators. And third, the attitude they adopted to developments in the North was

¹¹⁵ ibid., 'Statement by Hon. Lester Wolff, A Representative in Congress from the State of New York', p. 344; Sunday Telegraph, 30 March 1975; and Congressional Record — House, 4 December 1975, pp. 38721-2.

¹¹⁶ McGuire, To Take Arms, p. 108.
reactive, but nonetheless more responsible. This last distinction, referred to earlier as 'the politics of the last atrocity' (see pp.273-4), they shared, but probably to a lesser degree, with numerous non-governmental respondents in Western Europe.

Thus it was the introduction of internment in August 1971 that drew the first substantial outcry from this quarter. Senators Hubert Humphrey and Edmund Muskie both recorded their opposition to the measure and their support for the reunification of Ireland. But it is interesting to note that both were likely Presidential candidates for 1972 and both delayed their condemnation of the measure until it had become 'safe' to do so — i.e. after it had been in operation for some time and a respectable number of their congressional colleagues had set precedents. Among these the protests registered took such forms as a demand for the withdrawal of the British Army lest Northern Ireland become 'Britain's Vietnam' (Senator Ribicoff), its replacement by a 'peace-keeping' force, and a letter from 30 congressmen urging President Nixon to raise the subject of Northern Ireland during his talks in Bermuda with British Prime Minister Heath, scheduled for December 1971.

But towering over all such contributions in this period was the contribution of one man. Although Irish-American, and (then) enjoying 89 per cent of the Irish vote in his constituency, he had never been to Ireland, nor could it have been said that he saw himself primarily as an Irish-American. If any man could be said to have spoken for the 'great submerged' of that community it was he, yet his popularity rested on more than that disintegrating identity could afford (see Appendix I, pp.605-08). He was, however, irrevocably joined

117 Daily Telegraph, 21 December 1971; and Guardian, 26 January 1972, respectively.
118 Remark made at a fund-raising dinner-dance sponsored by the ACUJ, and at which both he and Senator Duffey called for the withdrawal of all British troops (Daily Telegraph, 29 November 1971).
119 Irish Times, 29 November 1971.
120 ibid.
121 For reference to Kennedy's claim regarding his electoral popularity among Irish-Americans, see the Financial Times, 19 January 1972; for a brief profile on his background see Louis Heren's article 'Irish Ghosts in US Politics', Times, 21 October 1971.
to it and possessed of its most illustrious name, almost like a Bishop in partibus infidelium. He was, of course, the Democratic Senator from Massachusetts, Edward Moore Kennedy, a man who was then, and indeed could be until the year 2000, an essential consideration in every Presidential race. Kennedy, moreover, held a position in American politics which was unique, as Conor Cruise O'Brien observed of his announced candidature for the Democratic nomination in 1979:

> Senator Kennedy comes towards the Presidency in virtue of the same power which made Augustus emperor in succession to the murdered Julius ... the sacralising power of royal blood, spilled and again renewed. Senator Kennedy represents the hereditary principle in its pure form. Nobody pretends that he would have been thought of as a Presidential candidate — or as a senator for that matter — were it not for the name. His election would therefore be an event of a different order from that of any of the other candidates. It would be the election not of a person but of the head of a family, a quasi-royal house.122

Thus, if it seems that excessive attention is paid to Kennedy in either this or the following chapter, it is only because it was widely appreciated on both sides of the Atlantic that his status, real and imputed, and his developing role, were such that no other person in American public life was as capable as he was of influencing events relative to Northern Ireland.

For Kennedy, the introduction of internment was the watershed of his involvement in the affairs of Northern Ireland. As he told Mary Holland in 1977:

> I really came to an awareness of Northern Ireland through the civil rights issues involved. I had been very active in civil rights campaigns here — the anti-Vietnam protests, racial issues and, internationally, on Greece. I'd watched the Civil Rights marches in Northern Ireland but it wasn't until the introduction of internment in 1971 that I began to get actively

involved. It was becoming obvious to me that the one civil rights issue I wasn't speaking about was Northern Ireland.¹²³

Thereafter he made up for this shortcoming very quickly with a trenchant (and sometimes an emotional) criticism of Britain's Northern Ireland policies. Thus internment itself was a 'cruel and repressive policy' with consequences which were seen in terms of "streams" of blood [that] have become rivers.¹²⁴ In the same metaphorical vein, but with considerably more accuracy, the Compton Report¹²⁵ was dismissed as being based on an 'Alice-in-Wonderland logic', and overall, an example of 'cruel hypocrisy'.¹²⁶

Correspondingly, the British Army were 'part of the problem, not the solution',¹²⁷—which in his view was to be attempted by either (or both, it was not clear) the intervention of President Nixon as a mediator or some form of UN involvement.¹²⁸

The culmination of Kennedy's 1971 campaign of rhetoric was reached on 20 October with his impassioned introduction of the six-point Senate Resolution 180,¹²⁹ co-sponsored there by Ribicoff, and introduced in the House as Resolution 653 by Congressman (and then ACUJ member (Hugh Carey, later to become Governor of New York State. It requested the Government of the United States at the highest level to urge the immediate implementation of the following actions:

¹²³ 'Interview - Edward Kennedy', (conducted by Mary Holland), Magill, vol. 1, No. 1, October 1977, pp. 5-6 (hereafter cited as Kennedy Interview, Magill, October 1977).


¹²⁶ Letter from Senator Kennedy to the Times, 8 December 1971. Similar criticisms of the Compton Report were discussed earlier, in Chapter 9, pp. 333-8.

¹²⁷ Financial Times, 10 December 1971.

¹²⁸ Times, 20 December 1971: and International Herald Tribune, 19 November 1971, respectively.

¹²⁹ For excerpts from this speech see the Times, 21 October 1971.
1. Termination of the current internment policy and the simultaneous release of all persons detained thereunder.

2. Full respect for the civil rights of all the people of Northern Ireland and the termination of all political, social, economic and religious discrimination.

3. Implementation of the reforms promised by the Government of the United Kingdom since 1968, including reforms in the fields of law enforcement, housing, employment and voting rights.


5. Withdrawal of all British forces from Northern Ireland and the institution of law enforcement and criminal justice under local control acceptable to all parties.

6. Convening of all interested parties for the purpose of accomplishing the unification of Ireland.  

The international response it provoked was predictable. The Irish Government, wanting neither to offend the American Government nor Kennedy, greeted it passively. The American Government was, of course, less solicitous of the Senator's feelings, and issued a statement in which it dissociated itself from the resolution, and noted that even if carried in the Congress, it was not binding on US policy.  

And to the British Government went all awards for directness: in taking issue with just about every point in Kennedy's Senate speech, Prime Minister Heath condemned it in the House of Commons as 'an ignorant outburst'.  

In sum, Kennedy was no more able to influence matters in London and Washington than other Americans interested in Northern Ireland.

Then came Bloody Sunday, and a further round of Kennedy protest.

... one couldn't stay silent after that. At the time I was protesting about what had happened at Kent State University here, and the parallels between the circumstances surrounding the two tragedies were just

130 Northern Ireland: 1972 Hearings, p. 17.


too much. The defence put up here was that no one would have got killed at Kent State if the protestors had stayed home. In both cases there was an official Commission of Inquiry set up, which just turned out to be a shameful white-wash. It seemed to me that I must question the sincerity of British motives and involvement in Northern Ireland. I likened the situation to our involvement in Vietnam and I called for the British to withdraw. 133

But this time there was a wider realisation that many of his demands were worthy of consideration. Just as the deaths at Kent State had inspired the 'days of rage' on a national scale, the killings on Bloody Sunday engendered a massive mood of outrage against Britain internationally, and this was widely expressed across the political spectrum in the United States. In the Democratic Party, there was strong support for some, if not all, of what essentially were the positions taken earlier by Kennedy — from Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley,134 the Party's leader in the House, 'Tip' O'Neill,135 New York Congressmen Rosenthal and Jacob Javits,136 and two of its Presidential front-runners, George McGovern137 and Edmund Muskie.138 Among the Republicans the Mayor of New York, John Lindsay,139 and Senator Edward Brook140 both endorsed actions and objectives which had been contained in Kennedy's original six-point resolution. Even the Conservative-Republican James Buckley, who had been elected in 1970 to Robert Kennedy's former constituency, underwent a change of heart. Whereas it was generally agreed by commentators that he owed his position to what was left of the

135 ibid., O'Neill was later to become Speaker of the House.
137 Daily Telegraph, 27 April 1972.
140 International Herald Tribune, 5 and 6 February 1972.
conservative 'Irish vote',\(^{141}\) in late 1971, he displayed a certain independence of mind by resisting attempts to have him 'speak out for Ireland' on the grounds that it constituted illegitimate interference.\(^{142}\) Within six weeks, however, he appealed to the Senate to support a call for both US assistance to aid the orderly withdrawal of British troops and US settlement efforts.\(^{143}\)

In the wake of this outpouring of unfocused sympathy and support, American politicians interested in the subject of Northern Ireland, like politicians anywhere no doubt, took the one action which was in their prerogative, given a reluctant executive and administration: they discussed it further. Specifically, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Benjamin Rosenthal, convened hearings which were held in the Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C., between 28 February and 1 March 1972.

They did not represent, as might be inferred from Rosenthal's involvement and the record of some of those who gave testimony, a triumph for the support network previously discussed. While it was probably encouraged by the facilities for publicity and propaganda it received during the hearings, other factors overrode its interests. Although evidence on this is scant, predominant among these must have been the mood of sympathetic parties who desired that their feelings should be allowed as near to the formal national expression as possible. This at least was consistent with the Chairman Rosenthal's introductory remarks (cited earlier).\(^{144}\) Furthermore it was significant that Kennedy attended the hearings where, prior to (and since) that time he had studiously avoided associating with NORAID and its related activities. The same was true of both Tip O'Neill's decision to submit a

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\(^{142}\) *Irish Times*, 28 December 1971.

\(^{143}\) *New York Times*, 3 February 1972.

statement, and the presence of a representative of the State Department, Martin J. Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.  

As was noted earlier in this chapter, the Chairman's introduction was an eloquent, diplomatically sensitive, and compassionate approach to the issues at stake in Northern Ireland. The proceedings which followed could not be so characterised. As a reference to most of the 600 pages of testimony will reveal, the tone of the event was decidedly anti-British and denunciatory.

Kennedy was again to the fore; indeed, received 'star' billing. He opened the testimony with a lengthy prepared text, to which he spoke, also at some length (and repetitively), and followed this with further intermittent observations during a period allocated for questions. It was a wide-ranging address, difficult to capture in simple terms, and without doubt the high point of Kennedy's interest in the Ulster Question in the period 1971-76. Although he denied that he was acting with anti-British intent, it was his most bitter attack on Britain's Northern Ireland policies (and a sharp personal criticism of Prime Minister Heath.) Indeed, in this regard he appeared to assume the role of Prosecuting Attorney before the Bar of History. The killings in Derry, he implied, were not an aberration; they were only the most recent atrocity in a catalogue of 'cruel and bloody days, ... like the massacres in the Gordon Riots, and at Amritsar and Peterloo and Dublin'. From this and numerous other statements in the same vein, Kennedy seemed to press for not only an acclamation of Britain's guilt but, were it possible, the consignment of its national soul to perdition.

It was also his most persuasive proposal to that time for a role for the American Government. From historical precedents in Anglo-American

145 (Under the rules by which the sub-committee operated, representatives of governments other than the US Government, could not be heard).


147 ibid., pp. 8, 14, and 22.

148 ibid., pp. 6 and 12.
relations, the presence of a US Naval Communications Station in Northern Ireland (see p. 519) the alternative deployment of British troops in the Province to NATO, the involvement of the Republic of Ireland and comparisons with US intervention in recent times, he assembled, if not a compelling argument for direct action, at least a reasonable case for a more active US interest in ensuring that the conflict was settled.\textsuperscript{149} Consistency alone dictated the latter:

A few weeks ago, in the controversy over Britain's base on Malta, America was not so silent. We did not hesitate to intervene. The Administration was quick to prod the British then, when a few square miles of an obsolete island base of no military significance were at stake. Why is it so slow to act on Ulster now, where basic human rights and the lives of innocent people are in the balance.\textsuperscript{150}

And again:

More important on the issue of intervention, Ulster cannot fairly be called the internal affair of Britain. Not a day goes by without new evidence of the deep involvement of the Republic of Ireland in the crisis — a separate and independent nation whose affairs and future are intimately bound up with the solution of the Ulster issue. We sent the aircraft carrier Enterprise to the Indian Ocean last December, and we intervened in other ways to try to tilt the balance between India and Pakistan, two nations with whom we have had long and friendly ties. But by some cruel irony today, we are unwilling even to make our good offices available to mediate a crisis over Ulster that involves two of our closest friends, Britain and Ireland.\textsuperscript{151}

And once again the pervasiveness of the contemporary American experience in Indochina was obvious. In the general sense, Ulster was 'Britain's Vietnam', and hence 'the most important single step', that could be taken was the withdrawal of troops.\textsuperscript{152} In the particular sense, Londonderry was 'Britain's My Lai' — of which the concomitant was that less than justice would be done at the consequent inquiry.

\textsuperscript{149} ibid., pp. 3-4 and 10.
\textsuperscript{150} ibid., pp. 3 and 10.
\textsuperscript{151} ibid., pp. 4 and 10.
\textsuperscript{152} ibid., p. 12.
Just as at My Lai, there will perhaps be microscopic scrutiny of the soldiers at the scene, but the generals will go free.\textsuperscript{153}

In short, while it was not difficult to find fault with the comparisons he made, Kennedy's criticisms, if they are regarded apart, were valid where they concerned recent developments such as the introduction of internment and the Compton Report, and accurate in their expectations as they concerned (say) the Widgery Tribunal which inquired into Bloody Sunday. (See Chapter 9, p. 355).

But there was, in the belief that between Vietnam and Ulster a high order of comparability existed, a failure to go beyond the level of superficialities. Foremost among the deficiencies to be noted was a complete lack of appreciation that an American role in Northern Ireland, even if diplomatic rather than military, would in all probability be just as unsuccessful as had Britain's to that point—an objection raised by the ranking Republican member of the subcommittee, Peter Frelinghuysen.\textsuperscript{154} There was, simply, no grasp of the traditional intransigence of Ulster Unionists to initiatives from parties external to the Province. Nor, it could be inferred, was there anything in contemporary American diplomatic endeavours (with regard to broadly similar problems as were present in Ulster) which would have allowed Kennedy or others to propose a role for the United States with any degree of optimism.

Kennedy's testimony, however, could be faulted in other major aspects as well. It was, for instance, flawed by its excessive optimism. With the same fine disregard that O'Dwyer (see Appendix II) displayed for the capacity of the North to erupt in the most frightening manner (as it had done frequently since 1969), Kennedy denied that civil war was a likely consequence of a British withdrawal.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{153} ibid., pp. 7 and 13.
\textsuperscript{154} ibid., p. 28.
\textsuperscript{155} ibid., pp. 8 and 14.
Perhaps his greatest omission in this regard was (again like O'Dwyer) a sufficient understanding of the paramilitary organisations, specifically the IRA. It was not for example sufficient to account for their strength and their support by playing on the theme of justice denied for the Catholic community in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{156} That was the truth. Kennedy failed to grasp a relatively simple fact, obvious from the autumn of 1970 (earlier on the other side of the paramilitary divide), that the explosive power of the revolution (and the counter-revolution) in Northern Ireland was derived in no small part from the desire to get even as well as equal. Moreover, he declined to recognise the constant theme in IRA mythology that was revenge, intrigue and forms of mysterious return in which it would reappear, as did the prodigal, and see the usurpers, in the North and in the Republic, humbled.

What this pointed to, it seems, was Kennedy's own ambivalent behaviour towards the men of violence. According to Maria McGuire, 'Kennedy's office' was, at or about this time, facilitating Provisional spokesmen in their efforts to obtain visas for visits to the US.\textsuperscript{157} However, any suspicions that his account of the rise of the Provisional was but a winking endorsement of their violence, must be set against the absolute condemnations of it he made, also in the hearings.\textsuperscript{158}

But in his uncertainty, if that was what it was, there were further grounds to query, as did the usually sympathetic New York Times of his October Resolution,\textsuperscript{159} the judgment of a man whose status was that of a possible leader of the West's most powerful country. From a well of hope apparently based on nothing more substantial that the occasional mollities of Brian Faulkner and Ian Paisley,\textsuperscript{160} and the

\textsuperscript{156} ibid., pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{157} McGuire, To Take Arms, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{158} Northern Ireland: 1972 Hearings, pp. 15 and 30.
\textsuperscript{159} New York Times, 22 October 1971.
\textsuperscript{160} Northern Ireland: 1972 Hearings, pp. 9, 15 and 24.
common membership of both states in Ireland of the European Community, he contrived to conclude that:

... the goal of unification is now too close for Ireland to turn back ...

In all, Kennedy was found wanting in the very quality which his position and purpose demanded: a deep understanding of the issues in Northern Ireland. It was, therefore, a flawed performance. And it failed. In Washington the Administration of President Richard Nixon was unmoved, but other factors probably dictated that outcome from the start. But it failed in Dublin, too, where Taoiseach Jack Lynch took exception to Kennedy's call for an immediate withdrawal of British troops, and suggested that he was less than adequately informed.

From February 1972 onwards Kennedy undertook, what seems now in hindsight, a spasmodic withdrawal from his earlier positions. Some were still in evidence — such as a further appeal to Nixon, a successful collaboration with O'Dwyer and Ribicoff to have included in the 1972 Democratic platform a plank condemning discrimination and repression in Northern Ireland, and a minor furore over joint training exercises between the US and Royal Marines. But they were increasingly overtaken by what the Senator later chose to call, in early 1973, 'a more positive attitude'. And by this time he had lauded Heath for the prorogation of

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161 ibid., p. 8.
162 ibid., pp. 9 and 15.
167 As reported in the Times, 3 February 1973.
Stormont (which had been a proposal in his and Ribicoff's resolution) and bestowed high praise on the Northern Ireland Secretary, William Whitelaw, for his efforts to effect a ceasefire in the middle of 1972. (See Chapter 2, pp. 102-09).

There remained, however, some residential ambivalence in Kennedy's position that was not to be completely removed until 1977. While he claimed that his statements were modified in accordance with what he saw as progressive initiatives by the British Government through 1972 and 1973, it was obvious from an article he wrote in Foreign Policy in mid-1973, that his apolgia in this period was unchanged from the testimony he gave at the Washington hearings. In fact, he had found in the 'latitude given to the growth of Protestant paramilitary organisations' in 1972, and in the March 1973 White Paper's 'lack of commitment to the unification of Ireland', additional grounds to criticise British policies. Yet it was also obvious that a transformation in Kennedy's approach to the situation in Northern Ireland had been wrought: his tone in the above article was quieter (as befitted a learned journal?), and his arguments stated in such a way that they did not carry the Anglophobic overtones that his February 1972 testimony did.

If there was a catalyst outside of the British initiatives responsible for this change, it could almost certainly be traced to the influence upon Kennedy of the leader of the Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party, John Hume. As early as November 1972 they had met in secret in Bonn while the former was attending the North Atlantic Assembly of NATO Parliamentarians. There is now general

170 Kennedy Interview, Magill, October 1977.
171 Edward M. Kennedy, 'Ulster is an International Issue', Foreign Policy II (Summer 1973), (hereafter cited as Edward M. Kennedy, 'Ulster is an International Issue').
agreement amongst observers of the American Dimension that, subsequently, Kennedy came to be almost entirely guided on Northern Ireland matters by this man he described as:

... one of the finest and most creative political leaders of our generation, a man of extraordinary courage and wisdom and understanding. 174

With the getting of Kennedy's own wisdom the extra-governmental activities in the United States related to Northern Ireland took on a new complexion. In the spirit of the title of this chapter, the divisions became clearer between those who were both crusader and criminal, and those who were merely the latter. The former, who were never a majority, lost ground on their own account and to the coalition which formed around Kennedy and a number of his 'great and powerful friends'. And also there may have been the suspicion on the part of most politicians that too close an involvement in the affairs of Northern Ireland was a dangerous thing. Neither Benjamin Gilman's (Republic, New York) House resolution calling for a US embargo on

... the exportation of all weapons and ammunition to Great Britain which are related to the suppression of the minority in Northern Ireland [and the unification of Ireland].175

nor a move within the Democratic Party to include a call for a united Ireland in its 1976 platform was successful. 176 But these were still rather negative expressions (in the case of arms), or too simply positive expressions (in the case of unity). It was to be some time yet before greater understanding or sophistication would prevail over such views. In the interim they ignored the realities of Northern Ireland, but more to the point of this thesis, they were inappropriate in terms of Anglo-American relations, and not really attuned to either the objectives of

174 As cited in David McKittrick, 'Horsemen of the Irish Apocalypse', Irish Times, 6 September 1979, p. 10. See also Kennedy Interview, Magill, October 1977, p. 6. Further confirmation provided by interview.
175 Irish Times, 18 March 1975.
Irish-American, or the nuances of Anglo-Irish relations. Thus it is
to this third level, beyond the transnational and national-political
levels that attention must now be turned.

Eight years before the current conflict in Northern Ireland broke
out an event took place which could have had some bearing on subsequent
events: Edward Kennedy's elder brother, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, was
elected President of the United States. It symbolised, as historian
Lawrence McCaffrey recalls, 'the Irish-Catholic climb from the murky
bogs of ward politics to the heights of national power'. 177 And
while Lewis Namier's dictum that 'it serves no purpose to expostulate
with history' 178 will be observed in the following analysis, it is
tempting, indeed compelling, to reflect upon the milieu as did Daniel
Patrick Moynihan in his essay 'The Irish':

The era of the Irish politician culminated in Kennedy.
He was born to the work and was at every stage of his life
a 'prop'. He rose on the willing back of three generations
of district leaders and county chairmen who, like Barabbas
himself, may in the end have been saved for their one
moment of recognition that something special had appeared
among them. That moment was in 1960 when the Irish party
chieftains of the great Eastern and Midwestern cities, for
reasons they could probably even now not fully explain,
came together to nominate for President the grandson of
Honey Fitz ... It was the last hurrah. He was the youngest
and newest, served in a final moment of ascendancy. On the
day he died, the President of the United States, the Speaker
of the House of Representatives, the majority Leader of the
United States Senate, the Chairman of the National Committee
were all Irish, all Catholic, all Democrats.

[emphasis added]. 179

177 Lawrence J. McCaffrey, The Irish Diaspora in America (Bloomington:
Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 161 (hereafter cited as McCaffrey,
The Irish Diaspora in America).

178 Lewis B. Namier, Avenues of History (London: Hamish Hamilton,
1952), p. 44.

179 Daniel Patrick Moynihan, 'The Irish', Nathan Glazer and Daniel
Patrick Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans,
Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City, 2nd ed. (Cambridge,
By 1969 John F. Kennedy had gone to his death but the Speaker of the House and the Majority leaders in both the House and Senate were still 'Irish ... Catholic ... Democrats'. The President, of course, was a Republican, but should that have made a difference? Two months before the Presidential election in 1952, Richard Nixon, as candidate for Vice-President, stated that he was 'against the partition of Ireland absolutely'. And further:

... it is not easy to suggest practical steps to end partition right away. But one thing that occurs to me is the possibility of putting pressure on the British when it comes to handing them out American money. Then it could be made clear that we don't favour their policy in relation to the division of Ireland.\textsuperscript{180}

He was also reported as saying that he thought the United States could exercise considerable moral influence on the demand for a united Ireland, and that he was in favour of such action. What is more:

it can be said that there is a better chance of a Republican Administration doing something about partition than the Democrats ... We are more honestly concerned in trying to help in this partition than the Democrats. \textsuperscript{181}

How then to explain his steadfast refusals throughout the period of his Presidency to do anything remotely in accord with his 1952 utterances, his cautioning of Congress against making any sweeping declarations on the Irish problem,\textsuperscript{182} or to account for Dennis Clark's observation that: \ldots higher officials of the Nixon administration treated the entire issue as if it were on another planet?\textsuperscript{183}

Certainly, internal (to the US) political antagonisms must have played a part, particularly those between the Democratic Party and Nixon. However, by far the major determinants of the position taken by the US Government lay outside this explanation.

\textsuperscript{180} As cited in Edward M. Kennedy, 'Ulster is an International Issue', p. 60, note 1.
\textsuperscript{181} ibid.
\textsuperscript{182} Lebow, 'Ireland', p. 250.
\textsuperscript{183} Clark, \textit{Irish Blood}, p. 38.
In the first instance they were traceable to various factors which collectively ensured what Clark termed the 'organisational isolation' of the foreign policy bureaucracy:

The United States State Department and higher government circles were largely inhabited by men without ties to the Irish immigrant community. The Ivy League and power broker careerists in Washington simply didn't know anything or give a damn about Northern Ireland. They did care about England and its requests and suggestions to the United States. England was an important ally. Nor were the Irish of much domestic political significance. Their old power had declined. They had attached to them a dual political image, that of old time ward boss vulgarity, typified by Mayor Edward Daly of Chicago, and the Kennedy family drama of pain and disillusionment. Either part of the image was distressing to think about, and there was no longer any clear demographic and electoral Irish bloc of national significance to compel consideration of Irish concerns. In addition, the IRA supporters did not represent a broad base of adherents even among Irish-Americans. 184

Clark also implied that 'those two major characteristics of the Irish conflict itself, convoluted complexity and raging violence' 185 were even more potent disincentives to an active American interest, but it is not clear whether he intended that they be applied to the State Department as well as to the population as a whole. Whatever his intention the former proposition appears unlikely in the context of US intervention in other violent manifestations of intractable political problems. Whereas the two reasons cited no doubt deterred the majority of Americans from wanting any part of the conflict, they would have been but poor excuses for the American Government to abdicate a role. Indeed, a case could be made that such conditions only imposed a greater obligation on it to act – according to the analogy that governments, like surgeons, are frequently required to perform what laymen have neither the license nor the stomach for.

Clark, it is apparent, had no high regard for the State Department, but two further independently observed conditions lend evidence to his

184 ibid., p. 67.
185 ibid.
claim. Both logically proceeded from them. The first was that Northern Ireland was regarded as a domestic and not a foreign policy by the State Department. Statements originating from that source, until the advent of the Carter initiative in 1977 (see Chapter 11, pp. 471-3) were made on an *ad hoc* basis, without benefit of specific policy guidelines.

Second, the position that Ireland (Republic and the North) occupied within State's bureaucratic structure reflected this view: only one desk officer was assigned to cover relations with Dublin. Thus, the troubles, in effect, 'competed' for the attention of the Office of North European Affairs along with the United Kingdom, the Benelux nations (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) and the Nordics (Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden).

In combination these factors determined that the United States Government said nothing, or at most very little, throughout the first nine years of the current troubles (i.e. until August 1977). During the period in which Ireland attempted to bring the Northern conflict before the United Nations, it simply declined to state its position on the issues (see Chapter 5, pp. 253). The sum total of its representative's contribution to the proceedings consisted of the following evasive action:

Mr Buffum (United States of America) said he had a statement to make on the inscription of the item. However, before being required to take a stand on an issue confronting many with an unhappy dilemma, he would be interested to know whether the representative of Ireland would wish to respond to the very eloquent appeal made by the United Kingdom representative.

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187 ibid.
188 Shannon Interview; and interview, Department of State, Washington, D.C., 1979 (hereafter cited as Department of State Interview, 1979).
Note: a minor difference existed between the former, in which reference was made to the 'North-west European' section, and the latter, the terminology of which was used above. The discrepancy may, however, lie in the writer's note-taking.
By early 1972, however, American policy with respect to Northern Ireland was explicit. Without 'any particular request' from either the Irish or the United Kingdom Government, Secretary of State, William P. Rogers, advanced the argument that the United States was 'not in a position' to intervene in the crisis then underway. Moreover, at an impromptu news conference given by him after receiving Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Patrick Hillery, he concluded that:

it would be both inappropriate and counter-productive for the United States to attempt to intervene in any way in the area.

In similar vein he responded to proposals by Senator Edward Kennedy and others that the United States press Britain to withdraw its troops from the Province:

I don't think we should do anything to suggest the United States can solve this problem. It's unrealistic, and suggestions that if we 'acted vigorously and in a diplomatic way' that we could solve it, are outrageous.

Rogers' successor, Henry Kissinger, was equally forthright. According to a number of authoritative sources, in 1975 he rejected a US role with the statement that 'Northern Ireland was not a fruitful area for US diplomatic energies'. In sum the views of two successive Secretaries of State confirmed the claim made by Dr Bernard Lee, executive assistant to Dr David Abernathy, President of the black civil...
rights organisation, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, that during their meeting in Bermuda in December 1971, President Nixon had in fact discussed the situation in Northern Ireland with Prime Minister Heath (as Kennedy and others had urged him to), but that the result had been an assurance by the latter of US Government silence on it (and Rhodesia). 194

The nearest the US Government came to departing from this unaccustomed 'hands off/no comment' policy was during the 1972 hearings when Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Martin J. Hillenbrand, faced with the need to comment on internment, took refuge in what he chose to call 'fairly measured words':

I intend to offer no defense of internment, either as principle or as a policy. But I do not believe that we should make declarations which in effect substitute our judgment for that of other democratic countries as to whether they do or do not face conditions of civil conflict which cannot be controlled by ordinary judicial processes. I know that we would accept no advice from them in similar circumstances. 195

It required little imagination, therefore, to account for the criticism of Kennedy (and others), or for the fact that Rogers, in his meeting with Hillery, recorded only Nixon's 'deep personal concern' for the Northern Ireland situation following Bloody Sunday. 196 Or, for the matter of that, for the State Department's balancing act following the prorogation of the Northern Ireland Parliament — which took the following form. Initially a statement was issued by spokesman Charles W. Bray that:

It would be inappropriate for this government to comment. This whole matter is one in which we have attempted not to inject ourselves unnecessarily and certainly not publicly. 197

195 Northern Ireland: 1972 Hearings, p. 166. Hillenbrand's description of the above as 'fairly measured words' is found on p. 178.
196 ibid., p. 164; the description is taken from Hillenbrand's statement.
Then subsequently, it was accorded a more platitudinous reception, but the non-involvement disclaimer was maintained:

We hope that as a result of the action announced by the British Government and the attitude expressed yesterday by the Government of Ireland an opportunity will be created for all those involved in the Northern Ireland problem to now proceed in the spirit of compromise to secure peace with justice.

We express this hope on behalf of the United States, which is not itself involved in the problem but which has many close links to both Ireland and Great Britain.¹⁹⁸

Notwithstanding this evidence, it might still be inferred from the use of wording, such as 'unnecessarily and certainly not publicly' in the first (Bray's) statement, and the similar disclaimer in the second, that the US was 'protesting overmuch' and its influence had been brought to bear. Furthermore this would be consistent with the view expressed by one senior member of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs — that prorogation was brought about sooner rather than later as a result of friendly pressure (origin unspecified) being applied to the British Government.¹⁹⁹ But in turn, 'friendly pressure' is also open to numerous interpretations, and that leaves to one side the increasing realisation in Whitehall during late 1971 – early 1972 that Westminster would probably have to assume a more direct role in Northern Ireland. Thus, without a more substantial body of evidence to draw upon, the question of 'American influence' in prorogation must remain open. And even then there will probably be little which would overturn the conclusion that the foremost obstacle to US intervention in Northern Ireland was its own internal resistance.

There was another reason which strongly complemented this state of affairs, but was seldom, if ever, directly alluded to by any of the US Government's spokesmen. But this may have been because it was so obvious as to not require mentioning — the special nature of Anglo-American relations. They were, and remain, of transcending importance to

¹⁹⁹ Interview, Department of Foreign Affairs, 1978.
the West; to them the Ulster Question was but an irritant. Conscientious efforts were therefore made to ensure that, at worse, it would become nothing else.

Two events in the week following Bloody Sunday and involving the British Ambassador, Lord Cromer, demonstrated the extent to which the conventions of this relationship were so well established. In the course of a television interview in Washington the following exchange took place:

Interviewer: I'd like to ask you at least one question about the incident last Sunday which heightened the present crisis. Those troops in Londonderry said that they were firing chiefly at people who were firing at them. But isn't the arithmetic of thirteen civilians killed and no soldiers killed circumstantial evidence against that position?

The Right Honourable the Earl of Cromer: Well, as you know, this most unfortunate affair is subject to a judicial inquiry so that I can't get too deeply involved in the detail of it. But I don't think that there's substance in what you say because the number of firings that were made on the troops greatly exceeded the returned fire by the troops. And of the people that were unfortunately killed, one man had nail bombs on him and four others were wanted for some other affairs.

And the troops certainly didn't lead in firing until they were attacked. [emphasis added].200

Within days of the above he was also reported as going so far as to say that the Roman Catholics of Northern Ireland could leave if they did not like it there.201

In both statements he took liberties: in the first with the presumption, later found to be unjustified, that the substance of his claim would be confirmed by the evidence to be presented at the (Widgery) tribunal of inquiry, and by implying that it was somehow permissible to shoot unarmed civilians who were 'wanted for some other affairs'; and in


201 Times, 11 February 1972.
the second with the sensitivities of the Northern Catholics. Furthermore, to the extent that Lord Cromer was responsible for informing the US Government of developments in Northern Ireland and of explaining British policy there, both of the above made a joke of Prime Minister Heath's statement that President Nixon did not have the 'misunderstanding' of the situation which was notable in some other American leaders. 202 But, in the absence of any indication to the contrary, it was perhaps more to the point that both statements passed without comment by the Administration, such was the indulgence enjoyed by the British Government within the US.

For its part the British Government maintained the convention that Northern Ireland was not a subject for polite Anglo-American conversation until its preoccupation with security matters — in particular the discovery of arms and ammunition of US origin in the North — made such restraint untenable. Then, and only then, according to information received from the State Department, did the troubles intrude into Anglo-American relations. 203 Using Jones's account of the introduction of weapons of US origin, this would locate the above development in 1970, 204 yet the record of public statements by British Ministers indicates a much later emergence of the issue: 1975.

The explanation for this 'discrepancy' appears quite straightforward. In the intervening period, measures were taken by the US Government against various Provisionals and their sympathisers, but in accordance with the prevailing Anglo-American understanding on Northern Ireland. These are considered later in this chapter. But also in this period, or at least from late 1971-75, the British Government had overall responsibility for the operation of internment, a policy which ensured the US support network of a steady supply of funds for the 'families' of those in prison camps. 205 It would seem that with the strength of this appeal diminished by the formal end to internment in

202 Irish Times, 28 February 1972.
203 Department of State Interview, 1979.
204 Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry in Northern Ireland', p. 17.
205 Clark, Irish Blood, p. 71.
1975, the British Government felt less inhibited in its attempts to counter the effectiveness of the Provisional support network in the US. In the process it succumbed to an excess of vigour, of which the claims made regarding US arms were an example, and became involved in a brief but inconsequential exchange of differences with a US Government agency (previously discussed: pp. 403-06). Otherwise was unlikely to have occurred. And it has not since.

In view of the advantages enjoyed by the British Government in its American dealings it was only natural that the Irish Government, given its adversary relationship to the former on many Northern Ireland issues, should have fared rather poorly. 'Poorly', that is, if it can be ascertained just exactly what it was that Dublin was attempting in its relations with Washington, particularly during the period of the 1969-73 Fianna Fáil Government.

Certainly, one theme was constant throughout the years which are considered in this chapter: anti 'aid'. However, because it was not illegal for American citizens in the United States to support the Provisionals — or any other foreign liberation/terrorist movement for the matter of that — nor was it likely that this would change, Dublin representations became essentially an appeal by the government of one country to a small minority of the people in another. And for the most part it was an unrewarding labour, akin, to borrow from Anthony Cronin, to 'peddling visions to the blind and shouting slogans to the deaf'.

But it was on the government-to-government level that matters were decidedly clouded, as was instanced by the transactions following Bloody Sunday. Until then, there was no evidence that Dublin had attempted to interest Washington in an active role, however defined, \textit{visa-à-vis}

\footnote{ibid.}

\footnote{Another was Wilson's exhortation to American correspondents to 'strip away the romantic legends' attached to the IRA. As he told them 'the men of the [current] IRA are to the men of the Easter Rising what Al Capone was to Garibaldi' (London Press Service, Verbatim Service, 243/75, 17 December 1975, 'IRA Fund Raising', an extract from a speech by the Prime Minister to the Association of American Correspondents, Savoy Hotel, London, 17 December 1975).}

\footnote{Shannon Interview.}
Northern Ireland. Immediately after that date, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Patrick Hillery, appeared to promote a change in this policy, but in his various explanations of this he also appeared to take a lead from, and refuge in, the verbal obfuscation more commonly found in the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch.

On 2 February 1972, Hillery stated that, because it was unlikely to be effective, he did not want the United States to take up a public stand on Northern Ireland, but instead hoped that it would make its concern felt privately.209 On the following day, however, Secretary of State Rogers, announced that neither Hillery (nor Lord Cromer) had 'any particular request' to make at that time of the Administration.210

A short time later a similar conflict of views on what the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs had conveyed to the US Government was evident. In the course of Assistant Secretary of State Hillenbrand's statement to the House Subcommittee on Europe's hearings on Northern Ireland — substantially a reaffirmation of Rogers' earlier statement — he was challenged by Congressman Morgan F. Murphy of Illinois, who cited Hillery as having told a joint (House and Senate) meeting of Congress that:

... he did request that the White House and State Department talk to the British, and further stated that he welcomed the action in Congress, specifically the Foreign Affairs Committee, on the resolutions pending before it for a full discussion of what was taking place in Northern Ireland.211

In reply Hillenbrand exercised considerable diplomatic caution, but he nevertheless raised the possibility that what Hillery had told the Senate and what he had told the State Department were two different things. As regards intervention:

209 *Times*, 3 February 1972.
I think it is fair to say that what I have indicated in my records reflects what we understood him to be telling us. Now, it is true he made a speech up in New York before he came down here, which went considerably further in its implications than some of the things he said subsequently.

But our understanding was that intervention in the sense that we would actively try to influence the situation was not on his mind when he talked to us ...

I do not know what he told you down here or what he told the Senate, but I think this represents what we think he was asking us to do or what he was not asking us to do.212 [emphasis added]

And on the matter of the Kennedy-Ribicoff and Carey resolutions then before Congress, Hillenbrand devoted considerable time to explaining that the Administration's opposition to them was essentially derived from recent statements by the Taoiseach which clearly signified the Irish Government's opposition to them.213

But Hillery persisted, and on the point of intervention anyway, it was difficult to reconcile the State Department's account with the reply he gave in Dáil Éireann to a question by Dr O'Connell as to what had actually been sought in Washington.

What we asked was not to intervene in a hostile way but as a friendly nation to Britain to encourage Britain and to ask Britain to change from a military policy. Not using the word 'intervention' might give the impression we did not ask for action by the US. We certainly did.214 [emphasis added].

Unfortunately for the resolution of this controversy, the above explanation was bracketed by two exchanges which vividly illustrated the limits to which truth may be elucidated from parliamentary debates if the responsible minister is of a mind to be disingenuous and the Ceann Comhairle (Chairman) is disposed to facilitate him. In the first instance:

213 ibid., pp. 165-7, 177-8 and 182. The statements in question were taken from Jack Lynch's speech of 19 February 1980 to the Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis in Dublin.
Dr. O'Connell: I have here a transcript of a statement made by the US Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. He said that the Minister told the US Secretary, Mr. Rodgers [sic], that he was not requesting US intervention in the Northern Ireland situation. Is that correct?

Dr. Hillery: It is quite clear that we asked the US Government and other Governments to speak to Britain and to encourage Britain to seek a political rather than a military solution in the North.

Dr. O'Connell: This document states that the Minister did not —

An Ceann Comhairle: We cannot have an argument on this.215

And in the second:

Dr. O'Connell: In view of the unsatisfactory nature of the reply, I give notice that I intend to raise this matter on the Adjournment.

Dr. Hillery: My reply will be as unsatisfactory on the Adjournment.

Dr. O'Connell: I have some more supplementaries.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy may not have more supplementaries. He will not monopolise Question Time.

Dr. O'Connell: I had seven questions —

An Ceann Comhairle: That does not permit the Deputy to monopolise Question Time.216

Nor were attempts made some years later any more fruitful.217

The inference to be drawn, then, was that either Hillery or the US Government's representatives were misleading their respective audiences. (The possibility that each misunderstood the import of the other's position is discounted since the reaffirmation and terms of their respective statements appear to preclude it). On balance, the available evidence suggests that the former was the more likely — for two reasons.

215 ibid., col. 967.
216 ibid., col. 969.
217 A request by the writer, in 1979, for an interview with (then) President Hillery for the purpose of obtaining further information on the period of his Ministry was declined on the grounds that the protocol of the Office of President precluded him 'from engaging in such discussions'. (Letter from M. o'hO'drain, Secretary to the President, to the writer, 11 July 1979).
First, given the consistency and priorities of the US Government, it seemingly had nothing to gain by an admission that it had declined to intervene in a dispute between two nations with which it had friendly relations. Conversely, it is difficult to find a motive which would have determined it to deny that diplomatic overtures, however quiet, had been made to the British Government. And second, if the statements made by the Taoiseach in Dublin were an accurate account of his Government's policy throughout, and not a reconsideration once the immediate sense of outrage had passed, then the substance of Hillery's representations in the US and elsewhere could not have included attempts to internationalise the situation in the North. Of course this does not exclude the rather obvious possibilities that in the prevailing crisis atmosphere, he might have sought to do so irrespective of instructions from Dublin, or even that he was despatched without a specific brief. By all accounts, therefore, the perspective made most attractive by the evidence is that which saw the Minister's odyssey as, to precis Dr O'Donovan in the Dail, essentially an 'ill-prepared traiipse around the world.'

No similar recourse was made again. There was, however, no event of the magnitude of Bloody Sunday to warrant it anyway. The most ambitious objective in Irish-American relations in the four years following Bloody Sunday appears to have been Lynch's hope, reported in January 1973, that Nixon would use his influence with the British Government to ensure that Whitehall's forthcoming proposals for the province would incorporate a positive 'Irish dimension'. To date no evidence has come to light which would allow attribution of this development, in any meaningful sense, to US agency.

In the circumstances of Anglo-American and Irish-American relations considered in the foregoing, the impression could be gained that the US Government opted to do almost nothing in relation to Northern Ireland. Despite the fact that no legal impediment was introduced to fund-raising

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by American citizens within the United States, even if it was for 'terrorist' purposes, there was, as the previously mentioned arms suits indicate, an identifiable US Government response. This was born of reducing British and Irish preoccupations with security to a common, anti-terrorist denominator. ('Preoccupations' is preferred to 'requests' because the former required no great skill to perceive and because evidence on the latter is lacking).

However, in the following analysis it is important to be aware of one of the conventions of Anglo-American relations: representations to Washington with respect to security measures that might be taken regarding Northern Ireland are denied by London as a matter of practice. Furthermore it has not been possible to differentiate between measures which may have been taken as a result of British and/or Irish representations and those which the US Government would have taken in the normal course of events.

An impressive range of sanctions was marshalled against those who supported the Provisional cause. According to Clark, who tended to view the Irish-American support network as harassed, the record shows that five federal agencies or departments were used at various times. Reference to other sources increased this to six: the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Immigration and Naturalization Service, Internal Revenue Service, Department of Justice, Department of the Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the US Customs Bureau. In support of the counter-measures they mounted, heavy reliance was placed upon the following pieces of legislation: the Federal Gun Control Act of 1968, Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, Omnibus Crime Control Act of 1970, and the US Immigration and Nationality Acts. Thus empowered the US Government has sought to act in three major areas which may be summarised as prevention, control, and prosecution.


222 The Department of Justice (Embassy of Ireland Briefing, 17 April 1975).
The first of these, prevention, took the form of cancelling or withholding entry visas from Provisional sympathisers intending to visit the US for the purpose of publicity and fund-raising. Among those to be so treated were Joe Cahill, Maire Drumm, Sean Keenan, Seamus Loughran, and Ruairi O Bradaigh. In the case of some, however, this was a belated move. Both Loughran (1975) and O Bradaigh (1972 and 1973) had previously visited the United States despite the Immigration and Nationality Acts which excluded aliens 'connected with organisations which advocate the killing of government agents or the unlawful destruction of property', and other legal provisions that barred visas to those seeking to overthrow a Government recognised by the United States.

On one occasion these criteria were held to be sufficient to refuse entry to four delegates who had been associated with the IRA to a conference on Irish affairs. On another they appeared to provide the basis for denying entrance to the US to Joe Cahill, and it was perhaps this instance which best illustrated the political mechanics of American counter measures. On 2 September 1971, Cahill, with a valid visa, landed in New York on an Aer Lingus flight but was met off the aircraft by police and detained. His visa was revoked — according to his lawyer this...

223 Guardian, 2 September 1971, and as reported in the Daily Telegraph, 29 April 1975. For brief background on Cahill see note 23 this chapter.

224 As reported in the Daily Telegraph, 29 April 1975. (Maire Drumm was then, April 1975, Vice-President of Provisional Sinn Fein; since murdered).

225 ibid., (Keenan was a leading Londonderry Provisional with a long IRA record).

226 ibid., and Daily Telegraph, 5 March 1975. These appear to represent two separate occasions on which Loughran, an organiser for Provisional Sinn Fein in Ulster, was unsuccessful in his attempts to travel to the United States.

227 ibid., see note 33 this chapter for brief background.

228 This latter criterion was attributed to an official of the State Department (New York Times, 23 August 1975).

229 ibid.
had been effected while he was in midair — and he remained under guard at an immigration office until his return to Dublin a week later.

According to a State Department official, Cahill had been seized on 'information made available by the British Government'. This confirmed an earlier report of a dossier on Cahill having been passed from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) via the British Embassy in Washington, to the State Department, and which also carried his pre-departure statement that his Provisionals intended to shoot as many British soldiers as possible and would continue the bombing of military and economic targets. An FCO spokesman was quoted as saying 'It was left up to them [US authorities] to take a decision.' Obviously they did. It was therefore surprising that the FCO having admitted that it instructed the British Embassy to act in the way described, should then issue a strenuous denial of any suggestion that Cahill was barred on the advice of the British Government.

In the second major area of US Government activity, control, NORAID was the primary focus of attention. Under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 (administered by the Department of Justice), NORAID was required, as the agent of a foreign principal, to furnish from 21 January 1971 and at six-monthly intervals thereafter, returns of its financial activities. With the advent of an inquiry in Texas into gun-running by five Irish-born residents of the New York area, NORAID once again became the subject of a Federal investigation when it was forced, as a result of a move intiated in July 1972, to open its books for examination by the FBI. Although this action revealed that NORAID

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230 Clark, Irish Blood, p. 64.
233 ibid.
234 Daily Telegraph, 4 September 1971.
235 US Department of Justice, NORAID files.
was keeping a 'reasonably accurate' record of their transactions, the suspicion remained in Justice Department circles that it was an organisation run by people who 'just can't treat straight with any government', and, accordingly, a watching brief was maintained.

But it was in the third area of US Government activity — that of prosecution — that the support network was subject to the greatest pressure. The first cases came before the courts in mid 1972, and 1973 some twenty convictions of persons with 'Republican connections' had been obtained from the numerous gun-running suits brought in the intervening period. To some commentators this was typical of a Nixonian zeal for 'ferreting out subversives' but the evidence in support of their claim was neither substantial nor conclusive.

To a considerable extent it rested upon a notorious case, begun in June 1972 — that of the 'Fort Worth Five' — which became a cause célèbre both in Irish-American and US civil rights circles. From the viewpoint of the former, it derived its prominence from the issue of the supply of arms and ammunitions to the IRA; from the latter, both the constitutional and civil rights questions it gave rise to by the defendants' pleading the Fifth Amendment (in refusing to testify), and the fact that they were New Yorkers who had been summoned to appear before a Grand Jury in far-off Texas which was investigating the purchase of weapons in Texas and Mexico to be smuggled to the IRA.

Two of the men, Daniel Crawford and Matthias Reilly, were British citizens — Catholics from Northern Ireland. The others, Kenneth Tierney, Thomas Laffey and Paschal Morohan, were naturalised Americans. All five claimed to be mystified by the summons since, reportedly, they

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237 Department of Justice Interview, 1979.
239 e.g. Clark, Irish Blood, pp. 63-7.
240 Guardian, 26 June 1972.
had never been to Texas before, though all were supporters of the IRA cause.\textsuperscript{242} They were promised immunity from future prosecution if they answered questions of the Grand Jury, meeting in secret. They declined, however, on the grounds that this immunity would not protect them from being extradited by the British Government and charged in the UK, if the proceedings should be 'leaked'.\textsuperscript{243} They were also suspicious that the US Department of Justice was in reality acting against them on information received from London — a charge which was also made on several occasions by Senator Edward Kennedy.\textsuperscript{244}

The Five's suspicions on this point were strengthened by the case of James O'Gara, who, in February 1972, had been indicted on charges of conspiring to export arms to Ireland. Seven alleged co-conspirators — including Crawford, Reilly and Morohan — were named in company with O'Gara but charges against all seven were dismissed. Nevertheless, two of them, James Lagan and Frank Henry, both stewards on the Cunard liner QE II, were arrested by British authorities when they reached Britain and charged with arms offences.\textsuperscript{245} Among the Grand Jury questions which the Fort Worth Five refused to answer were several concerning O'Gara, who was then awaiting sentence.\textsuperscript{246}

At the end of 1972 the Five were released on bail pending an appeal against their imprisonment to the Supreme Court. In January 1973, this body decided that it would not rule on the case and they were promptly returned to jail.\textsuperscript{247} There then followed new appeals on different grounds through various Federal Courts with the case once more returning to the Supreme Court, but all were in vain.\textsuperscript{248}

\textsuperscript{242} New York Times, 17 July 1972; and Times, 1 August 1972.
\textsuperscript{243} Times, 1 August 1972.
\textsuperscript{244} Daily Telegraph, 3 August 1972; and New York Times, 4 August 1972.
\textsuperscript{245} Observer Foreign News Service, 7 August 1973, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{246} Times, 1 August 1972.
\textsuperscript{248} Observer Foreign News Service, 7 August 1973, p. 2.
Although Department of Justice officials maintained that the Fort Worth case was an on-going investigation, by August 1973 (i.e. 10 months after the Grand Jury first sat), not one witness had been called. The prospect therefore remained that, if at the end of that Grand Jury's eighteen-month life the Five again refused to testify before its successor, they could be kept in prison indefinitely. In the event, their silence was maintained, and although they remained accused of contempt of court, they were once again released. In all it was by far the most striking example of the pressure which was available to the Federal Government, but because it was a case in isolation it is difficult now to see it as part of a pattern of systematic harassment on the part of the authorities. Similar cases simply did not occur.

This may have been a consequence of the controversy which the Fort Worth Five attracted. Kennedy's denunciations, based on principles of civil rights and legal justice, were sustained and trenchant, as were those of a number of lesser-known federal politicians. His and their concern came to be expressed institutionally, in the form of a Congressional sub-committee, established in March 1973, in response to a resolution by Congressman Bella Azbug, which questioned whether the aims of the Department of Justice could have been satisfied by a Grand Jury investigation closer to the homes of those summoned.

Furthermore, support for the Five was extended not just from the political arena, which may have been predictable given the issues and the burgeoning scandal of Watergate: it came, albeit briefly, from liberal American circles in general, ethnic communities such as the Jews, who had previously shown no interest in the issues of Northern Ireland, and organisations such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights.

249 ibid.
253 Clark, Irish Blood, p. 65.
Notwithstanding these developments, the basic questions of whether the Fort Worth case was to be explained in terms of a British request or Nixon's anti-subversive zealotry, remained unanswered. At the sub-committee hearings both suggestions were aired, but then they, particularly the former, had been current in the media throughout the duration of the Grand Jury inquiry. Moreover, Clark's suggestion that the inquiry and other counter-measures grew out of the Heath-Nixon meeting in Bermuda in December 1971 must be viewed with caution: if it was so conceived the questions remain as to why it took Nixon's Administration six months to act and why he should choose to do so in the lead-up to a Presidential election in which the opposition had pronounced 'Irish' sympathies. And this begs the question of whether Heath, who was at that time not particularly active on Northern Ireland, and Nixon, whose specific purpose in Bermuda was to explain and co-ordinate the evolution of new developments in American foreign policy, especially with regard to China, could have been expected to give other than the briefest attention to Northern Ireland.

Insofar as Nixon's alleged animus towards the support network was concerned, this, too, is dependent on material which, if it exists, has yet to be released. But, from the vantage point of 1980, how credible is the suggestion that Nixon, increasingly beleagured on the domestic front, and well-occupied internationally with the run-down of the war in Indo-China, was so concerned with the troubles of Ulster that he would issue more than a directive that the relevant government agencies were to take a stronger enforcement role with regard to the support network's possible breaches of the law? In this regard it was significant that NORAID was compelled to begin filing its financial records with the Department of Justice some five months before the Bermuda meeting.

And finally, it is not possible that the treatment accorded to the support network resembled harassment principally because, unlike various other movements and regimes of questionable legitimacy and equally questionable aims, the IRA was not regarded as a 'favoured faction' in Washington and so its sympathisers perceived themselves as persecuted?

254 ibid., p. 63.
This theme, essentially derived from a sense of government inconsistency, was elaborated upon by Clark with respect to NORAID and its auxiliaries. But was not peculiar to him. Indeed, it might be recalled that it was a major premise of Kennedy's earlier argument for US intervention.

Nevertheless, it must be allowed that the British (like the Irish) Government was in accord with the general tone of the US Government's response between 1972 and 1975. Moreover, it seems not unreasonable to presume that the unseen hand of British diplomacy was responsible in substantial measure for guiding its probes. From this it is but a short step to the obvious conclusion that Washington did at times act in a way which it may not have done without London's prompting.

This, however, should not obscure the nature of the Ulster Question in Anglo-American relations, nor, in the wider frame, the extent of what is here termed the 'American Dimension'. As an issue between the Governments of Britain, Ireland and the United States the Ulster Question was of no great moment, despite the fact that it was, and remains, of great significance for Ireland and, to a lesser extent, Britain. Furthermore, from the analysis of the conditions which attended their relationships, it was clear that this situation was dependent almost exclusively

255 ibid., pp. 64-5.

256 An attempt to inquire further into this matter using official US documents relating to the Fort Worth Five and another group (The Baltimore Four) came to nothing — as indicated by the following excerpt from a letter to the writer from the Assistant to the Director (Disclosure), Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, dated 12 December 1979:

The records concerning the 'Fort Worth Five', and 'Baltimore Four' constitute a request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Our records have been reviewed; however, the material is being withheld because of the following exemptions pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 5 U.S.C. 552: 1) disclosure would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal property (b) (7) (C); 2) the material would disclose the identity of a confidential source (b) (7) (D); and 3) the records contain surveillance and investigative documents which would interfere with enforcement proceedings (b) (7) (E).

In addition, the records contain information outside the scope of your request and records from other agencies which we are not at liberty to disclose.
on the attitude of Washington: with the Administration there uninterested, only the interest of British Government, with its perennial claim that Northern Ireland is a domestic matter, was served. With Washington interested, the possibility at least, existed for the province to loom larger in the trans-Atlantic diplomatic traffic.

But this possibility was remote. It required, as a prerequisite, a groundswell of domestic opinion urging US intervention. Instead, all that emerged was a support network — small and isolated, within the country in general and the Irish-American community in particular — and an outspoken but relatively powerless domestic political voice. Neither proved able to influence the US Government (or the situation in Northern Ireland) in other than a negative way. Both highlighted the essentially transnational character of the American Dimension, with the former being by far the more important. Yet, and here was an irony of the situation, the deeds of the support network achieved this status only because of the correlation between the smallness of the conflict in Northern Ireland and the smallness of the aid it was able to donate. Had the conflict been on a truly large international scale, or had the support network claimed the active sympathy of the majority of Irish-Americans, the equations of Anglo-American and Irish-American relations must have been inapplicable.

Because these conditions did not arise, the scope allowed to each grouping of actors was just enough to bring into play the 'crusaders, criminals and crazies' which, it is submitted, colour so much of the period between 1968 and early 1976. In all, it was a baleful reflection upon those who, in the 1916 Declaration of Independence, were honoured for past generosity and looked towards with hope, as Ireland's 'exiled children of America'.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE AMERICAN DIMENSION

PART II : BENEVOLENT BYSTANDERS
MARCH 1976 – NOVEMBER 1980
Just before the Democratic Primary in New York in 1976, a presidential hopeful by the name of Jimmy Carter marched in that city's St Patrick's Day parade with a button on his lapel reading 'Get Britain Out of Ireland' (or words to that effect).\(^1\) Seven months later, as the Democratic candidate, he appeared before members of the Irish National Caucus at the Hilton Hotel in Pittsburgh, and told them that his party was committed to 'encouraging a formation of a uniting Ireland'.\(^2\) He also told them 'I do not disavow my own Irish heritage' and that it was a mistake for the US Government 'to stand idle' on the question of Ireland.\(^3\) And finally, in a reflection of one of his major concerns Carter announced that he had just met with Cardinal Cook in New York and discussed the need to establish a Commission on International Peace 'to pursue the concept of our country's standing firm for human rights'.\(^4\)

Despite the fact that he beat a somewhat undignified retreat from these positions in so far as they concerned Ireland the sequence of events was hardly an auspicious omen for a twelve-month period in 1976-77, punctuated by the celebrations of two St Patrick's Days, which was to be a watershed as far as the American Dimension was concerned. The man who was to become the thirty-ninth President of the United States had not only risked giving encouragement to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) by his election gambits, but may even have lent it respectability by his appearance with an organisation that was founded to further its aims via American political channels. Carter thus raised doubts and apprehensions at all levels in Belfast, Dublin and London as to what his intentions


\(^2\) According to the Guardian, 29 October 1976, he used the expression 'united Ireland'; however, Sean Cronin, in an article in the Irish Times of this period, for which the writer has no specific date, entitled 'Election Diary: What Carter Said That Day In Pittsburg', claimed that a close examination of the tapes he recorded revealed that Carter said 'uniting'. In view of Cronin's close and sustained interest in such matters his account has been preferred.

\(^3\) ibid.

\(^4\) ibid.
might be in office, and above all, his sense of responsibility. Nevertheless, the following year gave rise to developments which were to dull these feelings, and the period thereafter saw an initiative by Carter which probably dissipated them.

In order to understand this transformation, it is necessary to consider, first, the standing and effectiveness of the Northern Ireland support network in the US after early 1976. In so far as the supply of arms was concerned, the record confirms the optimistic assessment given in 1977 by the US Ambassador to the Court of St James, Kingman Brewster, that it was on the wane. An IRA claim, inspired it seems by low-grade science fiction, that it had shot down a British Army Air Corps Caselle helicopter using a US-made M-60 machine gun firing 'specially developed magnetic bullets' was almost certainly a fabrication. About the only shred of truth in it was that the IRA was in possession of a small number of belt-fed M-60s, which it is now generally believed, were stolen from a National Guard armoury in Danvers, Massachusetts. Exactly who stole them and how they were obtained is not clear. In any case, the possession of this weapon, a somewhat cumbersome one for the urban type of operations the IRA conducts, and the acquisition of useful field aids, such as stolen US Army electronic binoculars, should not obscure the fact that, by September 1979, American-made arms comprised only twenty-three per cent of arms recovered by the security forces in Northern Ireland — down from approximately thirty per cent in 1975.

Financial support, as reflected in the bi-annual returns of the Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAIM), and set out in the following table, was also diminished. The figures cited, however, are subject to the same

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8 Irish Times, 21 September 1978.
10 i.e. approximately 2,300 of 10,000 weapons were said to be of US manufacture (International Herald Tribune, 25 September 1979, p.3. See also Chapter 10, pp. 403-06).
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Minimum Six year total $829,781 $203,788 $1,173,089 $56,942

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Four Year Total 696,325 131,648 502,518 80,049

Minimum Ten Year Total 1,526,106 335,436 1,675,607 136,991

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11 Irish Northern Aid Committee, Registration No. 2239, two public files designated Section I and Section II respectively, held by the US Department of Justice at the Federal Triangle Building, 315 9th Street, Washington, D.C., (hereafter cited as US Department of Justice, NORAID files). The figures for 31 July 1979 and 31 January 1980 were supplied by letter from Brian K. Ahearn, Attorney, Registration Unit, Internal Security Section, Criminal Division, US Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 5 September 1980.
qualifications and reservations which were made in respect of NORAIM's returns in the preceding chapter.

In general, the levels of both income and disbursement had fallen away from those of pre-1976. The only exception was that recorded in the 31 January 1980 return: this showed a massive swing back and was widely attributed to the criminally perverse power of 'blood-in-the-streets' ('spectaculars'), in particular the murder of Lord Mountbatten and the killing of eighteen British soldiers at Warrenpoint, Co. Down, in the preceding August, to loosen the purse strings of Irish-Americans sympathetic to the Provisional cause.\(^\text{12}\)

In other respects, too, it was apparent that the support network was faced with a lack of interest. In September 1978, Teddy Gleason, a Vice-President of the Irish National Caucus, and President of the International Longshoremen's Association, called for a world-wide boycott of British goods in support of demands being made by four relatives of Irish prisoners in Long Kesh (Her Majesty's Prison, The Maze).\(^\text{13}\) Despite the fact that Gleason expected full support for the measure from the Executive of the American Federation of Labor — Congress of Industrial Organisations, seven of whom were first generation Irish-Americans, British commerce was not endangered. This should not have been a surprise to anyone, least of all to Gleason: he had, it will be recalled, disavowed boycotts in 1975 as being unlikely to either save lives in Ulster or bring the sides to the bargaining table (see Chapter 10, pp. 408).

Furthermore, when American intervention from those associated with the network became more direct, lack of interest at home was replaced by hostility in Northern Ireland. Thus in 1978, the Deputy Leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), John Hume, denounced the Ancient Order of Hibernians for their crude attempts to sabotage US investment initiatives. According to him, there was evidence that the latter, under the sway of some of its leadership who sympathised with the

\(^{12}\) Interview (in 1979) with former member of Embassy of Ireland, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited in this chapter as Interview).

\(^{13}\) *Irish Times*, 28 September 1978.
IRA, had resorted to suggesting that, in general, there should be no American investment in the North as this would result mainly in Protestant employment, and that one US company in particular should be 'concerned about the possible safety of its plant'. As Hume was quick to observe, the notion that a lack of investment would somehow contribute to political change was not only 'misguided', but also difficult to reconcile with the Hibernians' recent resolution at a conference in Killarney which purported to offer friendship to Protestants.14

Overall, the situation in the US could be attributed to five factors although their relative weight may be difficult to ascertain. The first and most obvious of these was political developments, or rather their lack, in Northern Ireland. The Ulster Workers Council Strike in 1974 gave birth to a political stalemate which effectively remains to this day. Furthermore it was followed by a decrease in the level of violence (as compared with the early 1970s). In combination they served to deprive the support network of what Clark termed 'the energizing effect [of] constant headlines'.15

The second, also a Northern Ireland factor, compounded the effect noted above. This was the erosion of support by conservative Irish-Americans as a consequence of their increasing awareness of the IRA's socialist orientation — evidenced by its assassination campaign against Northern businessmen.16 The third and fourth were internal circumstances. Weariness from years of activity had so sapped the movement that much of it, even before 1976, was pervaded by apathy.17 And it now appears that, by 1979 at the latest, a breach had developed between NORAID and the Irish National Caucus as a result of personality clashes and a conflict over which group was to provide the leadership for Irish-American

14 Irish Times, 3 July 1978.
17 Clark, Irish Blood, p. 69.
supporters of the Provisionals.\textsuperscript{18}

Fifth, the network and those associated with it were out of touch with the prevailing mood which, from March 1976, and in both Northern Ireland and the US, embodied a firm rejection of violence, and hence of the Provisionals. In the former it rose from the courageous stand taken by the Peace People and the promise and inspiration they provided across the sectarian divide.\textsuperscript{19} To many around the world, accustomed to being informed only of the carnage which was sweeping Northern Ireland, they were the best hope for a solution that had emerged in eight years of conflict.

But in the US the mood had begun to change even before the Peace People mounted their first campaign in August 1976. At the highest level it found expression on St Patrick’s Day 1976, in the joint communique which was issued following discussions in Washington between Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave and President Gerald Ford. For the first time, such a document contained a condemnation of violence and an appeal to the American and Irish People to refrain from supporting it in any way.\textsuperscript{20} It was an announcement which, despite the fact that Ford, a Republican, had only some ten months remaining to serve, signalled the advent both of an American Government more interested in Northern Ireland, and of a more responsible American public attitude towards the troubles it contained. This did not mean that the support network was cowed in the

\textsuperscript{18} *International Herald Tribune*, 8-9 September 1979, p. 1; and Interview (in 1979) at Consulate-General for Ireland, New York.

\textsuperscript{19} An organisation, composed mainly of women founded in 1976 and generally associated in the public eye with the work of Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan, who introduced a note of hope, based on Christian love and tolerance, into the otherwise violent atmosphere of Northern Ireland. In 1977, Corrigan and Williams were recognised by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for the preceding year. It should be noted, however, that the Movement had, by 31 March 1978, received only £900 in donations from the US (\textit{Daily Telegraph}, 24 April 1978). See also Dairy O’Donnell, *The Peace People of Northern Ireland* (Camberwell, Victoria, Australia: Widescope, 1977).

\textsuperscript{20} ’Communique by the President of the United States and Prime Minister of Ireland, following discussions held in Washington, D.C., March 17, 1976’, issued by the Office of the White House Press Secretary, 18 March 1976.
period under review, or that the politicians sympathetic to it were any less vociferous.\textsuperscript{21} However it was clear that a significant transformation which was being wrought in the political party to which most Irish-Americans owed their allegiance, and in particular, to the attitudes of four of its most prominent and powerful leaders.

In view of Carter's statements in 1976 the Democrats had more ground to make up if they were to appear responsibly interested in Northern Ireland. To some it appeared that, with their platform plank, they had missed the mark completely, or at least over-stated US interest.

The voice of the United States should be heard in Northern Ireland against violence and terror, against the discrimination, repression and deprivation which brought about the civil strife, and for the efforts of the parties toward a peaceful resolution of the future of Northern Ireland. Pertinent alliances such as Nato and international organizations such as the United Nations should be fully apprised of the interests of the United States with respect to the status of Ireland in the international community of nations.\textsuperscript{22}

This however, was to be considered in light of both a report that the Democrats were, earlier in 1976, on the point of coming out for a united Ireland but deleted it at the last minute,\textsuperscript{23} and a close reading of the eventual document which revealed that it committed a Democratic Administration to no particular course of action. It appears that this occurred because Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan almost persuaded the party's drafting subcommittee that an expression in favour of Irish unity was not only desirable but necessary. According to the Guardian's Jonathon Steele, it was intended as an incentive to the predominantly

\textsuperscript{21} Nor were a small number only less stupid. One Congressman, Thomas J. O'Donnell, put down an amendment in Washington, that if passed, would have allowed Ireland to become the 51st State in the Union. According to this scheme, Ireland would then be freed of 'the Protestant-Catholic violence that has wracked that country' (Irish Times, 23 September 1978).

\textsuperscript{22} As cited in the Times, 29 October 1976.

\textsuperscript{23} Guardian, 29 October 1976. The Guardian, 15 June 1976, carried a report of the same plank as cited in the foregoing except that after '... future of Northern Ireland' was inserted 'The US should encourage the formation of a United Ireland'. 
northern states' Irish lobby — as represented by Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley — to throw its weight behind southerner Jimmy Carter. It was therefore a declaration without a great deal of meaning beyond the immediate concerns of internal Democratic Party politics.

And this was made explicit at the time. In so far as John Gilligan, secretary of the drafting subcommittee was concerned, the 'United Ireland' plank 'border[ed] on the impossible' and was no more than:

... a ceremonial bow in the direction of a constituency in the party with no real intent to influence foreign policy.24

Additionally, the Democrats' policy should be seen in conjunction with a subsequent report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations by former Presidential hopeful, Senator George S. McGovern (Democrat, South Dakota), based on his July 1977 visit to Ireland.25 Although it took place outside the March 1976 — March 1977 period here under discussion, it is included as a further illustration of the general trend among Democratic leaders. In tenor it was a long way from his April 1972 statement supporting Senator Edward Kennedy's resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of British troops and the eventual unification of Ireland.26

Even a brief historical summary demonstrates that the conflict in Northern Ireland is far older than the 1921 partition of the country and contains far more complexities than can be conveyed by a short description of today's divisions. I emphasize that lest anyone conclude that the United States can simply assess the current situation, apply special diplomatic and managerial skills, and somehow arrive at the miraculous solution that has escaped the British and the Irish themselves ...

26 Daily Telegraph, 27 April 1972.
Perhaps there are ways we can help. But there are dangers, too. From a distance, we may tend to romanticize the struggle, to discount the costs and perils, and to begin with our own conclusions about what the ultimate shape of Ireland should be. Well-meaning people can easily harm those they intend to help. Our first obligation, then, is far more basic — to recognize that the role of the United States and of concerned Americans can only be constructive if it is limited, cautious, and based upon the fullest possible understanding of the nature of the struggle.27

Accordingly, its recommendations reflected these same criteria. They were limited to denying support to any 'extremist or terrorist groups', encouraging the British and Irish Governments in their respective initiatives, having the US assist in the economic reconstruction of Northern Ireland when a new government was established and offering encouragement to the leaders of both communities in their pursuit of a peaceful solution.28 Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that, in this time, a certain caution prevailed over previous counsels which would have been self-defeating in terms of the responses they would undoubtedly have generated in the North.

Any doubt that this was so was dispelled on 17 March 1977 by the collective action of Governor of New York, Hugh Carey; Senator Edward Kennedy, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Speaker Thomas P. ('Tip') O'Neill — known popularly by the appellation they were given in the New York Times, 'The Four Horsemen'. To their stand they brought two essential traits: they were powerful enough in their own right not only to command the attention of Irish-America, but also, it seems, to sway a President. On the day in question they broke the long and unbecoming silence of US political figures about the money that their fellow countrymen were sending to the IRA, and called upon them

... in a spirit of compassion ... to renounce any action that promotes the current violence or provides support or encouragement for organizations engaged in violence.29

28 ibid., pp. 23-4.
29 Text of Joint St Patrick's Day Appeal For Peace In Northern Ireland, supplied by Senator Kennedy's office, Washington, D.C.
Kennedy was later to admit that the condemnation of violence was not an easy thing to do. As he told Mary Holland in 1977:

> There's still considerable support in our community for the traditional line of thinking on Ireland, which is to get the British out.  

For that reason it is tempting to look for ulterior motives or external pressures or influences being brought to bear upon the Four Horsemen by the British or Irish Governments but there was, and remains, no suggestion that this was the case. Although Kennedy's office maintained a practice of almost daily contact with the Embassy of Ireland in Washington, D.C., and the Senator was regarded as being exceptionally well-briefed on Northern Ireland, the Irish Government was not aware that any announcement was pending until its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Garret Fitzgerald, arrived in the US on 16 March.

Notwithstanding this, it would be unjust not to recognise that the joint statement was testimony to John Hume's profound influence upon the attitudes of leading Americans. Indeed, this debt was confirmed by Kennedy, and acknowledged by O'Neill, who, in 1979, spoke on behalf of Hume in his successful campaign for election to the European Parliament.

In the interim the Four Horsemen had undertaken what could best be described as an 'offensive against aid' which, in the months following their original announcement, increased in momentum. In part this was forced upon them by the persistence of the congressional lobby which had formed around Mario Biaggi and sought to counter developments which


31 Interview.

32 Interview with Dr Garret Fitzgerald, former Minister for Foreign Affairs (1973-77) and Leader of Fine Gael, Dublin, 14 February 1978.


34 Interview.
were eroding its self-acclaimed position as the voice of Americans concerned with Ireland. Thus, on the day before Kennedy and the others made their plea, twenty members of the House of Representatives, led on this occasion by Lester Wolff, joined in urging American recognition of human rights in Northern Ireland, and called for Congressional hearings to focus on the situation. There was nothing new in this proposal nor in those who put it forward, but it served to illustrate what was to become a familiar pattern. The Biaggi (and Wolff) lobbyists were not about to cede ground gracefully, or at all if they could prevent it, to the forces which 17 March 1977 had ushered in. The result was that major statements or initiatives by Kennedy and his associates were nearly always accompanied by an alternative or pre-emptive action by Biaggi and his colleagues.

But some of these initiatives by Carey, Kennedy, Moynihan and O'Neill were difficult acts to follow. At the Ireland Fund Dinner in New York on 18 May 1977, the distance that Kennedy had travelled since his Senate Resolution 180 in 1971 was demonstrated most eloquently. In the language of a sermon he addressed his remarks to 'the violence of both sides, Protestant as well as Catholic, UDA [Ulster Defence Association] as well as IRA.' He called on Americans to 'pray for the patience and wisdom and understanding needed to make the [search for peace] effective' and to this end offered his audience the wisdom of Yeats, who understood that it might come by 'slow and painful steps'.

I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow, Dropping from the veils of the morning where the crickets sing.

Kennedy's conciliatory attitude was further to the fore in the following July when he spoke out on behalf of Northern Ireland's Protestants and stressed that Irish-Americans should consider their interests as well as those of the Catholics, with whom they tended to identify almost exclusively.

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36 (United States) Congressional Record, 20 May 1977, p. S8247. The quotation is from The Lake Isle of Innisfree.
In this sensitive period it is important for Irish Americans in the United States to do what we can to reassure the Protestants in Northern Ireland that they have nothing to fear from the Irish American community, and that we are concerned to reach a settlement that respects their basic rights as we are to secure the basic rights of the members of the Catholic community. 37

As a token of his personal commitment in this matter he commissioned the Library of Congress to conduct research into, and publish a small paper on the 'Protestant Irish Heritage in America', the point of which, he claimed, was to 'demonstrate the goodwill of Irish Americans towards the Protestant community in Northern Ireland' by reminding them of what the Protestant Irish contribution had been to the development of the United States. 38

For those with a sense of recent history, Edward Moore Kennedy's endeavours were not without precedent. His attempt to 'build bridges out to the [Protestants]' 39 was, perhaps, 1960 writ small. Then, his brother John went to Houston to tell a meeting of Protestant ministers - and the nation - that they had nothing to fear from a Roman Catholic President. In 1977, Edward was similarly attempting nothing less than a radical re-orientation - but of the Catholic Irish in America and the Protestant Irish in the North. In both, as David Murray observed, the intention was to give a 'decent burial' to the notion that members of a particular ethnic/religious community owed their allegiance to that community above all else. 40 John Kennedy, almost certainly, enjoyed a considerable measure of success whereas the verdict on Edward, who faced what was probably a far more sceptical audience across the Atlantic, has yet to be returned.

Even then it may prove difficult to distinguish from the overall Protestant reaction to the most significant development promoted by an

38 Wellington (N.Z.) Evening Post 18 August 1977; see also Kennedy Interview, Magill, October 1977, p. 7.
39 Kennedy Interview, Magill, October 1977, p. 7.
American Administration in response to the partition of Ireland. This was, of course, what is now known as the Carter Initiative. In time it may come to be seen only as a curiosity, thrown up because of a fortuitous conjunction of circumstances which may have ceased to exist with Jimmy Carter's departure from office, and with him, the President's concern not to unnecessarily antagonise two of the most powerful Democratic politicians in the US. Nevertheless, between August 1977, when it was first announced, and November 1980, when Carter was defeated at the polls, it existed; the only official declaration by a President of the United States of an active interest by his country in Northern Ireland.

The genesis of the Carter Initiative is therefore deserving of attention. Clearly, it was mixed. Many saw in it the President's own concern for human rights throughout the world in general, and Northern Ireland in particular, and by extension, a concern for the eventual settlement of the Ulster Question. Those who favoured this explanation could point to the fact that, long before the initiative was bruited, at a time when Carter was President-elect, the State Department had given ample forewarning of a likely change in the expectations of the US Government. In a little-publicised report to the House of Commons, Stanley Orme, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, disclosed that he had been informed in Washington that, in return for US co-operation in enforcing the law against the Provisional support network at home, the British Government would 'have to be seen' to be basing its policies on 'partnership and co-operation in Northern Ireland'.

There are difficulties, however, in extrapolating from this exchange to the Carter initiative. For one, Carter was not then President nor, therefore, was he in a position to direct a government agency. Furthermore there is no evidence that he acted in a manner consistent with the State Department's warning to Orme, or even that the State Department repeated its warning to the British Government, until the advent of the initiative

in the summer of 1977. On the contrary, the most reliable reports on this development are consistent with one another in attributing the initiative to sources outside the White House.

By far the greatest motivating force seems to have been provided by those whose interests in the issue were either longer established or more sectional (or both) than the President's. Foremost among these was John Hume who, at the time of the St Patrick's Day announcement, met individually with Carey, Kennedy and O'Neill, and suggested a Presidential initiative on Northern Ireland which would involve the US in a statement of support for power-sharing and a promise of massive aid to follow a settlement. All three apparently greeted the proposal with enthusiasm whereupon a meeting was arranged, through O'Neill's agency, with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and his deputy, Mathew Nimetz, on 9 June 1977. At this, two major components were agreed upon: first, a draft was to be drawn up and the British and Irish Governments were to be invited to make their submissions; second, a figure of $US100 million for reconstruction in the North was suggested as an incentive.

Differences were immediately apparent on both, but it was London's response that was the more hostile. It found in the very idea of a Presidential statement an abrogation of previous Anglo-American understandings, and in the draft proposal that a role for the Irish Government be recognised, an infringement of British sovereignty. It also required that whatever statement was issued should include an American endorsement of British policy.

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44 ibid., and Mary Holland, 'Carter, Kennedy and Ireland', *Magill*, vol. 1, No.1, October 1977, p. 3 (hereafter cited as Holland, 'Carter, Kennedy and Ireland', *Magill*, October 1977). Carey was absent from the meeting because his aircraft had to return to New York with a radar problem; Moynihan, however was present.
On the question of US aid for reconstruction, both Dublin and London were at odds with the draft proposals, but for different reasons. The former (and Hume) were wary, in the prevailing circumstances, of the usefulness of what was, in effect, a 'US hand-out'.\(^\text{49}\) (According to Mary Holland, this view was partly determined by the view that the Republic was as deserving a candidate for aid as the North.) It also objected to the mention of a specific sum being promised but leaned towards the notion of investment.\(^\text{50}\)

Britain's reservations had more to do with the implications of agreeing to the aid proposal. Principally, it found the notion of aid from the US objectionable — and the notion of aid with 'strings attached' still more.\(^\text{51}\) And, on the domestic political front, it faced the difficulty of explaining why Northern Ireland would receive such favoured treatment when the economic plight of parts of Scotland and Wales seemed also to justify it.\(^\text{52}\) For these reasons, and because aid could also be presented by Unionist hard-liners as an attempt to bribe the Northern majority into a political compromise, London was in accord with Dublin on the need to encourage investment in Northern Ireland.\(^\text{53}\)

What Holland termed the 'distinctly unpromising' circumstances attending the project were subsequently exacerbated. On 17 June the National Coalition was defeated in the Irish Election, and the State Department, anxious to maintain cordial relations with Britain, was prompted to seek a postponement of proceedings until the views of the new (Fianna Fáil) Government were made known.\(^\text{54}\) Perhaps surprisingly, this situation was then ameliorated by British intervention — in particular by the newly appointed Ambassador to the United States, Peter Jay. To the

\(^{49}\) Ibid.

\(^{50}\) Holland, 'Carter, Kennedy and Ireland', \textit{Magill}, October 1977, p. 4.

\(^{51}\) Ibid.

\(^{52}\) Interview with William V. Shannon, United States Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland, Dublin, 24 April 1978.


\(^{54}\) Ibid.
stalemate that had developed he reportedly brought an attitude to politics that was described as 'cheerfully pragmatic and little influenced by protocol', which, in this case, meant that he saw a need to support politicians such as the Four Horsemen for having taken an unpopular and difficult course of action with some of the same objectives in view as Britain herself. In making this point to the Foreign Office he was also able to advise it that his information, based on a recent in-country briefing, was that the St Patrick's Day statement had had a beneficial effect in Northern Ireland.

On the American side, Jay's efforts to accommodate proposals which his Government found unwelcome were matched by an attitude among the original Irish-American proponents that was uncompromising. It was also to be, for them, a winning tactic in terms of the eventual statement which went to Carter for delivery (the President did not see the final draft until that time), but not until a certain amount of confusion had been created, and overcome, as to whether there was any 'initiative' at all in the wind.

The seeds of such doubt were sowed by 'leaks' of an impending American statement which appeared in both the Dublin and London press, and which served only to fan wild speculation and to place the eventual announcement in jeopardy. Probably for this reason, the Carter Administration denied, in late July, that it was planning any such thing, as did Tip O'Neill. Nor was this wholly untrue — their respective denials were made in reference to an 'independent political initiative' and the possibility of the US becoming 'directly involved' —

55 ibid.
56 ibid.
58 According to O'Clery (cited directly above), Irish officials viewed these as being inspired by British sources, but Holland (cited in note 53 above), makes no reference of this.
60 Irish Times, 26 July 1977, p. 6.
which of course, allowed room for semantic evasion. It was at this time that an American spokesman saw fit to describe the United States' interest in Northern Ireland as being that of a 'benevolent bystander', and it was at this point also that scepticism and a sense of confusion on the part of observers could be excused.

On the same day, 25 August 1977, in the same newspaper, the International Herald Tribune, and even on the same page, three reports were carried which, taken collectively, were baffling. The main article was headed 'US Interest in Solution for Ulster Spurs Rumors on an Initiative, Aid', and carried the familiar line that the US 'was quietly looking for ways in which it might help to end the civil strife in Northern Ireland'. It was, in brief, a piece of informed speculation by the paper's correspondent, R.W. Apple, Jr., and no different to numerous articles which were appearing in this period in Britain and Ireland.

Immediately below this piece, however, was a statement by President Carter's chief spokesman, Jody Powell, that reports of US economic aid to the North had been 'overplayed'. Since this may have been true, or was at least a matter of opinion, it was possible to accept his statement as both an admission that something was about to break, and that it would be, in his words, 'of a very limited nature'. But it was not possible to hold to that position when the White House also claimed, in the shortest article of the three, that it knew of no plans to offer US economic aid to Northern Ireland. As Powell told another newspaper, on the same day, of the suggestions which were current:

> There is absolutely nothing to any of that. There is no speech. There is no initiative. No draft speeches have gone to London or Dublin. The President is aware of no American initiatives in this area.

On only one of these points could it be said that Powell may not have been attempting to mislead the media: as was noted earlier, the President is reported by another source as not having received the final

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draft of the statement until just prior to delivery. Whether this meant that he was not aware of the consultations and negotiations which preceded it is another matter upon which there is no available evidence.

In the following days little was done in the US which would have resolved the question beyond doubt. In fact a similar reliance upon the imprecision of words, as was resorted to in the earlier Administration and O'Neill statements, was to be found in the replies the British Foreign Secretary, Dr David Owen, gave to questions on the American CBS television programme 'Face the Nation'. In his case he was of the opinion that the US would not take an 'active role' in the search for a solution to the conflict.63

Only in Dublin was the 'initiative cat' let almost completely out of the bag. In an interview with the Irish Times — indeed his first major statement on foreign policy since taking office — the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Michael O'Kennedy, stated that he would welcome an initiative from President Carter which would help cut off arms supplies from the US to Northern Ireland and which would boost industrial development both North and South. He was, moreover, 'very hopeful' of a Presidential contribution towards these objectives.64 In so stating he foreshadowed an optimism in the potential for American (and European) influence which was to mark several of his pronouncements in 1978-79.65 Perhaps he took encouragement from what was actually announced on 31 August 1977.

In so far as British Government's objections and requirements relating to the first component (Presidential statement, role of the Irish Government, endorsement of British policies) were concerned, it lost out: the first was made; the second recognised; the third avoided. 66

63 Dr Owen's remarks were made on the 'Face the Nation' programme of 24 July 1977, and reported in the Irish Times, 26 July 1977, p. 6.
65 See Chapter 4, pp.229-31; Chapter 8, pp.317-20, and this Chapter, pp.495-6.
However, it could be classed as a minor success for their representations that the wording in respect of the second was changed — from describing the settlement upon which aid/investment was conditional as:

a solution involving the British and Irish Government and the two communities in Northern Ireland.

to:

a solution that the people in Northern Ireland as well as the Governments of Great Britain and Ireland can support.\textsuperscript{67}

The second component — aid — was modified substantially, but this was probably to be expected in the light of joint Anglo-Irish reservations concerning the original proposal. It was replaced by a US commitment, still conditional on a political settlement, as outlined in the foregoing:

\begin{quote}
 to join with others to see how additional job-creating investment could be encouraged, to the benefit of all the people in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{68}
\end{quote}

Exactly what impact this would have is hard to discern. American investment in the Six Counties in 1977 already totalled £152 million from thirty-one different companies and provided employment for one person in six in the manufacturing sector.\textsuperscript{69} But since the bulk of this injection of capital had taken place before the outbreak of the troubles — only one new US company was set up in the intervening period\textsuperscript{70} — there was a deep uncertainty attached to how, in an incipiently unstable situation, new investment by private companies might be effected.

In its other aspects the statement was completely uncontroversial: it echoed the Four Horsemen in denouncing aid to those who were engaged in violence and, as though nothing had changed, genuflected

\textsuperscript{67} O'Clery, Report from Washington, No.1, 18 January 1978.
\textsuperscript{68} Official Text: Carter Statement.
\textsuperscript{69} Times, 1 September 1977.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
towards traditional priorities by reaffirming the US Government's 'policy ... of impartiality' and 'friendship with both parts of Ireland, and with Great Britain.'

In sum, it was as discreet, modest, and in the immediate sense, passive an approach to the issues which could have been expected given the interests and influences which were brought to bear upon it.

Because of that, because it was the highest expression of what was acceptable to all the parties concerned, it was hardly accorded a tumultuous reception in either Britain or Ireland. O'Clery accurately described it as 'the initiative that fell flat', but this was because he, like many observers in the two countries, was concerned with describing the reaction to the specifics of the Carter statement. Yet it was not that feature which made it noteworthy — that was owed to the fact that the US President made it all. While his expression of support may have sounded bland, it was to be compared with the silence of his predecessors; while the Four Horsemen could speak to and for Irish-American Catholics, they could not, as Carter, a southern Baptist could, attempt this on behalf of Protestants. And finally, no matter how modest his exhortations and proposals may have been, they had established publicly an official US interest in the political and economic future of Northern Ireland. They were no more than that, and for the remainder of the Carter Administration there were few disturbances, and none that was serious, to either Anglo-American or Anglo-Irish relations which could be traced to this interest. In most respects the US Government conformed to the role the anonymous spokesman had assigned it — that of a 'benevolent bystander'.

71 Official Text: Carter Statement. In a later explanation by the US Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland, William V. Shannon, the US was described as being 'neutral but not indifferent,' with regard to the clashing viewpoints espoused by different elements in the North (Luncheon Speech to the US Chamber of Commerce in Ireland, Dublin, 8 September 1977, as reported in the Irish Times, 9 September 1977).

72 For the benefit of those who had failed to grasp these points particularly the third, Ambassador Shannon, in the address cited in the note above, stated categorically 'There is no Carter Peace Plan for the North.'

As was the case in the characterisation of the first period (of the American Dimension) reviewed, the term was not universally applicable to this period but is used here with the intention of conveying the ascendancy of one attitude over several others. Thus, while NORAID and the Irish National Caucus were seldom benevolent parties, and Kennedy and his colleagues frequently exceeded the expectations which could be held of bystanders, such objections do not sufficiently allow for the relative transformation in the American Dimension. Although within itself it had become an even less hospitable environment for the Provisional support network, that was probably not the most profound difference that was made. Stated positively, and from the perspective of international politics, Carter and the Four Horsemen should be seen as having set a changed face to American involvement in Northern Ireland which, as a result, was more understanding of the issues involved, more considerate of viewpoints previously ignored, and ultimately, given to a greater reluctance to impose itself upon the situation.

There were, however, those who recognised neither the desirability of this development, nor seemingly, the fact that it had taken place and relegated them to a position of lesser significance than they held earlier. Curiously the expressions of vitality which they mustered were in a similar context as those towards the close of that earlier period, occurring as they did at a time when their eclipse was almost compassed. What was even more curious was that the most publicised of these counter-developments — the formation of the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs on 27 September 1977 — should have taken root when it was so obviously alienated from American political leadership and, to judge by the pronouncements of its chairman, possessed of a prodigious ignorance of the very subject it took its name from.

But on reflection, there was nothing exceptional in the latter: the chairman in question was the Representative from the 10th Congressional District of New York (East Bronx and North Queens), Mario Biaggi. In the years since his first outburst on Northern Ireland, he had become a leading example of those who had succumbed to that trick of Ireland's which George McGovern so accurately identified as the 'magnetic pull in the juxtaposition of a breath-takingly beautiful land, warm and engaging
people, and perpetual conflict and deprivation, and yet had been unable to match the depth of their fascination with a corresponding comprehension. As might be inferred from David McKittrick's report in 1979, Biaggi would have been no more than a comic figure were it not for the consequences of his actions:

Mario Biaggi has been making statements about Ireland for maybe 10 years now, but 10 minutes with him in his office on Washington's Capitol Hill is enough to demonstrate that he knows little about the place. He once protested about the presence of British troops throughout Ireland. A year ago, asked by a reporter what he thought of the Peace People, and of the Official IRA, he had to admit that he hadn't heard of either.

A man in his fifties with iron grey, curly hair and gold-rimmed glasses, Biaggi waves his hands a lot, Italian-style, loses his words often, depends upon a sharp young aide called Bob Blancato to finish his sentences for him. His language is grandiose: 'I hope the Provos will attend the peace forum', he declares softly. 'It's important for the total world perception of the undertaking'. The handwaving and the stateman-like pronouncements are unfortunately interrupted by a loose dental plate which demands his frequent attention. Blancato smoothly talks on until the Congressman's teeth are firmly back in position.

For all that, Biaggi saw himself as an 'activist, a crusader ... on behalf of a more positive United States role in pursuit of peace and justice in Northern Ireland'. So evidently, did the Ancient Order of Hibernians (at whose request he formed the Ad Hoc Committee and became its chairman) and 133 of his congressional colleagues, including fifteen Republicans, whose sense of political discrimination proved no barrier to their membership of it.

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75 David McKittrick, 'Biaggi Thought the British Army was in the Republic', Irish Times, 5 September 1979, p.10 (hereafter cited as McKittrick, 'Biaggi').
76 News From Congressman Mario Biaggi, a release by his office entitled 'Speech of the Honourable Mario Biaggi, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs at the 80th Biennial National Convention of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Bal Harbour, Florida, July 31, 1980' (hereafter cited as Biaggi, AOH Speech, 31 July 1980).
77 ibid.
Biaggi claimed that this membership, approximately twenty-five per cent of Congress, was 'helped in great measure' by an attack on himself and the Committee in early 1978 by the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch (discussed below). This, to put it mildly, was an exaggeration. It took no account of the two factors which informed observers generally held to be the best explanation: Congressional courtesy and electoral pressure on Representatives with significantly 'Irish' constituencies. Nor did it explain why this 'support' was so unimpressive when translated into an active interest in Northern Ireland matters. According to Sean Cronin, the usual attendance at an Ad Hoc Committee meeting was 10-15.

Correspondingly, many of the committee members displayed complete ignorance of Irish matters. On 16 March 1977, for example, Biaggi set the tone with a denunciation of the 'Irish Free State' and 'the presence of British troops throughout Ireland'. He was then followed by Benjamin Gilman who spoke of Ireland as 'a land of gentle grace and beauty' being besieged by the same barbarism used by the 'ruthless Nazis' and suffering from the 'torture techniques used in the Southeast Asia conflicts'. Nearly a year later there was little that would support the proposition that education can proceed from 'contamination' by an issue: Representative Christopher J. Dodd referred repeatedly to the Taoiseach as 'President Lynch', while Gilman found in the Dáil a person by the name of 'Fitzpatrick, the minority leader.'

These were not isolated instances, nor were they without a more
serious side which caused the Ad Hoc Committee to run afoul of the Irish Government. The most celebrated case in this regard centred upon Biaggi's attempt, following the Taoiseach's controversial 8 January interview on Radio Telefis Eireann (RTE), 84 to make common cause with the latter on the subject of a British military withdrawal from Northern Ireland, and to request his 'comments on the overall prospects for peace' in the country. 85

Lynch's response was somewhat more extensive than this. Overall, it implied a dismissal of the condemnations of violence made by Biaggi and his colleagues on the grounds that they were not consistent with the activities undertaken in the name of the Ad Hoc Committee. But in the main, it admonished its chairman for not having ascertained exactly what had been said in the course of the interview and concluded with a stern lecture about his choice of partners in the practice of Irish-American politics.

One of the obstacles to progress is violence which, though it has time and time again been rejected by the overwhelming majority of the Irish people, emanates from extremists of both political traditions and, in both cases, derives support and encouragement from small groups outside the country. One such group is the Irish National Caucus which, whatever its recent pretensions to the contrary has been closely associated with the cause of violence in Northern Ireland. It has been noted in media reports that the Irish National Caucus termed the establishment of your Ad Hoc Committee as a victory for itself and that you yourself have visited Ireland at the request of the Caucus. We in Ireland have also noted your public identification when here with supporters of violence who have no democratic mandate from our people ... It has come to my attention that my Government's policy on Northern Ireland has been seriously misrepresented to members of the Congress and in view of the extent of this confusion and of the seriousness with which I must view it, I am issuing copies of our correspondence to members of your

84 See Chapter 4, pp. 211-12.
85 Letter from Biaggi to The Right Honourable (sic) Jack Lynch, of 24 January 1978, released for public distribution by the Taoiseach through the Government Information Services, Dublin.
Ad Hoc Committee and other Congressional leaders. I would hope that in doing so, the existing confusion will be removed and the cause of peace and political progress in Ireland advanced.\textsuperscript{86}

In Biaggi's own estimation, this was a 'scathing' reply. Moreover, on the facts of the interview it was accurate — the transcript shows that Lynch did not call for a British military withdrawal\textsuperscript{87} — as it was also with regard to other matters cited above. It was, therefore, surprising that Biaggi and a number of his colleagues should have then taken the opportunity in Congress not only to accuse Lynch of 'lying and waffling', but also to demand from him an apology for his recent statements critical of the Ad Hoc Committee.\textsuperscript{87}

What the membership of that body appeared, or chose, to be mystified by was the Taoiseach's verbal obfuscation which had clouded the precise meaning of Fianna Fáil's Northern Ireland policy from the start, and which even skilled 'Lynchspeak' interpreters found difficult to discern.\textsuperscript{88} That policy stated, \textit{inter alia}:

\begin{quote}
Fianna Fáil calls on the British government to ... encourage the unity of Ireland by agreement, in independence and in a harmonious relationship between the two islands and to this end to declare Britain's commitment to implement an ordered withdrawal from her involvement in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland. [emphasis added].\textsuperscript{89}
\end{quote}

Lynch, furthermore, was at pains to point out that the objective sought was not to be interpreted as either a 'declaration to a commitment to withdraw', or a 'declaration of intent to withdraw'.\textsuperscript{90} The distinction

\textsuperscript{86} Letter from the Taoiseach to Biaggi, of 17 February 1978.
\textsuperscript{87} (United States) \textit{Congressional Record} — \textit{House}, 23 February 1978, pp. H1471-H1481; and News From Congressman Mario Biaggi, a release dated 24 February 1978.
\textsuperscript{88} See Chapter 4, pp. 200-01.
\textsuperscript{89} Statement by Fianna Fáil on Northern Ireland, issued by Fianna Fáil Research and Support Services, Leinster House, Dublin, 26 October 1975.
was elusive but the lesson was as clear on this issue as it had been ever since the Taoiseach's 'we won't stand (idly) by' address in August 1969: his pronouncements frequently reflected a Jesuitical refuge in the multiplicity of meanings which could be attributed to words and phrases, and hence those who sought to infer a particular meaning were liable to miss the mark.

On this particular occasion, Biaggi had less cause than on some others to plead that he had been the victim of Lynchspeak. The British Army, although a defining characteristic of the British presence in the North, was never mentioned, nor incidentally, had it been mentioned in Fianna Fáil's 1975 policy statement. More to the point, it should have been clear to any informed and astute observer of the situation that the Irish Government was not then in favour of a British withdrawal of any description. This had been made abundantly clear in the Taoiseach's remarks over RTE on 28 September 1977, and again 8 January 1978. In the course of the latter the following exchange took place:

Interviewer (Mike Burns): ... do you think the time has come for the British Government to make that long-awaited declaration of intent?

Taoiseach: I think it has, yes. You see this declaration of intent can be interpreted in a very stark way. We never intended that it be interpreted as, say, the British Government will get out at the [end] of a certain year ... What we wanted them to do was to indicate their interest in the bringing of Irish people together and their indication as well that they have little to offer to Ireland as a whole.93


92 As reported in the Financial Times, 11 January 1978; see also Chapter 4, pp. 203.

93 'Text of Taoiseach's Radio Interview', Irish Times, 11 January 1978. It might be noted that Lynch here followed Burns' example of referring to a 'declaration of intent' where previously he had avoided this term in preference for the wording of the original policy statement.
In all Biaggi's position was barely tenable. He had misrepresented the Taoiseach's position by imputing to it a call for a 'declaration of intent' for a British military withdrawal. His House Resolution 478 in support of this imputed 'declaration' was therefore a nonsense, and in general he had demonstrated his poor ear for the nuances of Irish politics. Indeed, the whole enterprise involving Biaggi and other members of the Ad Hoc Committee only confirmed the impression that, all too often, when Americans became involved in Irish affairs, they tended to reveal more about themselves than about the Irish.

Subsequent developments confirmed this: by its associations, choice of issues, and objectives, the Ad Hoc Committee was never able to divest itself of the image that it was, to a greater or lesser extent, a Provisional proxy, or worse, dupe. Under Biaggi's chairmanship it concerned itself almost exclusively with playing upon what could fairly be described as 'Provisional themes'. Some were recurrent: the denial of US entry visas to Provisional spokesmen was never far from its attention, nor was its proposed Congressional Hearings (later termed a Peace Forum) on Northern Ireland. Some, such as the reported role of the Ad Hoc Committee in having the Irish Ambassador to the United States, Sean Donlon, recalled, were occasional. All were marked by glaring failures: the visa decisions were not overturned; the Hearings, in the face of strong opposition in Washington from many quarters,

95 See Biaggi's speech before the National Board Convention of the AOH, 12 November 1977 (News from Congressman Bario Biaggi, same date); Washington Star, 22 February 1978; and Irish Times of 31 August 1978; 2 September 1978; and 5 September 1979.
97 At the time of writing (December 1980) it was not possible to obtain reliable information on this matter in Canberra. Presumably, the Ad Hoc Committee were concerned about Donlon's lack of sympathy for Provisional-aligned organisations in the US and suggested that he should be replaced. Biaggi, in his speech to the AOH on 31 July 1980 (see note 76, this Chapter) implied that there was an element of truth in such reports but that 'although flattering, [they] were largely fabricated.'
particularly Speaker O'Neill, have never been held; and the decision to recall Donlon was reversed. In all, a dismal record.

It reflected the Ad Hoc Committee's basic inability to approach the Carey-Kennedy-Moynihan-O'Neill alliance in terms of the authority and influence the latter could bring to matters bearing on the Ulster Question. The clearest measure of this difference was that there was barely an issue on which the two groups could be said to espouse anything like a common approach. To judge from statements made by their respective principal spokesmen, this applied even to matters on which they might reasonably have been presumed to agree — such as the growing body of evidence which tended to confirm allegations of systematic police brutality against Republican and Loyalist suspects in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, where Kennedy, for example, was slow to condemn the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) solely on the basis of an Amnesty International report and suggested 'the establishment of an independent special prosecutor', Biaggi accepted the same document as virtual proof positive of RUC guilt and neglected to mention that members of both communities had found grounds for complaint.

Biaggi's Republican bias also showed through later, when both Dr Robert Irwin, a Northern Ireland police surgeon, and the official Bennett Committee of inquiry detailed cases of brutality which put many of the allegations generally beyond doubt: he then went to some lengths to point to certain allegations of human rights violations by


99 See Chapter 9, pp. 343-50; and 382.

100 (United States) Congressional Record — Senate, 12 June 1978, pp. S9908-S9010. Note: Kennedy was not pre-judging the various claims: he defined the task of such a person as someone with 'full powers of investigation to find and state the truth.'


102 Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Police Interrogation Procedures in Northern Ireland, Cmnd. 7497 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1979), also known as the Bennett report after its Chairman, Judge H.G. Bennett, QC. See also Chapter 9, p. 350.
the Irish Government in respect of persons detained under legislation designed to counter threats to the state. The aim of the response in each case, it seems, was to outflank those who held the more commanding heights in Irish-American politics.

This strategy was well illustrated in 1979 in a minor furore over the State Department's decision to authorise the sale of 3,000 magnum .357 hand guns and 500 .223 automatic rifles to the RUC and Speaker O'Neill's concern, expressed in a statement of 1 June 1979, that 'the past record of the RUC is not one of impartiality in maintaining law and order', and his recommendation to the State Department that it 'not authorise such shipments in the future.' Thereafter, Biaggi and members of the Ad Hoc Committee attempted to claim a central role in the affair which was introducing a note of tension to Anglo-American relations.

In the course of the congressional debates on the State, Commerce, and Judiciary appropriations bill in July 1979, Biaggi went further than O'Neill's recommendation and unexpectedly introduced an amendment barring the use of funds for the supply of weapons to the RUC. It was not a new tactic – Biaggi's colleague Benjamin Gilman had attempted something similar in 1975 but on this occasion it caught the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Clement Zablocki, off guard. The outcome of the ensuing holding action and heated debate was that Zablocki was required to give an assurance that his Committee would 'investigate this matter thoroughly' in return for Biaggi's

103 (United States) Congressional Record – House, 9 April 1979, pp. H2114-H2122. See also Chapter 9, pp. 369-72.

104 According to a report by Harold Jackson and Ian Aitken in the Guardian Weekly, 12 August 1979, p. 7, these figures related to that part of an existing 9,000 weapons order which had been delivered, although it was made clear by State that the entire order would be honoured.

105 Statement By Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr, on The State Department's Authorisation of Shipments of US Manufactured Arms To Northern Ireland Police. Note: This statement is undated but advice received from State was that it was released on 1 June 1979.


withdrawal of the amendment. 108

It was therefore, a compromise, and less than what Biaggi had tried to exact. He wanted 'a very exhaustive investigation and a hearing' — what Zablocki termed, in his rejection of it, 'a Pandora's box'. 109 Yet, at the same time, all American parties to it could claim a victory or success of sorts. The substance, if not the form, of O'Neill's recommendation has been preserved intact; the State Department remained unfettered by a Congressional amendment; 110 Zablocki had promised only an investigation — which Biaggi could take credit for.

Later, however, Biaggi and his group were seen to come out ahead, although there were suggestions that the following development was due more to O'Neill's influence than that of the Ad Hoc Committee. 111 Following a meeting in private session between it, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and a senior State Department official, Mathew Nimetz, it was announced that arms sales would be suspended pending a review of policy. 112 In true style, Biaggi publicly misrepresented this as a decision that sales had been 'suspended indefinitely' — a claim which State felt obliged to deny as an 'unfair characterisation'. 113

But Biaggi was incorrigible in this regard: he had previously attempted to endow Zablocki's proposed investigation with more status than the latter intended by referring to them as 'hearings'. 114

110 see note 109 this chapter.
112 Irish Times, 3 August 1979, pp. 1 and 5. According to Biaggi, AOH Speech, 31 July 1980, it was still in force as of that date. On 23 July 1980 the writer wrote to the Officer in Charge, Irish Affairs, at the State Department to inquire further of the policy review, but as of June 1981 no reply had been received.
113 As cited in the Irish Times, 3 August 1979, p. 5.
114 (United States) Congressional Record — House, 12 July 1979, p. H5811.
Likewise there were discrepancies between official and Biaggi versions of a meeting between President Carter and the Ad Hoc Committee Chairman, on a train to Baltimore on 4 August 1979. Where the White House termed it no more than a 'casual encounter' and let it be known that the President had added nothing to his 'initiative' statement of August 1977, Biaggi claimed to have been accorded a 'private meeting' at which Carter had 'expressed "deep concern" about human rights and terrorist problems which plague Northern Ireland', and had said that the only real solution rests with a 'consensus solution'.

On later occasions there was something of a pathetic quality to the way Biaggi sought to inflate incidents to his own advantage. As he proudly told David McKittrick of the Presidential train episode:

As a matter of fact he [the President] had Mrs Carter leave her seat which was alongside him, and had me take her seat.

It was to the fore when he took consolation from the fact that the Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, in a speech in which he denounced both the Irish National Caucus and NORAID, did not 'specifically mention [himself] or the Ad Hoc Committee'. This was true, but once again it ignored Haughey's admonition that:

No individual, whether private citizen or elected member of Congress, should by any statement or association, lend support to those whose actions serve only to delay Irish unity.

Biaggi, of course, consistently denied that his statements or

117 McKittrick, 'Biaggi'.
118 Biaggi, AOH Speech, 31 July 1980.
119 'Northern Ireland: A positive role for Irish Americans' (Address by the Taoiseach, Mr Charles J. Haughey TD, to the Fianna Fáil Organisation in the Metropole Hotel, Cork on 27 July 1980), Statements and Speeches 4/80, Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs.
associations did any such thing; indeed his denunciations of violence by all parties in Northern Ireland were as eloquent as those to come from (say) Kennedy and his associates. He was, moreover, on record as applauding (some would say patronising\textsuperscript{120}) the efforts of the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, and could, without difficulty, have provided a selected catalogue of statements and activities which purported to demonstrate both his respectability and responsibility. Yet this would still have missed the point: that in the overall context of his activities he had not the wit or the wisdom to realise that he may actually have been encouraging violence, and that condemnations of it alone are like condemnations of sin — requiring little courage and about as much imagination.

In many ways the question of imagination, or lack of it, was central to the faults which may be found in Biaggi and those who followed his lead. They exhibited collectively a failure to grasp that their judgment was not only lacking, but in some cases, appalling. Where, for example, Kennedy gradually withdrew from the indefensible positions he held prior to 1972, the Ad Hoc Committee became a political vagrant on the Irish-American scene, wandering from one issue to the next, without any visible means of real support in Ireland or the US. In its travels it has confused rather than clarified Irish issues in American politics, but perversely, a study of it does at least provide an understanding of why observers, within and outside of the US, frequently misunderstand the position which the troubles of Ireland hold in the US. And if this conclusion should seem harsh, the following words of Biaggi may dispell such an impression:

\begin{quote}
The Irish question has become a major issue of American foreign policy ... It will grow as we grow closer to the 1980 Presidential election.\textsuperscript{121}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{120} This inference is well justified by reference to Biaggi, AOH Speech, 31 July 1980, p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{121} (United States) \textit{Congressional Record — House}, 9 April 1979, p. H2121.
The fact that the Irish Question did not then loom large ('similar to Vietnam'\textsuperscript{122}), as Biaggi claimed, did not mean that it was eclipsed completely by other, more pressing concerns. Kennedy and his colleagues saw to that — in such a way that the issue was consigned to a sort of limbo, from where it could be elevated if the circumstances demanded. This happened frequently, to the consternation of the British Government. Two factors, apart from those of a US domestic political nature (already discussed), greatly facilitated this. The first was the widespread perception that the British Government was in default of its obligations in Northern Ireland by allowing the situation there to drift. The second also related to the British Government's obligations, but in the positive sense that it felt required, particularly after March 1977, to pay attention to the Four Horsemen because of the common cause against violence it and they were joined in.

Although, of itself, this cause may have been presumptive evidence of the existence of a generally pro-British stance by the Horsemen, a series of events which unfolded in 1978-79 as a result of the two factors outlined above in conjunction suggested otherwise. In fact the result was a demonstration of the marginal utility of some types of politics, whereby the British Government, having welcomed the support of some of the most powerful and influential figures in Irish-American affairs, only found that it had also increased the number of not overly sympathetic constituents it was answerable to.

This was first seen to operate on the occasion of the Four Horsemen's second St Patrick's Day message, in 1978. On the one hand it was a repeat of that delivered the previous year, with variations to allow for the Carter initiative; on the other it took the British Government to task for not providing 'more effective leadership' and its 'failure ... to end the festering stalemate.'\textsuperscript{123} Moreover, it appeared over the signatures of an additional fourteen US politicians, including Senators Thomas Eagleton and George McGovern, and Governor Brendan Byrne of New Jersey.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{122} ibid.
\textsuperscript{124} ibid.
The criticism which the above message contained was repeated, this time as a plea by O'Neill, at an Ireland Fund dinner in New York the following May. But the form could not disguise the fact that, in Irish-American eyes, the British Government were guilty of procrastination for ulterior motives, nor could it disarm the rebuke which the address clearly implied.

... nothing can flourish ... without evidence of progress. So I would appeal to the British Government to re-examine seriously its own role in Northern Ireland. The problem of Northern Ireland will not be solved if it is permitted to become a football in British politics. ... it seems obvious to me that the Northern Ireland crisis should be treated by all British parties without a view to party advantage. As an absolute minimum, it must not be subjected to extraneous political considerations.\textsuperscript{125}

It was a common enough view — although held more acutely in Belfast and Dublin — frustration with British inactivity. And it was justified. No matter what construction was put on events, or the lack of them, it was plain that the affairs of Northern Ireland were not being accorded anything like an urgent priority at Westminster.\textsuperscript{126} Throughout the remainder of 1978, criticism and pressure from the Four Horsemen and their growing retinue to change this situation took the form of an inverse relationship — the less the British Government did on various issues, the more it was berated and urged to act.

And the messages were both direct and couched in the most unmistakeable terms. After meeting with the Taoiseach in Washington in May 1978, Kennedy let it be known that the efforts and impact of those in America who supported a non-violent solution in the North were, to a very great extent, determined by 'active British support for power-sharing'.\textsuperscript{127} A month later, Carey stayed away from a Vice-Presidential

\textsuperscript{125} Text of a speech by O'Neill at an Ireland Fund dinner in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, 10 May 1978, as cited in the \textit{Irish Times}, 23 May 1978.

\textsuperscript{126} This was argued extensively in Chapter 4.

dinner in honour of visiting British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, as a protest against his Government's slowness in eradicating violence and discrimination in Northern Ireland. In the same general period, both Carey and O'Neill went on record to demand a public enquiry into alleged RUC brutality, and to condemn prison conditions in Northern Ireland, respectively.

By early 1979 the combination of criticism and pressure had intensified to the point where the greater part of the joint St Patrick's Day statement, the longest of the three to that time, consisted of a stern lecture to the British on the failings of their Northern Ireland policy. Among those that the Kennedy group identified were 'drift ... delay and neglect ... and ... conspicuous tilt in favour of the majority and to the detriment of the minority.' Furthermore, it suggested that, with regard to the allegations of official brutality and violations of human rights then coming to the fore in Northern Ireland, it was 'difficult to believe that such practices could exist without the acquiescence, or at least the negligence of the British Government.'

This was strong language, even allowing for the circumstances in Northern Ireland which motivated it. And to explain why it should have been so, it is necessary also to understand two related events which preceded the 1979 joint statement and could account for its tenor. According to two reliable observers of the Northern Ireland scene, in late 1978 or early 1979, O'Neill inquired of the British Ambassador (and son-in-law of the Prime Minister), Peter Jay, whether a Callaghan-Unionist deal was operating at Westminster. Jay not only denied

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130 *Irish Times*, 12 August 1978.
131 Joint Statement on Northern Ireland, 17 March 1979, issued by Senator Kennedy's office.
that there was, but took the view that any such suggestion was a
'personal affront'. Thus, when some months later (during the
British election campaign in early 1979), Callaghan himself admitted
to O'Neill that he had, without reference to the Parliamentary Labour
Party, concluded an arrangement with the Unionist bloc of precisely
the type which the latter had earlier suggested, the grounds existed
for a particularly critical line to be taken by the 'horsemen',
together and individually. And it was in this vein that they
conducted their public representations to the British for the remainder
of the period under review.

On one occasion, however, this mood produced a positive, if
unconventional and unsuccessful local initiative by Carey. In August
1979, he announced that he had invited representatives of the British
and Irish Governments to meet in New York in an effort to bring peace
to Northern Ireland. Although the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Michael O'Kennedy, accepted, the Northern Ireland Secretary, Humphrey
Atkins, declined, on the grounds that the future of the province was
a matter which could not be discussed by the British Government outside
the United Kingdom. The whole enterprise thereby failed, but the
fact that London was willing to contemplate such a meeting, even
after the Irish National Caucus let it be known that the Governor was
only paying off a pledge made in the course of the 1978 State
gubernatorial election campaign, illustrated the extent to which the
interests of the 'horsemen' had to be taken into account. Indeed, the

133 ibid., in the Interview version, Jay used the expression an
'insult to his country' (or words to that effect) instead of 'personal
affront'.
134 ibid., and Mary Holland, 'Kennedy's New Irish Policy', New
138 Barry White, 'A Potent Weapon for the Irish — Political Clout in
such action by Carey was reported in two of Sean Cronin's regular articles
for the Irish Times, ('Letter From New York'), of 24 October 1978 and
7 November 1978, respectively.
Northern Ireland Office statement announcing Atkins' decision was notably deferential in this regard: it went to some length to recognise the 'deep interest of Irish people wherever they might be' in the problems of Northern Ireland and to acknowledge 'Carey's concern ... particularly his public stand against terrorism.'

In 1980 the obligation upon Britain to heed the more responsible US interests was once more emphasised with the inclusion in the Democratic Party platform of a plank which read:

Consistent with our traditional concern for peace and human rights, the next Democratic Administration will play a positive role in seeking peace in Northern Ireland. We condemn the violence on all sides. We will encourage progress toward a long-term solution based upon consent of all parties to the conflict, based on the principle of Irish unity. We take note of the St Patrick's Day statement '... that the solution offering the greatest promise of permanent peace is to end the division of the Irish people' and its urging of '... the British Government to express its interest in the unity of Ireland and to join with the government of Ireland in working to achieve peace and reconciliation.' New political structures which are created should protect human rights, and should be acceptable to both parts of the community in Northern Ireland.

Following the Presidential Election of November 1980, however, some of the obligation diminished — the 'next Democratic Administration' was as far away as January 1985, if not further. Moreover, the domestic political circumstances which allowed the Horsemen to exercise the influence they did with the Executive no longer obtained to the same extent. Thus, it may be that the election of Ronald Reagan will denote both the eclipse of the small group of Irish-American political leaders whose achievement was to transform the American Dimension to the Ulster

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140 As cited in News From Congressman Mario Biaggi, a release entitled 'Biaggi Commends Democratic Party Platform Commitment to Northern Ireland,' 22 August 1980. Note: In this document Biaggi claimed credit for helping 'to shape the final language' of the platform, and for the inclusion of the condemnation of 'all forms of violence, both civilian and official.' These, however, were to be found in the 17 March 1979 joint statement by the 'horsemen' — in fact there was nothing in the Democratic platform that was not explicit in either their 1978 or 1979 statements.
Question, and the corresponding re-confinement of an active US interest in that issue to the traditional levels of domestic politics from whence it emerged in August 1977.

To some the prospect of this development, or that part of it which might entail a reduction in the interest of the US Administration would be welcome. For example, Conor Cruise O'Brien has claimed that the Four Horsemen

... suffer from one fatal idee fixe: that Ulster Protestants are basically England's puppets and England (if rightly squeezed) can reverse their political allegiances.\[141\]

According to O'Brien, the distinctions of substance and style between the two basic types of American interest groups were irrelevant: 'their efforts are complementary in their effects and are so perceived by those who resist.'\[142\] The Horsemen, therefore (he names them individually), stand accused of 'unwittingly pushing Ireland — all of it — toward the abyss [of civil war].'\[143\]

These views, it is emphasised, were not expressed by either the British or the Irish Government in the (second) period under review. They owe their inclusion here to the fact that one of Ireland's most public and published figures espoused them. That he did so less by argument than by opinion may be of no moment: his opinions are widely read, and particularly in Britain, highly regarded (if the extent to which he is cited in that country is any indication).\[144\] As hypotheses

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142 ibid., p. 108.
143 ibid., p. 109. Similar views to those cited above were also to be found in Conor Cruise O'Brien's open letter to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 July 1979, p.22; and 'Americans and Ireland', *International Herald Tribune*, 8-9 September 1979, p. 4.
144 Needless to say they were not highly regarded by Tip O'Neill. In September 1979 he was reliably reported to have refused their author, as Editor of the *Observer*, an interview, and to have referred to him as 'a silly, senile, son of a bitch' (*Irish Times*, 22 September 1979, p.1, report from Sean Cronin in Washington).
concerning a future state of affairs, they are acknowledged for the
discussion they may provoke, and the currency they may achieve; for
the same reasons their analysis is foregone as not being demanded by the
time frame of this thesis.

The discussion of the American Dimension between 1976 and 1980 to
this point has concentrated on the role of non-state actors — and
with good reason. With the exception of the pre-Carter initiative
negotiations, the political relations between the nation-states
involved — Britain, Ireland, and the US — were unremarkable. Initial
fears that Carter might carry over to his Presidency the rash behaviour
on Northern Ireland which he had exhibited during the election campaign
were not realised.

In their stead he gave every indication of being avowedly anti-
Provisional and determined not to allow their American support
organisations to misuse his concern for human rights for their own
purposes. Accordingly, visa refusals, law suits against NORAID, and
prosecutions for arms offences continued as part of US Government
policy. Where these counter-measures differed notably from those
applied under Nixon was in their low frequency, but this would appear to
be explained by the general erosion of support for the Provisionals from
the Irish-American community after 1976.

145 See reports of the visit to the US, in March 1977, undertaken by
the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, in the
Irish Press, 17 March 1977, pp. 1 & 4; Cork Examiner, 17 March 1977;
Irish Times, 17 March 1977, pp. 1 & 4; and International Herald Tribune
of both 19 March and 21 March 1977.

146 In 1978, Joe Stagg, Chairman of the Irish Civil Rights Association
and brother of a hunger striker who starved himself to death in 1976, was
refused a visa to visit the US on the grounds that, during his October
1977, he had engaged in fund raising (Irish Times, 7 February 1978).

147 As of September 1980 a case was in progress against NORAID but the
writer is not aware of the precise grounds (letter to the writer from
Brian K. Ahearn, Attorney, Registration Unit, Internal Security Section,
Criminal Division, US Department of Justice, dated 5 September 1980.)

148 In October 1980, a successful prosecution in the US resulted in
three people being jailed and fined for running a total of 100 guns and
1 million rounds of ammunition to the IRA since 1972 (ABC TV News,
4 October 1980).
In comparison with this level and range of activities on Northern Ireland the Carter initiative stands out clearly as the only prominence on an otherwise featureless diplomatic and political landscape. Yet, even then, there was less to his decision to venture into Ireland's bog of ancient hatreds than met the eye. As was argued earlier in this chapter, his reasons had as much (or more) to do with the imperatives of his domestic political relations as they did with any compassion or torment he felt over Northern Ireland. And while this aspect in no way diminished the achievement which the initiative represented, it did underline the modest and reactive role played by the US Government.

When translated to the realm of relations between the US Government and the British Government, these characteristics proved somewhat detrimental to the otherwise harmonious basis on which they were conducted. The principal reason for this was that, although a modest and reactive role within the US satisfied Carter's domestic political requirements, it introduced into these relations measures which challenged the conventions under which they had traditionally operated. By allowing into the international arena what had previously been defined as domestic concerns, it blurred the distinction between both. In doing so it bestowed upon such episodes as the criticism of British policy by the Horsemen and the Carey proposals a much greater status than they could have expected to enjoy had the President been less dependent on the goodwill of O'Neill. Where once these attempts to intervene in what Britain regarded as an internal issue would have received short shrift, as did Kennedy's pronouncements in the first period examined, Britain's response in this period was to pursue a policy of public reticence if no favourable comment was to be forthcoming. But this situation was not entirely of Carter's making. As was noted earlier, the British Government had not only gratefully received the support of Carey, Kennedy, Moynihan and O'Neill in 1977, but acknowledged thereafter that it had incurred an obligation to attend to them which was derived from the positions of influence they held in their own right. In essence, a conflict of three uneven interests was involved — between the overriding need of both the US and Britain to maintain the quality of the trans-Atlantic relationship in general, the particular and competing need of the former to promote measures relating to Northern Ireland which cut across previous understandings, and the insistence of the latter on the status quo.
For all that it was an occasional, rather than a besetting problem, and was to the fore only twice — in relation to the Carter initiative and the embargo of arms to the RUC. As regards the first instance, it was obvious that the British Government would have preferred no initiative on Northern Ireland from the US President, but it was also just as clear that Washington, having embarked upon a general course of action, was at all times solicitous of the sensitivities involved. (That some Washington parties were more concerned does not invalidate this observation.) While these factors no doubt accounted for the blandness of the statement which emerged on 30 August 1977, they also ensured its acceptability to the party whose sovereignty was eroded — Britain. Furthermore, the eventual welcome which the Carter initiative was accorded by both the British Government and Northern Ireland political leaders generally, indicated that minor disruptions to the harmony of Anglo-American relations are perhaps, to be expected as a necessary but temporary cost of incorporating American proposals for possible progress. The conventions of the relationship, it seems, determined initial resistance irrespective of the merits of what was put forward. However, an outcome acceptable to both parties has so far not been reached on the second issue — the embargo of arms to the RUC. As of July 1980 it was still in force, with the question of a State Department review outstanding. It must remain, therefore, as a slight irritant to Anglo-American relations, and since its continuation implies a suspicion of (RUC) guilt, a minor source of embarrassment to the British Government. Beyond that, because of the lack of subsequent publicity which has attended it, its effect cannot be judged with any certainty.

By way of contrast, it is certain that Irish-American relations were less troubled and more to the advantage of Ireland. In so far as a reduction of American 'aid' in its various forms was concerned, Dublin had, if the figures cited earlier in this chapter were any guide,

149 'Statement by the Prime Minister', London Press Service, Verbatim Service, 196/77, 30 August 1977
150 Irish Times, 31 August 1977, p. 5.
151 Inquiries were made by letter to the State Department, on 23 July 1980, as regards the continuation of the embargo and the proposed review. As of June 1981 no reply had been received.
considerable cause to be heartened. And on the Carter statement's acknowledgement of a role for the Republic in a future political settlement in Northern Ireland, the Irish Government's cause was also clearly advanced. Neither, however, could be seen as entirely, or even predominantly, due to the efficacy of the sustained educational campaign of the Irish Government to persuade Irish-Americans to desist from provisioning the IRA. Indeed, the most important factor in their achievement was the ascendancy of the Four Horsemen and the fact that they shared certain objectives in common with the Irish Government.

Yet, as in Anglo-American relations, Irish-American relations at the end of the period admitted one area which had yet to be resolved and was of potential significance for the relations between Britain, Ireland and the US as they concerned Northern Ireland. Basically, it was a particular concomitant of the general differences in emphasis within the Fianna Fáil Cabinet in 1978, and the apparent shift in policy in 1979, as to the attempts that should be made and the results that could be expected if the Ulster Question were internationalised by the Irish Government. This development was noted earlier, as it concerned the European Community.\(^\text{152}\) Whereas in May 1978 the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Michael O'Kennedy, had stated his Government's strong opposition to external parties — such as the US or the European Commission\(^\text{153}\) — attempting a solution to the North's problems, he and leading members of the Cabinet (including the Taoiseach)\(^\text{154}\) were on record throughout late 1979 as advocating a contrary position. According to O'Kennedy,

> The goodwill in Europe and the United States is there to be tapped to support a return to normal politics in the North.\(^\text{155}\)

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152 See Chapter 8, pp. 317-21.
153 ibid., p. 318.
154 'Irish Presidency 1979, Opening of the New European Parliament: Statement by the Taoiseach, Mr. John Lynch TD', Statements and Speeches 9/79: Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Although Northern Ireland was not mentioned specifically in this address, it may be clearly interpreted as an unmistakable appeal for international assistance towards an initiative on Northern Ireland.
155 As reported in Geoffrey Barker, 'Unity: An Irish Dream', *Melbourne Age*, 1 November 1979, p. 9.
As regards the European states, 'goodwill' was defined by Minister for Industry, Commerce and Energy, Desmond O'Malley, to include making their views known ... expressing their inability to accept the situation [and] using their economic muscle to encourage a coming together of the two traditions in the North.\textsuperscript{156}

It thus seems reasonable to infer that something similar was envisaged as regards the US. But as 1980 drew to a close there was no evidence to suggest that the Irish Government had encountered any success with this policy, or even that it had been implemented.

The American Dimension had, therefore, resumed a static state by 1980. At neither the domestic, nor the international level was there any obvious sign of activity or extension of influence. The high points of the period had been reached between March and August 1977 and nothing that happened after this was as important or as far-reaching as the first St Patrick's Day statement by Carey, Kennedy, Moynihan and O'Neill, or the Carter Initiative. It was as though, at the support network level, the attention of the minority of Irish-Americans who comprised it was reclaimed. They returned from their sacred and poorly understood cause of a united Ireland through the armed struggle of the IRA - perhaps to the more pressing demands which they faced along with other 'heritage' groups in the US, which David Murray saw as:

\begin{quote}
abortion, busing, swollen welfare rolls, crime and punishment and preservation of the Great American Automobile.\textsuperscript{157}
\end{quote}

Among the politicians of the Ad Hoc Committee the diminution of vital signs was equally noticeable. Although the arms embargo to the RUC could be taken to signify the opposite, the fact remained that they were frustrated at every turn in their attempts to establish the Committee as the American focus and referent for the Ulster Question. Thus it remained as an incongruity, a curiosity, adrift on the periphery of the Irish storm, and lacking both an ability to stay afloat to any real purpose, and the decency to sink.

\textsuperscript{156} ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} David Murray, 'An Irish-American Political Shibboleth is laid to Rest', \textit{New York Times}, 13 August 1977.
For those who held the position which the Ad Hoc Committee coveted, the Four Horsemen, the period under review was virtually their period. Not only did they over-shadow their domestic opposition on the Ulster Question, but they also proved strong enough to move, in varying degrees, the President and, effectively, three governments. Yet, by the end of 1980, it was tempting to view their efforts and achievements as no more than a lamp briefly lit. With Carter about to depart the White House, and the Democrats less than the power they had been in Congress, it was no longer realistic to expect that their position of international influence on Northern Ireland could be maintained.

As a consequence, the Government of the US, and still more that of Britain, may be left somewhat at peace, at least until 1984, for there is no question that both were harried on occasions by the Four Horsemen. Nevertheless, the irritation which this no doubt engendered should not distort the fact that the outstanding achievements of the period were initiated and worked only secondarily by the Governments concerned. They were necessary parties, even principals, but left to their own devices they would never have produced the outcomes for which the period 1976-80 will be remembered. To reach this conclusion is not to say that these outcomes should be regarded as other than modest steps in terms of the pre-requisites for a settlement in Northern Ireland nor, correspondingly, is it to devalue them in terms of the traditional attitudes of the US towards the troubles in Ireland.

It might be claimed, of course, that the activism which this change required hardly betokened 'bystanding', or that there were sufficient incidents in the period which would gainsay its description as one of benevolence, but to do so would be to concentrate unduly upon certain levels or areas at the expense of others. It would be to allow the manifest activism on the part of the Four Horsemen to obscure the more significant outcome which was to change in the alignment of US interest to a more responsible, generally more passive, but potentially active position.

While there were occasions when the course of settlement in Northern Ireland was retarded, they were literally that – occasions, irregular events which did not denote the predominance of a pattern of activity which was inimical to the future of Northern Ireland. Moreover,
they were overtaken by developments of such substance which could not but aid in the eventual reconstruction of the province. The measure of the American Dimension between 1976 and 1980 must be Edward Kennedy. In (say) February 1972, it would have seemed probable to an informed observer in Belfast, Dublin, London or Washington that the Senator from Massachusetts would continue to be closely identified with this aspect of the Ulster Question. But it would not have seemed remotely possible then that, within a handful of years, he would have figured so prominently in the transformation of American interest to the point where it could be described as cautious, sympathetic and well disposed to both the Catholics and Protestants of Northern Ireland. It was of no great matter that these characteristics were relative, or that the understanding from which they sprung came, as Yeats' peace, 'dropping slow': in the previous period they were barely in evidence at all. Moreover they created, even if briefly, not only a greater field of choice for the Irish in the United States, but also better hopes for those in Northern Ireland.
CHAPTER TWELVE

THE 'OLD' COMMONWEALTH

CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, AND AUSTRALIA.
The three remaining 'old' Commonwealth countries of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are considered jointly, not because they related to Northern Ireland collectively as part of the British Commonwealth, but for three other reasons. The first is that each has been the terminus for significant Irish emigration; the second is that each was active, in an undistinguished way, vis-a-vis the current troubles in Northern Ireland; and the third is that because of the common British imperial heritage it is convenient to group them together. The fact that they are in addition to being 'old', also predominantly white, is a coincidence in terms of this inquiry.

Within this tripartite grouping, each country was marginally significant for a different reason. In descending order, the first of these was Canada because of several attempts there to supply arms and finance to both Catholic and Protestant paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland. The first evidence of this supportive activity was seen in August 1969 with an announcement by some 150 Toronto Irish-Canadians that they intended sending money, which could be used to buy guns if necessary, to the women and children of the (Catholic) Bogside in Derry. Thereafter the networks of the US-based Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAID) and the Irish Republican Clubs were extended to Canada but support activities on behalf of both the Official and Provisional movements were thought by observers to be limited by the mainly Protestant complexion of the estimated two million Canadians of Irish descent. Nevertheless, in 1972 (admittedly a 'high' year in relation to international interest in Northern Ireland), it was reported that 'about $40,000' had been forward by NORAID. (It has not proved possible to obtain other reliable estimates of financial aid.)

1 Of the five countries of the 'old' Commonwealth, Britain has been excluded from this chapter for obvious reasons, and South Africa has been excluded because it is no longer a member of the Commonwealth. However, there is a reference to a link between Provisional Sinn Fein and South Africa in Chapter 13, p. 541).

2 Daily Telegraph, 20 August 1969.

3 Irish Independent, 13 May 1974.
In the matter of supplying arms the available record is slightly more forthcoming. Judging by this, 1973 and 1974 were the years in which would-be gun-runners were most active. And the police most diligent. Three arms shipments intended for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) were intercepted – one on the Canadian side of the Canada/United States border, and the other two as part of a combined operation involving Canadian and Irish authorities, in Toronto and Dublin, respectively.

The total amount of arms involved was small, but in each case consistent with the numbers recovered in several other seizure operations originating in the United States: 15 rifles and ammunition in the border case; 5 sten-guns, 12 hand guns, about 18,000 rounds of ammunition, and 10 hand grenades, in Toronto; and 17 rifles, 29,000 rounds of ammunition, and 60 pounds of gunpowder in Dublin.

Of particular interest in the border interception was the American affiliations of Joseph Myles, a resident of Michigan, who was described by the Canadian authorities as an 'executive officer of an American organization Northern Irish Aid' (sic). For his pains he, and at least three accomplices, were sentenced to jail terms ranging from 17 months to two years.

As regards the combined operation, two aspects were notable. The first concerned the co-operation between the Canadian and Irish

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4 Times, 7 June 1975.
5 Toronto Star, 17 July 1973, pp. 1 and 2. The Dublin seizure was made at the docks, upon containers loaded from a British freighter, the Manchester Vigour.
6 See Chapter 10, pp. 400-06.
7 Times, 7 June 1975.
9 Times, 7 June 1975.
10 ibid. According to information received from official sources, seven 'Irish immigrants' went to trial in Toronto in 1975 on charges of conspiring to export, and attempting to export, a machine gun, 20 semi-automatic rifles, 10 sten-guns and more than 8,000 rounds of ammunition. Unfortunately, the writer has not been able to establish for certain whether the Myles, et al. case was part of this general attempt, or a separate attempt entirely. But in the writer's opinion, it was probably the former.
authorities over a three month period, while the second was that the shipment was intended for the Official IRA. This was somewhat curious, because that organization had unilaterally declared a cease-fire on 29 May 1972. However, it appeared not to denote a renewed campaign of violence by the Officials. According to Commissioner Edward Lysyk of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), investigations revealed that the man responsible for the attempt, one John Patrick Daniel Murphy, was engaged in a 'lone operation'. His efforts, therefore, were probably to be explained by the Official IRA's need, as a paramilitary organization, to maintain an armoury for self-defence and in case a situation arose in which it would need to reconsider engaging once more in an armed struggle. There is no evidence that it has done so since. Thus, with regard to both wings of the IRA, the influence of the Canadian connection upon their ability to operate in Northern Ireland was minimal.

The same was true in respect of the Loyalist paramilitary organisations, although official estimates to concede that 'one or two' successful attempts have been undertaken to supply arms out of Canada. In addition, at least two attempts were unsuccessful. Both were related and both involved consignments which were destined for the Ulster Defence Association, either for the purpose of training members on the Yorkshire moors, or for use in Northern Ireland itself.

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13 Sentenced to 18 months imprisonment in Dublin, on 18 November 1974.
14 Toronto Star, 17 July 1973, p. 1. In England, the Daily Telegraph was not impressed with Lysyk's modest assessment — it ignored his comments and carried the headline, 'Canadian Arms Ring Broken' (Daily Telegraph, 18 July 1973).
16 Irish Times, 19 August 1974.
As was the case with the attempts in aid of Republican elements, these Loyalist ventures were of a small scale and included World War II-vintage arms (e.g. Sten-guns). In common with the Murphy attempt they were also frustrated by international (British and Canadian) police co-operation — involving the Hampshire police at the Southampton docks and the RCMP in Toronto — which led to the arrest of two Canadians and three Britons.

Subsequent to these events, there is little evidence of Canadian involvement in the affairs of Northern Ireland. In 1977 a claim was made by one Jim Kennedy that Canada was being used by Loyalist extremists as a base for gun-running with the knowledge of the Canadian authorities. However, since Kennedy was at the time in an immigration jail in Vancouver and was thought to be not Kennedy, but James McCann, an IRA fugitive, the accuracy of his statement was open to considerable scepticism. Yet it, or at least not that part of it which referred to the continuing role of Canada as an arms source — could not be dismissed out of hand. In Dublin, just three months later, Donald C. Jamieson, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, made a statement in which he admitted that, because of his country's long undefended border, it was possible that illegal arms movements to Northern Ireland were taking place. As he put it 'sometimes these things do happen.' Notwithstanding this, he took care to emphasise that his Government had made every effort to counter such traffic.

17 The arms recovered in Toronto were 9 M1 rifles, 13 sten-gun housings, sten-gun ammunition clips, and 2,000 rounds of rifle ammunition. (Times, 9 April 1974). The quantity of arms recovered at Southampton was not cited; however, an idea may be gained from evidence that it was found within a box and a trunk within a container which also held other items (Irish Times, 19 August 1974).

18 Daily Telegraph, 18 April 1974. Unlike the Murphy case, there was a 9-10 day delay between the Southampton and Toronto seizure operations.


20 Ibid.

21 Irish Times, 7 September 1977.
Jamieson then passed to a subject that was quite topical — in view of the Carter initiative which had been taken only a week before. Canada, he remarked, would consider 'most sympathetically' any proposals, including investment for jobs, for its participation in a suggested solution to the Irish problem. It was not a momentous announcement, nor was it reported widely or with much comment. But in its own way the Jamieson statement was, like the Carter statement in relation to US foreign policy, a cautious but perceptible departure from previous Canadian attitudes and policies.

In 1972, these had been expressed by Mitchell Sharp, Minister for External Affairs, in terms which were sympathetic and decidedly negative.

As a friend of the Irish and British peoples, we can only deplore the present situation in which violence and emotion feed on each other. We sympathize with those who are suffering and we urge that all concerned should abstain from lawlessness and violence, no matter what emotions are involved. But we cannot solve other people's problems for them and we cannot intervene in internal affairs of either the British or Irish Governments, nor would it be helpful to try to judge from outside rights and wrongs of particular incidents which should in any case be seen in the broader context of the whole situation in that area.

Sharp's statement, therefore, seemed to imply that the Canadian Government would not exactly have been disappointed had Dr Patrick Hillery (the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, to whom he was responding) omitted to visit Ottawa on this occasion. From the reports of this time, it was the most disappointing reply Hillery received on his international mission following Bloody Sunday.

Perhaps no more could have been expected from the Canadian Government. There was, and remains, a conflict of cultures and political aspirations in Canada which challenges the country's national unity. It could not, then or now, appear to take sides in Ireland without incurring domestic wrath from at least one quarter. For this reason, the studious avoidance

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22 ibid.

of the Ulster Question in 1972 was inevitable, and the modification to it some five years later, the parameter within which any Canadian Government might be expected to act.

New Zealand was not so constrained, but neither was its Irish community very active. Apart from a visit in 1972 by Miss Ann Hope of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, there was little of a connection with the troubles. At the Government level it was not until 1977 that they drew any official reaction from New Zealand. When it came, however, it was most appropriate for a country which was as far away from Northern Ireland as it was possible for one predominantly European country to be from another. And it was unique.

It originated with an idea put to New Zealand's Prime Minister, Robert Muldoon, by the 'Peace People' leader Miss Mairead Corrigan, during the International Convention for Peace Action in Wellington, in February 1977. Briefly described, it took the form of an agreement by the New Zealand Government to allow the country to be the terminus of an 'escape route' for former members of the various paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland.

The rationale of this move was cloudy, but nevertheless appears to have been the result of an initial decision taken by Muldoon. According to him, it was a humanitarian gesture in a refugee situation. Others, commentators familiar with his family background as outlined in his book, *The Rise and Fall of a Young Turk*, pointed to his Irish connection — a grandfather from Linaskea, Co. Fermanagh, who became a Methodist missionary and travelled to New Zealand to convert the inhabitants. Still others, members of his personal staff and close cabinet colleagues, were of the opinion that Muldoon was simply so impressed with Corrigan's sincerity and the merit of her case, that he

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25 *ibid.*
agreed to do something without worrying overmuch about the details.\textsuperscript{26}

Whatever the reason, the subsequent period saw a minor controversy created by the 'escape route' decision, and many indications that the New Zealand Government's decision had not been thought out with any thoroughness. Nearly all of these indications stemmed from the inconsistencies and lack of clarity which pertained to those who were to avail themselves of the new exit from Northern Ireland.

Under the New Zealand immigration regulations then in force, Northern Irish immigrants were covered by the same restrictions as other United Kingdom citizens. They had to have a skill in high demand, be under 45, healthy, and have no more than two children. Anyone who had served a one-year prison sentence, or more, was a prohibited immigrant. Hence, the first and most glaring inconsistency concerned the type of people who were to be allowed into New Zealand, arose when they were classified by Corrigan as follows:

They might be boys who were 10 when the violence started, and 17 when caught with a gun. There are also men who have never really been involved but live in areas where they have been pressed into violence.\textsuperscript{27}

In Belfast, however, Mrs Betty Williams, another of the founders of the Northern Ireland Peace Movement, slightly complicated matters by stating:

Of course, we shall not be sending known criminals or wanted people, but people who genuinely wish to make a new start and have paid their debt to society.\textsuperscript{28}

Thus the picture that was presented was of once budding gunmen, others who had unwillingly been compromised by the situation around them, and rehabilited former paramilitaries, all of whom were seeking refuge on the other side of the world. If they had been convicted, many would have

\textsuperscript{26} This is a composite conclusion drawn by the writer from a number of interviews, including one with the Rt. Hon. Brian Talboys, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Wellington, November 1977.

\textsuperscript{27} Wellington Evening Post, 21 February 1977, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{28} Times, 22 February 1977.
received prison sentences in excess of one year and would, by virtue of that, have been ineligible to immigrate.

In London, the New Zealand High Commission provided a hint of how this situation might be resolved. It stressed, *inter alia*, that anyone with terrorist convictions or with a prison sentence of more than one year would need a further dispensation. (Presumably, as no other dispensation had been made explicit, this related to the 'dispensation' which applied when people with prison sentences of less than one year were accepted as immigrants). In other words, one criterion, was to be waived to enable the 'escape route' to operate. Nearly two months later, Air Commodore Frank Gill, the Minister for Immigration, confirmed that certain normal criteria for immigration were to be suspended in this regard.

But this still did not settle matters with regard to the type of people who were to be admitted. In June 1977, some three months after the first applicant had applied, Gill contradicted previous statements by commenting:

> What we've said all along is that the immigrant applicants would include people who have been *detained* by the authorities *but not convicted*. [emphasis added]

And there the matter has rested, with no subsequent statements or other evidence which might have clarified the situation one way or another.

On the question of who was to be admitted, among the types of people seeking sanctuary in New Zealand, an uncertainty was also evident. Initially, as Corrigan has indicated, they were to be juveniles and young men. This was reiterated by Muldoon in February 1977, after he had obtained Cabinet approval for the 'escape route' scheme, although he then seemed more inclined towards the former by his use of the word 'youths'.

32 *Wellington Dominion*, 27 June 1977, p. 3.
33 *Times*, 22 February 1977.
following month Gill also used the same terminology and referred to the 15 to 17 years age group.  

Yet in May, the Minister for Immigration announced that the Government had changed its criteria from single people to families. But even that was not completely true. One week later, Mr Peter McLaughlin, a spokesman for the peace movement, was still talking of the 'escape route' in terms of 'juvenile members of para-military groups' and 'youngsters' without any mention of families. Again there was no explicit resolution of the matter, except that the reports of Muldoon's surprise visit to Belfast in June 1977, made no reference to an age criterion but did refer to the fact that families were to be included. By then, also, the scheme had been extended to include people who, for their own safety, were living across the Border in the Irish Republic, or in England. According to these developments it was, therefore, a quite different scheme to that which had been announced in Wellington in February 1977.

About the only aspect of it which had remained unchanged was the number of people involved, and this certainly placed the entire scheme in a proper perspective. 'A handful' was the most usual expression used by the New Zealand Government — by which was meant not five, nor even ten, but up to twenty. Obviously, this was not a great number in terms of even such a relatively localised conflict as that which existed in Northern Ireland, and was appreciably less than the

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38 Ibid.
40 Christchurch Press, 12 March 1977, p. 1; and Interview with Air Commodore T.F. Gill, Minister for Immigration, Wellington, 18 November 1977 (hereafter cited as Gill Interview).
420 Vietnamese refugees New Zealand had taken between 1973 and 1977.\textsuperscript{41}

Two reasons accounted for this. The first was to be found in Muldoon's own description of his Government's decision on the 'escape route' as a 'humanitarian gesture'\textsuperscript{42} — an emphasis which was made again some months later by the Minister for Immigration.\textsuperscript{43} The second was, also according to Gill, the British Government's probable refusal to allow New Zealand to take larger numbers.\textsuperscript{44} How or why it would react in such a curious way was not explained, but it is recorded here for the purpose of showing that at least one member of the New Zealand Cabinet accepted its validity.

Overall, the restriction on numbers was probably fortuitous. It rendered acceptable the minor controversy it created in New Zealand — in which, \textit{inter alia}, many saw a contradiction between dispensing with established immigration policy for the benefit of former 'terrorists' and the continued repatriation of Polynesian islanders who had overstayed the period for which their visas were valid. It also minimised the apprehensions of those New Zealanders who saw in the 'escape route' only the importation of a microcosm of the Ulster conflict.\textsuperscript{45} And finally, it was less of an injury to those 'normal' applicants for immigration to New Zealand who had been rejected only to see former outlaws among their fellow-countrymen accepted.

As a 'gesture' it has been well nigh impossible to evaluate. Information on those that availed themselves of an antipodean sanctuary has been jealously guarded by the New Zealand Government. But nevertheless it stands as an innovative, if somewhat limited, development which

\textsuperscript{41} Gill Interview.

\textsuperscript{42} Wellington Evening Post, 21 February 1977, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{43} Gill Interview.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{45} Gill admitted that even those former paramilitaries who had rehabilitated, in the formal sense of committing no further crime after their release from prison, were probably still sympathisers of the respective cause they had served. (Gill Interview).
Notwithstanding this, it was an example which appeared not to be followed by New Zealand's closest international neighbour, Australia. According to one report, Muldoon 'confronted' Andrew Peacock, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, at a ministerial meeting of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris with 'the suggestion that Australia should follow New Zealand's lead.' Peacock, according to Muldoon, saw sense in New Zealand's plan, but gave no firm commitment and said that he would refer the latter's suggestion to the Australian Minister for Immigration. Judging from the lack of subsequent developments, there the matter must have rested.

Australia, therefore, of the three 'old' Commonwealth countries considered in this chapter, has the least record of involvement at the official level. Indeed, apart from the arrest, and subsequent visa revocation, of a visiting Provisional Sinn Fein official in 1979, the Peacock referral seems to be the extent to which the Australian Government was at all forthcoming on Northern Ireland.

Non-government response was only slightly more substantial. Limited fund raising for the Provisional movement was undertaken by the

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46 The peace movement claimed to have approached other Governments, among which were probably those of Canada and the United States (Daily Telegraph, 21 June 1977), and to have obtained the agreement of some to accept immigrants along the lines of New Zealand, but it refused to name them (Financial Times, 21 June 1977).

47 Wellington Dominion, 27 June 1977, p. 3.

48 ibid.

49 Phillip McCullough was in Australia as the guest of an Irish Republican organisation. He had previously been jailed for 18 months in Belfast for causing an explosion which destroyed a telephone booth. This matter was omitted from his visa application and he was, therefore, required to leave Australia voluntarily or face deportation (Sydney Morning Herald, 25 July 1979, p. 1).

50 In 1972, Gough Whitlam, leader of the Federal Opposition (and later that year, Prime Minister), provided a contrast to his colleagues on the other side of the House by stating that Britain was causing the 'catastrophic' situation in Northern Ireland by not grasping 'the nettle of the situation', and by not realising that 'military means of suppressing street demonstrations will not work' (Times, 7 February 1972).
organisation, Green Cross of Australia. In addition, an Irish Republican Information Bulletin was published by a Provisional Sinn Fein cumann in Melbourne. As the McCullough visit indicated, links with Irish Provisionals (and Provisional sympathisers) have been reciprocated. Probably the most notable of the latter was the April 1975 tour of Australia by James Kelly, Vice-Chairman of Aontach Eireann and former chairman of the Irish Civil Rights Association in Dublin (whose Irish Army captain of Arms Crisis fame, attacked security legislation in the Irish Republic and 'supported the IRA as an inevitable and classic revolutionary group. For its part, the Official movement was represented by the Irish Socialist Republican Clubs.

Outside these activities, which really had significance only for the already-converted, the ability of the Irish-Australian community to mobilise support for Republican objectives in Northern Ireland has been minimal. The greatest successes have been registered in the area of protest, and that mainly in 1972. In that year, following Bloody Sunday, some 5,000 were reported to have marched through downtown Sydney, while in Melbourne, the Seamen's union refused to provide docking facilities for the British liner Canberra.

These events were not part of a pattern — they were not even repeated in Australia in the remaining years of the decade. Despite the large number of Australians who are of Irish descent — one in six according to many estimates — the Ulster Question but lapped at the coast of Australia, nearly half the world away. It was thus significant that in excess of some three million people should react so passively to it.

But then the whole issue did not really prove a disturbance, nor extract more than a reflexive response to any of the countries considered.

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51 As of 1981 the writer had not been able to obtain information as to the amounts involved.
52 See Chapter 1, pp. 54-6.
53 *Sydney Australian*, 3 April 1975.
Why this should be in relation to the Irish communities in Australia and New Zealand is an inquiry more properly undertaken in another discipline. Yet if on this single point, one is permitted to venture a reason based on personal experience and observation of the societies concerned, it would be that conveyed by Hugh Moran when describing the reactions of his father, an Irish-Australian, to the civil war in Ireland when he returned there in 1922:

For him this was the final stage of his disillusionment. He could not understand it. So back he turned gladly to Australia. Between him and Ireland there was now more than a world of miles. There were centuries, aeons, the span of a man's struggle and triumph in a new land.56

56 Hugh Moran, Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon (London: 1939), pp. 407-8, as cited in Oliver MacDonagh, 'Time's Revenge and Revenge's Time: A View of Anglo-Irish Relations', Anglo-Irish Studies IV (1979): 10. As Professor MacDonagh has recorded his indebtedness to Professor K.S. Inglis for this quotation, so the writer acknowledges the former for first making him aware of it.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

AS AN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

Part I: The External Contacts Of, and Influences
Upon, the Paramilitary Organisations and
Other Non-State Actors in the Northern
Ireland Conflict.
Many times since 1968 the circus of carnage which the situation in Ulster has often resembled has left observers so alienated that they were unable to explain what their senses described. In general this resulted from a confrontation with conditions which were unaccustomed to the point of being foreign, as this recent account illustrated.

Anyone accustomed to wandering around the countries of the Third World would find little in Ulster that is unfamiliar. Guerrillas, suspended democracy, armies and gunmen on the streets, unthinkable behaviour in prisons, questionable and questioned frontiers, squalid housing, grinding poverty, indifferent multi-nationals, once vibrant economies in visible decline — these are the essential characteristics of much of the contemporary world. The uniqueness of Northern Ireland is that it lies, not south of the equator, but just off the shores of Britain.1

In particular it was a consequence of the inability to understand why the United Kingdom — its political system stable and democratic, its wealth distributed reasonably well, its society open and obsessively moderate — should include within its boundaries organisations, commonly denoted terrorist and paramilitary, which displayed an almost autistic fury across their whole range of actions. Many observers, therefore, adopted the habit of mind which Joseph Conrad so clearly manifested in The Secret Agent over seventy years ago in relation to an act of anarchist terrorism:

a blood-stained inanity of so fatuous a kind that it was impossible to fathom its origins by any reasonable or even unreasonable process of thought.2

Since 1968 it is obvious that the 'circus' and the concomitant refusals to countenance rational explanations for certain violent phenomena in Northern Ireland have been matched by extravagant propositions concerning the international dimensions of the conflict.

And in turn these propositions have struck an answering chord in many putative strategists and others who were attracted to studies of violence which have earned the appellation 'international terrorism'. This is not to claim that the conflict in Northern Ireland was, or is, without its influences from outside the Six Counties — the American Connection refutes this. But the evidence to hand suggests a far different picture than Walter Laqueuer's multinational, corporate view of an international terrorist operation:

... planned in West Germany by Palestine Arabs, executed in Israel by terrorists recruited in Japan with weapons acquired in Italy but manufactured in Russia, supplied by an Algerian diplomat, and financed with Libyan money.3

Moreover, it is the purpose of this and the succeeding chapter to challenge the assertions that Northern Ireland was, by virtue of its geographical position, of crucial strategic importance to Western Europe; that the international contacts of the paramilitary organisations, particularly the Irish Republican Army (IRA), denoted both a conspiracy with (essentially) communist interests to expose Western Europe from this position, and the existence of an international terrorist network in the North. The reality, it will be argued, reflected these elements with neither the sharpness nor intensity which the principal protagonists claim.

While an inquiry into the strategic significance of Northern Ireland may not appear to be a strict requirement of this chapter, one has been briefly undertaken for two reasons. The first is that many of the claims made in respect of the conflict are in the wider context of the security of Western Europe. And the second is that the outcome of this inquiry will support the body of arguments which will be developed in relation to the contacts and influences described above.

Perhaps the most extreme formulation of the conflict, and hence of the significance of Northern Ireland, was provided by Jeremy Harwood, who saw it in terms of the desecration of 'everything that civilised man holds

dear' by the forces of 'the new Anti-Christ'.

However a colleague of his in the Monday Club — a group of self-described Radical Right-Wingers — resisted the temptation to see it in such apocalyptic terms, but only just. John Biggs-Davison found the situation in Northern Ireland a forerunner to the downfall of Europe: 'First subvert Ireland, then destroy Britain.' But with further time to reflect upon the potentialities he became more expansive. As he told his constituency

We win in Londonderry or we fight in London. Appeased by Conservative ministers and the plaudits of the socialist Opposition, the IRA grows more dangerous and better armed ... The 1930s have come again ... the Ulster war is an urban guerrilla rehearsal for Western Europe and first of all for Britain.

So concerned with this issue did Biggs-Davison become that in 1976 he produced a paper under the auspices of the Foreign Affairs Research Institute in which he claimed that:

Ireland is another of NATO's exposed flanks.
The terrorist aim is a European 'Cuba' across the Western Approaches to Britain ... and is also a threat to NATO.

Historically, Britain would have been starved out by the U-boats in two world wars without ports in Ireland.

If ... revolutionaries there were to be successful they could deny the West port access, over flying rights and an effective early warning system.


5 ibid.

6 John Biggs-Davison, 'The speech the People's Democracy tried to drown', ibid. (The speech itself was an address to the Queen's University, Belfast, Monday Club's inaugural meeting on 1 December 1969), Jeremy Harwood, Jonathon Guiness, and John Biggs-Davison, *Ireland — Our Cuba?* (London: Monday Club, n.d.), pages not numbered, hereafter cited as Harwood, Guiness, and Biggs-Davison, *Ireland — Our Cuba?).

7 As reported in the *Times*, 19 July 1972, p. 2.
Northern Ireland offers Britain scope for dispersal in the event of a nuclear exchange. In a war at sea lasting longer than 90 days, the airfields and harbours of Northern Ireland would be essential for the protection of North Atlantic convoys.8

And thus

the separation of the province from Great Britain would ... introduce an area of instability and danger into the defences of Western Europe and the Western Approaches. Ulster might become even more of a magnet for subversives of every hue. She could not be quarantined from the Republic or from Great Britain. There would be a widening threat of 'law intensity' conflict, backed by the resources of an alien hostile power: the Soviet bloc.9

He was not alone, nor indeed, without much benefit as was provided by a staunchly Conservative tradition. In 1872 Lord Salisbury had identified the survival of the imperial system with continued British control over Ireland:

Ireland must be kept, like India, at all hazards: by persuasion if possible; if not by force.10

In 1978, with the empire virtually dissolved, the senior Conservative spokesman on Northern Ireland, Airey Neave, joined his junior colleague with a more modest claim: the province was to remain British for 'the implications' it held not only for national defence but also because 'Britain's role in NATO depended in part on having ports and bases in Northern Ireland.'11 Constituting as they did the views of two principal spokesmen of the Conservative Party, these opinions must be considered seriously, albeit critically. But in discharging this obligation it becomes clear that they were fanciful rather than solidly based in political and strategic reality. The positions adopted simply did not account for the decay of strategic wisdom which was extant in 1945, nor were they supported with evidence which would justify them.

8 John Biggs-Davison, 'The Strategic Implications for the West of the International Links Of The IRA In Ireland', A Foreign Affairs Research Institute Paper, No. 17/1976 (hereafter cited as Biggs-Davison, 'Strategic Implications, etc.'), p. 5.
9 ibid., p. 6.
11 As reported in the Irish Times, 21 August 1978, p. 8.
If the claims of Biggs-Davison and Neave are excepted, there appears to be an interesting omission from other British contributions to the debate on Northern Ireland since 1968: the strategic 'necessity' to hold the province has almost passed without mention. And this applies particularly to arguments presented from what could reasonably be regarded as the same side of the left-right political divide. In the main, neither the Ulster Unionists nor the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) have used strategic arguments in support of their respective positions. As recently as February 1980 the Ulster Unionist MP, Enoch Powell, and the Supreme Commander of the UDA, Andy Tyrie, wrote articles for a Guardian Weekly feature on Ulster without in any way invoking such considerations. Furthermore, the only occasion on which they appear to have received any prominence in official (government) deliberation was the 1972 discussion paper, and that stated no more than:

... Northern Ireland should not offer a base for any external threat to the security of the United Kingdom.

It should be noted that this was the paper which first mentioned the 'Irish dimension'. It was an early expression of a Conservative Government's willingness to attempt an imaginative, even radical settlement to the Ulster Question. As was argued earlier, it also represented the Heath Government's acknowledgment that lasting peace in a politically divided Ireland might not be possible. It therefore contemplated the possibility of a united Ireland, and as the above passage confirmed, in strategic terms which were purely negative: there was no mention of over-flying rights, access to ports, the provision of bases, or, for the matter of that, the provision of any facility in time of war or emergency. Indeed, the British Government subsequently began a gradual run-down of its defence establishments in Northern Ireland. Hence, unless recourse

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12 Enoch Powell, 'Test of Britain's Will to be a Nation'; and Andy Tyrie, 'Independence is the Only Alternative', Guardian Weekly, 24 February 1980, p. 5.
14 See Chapter 2, p. 112-14.
15 Examples of which were given in Chapter 3, p. 172.
is made to a sort of Sherlock Holmes doctrine of strategy — whereby the significance of strategic considerations is (like the dog's bark) to be inferred from its absence — then it becomes apparent that British/Western European security was not seen as greatly dependent on what Northern Ireland had to offer.

Confirmation of this was also provided by the 1978 closure of the United States naval communication base at Clooney Park in Derry's Waterside, and its ancillary station at Benbradagh (near Dungiven) in the Sperrin Mountains. Since the early 1960s these facilities had reportedly provided both the VLF\textsuperscript{16} link with US nuclear submarines and an unspecified service to the National Security Agency's headquarters at Fort Meade, Maryland. Its role may also have included electronic intelligence based in part upon SOSUS\textsuperscript{17} and CAESAR\textsuperscript{18} networks laid between Iceland and Ireland.\textsuperscript{19} However, with the onset of satellite communication, the introduction of CAPTOR,\textsuperscript{20} and the development of a communications establishment at Thurso in Scotland, all operations from Clooney Park/Benbradagh ceased in 1977.\textsuperscript{21} With that event the US military presence in Ireland ceased. Later in conjunction with British statements and actions, it was again evident that no great strategic value attached to Northern Ireland.

\textsuperscript{16} Very Low Frequency — a signal-type commonly used to communicate with submerged submarines.

\textsuperscript{17} Sonor Surveillance System: a major fixed underwater passive acoustic submarine detection and classification system, comprising a series of hydrophones and special sonars linked by cable to shore-based installations that process received signals.

\textsuperscript{18} CAESAR: A system of bottom-mounted, upward-listening, interconnected sonars.


\textsuperscript{20} CAPTOR (encapsulated torpedo): A mine casing containing a US Mark 46 torpedo instead of ordinary explosive, thus permitting an attack at much greater range.

\textsuperscript{21} 'Spying from Sperrin', \textit{Hibernia}, 9 March 1978.
The significance of the international contacts of the paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland is not so easily dismissed. Neither, by the same token, is it so easily established. However, they may be regarded as having existed at two levels. The lower, or less important, of many cases it denoted no more than a loose association, or close proximity, which occasionally and temporarily matured into an actual meeting. It was as though the various organisations were agitated, as in Brownian motion, and that they were therefore subject to the probability of contact by virtue of existing as somewhat like particles in a common and restricted universe. When their paths, which seldom if ever obeyed the same compass, coincided, there was generally cause for concern as though it signified the conjunction of evil. In reflection upon such events, former Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave was of the opinion that 'alien influences' had been at work in the North-South Border region.22 Exactly what he meant by 'alien' was unclear, but he nevertheless could have pointed to a curious assortment of interested parties in support of his view.

It seems that once the situation in Northern Ireland had established its credentials as a conflict — i.e. as a shooting match — it attracted the attention and, it is alleged, the attendance of the acolytes of war. The appeal of some of these rested upon their past exploits, as with Otto Skorzeny, a former Nazi SS Colonel who was wanted for war crimes in his native Austria, and whose principal claim to notoriety was his leadership of the raid to rescue Mussolini after the fall of the Fascist Government in 1943. Twenty-eight years later he was linked with Ruairi O Bradaigh of Provisional Sinn Fein. Despite Skorzeny's apparent sympathy, however, the significance of his interest in the Northern conflict existed very largely in the collective imagination of the editorial staff of the Sunday Telegraph. All that that publication could muster to justify its article on him was an unconfirmed report of a meeting with O Bradaigh in Spain.23

22 Interview with Liam Cosgrave, Taoiseach from 1973-77, Dublin, 8 June 1978.
23 Sunday Telegraph, 31 October 1971, pp. 1 and 3.
Much later in the period under review, Protestant militants also came up with a World War II figure in support of their cause. In 1977 John McQuade, a former Chindit, claimed he had formed a secret 'army' that would 'seek out and destroy' the Provisional IRA in Ulster. Evidently he was unsuccessful; indeed his only success may have been in securing a lengthy two-column coverage in the Daily Telegraph. McQuade in any case was a Northerner and his enterprise was probably more notable for what it negatively emphasised — that reports of foreign interest generally related to the IRA. But they did not always concern themselves with figures from the past.

According to Father O'Neill of St Eugene's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Derry, two North Koreans and an Algerian (not to mention a number of Englishmen), were present among the Provisional gunmen of Creggan and the Bogside in 1972. In 1977 a further measure of notoriety was added to the Republican cause with disclosures made in the Old Bailey of approaches made to a former member of the Parachute Regiment and Angolan mercenary recruiter, John Banks, for the supply of arms. As with so many of the instances cited in this and the following chapter it was, for the IRA, an indiscriminate move. Everybody and everything ended up in the wrong place: Banks in the service of the Special Branch; British Provisionals in the Old Bailey, and later, gaol; and the arms in (probably) Antwerp.

However the IRA has not been without its 'successes'. According to David Barzilay, it was 'known' that the organisation had attracted two 'foreign' electronics experts to work upon sophisticated trigger mechanisms for a bombing campaign to be conducted in Northern Ireland. He also claimed that these experts were not to be found in the North but 'in the South', an allegation which appeared to be based on unspecified information provided to him by the British Army. Nevertheless, for

24 The name given to Wingate's special guerrilla force in Burma.
those who were convinced that the Republic was a 'haven for terrorists'
one subsequent allegation put the matter beyond doubt and confirmed
Barzilay's cryptic reference to such people being 'very well
protected'.

In his machinations to avoid a United States deportation order,
a former Provo 'active', Peter McMullen, stated to the Boston Globe
that the IRA had received training and encouragement from a regular
Irish Army colonel in precisely the same type (photo-cell and radio-
controlled) of explosive devices which Barzilay referred to the previous
year. He also claimed that some of the electronic components were
provided by an Irish television manufacturer sympathetic to the cause.
Naturally the Irish Army rejected these allegations out of hand, while
McMullen, for his part, denied knowledge of the officer's identity.
It is difficult, therefore, to draw from the evidence a conclusion of
any strength. Hence the most balanced which could be stated, of the
period 1969-74 anyway, may be that of Lieutenant-Colonel George Styles,
the commander of the British Army bomb disposal teams in Northern
Ireland in that period:

... really we never could prove or disprove the rumours
about foreign mercenaries. But, pressed to an opinion,
I'd say it's more than likely they existed ...

Notwithstanding this, one conclusion which may be drawn is that it
is not always helpful to look beyond the borders of the United Kingdom,

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28 Irish Times, 28 September 1978.
29 ibid.
30 ibid.
31 Boston Globe, 7 September 1979, p. 2.
32 ibid.
33 Doubts about the reliability of McMullen's revelations also contribute
to this difficulty. One interview source advised the writer that McMullen's
statements, which appeared as a series in the Boston Globe, were a mixture
of truth and falsehood. Unfortunately, without the several articles on
hand, the interviewee was unable to specify exactly what party should or
should not be accepted. However the writer has found several inconsis-
tencies in McMullen's accounts, the most important of which will be noted
in the course of this and the following chapter, wherever McMullen's
claims are referred to.
34 George Styles, Bombs Have No Pity: My War Against Terrorism (London:
William Luscombe, 1975), p.111 (hereafter cited as Styles, Bombs Have No
Pity).
nor even the island of Ireland, for instances of external links to the 'troubles'. Strictly speaking, of course, the Republic is a foreign country in relation to the United Kingdom, but given the unique relationship which exists between it, Great Britain, and Northern Ireland, it may seem a contrivance to classify as international or external linkages from the Republic and Great Britain into Northern Ireland. Also, it might be argued that, in this instance, North-South distinctions are meaningless. Provisionals on either side of the Border belong to the same organisation, and both the British and Irish Governments have recognised this. Further, that it would involve an unnecessary and meaningless division of labour to impose a North-South framework upon an analysis of the contacts between both wings of the IRA and various organisations in Britain. Yet such an approach (which regards Irish and British contacts as external) does serve one very useful purpose: it goes some little distance towards disposing of the notion that the linkages to the conflict were all to Irish or alien influences; that there were not also British influences at work. This view, it will be argued, can only be sustained if Britons who took their political inspiration from (say) Marx or Mao were held to have forfeited their nationality. This is not to claim that the role of such local groups as will be considered was significant, rather that they existed, and that to exclude them would result in a distortion of the analysis herein undertaken.

About one million people of Irish birth, and many more of Irish extraction, live in Britain. Among them both factions of the IRA have attempted to establish political organisations to organise fund-raising, social events, demonstrations and propaganda, but without notable success. Some of these activities have been restricted by the Prevention of Terrorism legislation under which support for, or soliciting by a proscribed organisation is illegal. However, a number of organisations sympathetic to the IRA have managed to exist—such as Provisional Sinn Fein, Clann na hEireann (loyal to the Officials), and the Prisoners Aid Committee. The effectiveness of each of these organisations, and the splinter groups which their internal tensions occasionally generated, was

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nevertheless limited. Disunity and a revulsion against the violence in both Northern Ireland and on the mainland ensured their rejection by the majority of the Irish community in Britain, who felt that its standing was endangered.

Partly as a consequence of this and partly as a matter of strategy, Provisional IRA supporters also attempted to find common cause with small non-Irish groups in Britain which shared its basic aim of securing the withdrawal of the British Army from Northern Ireland. Although they failed in their attempts to get support from the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign, which argued against a British military presence in the province from a radical pacifist position, some was given by the Troops Out Movement, formed in September 1973, to campaign mainly within the trade union movement to make withdrawal a demand of the British working people.

In addition, the International Marxist Group (IMG), the International Socialists, and other small Trotskyist and ultra-left groups which formed the hard-core support for the Troops Out Movement, generally supported the Provisionals as a supposedly 'anti-imperialist' force, but in practice they also criticised the IRA's more indiscriminate acts of violence, particularly in Britain. So far as the IRA has been concerned the value of their support was, in any event, questionable. At best it was lent by groups whose fissile tendencies were frequently in evidence and whose efforts in support of the Republican cause consisted of single-issue campaigns which exhibited no great staying power.

Two reasons were primarily responsible for this state of affairs. The first stemmed from the British revolutionary-left conviction, reinforced by successive collapses of authority, that Northern Ireland was Britain's Achilles heel and that it must fall to revolutionary forces.

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before the same process can succeed on the mainland. Thus there was less interest in the revolutionary merits of the Northern Ireland situation than in the instructions it provided for future British revolutionaries when the time came for them to act. And the second reason even questioned that likelihood, as Peter Shipley observed in 1976:

British revolutionaries seem little inclined at the present time to engage seriously in that most characteristic form of modern city-based revolutionism, urban guerrilla warfare. There is much discussion of terrorism in other parts of the world, mainly to learn from its mistakes as a part of revolutionary strategy; there has also been a reaction against the horrific campaigns of terror carried out by Irish extremists ...

Of course it was frequently suggested that these groups were in league with the established Communist parties in Ireland and Britain, and hence that the sinister hand of the Kremlin guided their activities. Certainly Irish and British Communists saw Ireland as a classic victim of British imperialism, no different in essence from British colonies in other continents, but their assessments of the troubles in the North met with problems. In particular, Communists and Marxists had the difficulty of reconciling their 'imperialist' interpretation (implying a continuing struggle between British 'imperialists' and 'oppressed Irish') with the conflict between two separate local communities. Their objective therefore was to replace sectarian with class conflict, although the results were often the opposite of what was intended, as Conor Cruise O'Brien pointed to:

The effect of their efforts, gestures and language ... has been to raise the level of sectarian consciousness. They have encouraged the Catholics and helped them to win important and long-overdue reforms. They have frightened and angered Protestants and if their efforts could be continued on the same lines and with the same kind of

38 Shipley, Revolutionaries In Modern Britain, pp. 24, 118-19 and 123.
39 ibid., p. 215.
success, they would bring to the people of the province and the island, not class-revolution but sectarian civil war. And in fact, even at present, language and gestures which are subjectively revolutionary but have appeal only within one sectarian community, are objectively language and gestures of sectarian civil war.  

The outbreak of the current disturbances, which split the IRA, did however have the opposite effect on Irish Communists. In March 1970, the old Communist Party of Northern Ireland merged with the Irish Worker's Party in the Republic to form the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI). Although it favours an eventually united Ireland, the CPI took a cautious line on partition in deference to the predominantly Protestant complexion of its Northern Irish membership. It criticised the Provisional IRA's campaign for destroying any immediate hope of a united, non-sectarian, working-class movement, and by implication recognised the importance of British troops in combating terrorism by calling for their withdrawal to barracks only, not their immediate withdrawal from the Province as a whole. (Individual Irish Communists accepted the protection of the troops while participating in 'back to work' marches during the Ulster Workers' Council strike of May 1974). On most issues, including opposition to emergency legislation and advocacy of a Northern Ireland 'Bill of Rights', its policy was identical to that of Official Sinn Fein and both organisations used the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association as a conduit, some would say a 'front', organisation to promote their views.

The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and the Communist Party of Ireland have hitherto had similar views on Northern Ireland, reinforced by frequent meetings between the leaders of the two parties and the issuing of joint communiques. The CPGB, in common with the CPI, resisted calls for the immediate withdrawal of British troops but unlike the CPI experience, it led to an open disagreement with one of its most senior 'front' organisations - the British Peace Committee (BPC) - which, ignoring the party line, joined with the Trotskyist-inclined Troops Out
Movement to stage a major demonstration in London on 27 October 1974. The subsequent debate (between October and December 1974) in the pages of the CPGB newspaper *Morning Star* again emphasised the tendency for the Communists to succumb to 'paralysis by analysis'. Indeed, so much was this the case that the existence of those British revolutionary groups previously mentioned was, according to Shipley, an indication of a general dissatisfaction with the lack of activist fervour on the part of the Communists.

For many the deftness of improvisation has itself become a test of revolutionary purpose and the group least prepared to adjust its methods, invariably the Communist Party, has been the one least regarded on the left as revolutionary. Throughout the period... the Communist Party has remained the largest single organisation on the far left and has also been the reluctant progenitor of so many other enterprises.41

And as for external control of these 'other enterprises', the same writer found:

> The British movement ... is fervently internationalist in outlook; indeed obsessively so, to balance its otherwise parochial domestic roots and the introspective intensity of so many of its members. There is however very little evidence to support any notion of a centralised conspiracy organised by foreign powers to control the activities of any British revolutionary groups, or that revolutionaries are responsive to such wishes.42

Thus there was no reason to doubt, nor correspondingly, little reason to be alarmed at Airey Neave's claimed possession of the names of twenty organisations active in Northern Ireland which had links with the Communist Party.43 Neither the IRA nor the British and Irish Communists, nor the British revolutionaries have been able to successfully exploit the opportunity for association which has been theirs for more than a decade.

42 ibid., p. 215.
43 *Daily Telegraph*, 16 September 1976.
Further afield — in Western Europe — a similar association of both wings of the IRA with various ultra-left groups was reported. It included Provisional links with Red Aid and the Fourth International in Brussels, the alleged existence of a 'West German Committee' of the Official IRA, and reciprocal support by various Trotskyite spokesmen for the Provisionals' activities. And in a fittingly left-handed compliment to the Fourth International connection, a new affiliate, the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG), was established in Ireland in 1972. Its principal activities appear to have been the despatch of Gerry Lawless, the IMG's Irish expert, to Trotskyist groups on the continent, and a visit to Dublin by Ernest Mandel, the Fourth International leader.

In so far as West Germany was concerned, the above reference was probably to the West German/Ireland Solidarity Committee, set up by a number of extreme left-wing bodies in 1972, and which grew to be the most active of all West European IRA support groups. Apart from directing propaganda activities, it collected contributions for Ireland and supported a campaign to urge British troops to desert. Up to the end of 1974 it supported Official Sinn Fein and IRA, but then transferred its allegiance to the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP), People's Democracy (PD), and the Provisionals. It also extended its activities both inside West Germany and in other European countries. Within the scope of the former it played a leading role in arranging the joint Sinn Fein/PD/IRSP European Tour of May and June 1975, and later in that year staged a 'Republican Exhibition' in Paris.

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44 An anarchist organisation dedicated to 'armed struggle in West European countries as a necessary part of the struggle of people all over the world, aimed at destroying Capitalism to be replaced by Socialism'. See Peter Janke, 'The Response To Terrorism', Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies (RUSI), Ten Years of Terrorism: Collected Views (London: RUSI, 1979), pp. 24-5 (hereafter cited as RUSI, Ten Years of Terrorism).


46 Daily Telegraph, 6 June 1972.

Publicity for the IRA in other countries generally followed this pattern in as much as it was usually handled by local left-wing groups, or by the IRA Solidarity Committees which they established. In Italy the most active group was the anarchist Lotta Continua (Continuing Struggle), which used a film (made jointly with PD), a photographic exhibition and other publicity devices to draw attention to 'repression' in Northern Ireland. Fulvio Grimaldi, a journalist and leading member of Lotta Continua, addressed meetings in the province and was present during the Bloody Sunday demonstration of January 1972. Later that year a Provisional IRA party which included Dolours Price (currently serving life imprisonment for her part in the London bombings of March 1973) visited Italy under Lotta Continua auspices, but was then expelled by the Italian Government. Both PD and the Provisional IRA were represented at Lotta Continua's first national congress in Italy in January 1975, and four months later two Provisional functionaries, Richard Behal and Sean Keenan, were in contact with Lotta Continua, the Maoist II Manifesto group, and others in the course of another visit.

In France a Committee for the Liberation of the Irish People was set up early in 1972. At its first public demonstration in Paris on 10 February 1972, there were strong representations from the Trotskyist Ligue Communiste and the unorthodox Communist Party of Brittany. The committee operated from the Paris address of Temoignage Chretien, an organisation which had also arranged conference and propaganda activities in favour of the Palestinian cause and against the Vietnam war.

But contacts were also established between the IRA and organisations whose concept of action exceeded the type of tired debate which could be had on any evening of the week in Queen's, Trinity, or Liberty Hall. In the early 1970s the Officials claimed the support of fourteen self-styled national liberation movements, among them the Front

48 Entitled 'Ireland: The Flashpoint of Europe'.
49 He also presented to the Widgery tribunal bullets allegedly fired by the security forces during the demonstration; forensic evidence later showed that markings on them 'were consistent with having been fired into sand' (Irish Times, 15 March 1972).
for the Liberation of Quebec and the Republic Army of Brittany. Later, Provisionals were reported to have attended demonstrations in Brittany alongside local groups, and in 1971 a special committee, Secours Populaire Interceltique, was established to collect contributions for 'distress relief' in Ireland. Representatives from both groups (and the Basque ETA) are also known to have met in Belgium.

While it may seem from the foregoing that there was little that distinguished one wing of the IRA from the other in their contacts at this level, there were two primary differences, both of which should be seen as extending from general, rather than absolute principles proclaimed by the Officials. The first was a sympathy for more orthodox, pro-Soviet Communism, but this did not preclude their willingness to identify with a wide range of revolutionary causes. The second, which was not altogether consistent with such associations, was the Officials' 29 May 1972 unilateral declaration of a ceasefire (excluding 'defence and retaliation') to which they still adhere. At best this second measure, and their avoidance of 'anyone ... having sympathy with the Provisionals', was a partial recognition of the dangers warned of by Mairin de Burca, Joint Secretary of Official Sinn Fein, of 'becoming identified in international affairs with small groups of people with handfuls of gelignite.'

In the subsequent hiatus in 'military' operations the Officials contented themselves with attempts to maintain and develop the links which they had earlier established. Chief of Staff, Cathal Goulding, had interviews printed in Trotskyist publications in Britain and overseas, and Seamus Costello (since murdered), during his period as Adjutant-General,
had extensive links with ultra-left revolutionaries arising from his attendance at an international meeting organised by the Italian 'Workers' Power', in Florence in 1971.

Thus encouraged, in July and August 1974, Sean O Cionnaith (Sean Kenny), Director of International Affairs, staged a widely advertised 'International Anti-Imperialist Festival' in Dublin and Belfast which was intended, in part, to win over some of the Provisionals' left-wing supporters abroad. In the event the only foreign organisations to send delegates were the Republican Clubs of the United States and Canada, Clann na hEireann from Britain, a handful of left-wing extremist and separatist groups from Western Europe, and 'liberation movements' from Puerto Rico and Rhodesia. Total attendance fell far short of the 200 expected by the organisers, which tended to support Frederick Hacker's view that it 'simply fizzled out'.

Undaunted, O Cionnaith scheduled a further Festival at the same venues for 1976, and claimed early in that year that 1700 invitations had been sent out. However, a lack of subsequent references to this proposed event suggest that, if anything, the success enjoyed by it, if indeed it was held, was even less than its predecessor.

But by 1976 the Officials had long ceased to be a force in the conflict. By then they had, in Bell's description, 'moved on into


56 According to Hacker, a secret convention was held in Trieste, Italy, in 1974, of 'various ethnic groups, including Croats, Corsicans, Basques, Irish, and Welsh', together with 'representatives of terrorist organisations' (ibid.). However he does not distinguish between Official and Provisional Irish, and from published sources it has not been possible to accurately assess the importance of this gathering.

57 In May 1978, the Northern Ireland Secretary, Roy Mason, made a passing reference to an 'anti-repression' conference having been held earlier that year. Like Hacker, he did not specify what arm of the IRA was responsible for it, and once again, the indications were that the event itself was not viewed, by the British Government at least, as being significant [Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), House of Commons, Official Report, vol. 949, 11 May 1978, col. 1378 (hereafter cited as House of Commons, Official Report)].
58 According to Marxism-Leninism, discourse and ideological orthodoxy. While this is not to deny that they could once more become a violent force in Northern Ireland, it is to accept Bell’s view that the Officials were, as early as the end of 1974, “getting out of the secret army business.” For the purposes of this chapter, therefore, their prominence diminishes sharply in the categories which will be examined in the following pages.

From the outset of this section of the discussion it was emphasised that the contacts to be discussed were at a lower, or less important level, and, it is submitted, the evidence confirmed this. As Lebow observed, “none of this support ... has been very meaningful.” And for those who are distrustful of such academic assessments there was always the ‘insiders’ viewpoint of these links, as expressed by Maria McGuire:

... they were mostly rather unconvincing people: ... all they seem to want was to express their solidarity with us. We didn’t want their sympathy — we were only interested in concrete help.

The difference between these groups and those considered in the next section is drawn principally from their capabilities, and sometimes, their intentions. This is to say that the linkages established (or reported) particularly in 1972 and 1973, assumed a great significance because the IRA was seen to be in contact with groups which had demonstrated their ability to engage in sustained campaigns of violence similar in many respects to those of the former. As with the groups mentioned earlier, however, there was one element of striking similarity: they comprised an almost kaleidoscopic selection of the terrorist spectrum. West German ‘free-lancers’, the (Italian) Podere Operai, Japanese

58 Bell, The Secret Army, p. 413.
59 ibid., p. 414.
60 Lebow, ‘Ireland’, p. 250.
radicals (including the Japanese United Revolutionary Army and the Japanese Red Army), the Turkish People's Liberation Army, the Iranian Liberation Front, the Tupamaros, and of course the mandatory influence of the Baader-Meinhof gang were all reported as somehow involved or interested in Northern conflict through the IRA. There was also mention of a meeting at San Sebastian, Spain, in February 1979, between the Provisionals and members of OUT, the Portuguese Workers' unitary organisation.

Other contacts were developed by People's Democracy which, under the influence of local Marxists and London-based International Socialists, came to regard itself as part of the mainstream of world revolutionary and student protest movements. Also interested was the (British) International Marxist Group whose contribution was to help stimulate the interest of foreign revolutionary groups through its liaison with the Fourth International in Brussels.

To this point the contacts, although with a different class of organisation, in effect signified no more than those considered at the first level. But the presence at San Sebastian of Euskal Izaultzarako Alderia (EIA) — the Basque Revolutionary Party — highlighted the common

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65 Biggs-Davison, 'Strategic Implications, etc.', p. 4.
67 ibid., and Biggs-Davison, 'Strategic Implications, etc.', p.4.
68 ibid.
69 ibid.
73 Janke, A Decade of Violence, p. 14.
cause made by the Provisional IRA with a number of West European separatist groups which claimed to represent minority nationalities suffering from repression.

Over the period of the current conflict, the Provisionals' journal has identified '30 nations' in Western Europe in addition to the 'four nations of these islands' which were struggling for 'a new set of equalised relationships.' In April 1972, the IRA, the Basque Eusadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) — Basque People and Liberty — and the Breton FLB were reported to have signed a political agreement which was followed some two years later by a statement which embraced other, smaller national minorities, such as the Piedmontese. Via the auspices of the appropriate Sinn Fein, the Officials and various ethnic groupings followed suit with the socialist equivalent in September 1974, known to initiates as 'The Brest Charter'. What this brief catalogue of IRA-Basque contacts foreshadowed was confirmed by a deeper study: the Officials lined up with a 'socialist revolutionary party' in which the operative term was 'socialist', while the Provisionals found common ground with a 'socialist revolutionary party' which supported 'armed actions' and 'refuses reformism'.

Although there were further similarities in their respective stands on national sovereignty and independence, and other areas besides, 

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75 The ETA has been subject to numerous splits — one of which led to the founding of EIA.
78 Galician, Breton, and Welsh groupings were represented in company with Official Sinn Fein and Herriko Alderi Socialista Iraultalea — People's Revolutionary Socialist Party — to sign a 'Declaration on the struggle against colonialism in Western Europe' [Roger Faligot, 'Basques, Sinn Fein and the Brest Charter', *Hibernia*, 20 January 1978, p. 12 (hereafter cited as Faligot, 'Basques, Sinn Fein and the Brest Charter')].
79 ibid.
80 ibid.
it was the willingness of both the IRA and the (then) ETA to reciprocate with firearms and technical (explosives) expertise that placed this link in an altogether different category from those discussed previously. Contact between the two organisations dates back at least to 1972 when Jose Echebarriea, one of ETA's most influential members, was reported to have made two secret visits to Dublin to seek contact with both the Officials and the Provisionals. According to Maria McGuire, Basque leaders met Sean MacStiofain and in exchange for training in the use of explosives, provided 50 revolvers. 81 For years, however, this was the sole item of substance upon which wild speculations were made of an IRA-ETA network. Yet the resemblance in the technical field, between the assassination of the Spanish Prime Minister, Admiral Luis Carrera Blanco, in December 1973, and that of the British Ambassador in Dublin, Christopher Ewart-Biggs, three years later, 82 gave further credence to the Spanish Police's 1974 claim of the existence of a secret pact between the two. 83

Whether, as was alleged (but denied by the ETA), the IRA supplied the explosives used in the former, or as Parry implies, the IRA trained the ETA on a continuing basis 84 is, like so many questions in this area, undertermined. Both were possible but neither necessarily followed. As to the former, explosives appear not to have been an overly difficult material for terrorists to obtain in the last decade, and with regard to the latter, a training in explosives was surely within the range of competence of the ETA once they had learned the first lessons. Besides, there is no record of further 'quid pro quo' exchanges after that mentioned by McGuire. Since the time of Ewart-Biggs' death, the IRA-ETA/EIA link has been somewhat less substantial and confined to an exchange of visits and congratulatory statements. 85 In marked contrast

81 McGuire, To Take Arms, pp. 71 and 110.
82 Both were killed by the detonation of an under-the-road explosive device as their respective motor vehicles passed over it.
84 Parry, Terrorism, p. 539.
to the rhetoric which such instances of international terrorist co-operation have often attracted, the IRA's association with Western Europe would appear to have yielded little practically. As Peter Janke concluded of them:

The point about these links and one could go on adducing evidence of contacts, is that it is not at all an international revolutionary conspiracy, but rather a network of tiny groups acting illegally that comes across one another in their search for arms and are prepared to help when called upon for a meal, a night's shelter, an overcoat, a hair dye or a railway ticket.86

This conclusion is even more certain in respect of Eastern Europe, and covers the rather erratic ventures made by the Soviet Union into the 'troubles'. To say that Soviet propaganda organs have consistently distorted events in Northern Ireland to conform to a pre-conceived pattern of a popular uprising by an oppressed community against 'British imperialism', is an understatement. Indeed they so grossly misrepresented the situation that their pronouncements were ludicrous.87 (Similarly, the Soviet Government's attempts to provide support for stands taken by the Irish Government, have been clumsy and quite inimical to the interests of those they sought to assist.88) Notwithstanding this, and the need to develop friendly relations with Ireland (with which it established diplomatic relations in 1974), Moscow has maintained a cautious public attitude towards the Official IRA and a critical one in relation to the Provisionals.

To Constantine Fitzgibbon the rough similarity in ideological


87 See Dev Murarka, 'Moscow Takes A New Look at Ulster', The Observer Foreign News Service, No.30023, 24 March 1972; and 'Soviet Distortions On Northern Ireland', February 1977, a paper held by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and noted 'Source Not Known'. In the writer's opinion, this second paper, which juxtaposes Soviet comment with verifiable fact was produced by British Government authorities for general distribution to offices and personnel who might have a need to refute Soviet allegations.

88 See Chapter 6 concerning the Soviet 'support' lent to Ireland at the United Nations in 1969.
inspiration between Soviet Communism and Official socialism betokened
but one conclusion: '... the Red IRA ... [is] now under the control
of international Communism as directed from Moscow'. This must
have seemed even more so when Moscow's approval of the Officials was
manifest in two lengthy interviews with Chief of Staff, Cathal
Goulding, in Pravda, in April 1972; and when, in return, the Officials' journal, United Irishman, identified itself with Soviet policies which included the treatment of dissidents and, retrospectively, the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Thus Parry, ever the alarmist, also adhered to the position taken some four years earlier by Fitzgibbon, but then he went further and maintained that the Officials, and by extension, Moscow, 'had their tabs and even controls on the Provisionals.'

Despite the fact that bedfellowship between them and the Soviets was unlikely, the temptation to speculate upon its existence proved the early 1970s to be vintage years for conspiracy. First, Foreign Report, in January 1973, propagated the line that the Russians 'seemed willing to help', and in the following month, two British journalists discovered the workings of the KGB in the planning of an IRA bombing campaign.

But Parry, based his observations on the 'voices of informed suspicion' and appeared, therefore, to exclude the rigorous examination which his conclusions demanded. Foreign Report and the Daily Telegraph were even less forthcoming, but whereas the former's assessment was expressed as speculation, the latter's claim rested on alleged intelligence passed from London to Dublin. The absence of subsequent disclosures which would confirm either or both may be taken as an indication of just how accurate these two sources were on this particular

90 Parry, Terrorism, p. 380.
93 Parry, Terrorism, p. 380.
aspect of the Northern Ireland conflict.

What they, Parry, and Fitzgibbon disregarded was a knowledge of conditions in Northern Ireland. As Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote

> In fact it does not appear that either the 'Green' or the 'Red' IRA is under the control of anything — certainly not of anything so remote and exotic as 'International Communism ... directed from Moscow'. This is the equivalent of the theory that the men of 1916 were in the pay of Berlin. In reality, Irish rebels have responded to Irish situations in their own way, sometimes borrowing rhetoric and ideology from abroad, and often looking there for weapons and other aid, but seldom amenable to outside advice. In any case, Moscow, like Rome (or even Dublin), would find it difficult to assess each crisis arising in Ardoyne or Andersontown in time for its advice to have much relevance. Things move quickly under pressure of local competition.\(^94\)

Perhaps against many expectations, the Soviet line on Northern Ireland has found only an incomplete echo among the countries of Eastern Europe. Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic remained in concert with the Soviet Union but the press in Poland, Hungary and Romania exercised what may justifiably be termed objectivity.\(^95\) Of this group a representative example of reporting would be that found in a Polish commentary on the Constitutional Convention which credited the British Government with

> ... the position that the Catholic population have a right to power-sharing in Northern Ireland and [not sanctioning] Protestant monopoly of power because that would involve intensification of the civil war.\(^96\)

It was hardly a revolutionary approach to the conflict but it was nevertheless a welcome appraisal and a criterion against which an understanding of the Ulster Question Eastern Europe could be measured.

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96 *Tribuna Ludu*, 13 May 1975.
In sharp relief to the differing approaches which the Soviet bloc adopted on this issue, that presented by Yugoslavia is deserving of special mention. In 1972 Radio Belgrade paid a startling tribute to the British Army for its 'patience, constraint and self-discipline' in Northern Ireland.\(^{97}\) Moreover it condemned the IRA as a 'purely terrorist formation' and laid at its door the blame for Bloody Sunday.\(^{98}\) But the surprising Yugoslav attitude was not really to be explained in terms of support for the Governments of Britain and Northern Ireland. It was, more likely, a justification and a warning intended for internal consumption, directed towards dissident Croatian nationalists and separatists, against whom Tito had moved in December 1971.\(^{99}\) It should not be surprising, then, that Northern Ireland has failed since that time to occupy the same prominence in official Yugoslav pronouncements.

Just as the change of focus from the Soviet Union to the countries of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe involved a diminution in involvement and significance for the conflict, so too did this apply in the shift from those countries to what may be called international 'front' organisations, dominated by the Soviets. In 1972 a number of these, such as the World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Union of Students (IUS), and the World Federation of Democratic Youth began to take a more than passing interest in Northern Ireland.

Of these the IUS appears to have been the most active, no doubt in reflection of the fact that the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), which maintained a permanent representative at the Prague headquarters, was one of its few affiliates outside the Communist world. In January 1975, Jurij Sayamov, the Soviet Vice-President of the IUS, visited London to plan a campaign on Northern Ireland with representatives of the USI and the (British) National Union of Students,\(^{100}\) but the subsequent International Student Week of Solidarity with Ireland aroused little interest in the West.

99 *ibid*.
100 *Daily Express*, 17 January 1975.
In Ireland, however, it was the Official IRA which played the greater role through its contacts with another front organisation, the World Peace Council (WPC), a delegation from which, led by India's former Defence Minister, Krishna Menon, visited the province in May 1972. Subsequently WPC declared an international day of solidarity, and despatched its Secretary, James W. Forrest, an American Communist, to Belfast to attend a tribunal to mobilise public opinion against the British Army. Contacts were also developed with the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), which in turn resulted in overseas tours by both that organisation's functionaries and those of Official Sinn Fein. Within the scope of the latter, Republican literature was distributed at the WPC conference in Moscow 'through the good offices of the Soviet representatives', and the Officials' President, Tomas McGiolla, said later that the delegation had made useful contacts which it hoped to develop.

As best as can be ascertained such promise was still-born: the more recent attempts by these organisations appear to reveal no more than efforts to form Northern Irish links with the Communist women's movement following the attendance of a NICRA-organised delegation at an international women's congress in East Berlin in October 1975. Quite clearly, the international 'front' organisations were capable of offering only as much as those they covered for had a mind to give, which, in terms of an identifiable impact upon the conflict, was precious little.

Moreover this conclusion was no less appropriate when applied to the involvement of the majority of those states (extant and putative) whose international standing derived from their being located in the 'third' world, and preferably possessed of a 'revolutionary' regime.

101 Shipley, Revolutionaries In Modern Britain, pp. 43 and 48.
103 ibid.
Thus, with regard to Africa, the record showed occasional interest. Joshua Nkomo sent a solidarity telegram on behalf of the Zimbabwe African People's Union to Provisional Sinn Fein's annual conference in 1978; there were tenuous links with Okhela in South Africa; and in tribute to his catholic interests, Uganda's Idi Amin once demanded a briefing on Northern Ireland from the British High Commissioner in Kampala.

Throughout Asia, the response was very insignificant. If one report in the Hanoi publication *Nhan Dan* was an indication, North Vietnam's interest was perfunctory, predictable, and generally in conformity with the Soviet appreciation of the Northern Ireland situation.

Latin America's alleged contribution was made from two quarters: the first, not surprisingly, by Cuba. According to the Monday Club's Biggs-Davison and Harwood, the Fidelist inspiration motivated People's Democracy even in its early days. Later, Biggs-Davison saw the Communist designs in clearer and larger detail: the KGB, the Czechoslovak Secret Service (STB), and the Cuban Direccion General de Inteligencia were all involved, ultimately with 'the aim of breaking through sectarian barriers to foment an all-Ireland class war and socialist revolution.' Unfortunately no evidence was offered in support of this proposition, and two years later, the clearest link between Cuba and Northern Ireland was to be found in the Official movement's attendance at Castro's World Festival of Youth in July-August 1978. But by the tenor of its feature report even the *Sunday Telegraph*

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107 A white support network for radical black movements in South Africa.
110 As reported in the *International Herald Tribune*, 27 July 1973.
111 Harwood, Guiness, and Biggs-Davison, *Ireland - Our Cuba?* (See articles by Harwood and Biggs-Davison).
112 Biggs-Davison, 'Strategic Implications, etc.' pp. 3-4.
failed to be convinced of the revolutionary threat posed by that gathering. 113

The second Latin American contribution originated from a most unexpected quarter — the ruling military junta in Chile led by Augusto Pinochet — which was concerned with the existence of 'concentration camps' in Ulster. 114 Understandably, a view of his own record in the field of human rights, Pinochet's attack drew an almost nil response everywhere.

The People's Republic of China is also required to be treated, and dismissed, at this level. Despite claims made in 1972 by a former Czech diplomat writing under the name of J. Bernard Hutton, and reputedly based on NATO sources, that IRA (unspecified) terrorist activity in the North was being financed and directed by subversion agents recruited and trained in China, 115 there is virtually no indication that the Chinese Government was at all concerned with the conflict. 116 Apart from a pledge of support 'for the just struggle of the Northern Irish People' 117 in the period of international indignation following Bloody Sunday, there has been little since to challenge journalist Jonathon Steele's 1971 assessment that 'The polite Chinese have said next to nothing'. 118

114 Sunday Times, 14 September 1975.
116 But then Hutton also wrote 'In Africa and Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Canada and South America, terrorist violence is a carbon copy of what has happened in the USA' (emphasis added), ibid., p. 8. Apart from the dubious grounds for comparison which he claims, the writer has been unable to trace any evidence of violence which would qualify as 'terrorist' in either Australia or New Zealand prior to 1972.
In all, the record of the governments and organisations considered in this section is modest, no matter from what perspective of involvement it is regarded. The reasons for this appear to vary—from a basic disinterest in the affairs of Northern Ireland, to the political wisdom which Richard Rose saw as resulting from an 'informed reconnaissance of the situation.'\footnote{Rose, \textit{A Time of Choice}, p. 67.} Conor Cruise O'Brien's dismissal of the suggestion that the Russians exerted a control over the conflict foreshadowed the latter, for, it is argued, Chinese, Cuban, or Czech influence would be no more easily effected in the same circumstances, even if the will to intervene existed. Hence, it is at this point that a brief consideration should be given to that habit of 'Irish rebels', noted by O'Brien, of 'sometimes borrowing rhetoric and ideology from abroad'.

To this end it should be understood that both the Official and Provisional IRA claimed a lineal descendancy from an organisation—the IRA of the Easter Rising—which pre-dates almost every other 'terrorist' organisation in Europe, and certainly those of more recent notoriety, such as Baader-Meinhof, the Red Brigades, and the Red Army Faction, with whom they were allegedly linked. The IRA's doctrines, therefore, tended to be of a type formulated prior to Partition and developed in succeeding campaigns.

Admittedly, there were indications that their inspiration, particularly that of the Provisionals, was not drawn entirely from the Irish experience. In this regard former Chief of Staff, Sean MacStiofain, was illustrative of a most catholic taste. Lessons were taken from the Finnish defiance of the Soviet Union (at the start of World War II), the Warsaw rising of the underground army led by General Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski in 1944, and the success of Menachem Begin's Irgun in Israel as well as Ireland's Tom Barry in an attempt to compose an appropriate IRA strategy to achieve British withdrawal from the North.\footnote{ibid., p. 62.} And sustaining all, was a 'belief in God and in the practice of religion.'\footnote{ibid., p. 62.}
But MacStiofain like other IRA leaders, also made early contacts with members of EOKA, the Greek paramilitary army on Cyprus, at the time of their unsuccessful campaign of 1956-62. Both he, and Cathal Goulding, later to be the Officials Chief of Staff, were facilitated in this regard by being placed in the same prison (Wormwood Scrubs) as EOKA leaders such as Nicos Sampson. Evidently it was an experience which proved durable: in the early months of the Provisional IRA's existence it was reported

There was much reading of guerrilla manuals, notably the writings of General Grivas. Confirmation that the anti-British campaign in Cyprus (and Aden) was an example for the Provisionals was also provided by Maria McGuire.

Of some interest, in view of the way in which their campaigns were later waged, was McGuire's claim that the FLN's methods in Algeria were rejected 'because of the indiscriminate casualties ... caused'. However, the strength to which this was adhered was questionable. Parry claims that the film, 'The Battle of Algiers' was vigorously approved by the Provos, and presumably he was referring to something other than an artistic appreciation. More substantially, at the Provisional Sinn Fein Conference in 1977, Daithi O'Connaill spoke with obvious approval of the 'Algerian formula'. The precise cause of this development remains unclear.

If McGuire's account is accurate, the Provisionals had recourse to many other sources as well. She wrote that Ruairi O Bradaigh at one time bought seven copies of the paperback edition of Robert Taber's

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122 ibid., pp. 74-9. However, by MacStiofain's account, he and Sampson 'didn't hit it off very well' (ibid., p.77).
123 Sunday Times, Ulster, p. 196.
124 McGuire, To Take Arms, p. 74.
125 ibid.
126 Parry, Terrorism, p. 451.
War of the Flea, and gave one to each member of the Army Council, who then studied it closely. Whether they were any the wiser for the effort was not reported. In any case they would still have needed to relate their studies to the peculiarities of Northern Ireland, in support of which there is no wealth of evidence.

Historically, it was no more easy to discern principles distilled from Begin, Grivas, or Guevara in the IRA campaign which commenced in 1970, than it was to identify the influence of foreign theorists in earlier instances. Indeed, the current conflict appears to be well within the tradition of those previous 'troubles', the principal distinguishing characteristic being the weapons employed. As Stewart observed:

Terrorism in the advancement of a political cause is at once part of, and a new pattern imposed upon, the tapestry of civil disorder. It first appeared in its familiar modern form during the troubles of 1919-23, but it is probably a mistake to distinguish too sharply between traditional violence and that motivated by contemporary politics. The distinction lies in the use of more deadly weapons; the bomb and the machine-gun have been added to the pistol and the pike.

And in a passage which threw further doubt the way of those who saw external influences, he wrote:

The whole process of muted insurrection, so familiar in Irish history is an elaborately structured and ever-changing development which obeys no laws except those intrinsic to it.

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130 Actually McGuire cites Tauber as the author, which may give some indication of how closely she studied the work. It may also be significant that both she and MacStiofain, on another matter, display the same unawareness of a Northern nuance. In their respective books they refer to a particular suburb of Belfast as 'the Ardoyne' — which is a recent Britishism — when Northerners always refer to it as 'Ardoyne'.


132 ibid.
Stewart's comments are a necessary reminder. Although the conflict with which this chapter is concerned dates from 1968, in the light of Irish history it cannot be regarded as other than an ancient quarrel upon which certain contemporary influences have been ever so lightly superimposed. In general, the available evidence indicates that the force of these influences have been minimal where they have not been absent in relation to the international aspects of the conflict so far considered.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

AS AN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT:

THE EXTERNAL SUPPLIES TO, AND OPERATIONS, OF THE PARAMILITARY ORGANISATIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.
The international supply of arms to the conflict in Northern Ireland was, not surprisingly, one of the areas in which Bond culture, or perceptions of Bond culture, abounded. In the absence of corroborative evidence many accounts, such as those involving submarines off Tramore at night, seemed fanciful. Nevertheless, the ranks of would-be quarter-masters to the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and others, included as wide a variety of interested parties as did the first two categories (of contacts). Yet there is a need, as there was at the outset of the discussion in each of those two categories, to place foreign supplies in the context of total supplies, a significant proportion of which must be regarded as of domestic origin.

If licensed firearms were an indication, the population of Northern Ireland in the early 1970s appeared to be exceptionally well armed. In 1973, 105,000 firearms were registered, prompting Alun (Lord) Chalfont to express his horror as follows:

And added to this [Irish volatility and unreliability] for good measure is the strange frontier mentality of the Northern Irish, a mixture of cowboy and mafioso which has led them, like some Americans, to assume that they have some kind of inalienable right to possess firearms ... The civilian population, in fact, possesses more small arms than the security forces.

While issue may be taken with his spurious character assessment of the Irish race as regards the qualities cited in parentheses, it did seem that the justifications offered by the British Government in respect of over 86,000 of these weapons — gun clubs and protection of livestock on farms, etc.— were facile and insufficient. By these figures the rural areas were overrun with marauding beasts and the

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1 For such an account see an article by Dick Dowling in the Cork Examiner, 7 February 1978.


population as a whole was passionately addicted to target shooting. And if that was so, there was still the need to account for estimates which placed the majority of licensed firearms in Belfast which, with a decidedly un-rural character, would have been a curious place to find very many of the 73,000 shotguns. The British Government, however, maintained a dilatory response to this situation throughout those years and was given, whenever challenged, to either affirming the original justifications noted above, claiming it was prerogative of Stormont to rectify the situation, or simply refusing to introduce legislation to recall some or all of the weapons.

The Catholics thereby had grounds for concern. Not only were they out-numbered in the Northern population by a ratio of two to one, but by virtue of repressive legislation and Unionist excesses it must be presumed that they possessed but the smallest percentage of licensed firearms. Furthermore, in the field of unlicensed firearms they were doubly 'disadvantaged'. Large quantities of such weapons were known to exist in the armouries of unspecified Loyalist paramilitary organisations. In one case, that of the 20,000 weapons and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition landed for the then Ulster Volunteer Force in 1912, it was estimated that a great number had never been recovered and were still in the hands of their successors. This was in marked contrast to the resources of the IRA in 1969: most of its hardware had been sold the previous year to the Free Wales Army in order to subsidise the Sinn Fein newspaper, the United Irishman.

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6 R.D. Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry In Northern Ireland', British Army Review (April 1978): 21, (hereafter cited as Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry In Northern Ireland'). In 1975, however, a former leader of the Army Bomb Disposal teams in Northern Ireland was of the opinion that most of the UVF's weapons had been recovered (George Styles, Bombs Have No Pity: My War Against Terrorism (London: William Luscombe, 1975), p. 29, (hereafter cited as Styles, Bombs Have No Pity). In the opinion of the writer, more reliability should be placed upon Jones in view of his position within the Intelligence Corps, the focus of his article, and its later publication date.
In fairness it must be entered at this point, that up to March 1973, there was no evidence that licensed firearms had been used in acts of terrorism. The point of emphasising such a high level of Loyalist arms possession was, rather, to establish one of the bases of threat to the minority population, upon which subsequent attempts by the IRA to acquire arms were probably based. (Indeed, a highly credible case may be made that the need to defend the Northern Catholic community so moved senior members of the Fianna Fáil Government in the Republic that they became, effectively, midwives to the birth of the Provisionals). But it in no way is presented to justify such attempts, nor to discount the force of other motives such as the need of the IRA to be adequately equipped when confronting the British Army.

Even if the IRA had not disposed of most of its arms to Wales, the problem they faced in regard to the two basic reasons mentioned above would still have been formidable. Both those it disposed of, and those it retained were more suitable for collectors items. Many of them had been obtained during and after World War II, but some, mainly the 'Thompson guns', which were as much a part of IRA legend as the trench coat, were survivors of the early twenties. In addition, those weapons which were in reasonable working order, and even some of those acquired after 1969 in small lots, performed unreliably because of the widely differing quality of the ammunition. Clearly, being interred in a suburban garden or farm paddock for long intervals over forty or fifty years was undesirable. It gave to each bullet a disconcerting individuality which determined the Provisionals on a policy of purchasing a large shipment of 'identical weapons and ammunition of recent manufacture'.

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9 Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry in Northern Ireland', p. 17.
To finance such purchases, but also other activities (payments to those on 'active service' and operational expenses), funds were raised from a variety of sources in Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United States by legal Republican organisations. Efforts in Britain, however, were hampered by revulsion against the Provisionals' mainland bombing campaign and by the restrictions of the anti-terrorist legislation. The Irish Government also strongly discouraged fund-raising internationally, along the lines presented by former Minister for Justice, Patrick Cooney.

... the smallest coin is too big considering the purpose for which such funds are used. The point was, of course, that funds ostensibly for 'relief' or 'welfare' may, in fact, have been disbursed appropriately, but they inevitably freed other funds for other purposes.

This was clearly demonstrated by Joe Cahill's address to the first Annual Meeting of the Dublin-based An Cumann Cabhrach in May/June 1975, in the course of which he said,

... all the [IRA] prisoners ... look to An Cumann to give them the assurance and the confidence to continue their work for what they are striving to achieve.

In Belfast financial assistance was channelled through an organisation known as Green Cross; similar conduits existed in the other cities. The amounts varied but, according to James McCashin, Chairman of Green Cross, some £70,000 was sent north in 1974 and 1975 from Dublin alone.

While the relief organisations were channels for smaller donations some affluent supporters were believed to contribute more directly to

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11 As the Commonwealth countries and the United States are the subject of other chapters, reference will be made in this chapter only to fund-raising in Britain and Ireland.
13 An Phoblacht, 13 June 1975.
Provisional funds. According to one report, ten businessmen from the Republic pledged an initial £200,000 to them in 1969, but the money never reached its destination. Furthermore, Provisional-for-a-year, Maria McGuire, wrote that when Joe Cahill needed to raise money quickly for an attempted arms deal in October 1971, he turned to

... sympathisers in the Twenty-six counties, businessmen who were not prepared to help us publicly, but wanted to ease their consciences none the less.

Cash was also raised by the sale of books and artifacts, the latter made by IRA prisoners, but these did not realise the amounts required to wage and administer the type of warfare the Provisionals conducted. They therefore turned to more lucrative but illegal sources which included armed robbery, blackmail, extortion, protection rackets and illegal drinking clubs. In these activities, however, they were in competition with a number of Loyalist organisations and the military wing of the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) — the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA).

While estimates understandably varied as to the yield in each of the above categories, bank robberies must have been by far the most efficient in terms of time and takings. In the Irish Republic alone,
between October 1975 and March 1976, extreme Republican groups were estimated to have acquired more than £1 million in a series of raids. And according to information supplied by the Detective Branch of the Dublin Metropolitan Area, it may be inferred that 30 per cent of all armed crime within that zone was committed by 'subversives'.

In such activities the Officials were not noticeably active. Their welfare organisation, Cabhair, provided funds for legal costs as well as for prisoners' dependants, but their reduced scale of operations since 1972 obviated the resource problem which the Provisionals were obliged to face. For a time, however, they were ambitious: in 1970, one of their number in Britain, Gerry Doherty, was jailed for conspiring to smuggle a £200,000 consignment of arms and ammunition to Ireland. But after December 1974 the Official's need for arms decreased even further due to the fact that they had less of an establishment to support. With the founding of the IRSP/INLA at that time, they suffered from defections which considerably weakened their organisation, particular in Belfast and Derry. And for its part, the INLA does not appear to have had financial worries. It finances itself mainly from bank robberies, one of which, at Barnagh Gap, Co. Limerick, in June 1979, was the biggest in Irish history.

If the information relating to the discovery of arms — be they actually in their possession, or intended for same — is correct, the Provisionals could have forgone few opportunities to obtain them from every quarter. By 1973, at least 282 types of weapon had been discovered representing fifteen countries of origin

22 The information was expressed that '... 70% of armed crime has nothing whatever to do with subversive organisations. (Irish Times, 4 September 1978, p. 12).

23 Unlike the Provisionals, the Officials do not refuse to plead when brought before the courts.


25 Ibid.

Later disclosures were equally impressive. Official figures released on the eighth anniversary of the British Army's involvement in the Northern Ireland conflict showed that it had by then recovered 902,554 rounds of ammunition, 257,489 lb. of explosives, 297 machine-guns, 2,667 rifles, 2,962 pistols, 881 shotguns, 18 rocket launchers, 57 rockets, 427 mortar tubes and 441 mortar shells. In addition, Army personnel had defused 2,828 bombs. (And this does not include the amounts recovered, etc., from paramilitary sources by the Irish and other Governments). From a closer examination of arms recovery information it became clear that not only had the numbers of weapons increased, but also they had become both more modern and sophisticated as well. From the presence in the Provisional IRA arsenal of various semi-automatic weapons (see Chapter 10, pp. 404-05) Bell concluded that:

... basically the Provos were better armed for their business than the British Army for theirs. Equally significant by the end of 1977, the Provos were far more elegantly armed than the Loyalist paramilitaries or the militias-in-being ...

These figures and reports notwithstanding, it is important to treat the following discussion of the actual supply of arms to the conflict in the North with caution. First, it must be emphasised that it is concerned only with the estimated (maximum) 40 per cent of arms supplied ...
which originated from sources outside of the USA. Second, in relation to these countries of origin, there is considerable merit in the repeated caveats given by British Ministers of State for Defence, to the effect that the place of manufacture of arms and explosives was not necessarily the place where the terrorists obtained them.

Third, it is necessary to attach the same scepticism to claims that some suppliers of arms were exerting a controlling influence over the conflict in other ways that Conor Cruise O'Brien demonstrated with regard to Russian control. As Richard Rose wrote:

> Probably the outsiders who have benefited most from the Troubles have been dealers and brokers in arms from Hamburg to Libya. To continue to benefit, however, they must maintain their distance. Otherwise, they too will find themselves tagged as Catholic arms dealers, whether they are actually Christian, Muslim or atheist.

And finally, the scale of the operation must at all times be borne in mind. By the standards of many conflicts the above inventory of recovered weapons was modest. Nevertheless, no-one would deny the effectiveness of the IPA campaign since 1968, even it has not been successful in its own terms. The point to be made, of course, in relation to arms, was simply but accurately expressed by Peter Janke: 'very, very few suffice'.

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31 And even this figure is subject to considerable doubt. As was noted in Chapter 10 (pp.403-06) there was some disagreement, both as to what constituted arms of US origin, and their proportion of total arms. British estimates placed arms of a non-US origin as low as 15 per cent, whereas the calculations done in Chapter 10 suggested they could be as high as 77 per cent. The figure of 40 per cent is therefore the writer's estimate of the maximum proportion involved, but it was also to be found in Conor Brady, 'Provisions of Violence', Irish Times, 25 March 1977.


However, even these reservations do not sufficiently encompass the fact that the protagonists in Northern Ireland have demonstrated what in other circumstances might have been termed 'commendable initiative' in providing weapons from local resources. In the matter of arms, this was noticeably the case with the Loyalists who, in addition to the occasional raid on a unit armoury or 'hold-up' of an isolated sentry post, demonstrated their dominance in the engineering sphere with a certain enthusiasm for manufacturing their own. Against this, the effect of 'home-made' weapons has been minimal: in 1978 it was thought that no more than a thousand were in existence, and a number of these, according to Jones, presented 'a greater threat to the firer than to his intended victim!' As regards explosives, the Loyalists were not so resourceful within the Six Counties, but through the agency of sympathisers employed in the quarrying industries of Scotland, they appeared not to be without occasional supplies of gelignite.

The IRA, on the other hand, accomplished its explosives procurement task with a similar ingenuity to that which the Loyalists displayed with home-made weapons, and frequently with as much risk to the user/manufacturer — an 'own goal' being the black-humorous term used to describe the demise of a bomb-maker/carrier/layer. To this end it took to making a powerful but unstable explosive from ingredients which could, initially, be purchased from a local supermarket. Indeed, it was from

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35 Jones, 'Terrorist Weaponry in Northern Ireland', pp. 21-4. Although Loyalist paramilitary organisations such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) are known to have some modern weapons of US origin in their arsenal, the available evidence suggests that they have not been engaged in overseas arms procurement to anything like the same extent as the Provisional IRA. Furthermore, the available evidence relates to Canadian sources of supply — which were treated in Chapter 12.

36 Irish Times, 16 November 1978.


the source of such materials in combination, weedkiller (chlorate of soda) and a solution of household sugar,\textsuperscript{40} that the term by which it became colloquially known to the British Army derived — 'Co-op mix'.\textsuperscript{41} A similar use was found for agricultural fertiliser.\textsuperscript{42}

Outside of the Six Counties, but within Ireland, the Provisionals' national organisation allowed them to receive additional supplies from bomb factories located in the Republic. In some cases, however, the principal components of Provisional devices, such as the detonator and even the gelignite, were produced and appeared to have originated with commercial enterprises across the Border which were legally entitled to possess them.\textsuperscript{43} Naturally, the Irish Government was extremely sensitive to charges that it was inadequately discharging its responsibility in this area, and to an extent it presented a strong argument. The point to it was that over half of Northern Ireland's legitimate imports of gelignite were manufactured in the Republic, and hence it was quite probable that as much would be discovered in use by the terrorists of the Province.\textsuperscript{44} But only an act of faith would proclaim that the safeguards in the Republic were absolutely effective. Moreover, given the high level of improvisation required by the circumstances in which they operated, the Provisionals made do with a variety of relatively innocuous devices (clothes pegs\textsuperscript{45} and photovoltaic cells\textsuperscript{46}) over which it was very difficult to exert any kind of stringent control. At the grisly but not fatal level, this was well illustrated once the conflict had reached what might be termed its self-delighting phase. Instead of shooting through the kneecaps of those from whom it wishes to exact retribution, the IRA occasionally chose to perform the same operation with an easily available electric drill, thereby

\textsuperscript{40} ibid., p.98.
\textsuperscript{41} Times, January 1973, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{43} Styles, Bombs Have No Pity, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{44} Dail Eireann, Parliamentary Debates, Official Report, vol. 256, 20 October 1971, col. 16.
\textsuperscript{45} Styles, Bombs Have No Pity, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{46} Boston Globe, 7 September 1979, p. 2.
associating a well-known American power tool manufacturer (Black and Decker) with the argot of atrocity.

From further afield, in particular the seven Western European countries which produce one quarter of the world's weapon supplies, came the bulk of the 40 per cent (maximum) of illegal arms that is the concern of this chapter. Having stated that, it must also be repeated that it is in this part of the discussion that the cautions mentioned before are particularly apposite. Thus a common feature to be noted was that the city in which the negotiations took place, the port of loading, and the city of origin of the arms were almost invariably different within each venture. Furthermore the distinction between Eastern and Western Europe was blurred to the point of meaninglessness.

Maria McGuire, for example, wrote of accompanying Daithi O Connaill between Dublin, Zurich and Amsterdam, for the latter to negotiate a deal in Prague with Omnipol, the sales organisation for the Czech arms factory at Brno, for a shipment ex Rotterdam. It was, for all that, a not unusual episode in which the elements of foreign venues, intrigue and (frequently) failure were to be repeated on numerous occasions.

Unfortunately for a work such as this, most of the publicity available information has been derived from the successful interception of illegal arms intended for Northern Ireland. The reports of such operations were, therefore, subject to security considerations and devoid of virtually all mention of the politics of both purchase and apprehension. Furthermore, in many cases the arms in question appeared to be part of an independent arms dealer's stock on hand, from which information the conclusion to be drawn was that the deal was made on financial rather than political criteria. And this becomes more compelling in the common knowledge that no government in Western Europe has permitted either

47 Conor Brady, 'Provisions of Violence', Irish Times, 25 March 1977. The seven countries were given as: Belgium, France, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.K. and West Germany.
49 This appears to have been so in the case involving the mercenary recruiter, John Banks, (Guardian, 22 February 1977 and 7 April 1977).
its state or private enterprises to sell arms to the paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland. Consequently, in those instances where only an antiseptic collection of facts were reported such that Browning pistols (and matching ammunition) had been imported from the Continent, or that French arms, ammunition and chemicals were discovered, there are but poor grounds for deducing more than that the Provisionals (in the foregoing cases) took advantage of the international commercial availability of weapons and supplies.

Furthermore, nothing in the foregoing seriously challenges previous judgments in respect of communist intervention by Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union. There remains of course, a residue of uncertainty arising from Ó Connaill's apparent success in, to use McGuire's words, 'making an arms deal with a Communist country' (emphasis added). Subsequently, further doubt was added by the recovery of Czech pistols so new that they did not appear in any standard works of reference. Yet no matter how suggestive these facts were of an active and substantial Czech interest in the North, they must also be tempered by accounts which supported a contrary interpretation.

The first is that Ó Connaill, his negotiations with Omnipol in Prague notwithstanding, was required to work through an American intermediary and an arms dealer. As both were regarded by him as untrustworthy, and as the latter was to be contacted in Brussels, there are grounds for inferring that Omnipol did not agree to supply arms direct to the Provisionals.

51 *Irish Times*, 19 September 1978.
54 McGuire, *To Take Arms*, p. 45.
56 McGuire, *To Take Arms*, p. 44.
The second concerned Ó Conaill's certainty that he was shadowed in Switzerland by the 'Czech or Russian secret police,' which, if true, and taken in conjunction with the first reason, may have indicated that the manufacturers were in some doubt as to the wisdom of supplying those he represented.

The third was Jones' (presumably) expert opinion that the Browning pistols mentioned earlier, and the Czech pistols discovered at the same time, may well have represented arms obtained by a single purchase. If so, the case alleging Czech intervention would be weakened correspondingly, since the supply of arms of differing national origin would (again presumably) have been the prerogative of an independent dealer.

Finally, the absence of any further body of evidence which could implicate the Czech Government or its agencies since the time of Ó Conaill's 1971 approach to Omnipol, must question the resolve with which Prague was prepared to act, if at all.

The same is true of the Soviet Union, but in its case the conclusion is less equivocal. This does not mean that Soviet-made weapons have not been in evidence — they have — in the form of rifles, hand-grenades, and even rocket launchers, but the numbers involved have been small, and there was no serious suggestion that they signified Russian intervention. However, the discovery of Soviet weapons in transit for the Provisionals did signify that Soviet weapons were quite widely available on the international market.

57 ibid., pp. 43-4.
61 See the following discussion of the Claudia affair, and the Irish Times, 19 July 1978.
The case which perhaps best illustrated this was the celebrated affair surrounding the use of Soviet-designed, but Bulgarian made RPG-7 rocket launchers in November 1972. Although the Soviet Government rejected a Foreign Office request for its help in investigating the matter, and although it seems certain that it could have assisted, the opinion in Whitehall was that there was no direct connection between the Soviet Union and the Provisionals. Indeed, the likeliest source of the weapons was a group of Middle East states, at least four of which had been Russian clients for the RPG-7.

In turn this underscored the Provisionals' logistic dilemma. Close co-operation between American, British and Irish law enforcement agencies ensured that attempts to supply arms from the United States were made at a high risk and could be successful only in odd lots. Hence a reliance on that source meant that the IRA would be slow to rearm. The alternative, it appears, was to expedite this objective by recourse to sympathetic organisations and regimes, but at even greater risk. The RPG-7s, despite their successful debut, are to be seen within the latter category. It is necessary, therefore, to return to a consideration of a small number of third world/revolutionary regimes.

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62 Guardian, 29 November 1972; and Times, 30 November 1972. In 1981, Boris Shtern, a former Russian journalist, claimed that he was on board a Soviet trawler when it stopped off the Irish coast one night in 1971 and unloaded a secret cargo to waiting boats. Unfortunately, Shtern's certainty on the matter goes no further than reporting that the cargo was concealed in a crate and that it was received by two Irishmen from the KGB officer on board the trawler. Exactly who they were, or what they represented, was not reported; similarly it was only Shtern's (and others of the crew) opinion that the crate contained arms. (Times, 30 April 1981, p. 7). If it did, the quantity involved was obviously quite small.


64 Daily Telegraph, 11 December 1972.

65 Foreign Report, No. 1277, 3 January 1973, p. 5. The role of these states is discussed later in this chapter.

With but tolerable distortions, the term 'small number' is easily reducible to two, the preference for the former being required by reports of IRA arms purchases from African and Chinese sources. Of these, the African appeared as the most substantial with one convicted gun-runner claiming, in 1973, that he had taken advantage of some of the surplus ammunition put on the market by the Nigerian Government following the Biafran war, to supply the IRA. But the subsequent lack of corroborative evidence from such sources as British arms seizures suggests that either the IRA have successfully concealed the shipment to this day, or more likely, that it was never received in the first place.

In another instance it was alleged that the Provisionals were involved in an exchange operation with the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in which the former supplied arms and trained guerrillas in the use of explosives. What the IRA received in return was not specified; more to the point, given the needs of ZAPU, just what it could have provided which the IRA required is difficult to imagine. The discovery of bomb-making equipment at the Dublin docks in the cargo of a ship out of Cape Town was hardly suggestive of the answer. The quantity involved was small, and besides, once more begged the question as to why the IRA should seek overseas what they demonstrably possessed in relative abundance in Ireland. Moreover, neither case allowed more than a tenuously circumstantial nexus to be drawn between the IRA and African organisations.

With regard to supplies ascribed to a Chinese source this conclusion can be even less reservedly expressed. It rests on the fact that although 108 'Chinese or Japanese' grenades were uncovered in a large Provisional arms consignment in 1978, they were also found with arms manufactured in three other countries (Canada, France and the Soviet Union), and which court evidence stated were obtained through a deal

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67 Daily Telegraph, 20 April 1973. The convicted gun-runner was Gunther Leinhauser, owner of the coaster Claudia, the exploits of which will be considered in the following pages.

68 Daily Telegraph, (n.d.), as reported in the Australian, 10 August 1977, p. 5.

69 Times, 14 April 1978.
negotiated in Athens, from an intermediate supply in Cyprus, which probably originated in the Lebanon. Neither during the trial of the Provisional agent, Seamus McCollum, nor since, was it suggested that China (or Japan) was involved.

The widespread belief that the Lebanon was the likely source of that particular shipment was, however, not without significance. The struggle of the Palestine guerrilla groups had attracted the interest of both wings of the IRA, but their support had been muted — possibly to avoid alienating sympathisers in the United States who were also supporters of Israel. Among leading Officials, Máirín de Burca stated that 'the Republican movement ... openly sympathised with the Palestine resistance movement' and a later declaration was made to the effect

[the war in the Middle East] will continue until the Arab people of Palestine can once again live in their own country ... We stand shoulder to shoulder with the Arab people.

In return the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was among thirteen left-wing 'national liberation groups' which signed a declaration of support for the IRA, published in Paris in 1972, at the time of a visit to the continent by the Officials' Malachy McGurran.

Less formal contacts between Ireland and the Arab states were also stimulated by the Irish-Arab Society, founded in Dublin in 1969 under the aegis of Atif Matouk, a Syrian, who then ran the Arab Information Centre in Dublin. The main influence behind the formation of the Society

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70 Irish Times, 19 July 1978.

71 The international complexion of the counter-measures was almost as impressive as that of the consignment. According to Bell, Israeli intelligence, operating in Cyprus became aware of the destination of the arms, and advised both the Belgian police, who seized them in Antwerp, and the Irish authorities, who arrested McCollum in Dublin. (The Secret Army, pp. 437-8).

72 Irish Times, 6 September 1972.

was thought to be Sean Ryan, an internee during the IRA's 1956-62 campaign. Other supporters included a number of Ryan's IRA associates, Arabs resident in Ireland, Irish businessmen with Arab contacts and an Anglo-Irish group. Also involved at an early stage was Louis Maguire, who had been expelled from Fianna Fáil and later became chairman of a committee formed within Aontacht Eireann to raise funds for the 'relief of distress' in the North as well as treasurer of the Irish-Arab Society. The Society itself quickly became involved in arranging exchanges of visits between Ireland and the Arab world, with Matouk reportedly acting as a guide for important Arab visitors to Ireland. In September 1970, Sean Ryan, Jim Hamilton of the Union of Students of Ireland, and Máirín de Burca were reported to have attended a conference in Amman organised by the General Union of Palestinian Students on the theme 'Towards A Democratic State in Palestine', and a similar conference in Kuwait in February 1971. Such activities were then accepted as being the limits to which Irish-Arab liaisons had any substance.

Throughout 1972 this was still held to apply; indeed in that year the British and Irish Governments generally discounted newspaper reports that the IRA was then receiving considerable supplies of arms from Middle East sources. Hence the prevailing views on that subject at the time of the McCollum trial represented an almost complete reversal of the earlier position. The factor principally responsible for this change was the proven record of the Libyan Government of Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi in its attempts to supply large quantities of arms to the Provisionals. This was also bolstered by firm though not irrefutable indications that suggested a similar but reduced involvement on the part of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

What the official attitude in Dublin and London appeared not to give due consideration to in 1972 was the growing importance of Libya as a supporter of guerrilla groups in general and the IRA in particular.

74 See This Week, 22 June 1972.

75 See Financial Times, 13 June 1972 and 11 December 1972; and Times, 12 June 1972 and 30 November 1972, where the June reports relate to the British response.
At one level, of course, this was understandable: notwithstanding that various visits were exchanged between Ireland and Libya they appeared to have resulted in nothing more tangible than a scheme for Irish teachers to work in the latter country. (One such teacher, Eddie O'Donnell, became personally acquainted with President Qadhafi and later was appointed as an education adviser in the Libyan Government service). Yet, at another level, there were clear warnings that Qadhafi was generally hostile towards Britain and sympathetic towards the IRA. Indeed, in June 1972, there were a number of contentious issues in Anglo-Libyan relations indicative of the former, the most important being the nationalisation in December 1971 of British Petroleum's half share of the Sarir oil field and the Libyan Government's subsequent decision to contract with the Soviet Union for the purchase of crude from that field. A more specific instance was provided by his statement that:

... at present we support the revolutionaries of Ireland who oppose Britain and who are motivated by nationalism and religion. The Libyan Arab Republic has stood by the revolutionaries of Ireland ... There are arms and there is support for the revolutionaries of Ireland ...

Between 'revolutionaries' and 'religion' the former was the sole consideration: Religion was of little, if any significance. When, in 1975, Qadhafi perceived the conflict in Northern Ireland as 'not a religious war' (see p.569 ) it in no way altered the basic criteria by which he determined his original involvement. Furthermore, although the Libyan Foreign Ministry was later to announce that its support would end after the border poll (eventually held in March 1973), Libyan

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76 Whether he doubled as the alleged permanent representative of the IRA in Tripoli is not clear. See Edward S. Ellenberg, 'The PLO and Its Place in Violence and Terror', Marius H. Livingston, Lee Bruce Kress, and Marie S. Wanek, International Terrorism in The Contemporary World (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 175, collection hereafter cited as Livingston, Kress and Wanek, eds., International Terrorism in the Contemporary World; and Boston Sunday Globe, 2 September 1979. In the latter, McMullen refers to a 'school teacher from Donegal' who 'travelled extensively to Libya' to arrange arms shipments for the IRA. Since O'Donnell was from Monaghan, it could be that McMullen was referring to someone else, or mistaken in his recollection.

77 Financial Times, 13 June 1972.

78 Libyan Radio, 11 June 1972; see also Egyptian Gazette, 12 June 1972.

79 Financial Times, 9 August 1972.
leaders continued after that event to express themselves in terms consistent with their President's earlier statements. And well they might, for in March 1973 there occurred an event which clearly established the Libyan role.

On the 28th of that month, the Claudia a 298 ton coaster, was intercepted by the Irish navy off Helvick Head, Co. Waterford, and was found to contain five tons of arms intended for the Provisional IRA. It was an operation which not only provided a further illustration of the propensity for the conflict in Northern Ireland to exceed the boundaries of the Province, but also allowed brief glimpses of the complexities and ironies which have increasingly attended it.

It was complex because the voyage of the Claudia had been the subject of another one of those international deals, initiated in Germany and negotiated in two foreign capitals, Tunis and Tripoli. The vessel itself had taken considerable pains both to conceal its route — by re-tracking, and to disguise the immediate origins of its cargo — by loading it in international waters. It was, moreover, registered in Cyprus by the German Giromar Shipping Company (for which Lloyds had no address), a company 90 per cent owned by Gunther and Marlene Leinhauser, the former of whom had been convicted in 1967 for attempting to smuggle arms from Czechoslovakia to Kurdish rebels in Iraq.

80 Guardian, 30 March 1973. The arms recovered were 250 Russian-made (AK 47) self-loading rifles, 248 Webley .38 revolvers, more than 20,000 rounds of Belgian and Russian ammunition, 100 anti-tank mines, 100 cases of anti-personnel mines, 6001b. of TNT, 5001b. of gelignite, and 300 hand grenades (see also Guardian, 31 March 1973; Sunday Telegraph, 1 April 1973; and Times, 21 April 1975).

85 Leinhauser had been caught at an intermediate point, on the French-German border, with a consignment of American, German, Italian, and Yugoslav pistols and revolvers (Daily Telegraph, 31 March 1973).
It was ironic because this most spectacular and public interception by the Irish navy was wrought with the almost certain assistance of British intelligence, the Royal Air Force, and perhaps the Royal Navy. It was of little matter that Minister of Defence, Patrick Donegan, was reticent concerning this aspect; the success of the interception in Irish waters was logically and obviously predicated on Anglo-Irish co-operation. And in this regard it might be noted that two of the Irish vessels, the Fola and the Grainne, were formerly Royal Navy coastal minesweepers. That this modest flotilla comprised three-quarters of the ocean-going capability of the Irish Navy, or that it was thought necessary to deploy it in such strength to ensure the apprehension of an unarmed coaster, was to be seen less as a cause for derision than for concern. It emphasised both the vulnerability of Ireland to threats against its maritime and coastal sovereignty, and the inadequate resources which it possessed to counter them.

It was a concern which was only heightened by persistent reports that the Claudia had delivered between one and three arms shipments to Ireland in the previous fifteen months. Furthermore, there were questions which remained unresolved, although dismissed by the Irish Government, as to whether the 5 tons of arms recovered were the entire shipment or but part of a very much larger one which had been either trans-shipped earlier or dumped overboard when the crew of the Claudia realised their predicament. The belief that the Soviet Union, despite the appearance of arms of its manufacture in the cargo, was probably not involved was of little consolation to the British and Irish authorities. The evidence all to clearly pointed to the fact that Libya was.

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89 Guardian, 3 April 1973; Financial Times, 4 April 1973; Sunday Telegraph, 1 April 1973; and Times, 3 April 1973. Similar reports were to be found in other British newspapers throughout the two weeks after the operation and were also repeated by the above at different times in this period.
One prior development in this general period prompted speculation that another state (or organisation) had adopted a similar role. The introduction of the Soviet-designed RPG-7 rocket launcher to the IRA's arsenal in November 1972 did much to give this suggestion currency some months before the Claudia affair. At that time, the general suspicion which attached to Qadhafi as a supplier of arms to the IRA was of a low order: Libya was not an arms client of the Soviet Union, whereas Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria were reported to have received recent shipments of RPG-7s. As best as can be ascertained from available sources, however, these four client states were not directly implicated and the IRA's possession of the weapons in question is still put down to an undetected arms deal negotiated in the Near or Middle East sometime in 1972.

The seizure of a huge quantity of British Lee Enfield rifles on the Bremen docks in July 1973 may have been significant. Unfortunately for this inquiry, little was published about it other than it was a consignment belonging to a Dutch arms dealer, taken on in Aqaba, Jordon, and that customs officials in Bremen could not exclude the possibility that the weapons were destined for Ireland. However, in view of the age and type of the weapon, and the IRA's stated requirements, it must be regarded as a most unlikely purchase.

While the Claudia incident appeared not to dampen Qadhafi's enthusiasm for the Northern Ireland conflict, his subsequent attitude towards it was somewhat erratic. From being a benefactor of the Provisional IRA in 1972-73, he became, in 1974, the willing host for supplicant parties from the other side of the province's paramilitary divide. Early that year the Libyan Government began to consider whether, in addition to the Provisionals, some extreme 'loyalist' groups which favoured an independent Ulster might not also qualify for support as


91 In its attempts to locate the origin of the rocket launchers, British Intelligence sent samples of the dust and sand found inside one of the weapons to scientists of all the leading petroleum companies in Britain in the hope that it could be geographically identified. But it wasn't. (Times, 21 April 1975).

'anti-imperialists'. Qadhafi himself was reported to have expressed admiration for the Ulster Workers' Council strike of May 1974 which, according to Eddie O'Donnell, the Libyan leader viewed as a 'valid mechanism' that 'reminded him of his own non-violent coup in September 1969'.

But it would be misleading to attribute the Libyan involvement in any substantial measure to nostalgia. More to the point it should be understood that Qadhafi on numerous occasions acknowledged a certain 'hatred against the English' (and for the matter of that, the United States) whom he saw as having to 'pay dearly for the wrongs and perfidy they inflicted on us'. And the obverse of this hatred was a clear sense of small power purity or virtue, corresponding perhaps to the magnitude of the crimes Libya had been historically unable to commit, but which in any case allowed Qadhafi to align himself with 'people struggling for freedom'. As if to emphasise the purity of his intentions he gave notice

If the British people are ever colonised, God forbid, we will stand by the British people.

This promise, however, was less notable for the dubious consolation it may have offered the British than for Qadhafi's habit of confusing both the people of Northern Ireland with the Irish people, and Northern Ireland with the island of Ireland. As the following was to show, it was as though he believed that the entire Irish nation considered itself aggrieved by Britain and was fighting a war of national liberation.

We are backing Ireland. We shall continue to assist until Ireland gains the final victory.

Overlaying these aspects of Qadhafi's reasons for helping the IRA was a messianism, derived from his own perception of the precepts of

93 *Times*, 22 April 1975.
94 *Belfast Telegraph*, 4 December 1974.
97 *Irish Times*, 10 November 1975.
Islam, and by which he determined that it was his duty to 'guide' and 'enlighten' the oppressed Irish people. And through such personal revelation he also derived a 'sacred message' which, in addition to the 'wrongs and perfidy' allegedly inflicted by Britain and the United States, also commanded him as a 'faithful Moslem and patriotic Arab', to fight both of them. He told a conference in Tripoli in 1973 the conflict in Northern Ireland was for Britain a 'retaliation and retribution from God.'

While the aforementioned disposition would not necessarily preclude it, the suggestion that Qadhafi was acting as a proxy for the Soviet Union in this period seems unlikely. Apart from the fact that his country was not receiving Soviet arms, the President was also known to have directed his displeasure towards Egyptian leaders for their over-dependence on such supplies, and to have attacked the Soviet Union during the 1973 conference of non-aligned nations in Algiers.

Nevertheless, given the same disposition, Qadhafi's decision to treat with loyalist elements was curious, even contradictory, since by definition they represented 'British imperialism' rather than its antithesis. In this it would seem that Qadhafi's desire to further arrogate to himself the agency of divine punishment exceeded his grasp of the realities in Northern Ireland. Robert Fisk probably captured the essence of the situation when he wrote

The nature of the struggle seems to be of less importance than the fact it exists...

98 *Daily Express*, 13 June 1972.
100 *Guardian*, 14 May 1973. With regard to the conflict in Northern Ireland, Britain was also unpopular with Israel. In response to the British Government's decision to allow the PLO to operate an office in London, the youth of the Herut movement in Beersheba invited the IRA to open an office in that city (*Irish Times*, 6 July 1971, p. 1).
103 *Time*, 21 April 1975.
Such an appreciation would, therefore, account for the fact that, late in 1974, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) was invited to participate in a visit to Libya arranged for the Development of Irish Resources organisation (DIR), a previously little known group suspected of being subject to 'Republican' influences. However, according to DIR's chairman, Walter Hegarty, the organisation was not aligned with any political cause, and it had co-operated with the UDA's involvement because of a common interest in the development of Ireland's offshore oil and gas resources.  

This was a credible position as it was a motive equally attributable to those seeking a united Ireland and those contemplating an independent Northern Ireland (as the UDA were known to favour if the British link could not be maintained to its satisfaction.) But it was not entirely consistent with Eddie O'Donnell's claim that he secured the UDA invitation so that the Libyans could meet the men behind the Protestant strike, nor with the reports that the UDA had made representations to Qadhafi, particularly concerning his patronage of the IRA, and certainly not with the simultaneous presence of a Provisional Sinn Fein delegation at the same hotel in Tripoli at which the UDA were staying.

The reasons given were plausible, but in relation to the representations by the UDA and the presence of the Provisionals, incomplete. Whatever the truth in UDA spokesman Tony Lyttle's claim that his organisation had been invited to Libya 'to enlighten [the Qadhafi regime] on the truth of the Northern Ireland situation' it

105 In view of the unionist orientation of the UDA, this may seem a contradictory statement. Basically, it arose because although the UDA demanded that Ulster remain British, it also came to the conclusion that the British may not wish to retain Ulster. Hence, the UDA's response was to opt for an Ulster identity, independent of Britain and the Republic of Ireland, which would preserve the Protestant character of the Province. For a brief exposition of this view see Andy Tyrie (supreme commander of the UDA), 'Independence is the only alternative', Guardian Weekly, 24 February 1980, p. 5.
106 Times, 22 April 1975.
was surely to be expected that every opportunity would be taken to
do so in any case. In turn, the arrival of the Provisionals some
five days after the loyalists was guaranteed by the anxiety on the
former's part that an attempt was under way to disrupt their
arrangement with Libya, and that this should be strenuously resisted.108

In the ensuing period it was possible, without putting too
fine a point on it, to conclude that the IRA had not been
successful. The first indication that Qadhafi may have undergone
a change of heart was provided by a statement made in November 1974
by Glen Barr, a leading UDA figure on the visit.

... the Libyan Government appeared to be under the
impression that the IRA were Freedom Fighters ...
We were able to show them the other side of the coin.
They were interested in our proposal for an independent
Northern Ireland and I think we were successful in
putting our case across ...109

From the time of this announcement until late 1977 there was no further
evidence of arms reaching Ireland from Near or Middle East sources.
Yet in the month following the UDA visit, Qadhafi was reported as
having told senior Maltese Government officials that his aid to the
IRA to that point was £5 million, although he did not specify whether
this was in cash or in kind.110 November 1974 also saw the report of
a similar statement from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, made in this instance
by the Libyan Prime Minister, Major Abdul Jalloud.111

108 The late arrival of the Sinn Fein delegation might also have
suggested that the DIR was either an inefficient conduit or less
'Republican' than imagined.


110 Sunday Telegraph, 22 December 1974. This claim was consistent with
McMullen's 1979 claim that Libyan 'arms and loans' ran to $5 million per
year (emphasis added). See Boston Globe, 2 September 1979, p.12.

111 Times, 21 April 1975.
Shortly after these affirmations of support for the IRA, an example was provided of the type of conclusion which could follow from Qadhafi's inability to differentiate between 'liberation struggles'. Indeed, in his fascination with such causes he extended the realm of his personal fantasy with a proclaimed, but largely unpublished, support for what he called the 'freedom fighters' of the Scottish Nationalist movement.\(^{112}\)

In April 1975, the equivocal nature of the Libyan attitude to the IRA became more apparent. In that month a delegation from the Oireachtas\(^{113}\) visited Tripoli to explain to the Libyan Government that no assistance should be given to those in Ireland who used violence in their attempts to unite the country.\(^{114}\) At a luncheon in their honour, however, the Irish found that their hosts seemed to regard the IRA in much the same light as the PLO, as was evident in the speech of Ahmed Shahati, Secretary of the Arab Socialist Union's Foreign Affairs Committee:

> We support the unity of people, we support the unity of Northern and Southern Ireland and the peoples of both parts of the country. We support liberation forces throughout the world.\(^{115}\)

The connection between 'liberation forces' and Irish unity was not lost on the Irish Delegation but its power to persuade the Libyans to a more accurate assessment of the Northern Ireland conflict was, initially at least, disadvantaged by three main factors. The first was the delegation's seeming reluctance to question its hosts closely as to just what their aid had consisted of. By one reliable account the Irish did not even refer to the IRA specifically in the joint discussions, but chose instead to use the euphemism 'those who use violence'.\(^{116}\) The

\(^{112}\) ibid.

\(^{113}\) National Parliament of Ireland.

\(^{114}\) Irish Times, 18 April 1975.

\(^{115}\) ibid., the Arab Socialist Union is Libya's only political party.

\(^{116}\) Times, 21 April 1975, report by Robert Fisk.
second was an exaggerated report that the Irish delegation was divided,\textsuperscript{117} while the third, and perhaps the most substantial factor was the condition imposed by the Libyans that any gesture they might make would require a prior indication of support for the participation of the PLO at a forthcoming Euro-Arab conference.\textsuperscript{118} As the delegation could give no such assurance the prospects for even the promise of an uncontroversial trade deal were held as remote.

Nevertheless, an apparent reconsideration by the Libyan Government was achieved. According to \textit{ex parte} accounts by the Irish delegation, made from Malta, the Libyan Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, A. Dordah, had pledged:

\begin{quote}
My Government respects the wishes of the Irish people and does not want to interfere. My Government is looking to the future now, not the past.\textsuperscript{119}
\end{quote}

From further statements made by the delegation leaders on their return this was taken to imply that Libya would no longer aid any illegal organisation in Ireland, including the IRA.\textsuperscript{120} On the other hand it fell short of both the delegation's principal objective, which had been a categorical assurance in this regard, and the lesser objective of an admission by the Libyans of their previous arms supplies to the IRA.

In so far as the supply of arms was concerned, further developments suggested that the Libyan Government, while it had come to a realisation that the Irish question was not as simple as it first believed, was not about to embrace a practice of self-denial with regard to Northern Ireland. In September 1975, two of its representatives, including Eddie O'Donnell, met with UDA leaders in Northern Ireland and, it was

\textsuperscript{117} It was, but only on the issue of whether a Dublin businessman, Frank Maguire, who was not a parliamentarian, should be included in talks with the Libyan officials. (ibid.).

\textsuperscript{118} ibid.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Financial Times}, 23 April 1975.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Irish Times}, 28 April 1975.
understood, discussed in general terms the potential for Libyan investment in the event of British withdrawal. If this was true then the core of Libyan interest in Northern Ireland was still derived from, and defined in terms of, Qadhafi's Anglophobia. By extension, he was seeking, through discussions with the UDA, to manipulate the Province's tensions, if not to his advantage, then certainly to Britain's embarrassment and discomfort. Furthermore, given the strength of his hatreds, and the fact that his Government's (then) recent pronouncements eschewing support for 'illegal organisations' left much to be desired in Dublin and London, some residual doubt remained whether Libya had actually desisted from supplying arms to the IRA.

This impression was strengthened with the publication of an interview with Qadhafi by Il Tempo of Rome in November 1975, in the course of which he told the newspaper's Paola Brianti

> We are backing Ireland, which is fighting for its independence and not a religious war. We shall continue to assist until Ireland gains the final victory. But we shall never, for any reason, get involved in internal quarrels.122

According to a corrected version released by the Libyan news agency, he also added:

> We are not a party to other minority conflicts nor are we responsible for the method by which these minorities determine their own fate.123

It was clear, moreover, that this self-absolution did not have the effect of alienating the Provisionals from the Libyan regime. A letter allegedly smuggled out of the Maze Prison (formerly Long Kesh) by IRA detainees in late 1975 stated:

> We, here in our internment camp, greet the 1st September revolution and its leader, Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi.

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121 Daily Express, 26 August 1975; and Financial Times, 15 September 1975.

122 As reported in the Irish Times, 10 November 1975.

123 ARNA, 27 November 1975.
The voice of this leader reaches us despite the solitary confinement cells and the prison guards. We also greet the Palestinian Arab revolution and our companions in the Zionist internment camps. Long live the Arab-Irish struggle ...\textsuperscript{124}

Two months later there was still no sign of a rift between the Provisionals and Libya. In February 1976, a highly complimentary appreciation of Qadhafi's political philosophy, as expounded in his *Green Book*, was published in their journal and claimed:

\begin{quote}
[It] will have a familiar ring to Irish Republicans. Like all great political thought, Qadhafi's message relates to a much wider canvas than the desert societies of North Africa and Arabia ...\textsuperscript{125}
\end{quote}

From that time until the close of the period under review, any assessment of Libyan involvement in the affairs of Northern Ireland must be based on developments of an indeterminate and sometimes conflicting nature. Following the December 1977 arrest of Provisional Chief of Staff, Seamus Twomey, in Dublin, there were reports of IRA leaders once more visiting Tripoli.\textsuperscript{126} In this period the IRA received both a military and a psychological boost with the introduction of the M.60 machine gun to its arsenal, a weapon then suspected in some quarters of being supplied from the Middle East.\textsuperscript{127} A 1979 report by Peter McMullen, a former member of both the Parachute Regiment (from which he deserted), and the IRA (from whom he defected), tended to confirm this suspicion.\textsuperscript{128} McMullen claimed that in 1977-78 the Provisionals had received seven tons of arms from Libya, including 'Russian surface-to-air missiles, RPG5s and RPG7s'.\textsuperscript{129} By his account the major obstacle to their use had been the

\textsuperscript{124} 'Voice of the Arab Homeland', Tripoli, 22 December 1975.
\textsuperscript{125} *An Phobalacht*, 20 February 1976.
\textsuperscript{126} Interview with Dr James Bowyer Bell, Dublin, 5 June 1978.
\textsuperscript{127} ibid. and interview with Dr Garret Fitzgerald, Leader of Fine Gael, Dublin, 14 February 1978, (hereafter cited as Fitzgerald Interview, 14 February 1978).
\textsuperscript{128} *Boston Globe*, 7 September 1979, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{129} ibid.
prospective operators' inability to understand the Russian text of the instruction manuals. Finally it was alleged that Thomas McMahon, convicted in early 1980 for the murder of Lord Mountbatten, had perfected his remote-control bomb-making skills (under Russian supervision) in Libya.

The first was that it was later held, with near certainty, that the origin of the M.60 machine guns brandished by the Provisionals in early 1978 was later held in a National Guard armoury in Danvers, Massachusetts, from whence they were stolen in August 1976. The second was that, in the period late 1977-mid 1980, which presumably was sufficient time for a translation of instruction manuals to be effected, there was no recorded instance of an attack involving an RPG-7 or a surface-to-air missile. Both indications were therefore consistent with, and supportive, of the third, which was a report of discussions held in Libya between Qadhafi and the British Conservative Party's Shadow Foreign Secretary, John Davies. According to Davies, the Provisional IRA had ceased to be regarded as among the world's liberation movements, from which it was inferred that Libya was no longer prepared to support the Provisionals.

As on previous occasions when Qadhafi had given assurances to this effect there was much unsaid that encouraged doubt as to his real intentions. Davies was not then regarded as being within the top echelon of the Tory opposition's hierarchy, even less could he have been regarded as a representative of the British Government. Thus Qadhafi's choice of messenger was curious. Davies' report, moreover,

130 ibid. The abbreviation RPG stands for Rocket Propelled Grenade. Although the existence of the RPG7 has been known since 1962, there is no such weapon as the RPG5, or even a SA5 or SAM5 (both would refer to surface-to-air missile). However, the urge to dismiss McMullen's account out of hand may be resisted in the knowledge that there is a weapon of similar appearance to the RPG7, designated SA7. (F.W.A. Hobart, ed., Janes Infantry Weapons 1975 (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1974), pp. 779-81.

131 A Daily Mail report, as cited in Encounter LIV (February 1980) : 25.

132 Irish Times, 21 September 1978.

133 Times, 24 June 1978.
suffered not only from being based on inference but also from being
given ex parte. (In combination, these considerations may have
accounted for the poor attention given to it in the press). Even
then its contents provided no answer to whether Libya had recently
supplied the Provisionals with arms, or more importantly, whether
it was absolutely committed to not supplying them in the future.
Furthermore, two additional reasons to doubt Qadhafi's sincerity
were afforded by the knowledge that at the time of Davies' visit,
a sale of trucks, aircraft and spare parts worth more than £200
million was being held up by the United States Government in an
attempt to persuade Libya from harbouring international terrorists. 134

Given Qadhafi's outlook and record of erratic behaviour it could
not be assumed that any action he took in the face of American
pressure was likely to become an established feature of Libyan policy.
And even if to all appearances it did, there remained a distinct
possibility that one or more of the numerous Arab liberation
movements he gave considerable backing to—such as the PLO 135—might
act as his proxy with the IRA. Indeed, there was evidence that this
organisation had been so involved for some years, albeit it in a
secondary and shadowy capacity. To be precise this activity was
carried out by two of the PLO's constituent groups, the Popular Front
for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and Al Fatah.

One commentator on Middle East affairs, Yonah Alexander, dates
IRA-PFLP co-operation from as early as 1968. 136 Certainly, by May
1972, it was more widely acknowledged, even heralded, as in Radio
Cairo's exultant report of the massacre at Lod Airport, near Tel Aviv,
by three members of the (Japanese) Red Army specially recruited for the
occasion.


135 Edward S. Ellenberg, 'The PLO And Its Place In Violence and
Terror', Livingston, Kress, and Wanek, eds; International Terrorism
In The Contemporary World, p. 175.

136 Yonah Alexander, 'Terror International: The PLO-IRA Connection',
American Professors For Peace in the Middle East, Bulletin, October 1979,
p. 3, (hereafter cited as Alexander, 'The PLO-IRA Connection').
The participation of three Japanese members in the suicide action at Lod proves that the PFLP succeeded in obtaining international support as a truly revolutionary movement. Strong bonds exist between the Palestinian resistance organizations and other liberation movements in Africa, the I.R.A., the Vietnamese revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{137}

But as evidence of a substantial nexus with the IRA, this was very thin. As was pointed out earlier, the contacts then in evidence appeared to be at the ideological level and almost exclusively concerned Official Sinn Fein.\textsuperscript{138} Thus there was no suggestion that Irish revolutionaries were willing to emulate the Japanese example and be sacrificed for the Palestinian cause; ironically, only the night before the above broadcast, the Official IRA had ordered an immediate cessation of all hostilities other than those of a defensive nature.

Subsequently, whether as a result of this unilaterally declared cease-fire or some other reason, the PFLP liaison with Ireland was expanded to include the Provisional IRA.\textsuperscript{139} In May 1972, at Baddawai in the Lebanon, the PFLP and Black September hosted a meeting attended by representatives of numerous terrorist and nationalist/separatist organisations including the IRA.\textsuperscript{140} In the same year subsequent meetings


\textsuperscript{138} See also Financial Times, 11 December 1972.

\textsuperscript{139} According to Garret Fitzgerald, it was just possible that the PLO did not altogether understand the nature of their association with the IRA. During Ireland's Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Community in 1975, he toured the countries of the Maghreb as one of his official duties but in Algiers took the opportunity to hold discussions with a PLO spokesman. In the course of this Fitzgerald gained the impression that the PLO regarded the IRA as the 'Irish Government's underground army', and hence, Dublin's condemnation of their activities as no more than pro former statements intended to placate (say) the British Government! With some difficulty, he attempted to persuade the PLO otherwise. Among his measures were the withholding of Irish Government support for various PLO demands, which were otherwise considered just, for as long as the organisation continued to support the IRA (Fitzgerald Interview, 14 February 1978).

in Algeria, Japan and Dublin gave rise to reports not only of a closer liaison between such groups, but also of agreements 'to supply each other with arms and information and to carry out operations on behalf of and in the name of a brother movement'.\textsuperscript{141} Furthermore, McMullen claimed in 1979 that a young Arab woman living in Dublin was the liaison officer between the PLO and the IRA.\textsuperscript{142}

To date, the IRA-PFLP co-operation has allegedly found a tangible expression in three areas. The first concerns the provision of training facilities. If testimony given in an Old Bailey trial by mercenary-recruiter, John Banks, was to be believed, an IRA training camp had existed in Algeria, in 1973, on the edge of the Sahara Desert.\textsuperscript{143} While doubts as to Banks' reliability as a witness were raised by his admission that he had previously lied on two counts to the London \textit{Evening Standard},\textsuperscript{144} the substance of his claim received confirmation the following year.

In a BBC documentary on terrorism, Abu Maher, a member of the PFLP team which attacked an El Al aircraft at Athens airport in 1968, told of a camp run by his organisation at which people from several nations, including Ireland, were being trained.\textsuperscript{145} (Neither the location of the camp nor a more detailed description of the Irish members was provided). In the same programme an IRA presence at a training camp in Aden was reported by Israeli Colonel Elihu Lavite, who claimed that this information was forthcoming from his interrogation of terrorist Lidwina Janssen.\textsuperscript{146} McMullen also claimed that in more recent times (after 1977), the IRA leadership was able 'to attract money, arms and training from the Palestine Liberation Organisation and representatives of Libyan Leader Colonel Qadhafi'.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{141} ibid. Wilkinson claims that, in May 1972, the West German Embassy in Dublin was bombed by the IRA with the Baader-Meinhof gang claiming responsibility for the attack.

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Boston Sunday Globe}, 2 September 1979, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Guardian}, 25 March 1977.

\textsuperscript{144} ibid.

\textsuperscript{145} 'Terror International', BBC 1, 30 January 1978.

\textsuperscript{146} ibid.

\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Boston Sunday Globe}, 2 September 1979, p. 1.
Substantially similar accounts were provided following the deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 1978. While covering its activities, Irish Times correspondent, Conor O'Clery, interviewed a PLO colonel in Beirut who advised that a small number of IRA members had received instruction in explosives and guerrilla warfare techniques, in Lebanon, until just prior to that time (June 1978). O'Clery also noted that UN observers in UNIFIL were in agreement that such an arrangement had been in existence for a period of years. In some quarters this was held to be a disingenuous assessment: Alexander, for example, contended that the training continued through the course of 1978 'apparently with the full knowledge of the UN officers serving in the area', and that at least 10 IRA members arrived for training in each of the following 15 months. Notwithstanding the differences as to place, quantity and time which were to be found between the foregoing accounts, they were sufficiently consistent to establish the IRA's client relationship with the PFLP for the provision of services.

McMullen's 1979 claim would extend this to a second area. According to him the murder of Sir Richard Sykes, British Ambassador to the Netherlands, in the Hague in March 1979, was a combined IRA-PLO operation. Unfortunately (again) for this inquiry, there were other, conflicting accounts as to who might have been responsible: in Holland, spokesmen for the IRA, and for the Italian Red Brigades on behalf of the IRA claimed the deed. And further doubt must be attached to McMullen's claim as, by the time of the incident in question, he had been persona non grata with the IRA for at least a year.

149 ibid.
150 Alexander, 'The PLO-IRA Connection', p. 3. He also claimed that others were being trained in Libya and Syria.
153 By his own account he faced an IRA court of inquiry (for refusing an assignment) in February 1978, and flew to the US in April 1978 to escape an IRA squad charged to kill him (Boston Globe, 6 September 1979, p. 2).
If either of these 'arrangements' also included the provision of arms it was not readily apparent from the available information. However a case may be made that this third area was the subject of a separate understanding with another PLO constituent, Al Fatah. In the literature on terrorism, Al Fatah (Yasser Arafat's group) was cited as the source of IRA-intended arms on three separate occasions since 1972. The first appears to have existed only in the mind of Alexander: there are simply no records of a seizure of such a consignment in Antwerp in December 1972. (Perhaps he meant the 1977 episode, as follows). There was also some doubt as to the second, which was John Barron's unsubstantiated claim that the Claudia's captured shipment had been supplied from Al Fatah, and not Libyan stocks. The remaining instance concerned a consignment of arms which was discovered in Antwerp, but in December 1977, and which led to the trial of Seamus McCollum in Dublin in July 1978. While his testimony in no way implicated Al Fatah, the markings on several of the boxes did. Of themselves they were less than conclusive evidence of its involvement, but in the context of the RPG-7s used in 1972, the Claudia interception, and Qadhafi's interest in Ireland, they were sufficient to encourage the belief that Al Fatah, or an organisation closely aligned with it, was a likely source of some of the IRA's arms shipments.

The strength of this belief varied — from numerous commentators on the right who, irrespective of the evidence, saw the Middle East suppliers as mere agents for what was fundamentally a Soviet enterprise of sowing disaffection where it could — to the official and frequently expressed view of Her Majesty's Government, which was somewhat less sanguine. During one period of Question Time in the House of Commons in 1978 a number of Members who were inclined to the former view were assured by the Northern Ireland Secretary, Roy Mason, that the IRA's

154 Alexander, 'The PLO-IRA Connection', p. 3.
contacts with 'Palestinian terrorists' were neither 'significant' nor even 'a real link'. Indeed, Mason extended his assessment to cover not only organisations in the Middle East but 'international terrorist' organisations in general.

In support of his Government's position the Secretary relied in part upon the relative ease with which arms could be purchased in the Middle East and seemed to imply that such deals were commercially rather than politically inspired. In part though, he relied upon a form of wishful thinking which was controverted by evidence cited earlier in this chapter, namely that

> The appalling record of the Provisional IRA within the Province and its lack of political support do not enable it to establish any significant international links.

He thereby left unanswered why it was that such organisations as the Red Army and the Red Brigade were seemingly able to operate on an international scale while enjoying considerably less political support than the IRA. Equally, Mason was ignoring the substantial support which had been lent the Provisionals from the United States, and even their ability, demonstrated over some eight years, to operate in Northern Ireland in the face of the very difficulties he described. However, his position was arguably reinforced by none other than Yasser Arafat who, when asked if the PLO supplied arms to the IRA, replied, 'No, I am searching for weapons myself'. But in the same interview the Al Fatah leader was also reported to have denied that the PLO had 'any links' with the IRA which, in the light of the foregoing, questioned his credibility.

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159 ibid., col. 1388.
160 ibid., col. 1378.
161 Interview of Yasser Arafat by Barbara Walters for ABC Television News, 9 September 1979, as reported in the *Irish Times*, 10 September 1979, p. 1.
Mention will be made of just one other area of external support which the IRA may have received. Although there is no reference to it in any published documents, the possibility — more the probability — that the IRA occasionally obtained the services of professional assassins from outside Ireland, for service in Northern Ireland, was suggested in two interviews with British officials.\(^{162}\) Because of the sensitive nature of security operations in the North, no further information was forthcoming, and it is therefore, not possible to elaborate on the matter beyond this paragraph.

At this point it is appropriate to consider the perspective of what is being discussed in these pages. It principally concerns the supply of arms to a relatively localised conflict which, between 1968 and 1978, claimed the lives of some 2,000 people. Sadly, in terms of the natural and man-made hazards to which the world is accustomed, it is frequently regarded as a small toll of a small war in the north-eastern confines of a small country. Other indices confirm this: according to a Foreign and Commonwealth Office authority on the situation in Northern Ireland, ballistic signatures indicated, that in 1978, only about 1,000 weapons were in active use in the Province.\(^{163}\) This, and the relatively small quantity described in virtually all of the IRA's attempts to acquire arms, both frustrated and successful, is a caution against taking too expansive a view of the current 'troubles'.

The record of paramilitary operations related to the conflict reduced its international dimensions even further. By far the greatest number of incidents were the responsibility of one organisation — the Provisional IRA — although on a few occasions its pre-eminence was challenged by the Officials,\(^{164}\) some unnamed Protestant extremists,\(^{165}\)

\(^{162}\) One source was of the opinion that certain shootings in Derry, because of the circumstances surrounding them, were either the work of a freelance operator, or hired killer who visited the city specifically for the operation and left again.

\(^{163}\) Interview.

\(^{164}\) The bombing of an Army Officer's Mess at Aldershot, on 22 February 1972, which killed six civilians and a Roman Catholic chaplain was claimed by the Officials.

\(^{165}\) Persons so described were generally held to be responsible for the Dublin and Monaghan car bombings which claimed 28 lives in the space of 3 hours on 17 May 1974.
and latterly the Irish National Liberation Army. In March 1979, the INLA murdered the Conservative Party's principal spokesman on Northern Ireland as he was leaving the House of Commons car park. According to McMullen, Provisional IRA co-operation was provided (Boston Sunday Globe, 2 September 1979, p. 12). However, David O'Connell (Daithi Ó Conaill), then of Provisional Sinn Fein, denied this (International Herald Tribune, 27 November 1980, p. 4).

A fatal kidnapping undertaken by a small group of volunteers without official approval of the IRA command. See Bell, The Secret Army, pp. 406-07.

However, the Provisionals have, on at least two occasions, hijacked a goods train on the main Belfast-Dublin railway and blown it up. See Daily Telegraph, 30 December 1975; and Times, 21 November 1978.

In 1978 approximately one quarter of the UDR's strength was on full-time duties.

In the absence of official figures in the last few years the figure of 5,000 was estimated by the writer, perhaps generously, to allow for the increase in the numbers of the security forces on Border duties since mid-1974, when it was nearly 3,000 (Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Debates, Official Report, vol. 273, 26 June 1974, col. 1576). Even if the estimated figure is inflated, the order of comparability is not greatly affected.

Guardian, 19 October 1980, p.5. The report cited was a private assessment stolen from military intelligence by the IRA in 1979, and released by it. However, the authenticity of Document 37, as it was formally titled, was admitted by the British Government (Canberra Times, 12 May 1979).
Although statistics are but poor indices of the suffering and disruption to daily life which has been caused by the conflict in Northern Ireland, they do at least reveal that its more violent manifestations have been contained within the Six Counties (1837 dead); only secondarily and sporadically were they experienced in the Republic (73 dead); and mainland Britain (65 dead).\textsuperscript{172} Outside these boundaries they were seen but fleetingly—in Western Europe towards the close of the period, and exclusively against targets defined as British (less than 5 dead).\textsuperscript{173} What these statistics suggest, then, was the intention, or perhaps the inability, on the part of the antagonists not to expand the conflict beyond the borders of Northern Ireland under 'normal' circumstances.

A close inspection of the records of out-of-state incidents lends considerable support to this interpretation. They appeared to have arisen out of various ulterior, as opposed to central, motives which otherwise governed the conflict in the North. And there were sound reasons for the general avoidance of foreign battlegrounds, as McGuire explained:

\begin{quote}
... it was our [the Provisional IRA's] definite policy then not to take the war to England. We knew we would not be able to sustain operations there: on classic guerrilla theory you fight only where the population will support you and give you refuge. Previous attempt to carry the war to England had been ... disastrous and counter-productive.\textsuperscript{174}
\end{quote}

Thus revenge,\textsuperscript{175} the need of a bargaining chip\textsuperscript{176} and the desire to


\textsuperscript{173} The total of casualties resulting from European incidents, including the murder of Sir Richard Sykes (previously discussed) has not been published, but it would almost certainly be less than 5.

\textsuperscript{174} McGuire, \textit{To Take Arms}, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{175} This motive, a consequence of Bloody Sunday, was clearly behind the Aldershot bombing of 22 February, 1972 (See note 164 this chapter and Bell, \textit{The Secret Army}, p. 385).

\textsuperscript{176} The rash of bombings in London and Manchester in January 1975 was designed specifically for this purpose (Whale and Ryder, 'Decade of Despair', p. 15).
dramatically re-focus British attention on the Province were the motivating forces behind British operations when they were undertaken. It was as though the paramilitaries had decided upon a fundamental distinction — regarding the war in Northern Ireland in the classical Clausewitzian sense of the practice of diplomacy by other means, and the terrorist operations further afield as the gruesome arm of public relations.

Developments in 1978-early 1981 may lead to a modification of this view, if they continue. The murder of Airey Neave (by the INLA) in March 1979, and Provisional IRA bomb attacks on the Hammersmith Territorial Barracks, the Royal Air Force base at Uxbridge, and the Bromley-by-Bow gas works in December 1980 may be indications that the principles of 'classical guerrilla theory' have been put aside with regard to operations in England.

Moreover, such instances were no less noticeable in Europe. There, too, British diplomats, Army establishments and military personnel were the focus of attacks. There was also speculation (in 1976-77) that the Provisionals were connected with incendiary attacks on British interests in Austria, and the murder of a Belgian bank official (presumed to have been mistaken for a British diplomat at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation headquarters) in

177 Two incidents in 1974 — the bombing of a coach on the M62 carrying servicemen and their families (12 dead), and explosions at Army barracks at Guildford and Woolwich (7 dead) were timed to coincide with the British election campaign of February and October/November of that year respectively (ibid., p. 16).


179 On 3 December 1980, Mr Christopher Tugendhat, the British European Commissioner, was the subject of a shooting attack in Brussels (Guardian, 19 January 1981, p. 4).

180 In August 1978, eight explosions in six British military installations on the Rhine were reported (International Herald Tribune, 21 August 1978). Another example of this expanded theatre of IRA operations concerned the bombing of a stage, in Brussels, on which a British Army band was about to play (Irish Times, 30 August 1979).

March 1979.  This pattern (such as it was) in Europe appeared to confirm, albeit belatedly, McMullen’s 1979 claim that the IRA had, in early 1974, created a new position – Director of European Operations.  

But neither English nor European operations were the main thrust of the campaigns conducted by any of the paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland. In the final analysis the conflict remained, throughout the period under review, essentially within the dimensions of the questions from which it sprang. Although the antagonists garnered supplies from external parties, the fight itself never seemed likely to include, to any significant level, other than the Irish and the British in Ireland. For that reason, Sir Walter Scott’s description of it all was as accurate in 1981 as it was in 1825.

Their factions have been so long envenomed, and they have such narrow ground to do their battle in, that they are like people fighting with daggers in a hogshead.  

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183 *Boston Globe*, 5 September 1979, p. 1. The appointee, according to McMullen, was Martin McGuinness.  
Conclusions
In 1978 the essential elements of the Ulster Question were no more resolved than they were in 1968. The question of civil rights for the Catholic minority was, if not solved completely, then well in train. But since 1972 at the latest, no one had pretended that that was the issue: both Catholics and Protestants in the North, and the Irish Government in Dublin, had long since made the inductive leap from immediate reform to the Republican political ideal of a united Ireland.

No matter, in the terms of this thesis, that an 'objective' view of the situation in 1968-69 might have persuaded the more militant Protestants from reacting violently against the (predominantly) Catholic demonstrators, and hence have possibly pre-empted the latter's demands from being over-borne by the national question. And no matter, again in the terms of this thesis, that the same purpose might have been served by a speedy and effective response by the Northern Ireland Government in implementing the necessary reforms. First the Protestants, and then the Catholics, perceived their own peril in the situation as it was developing, and once so seen, their souls were moved, their defences mobilised, and it was but short remove to the fundamental question of whether Northern Ireland had the right to exist. In the process the landscape and the life of the Province changed, and gave forth what many took to be a foretaste of damnation.

How then to view the sum of the international politics which these transformations gave rise to?

The Spectator of 23 February 1934 carried a work by the great poet, William Butler Yeats, entitled, 'Three Marching Songs'; it was written out of the passionate belief that disorder in Ireland, and the fanatacism which enflamed it, was about to turn the country's 'noble history into an ignoble farce'. In the second Song he wrote:

Justify all those renowned generations;
They left their bodies to fatten the wolves,
They left their homesteads to fatten the foxes,
Fled to far countries, or sheltered themselves
In cavern, crevice, hole,
Defending Ireland's soul.
Justify all those renowned generations,
Justify all that have sunk in their blood,
Justify all that have died on the scaffold,
Justify all that have fled, that have stood,
Stood or have marched the night long
Singing, singing a song.

Fail, and that history turns into rubbish,
All that great past to a trouble of fools;
Those that come after shall mock at O'Donnell,
Mock at the memory of both O'Neill's,
Mock at Emmet, mock Parnell:
All that renown that fell.

As Conor Cruise O'Brien has pointed out, a 'blight of cynicism and
disgust' settled on 'free Ireland' following the Civil War with the
intolerable knowledge that the Republic proclaimed by Pearse and Connolly
was not attainable. In the confrontation between that reality and the
loyalty to a vision of a small nation 'not free merely, but Gaelic as
well', it very often seemed that Irish history had turned into rubbish,
and the past into a 'trouble of fools'.

As in so many of his observations, Yeats' prescience now seems
both chilling and inspired. Events since 1968 have shamed the achieve­
ment of Irish history, questioned the sacrifices which were made in the
name of the Irish nation, and cast a blight upon the generations which
will take the country, North and South, well into the twenty-first
century. Indeed, are not the recent and the present as much a 'trouble
of fools' as any time since the Civil War? This interpretation, however,
is not laboured, nor was it reached in anger or scorn; rather it
pervaded the generality of dealings with which this thesis is
concerned. Like snatches of a melody demanding to be played in the mind,
it was heard, now in crescendo, now in a muted, disjointed fashion. But
always it was there – in the most important of political liaisons and in
the most peripheral of involvements.

In 1977, Oliver MacDonagh examined a few selected events from the
previous eight years in the light of 'time frames and casts of mind'

1 Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'The Embers of Easter 1916-1966', New Left
going back three and three-quarter centuries to the final conquest of Ulster in 1601. He wrote then that the Irish problem (which he defined as including the Ulster Question) had persisted because of the power of geographical and historical images over men's minds. Not only did this apply to Ireland, between Catholic and Protestant Irish men and women, but to the relationship between Britain and Ireland. According to the arguments and more extensive evidence presented in the body of this thesis, this was also an accurate assessment of the period from 1968 to (and beyond) 1978.

But there was one important qualitative difference between the modern period and most of that which preceded it. In so far as Britain was concerned, the power of geographical and historical images was without any foundation in strategic or imperial necessity. This latter fact was implicit in the steady reduction of Britain's post-1945 circumstances, and was in any case explicit as early as 1972 in the Northern Ireland Discussion Paper of the same year. Britain simply had neither the desire nor the interest to maintain a foothold, much less retain power, in Northern Ireland. Thus, while there was an equivalence of traditional British attitudes to Ireland, there was an increasing lack of comprehension in the Republic of Ireland as to why this should be so.

It was evident from the early days of the current 'troubles' that Britain regarded Northern Ireland as somehow distinct from the remainder of the United Kingdom, of which it was constitutionally a part. In 1968-69 the British Government was faced with a revolutionary situation: the minority community in Northern Ireland wanted nothing less than the replacement of the system of government in the state which effectively disenfranchised it. London's response was to encourage a reluctant Northern Ireland Government towards a policy of reform— which was

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2 Oliver MacDonagh, 'Time's Revenges and Revenge's Time: A View of Anglo-Irish Relations', Anglo-Irish Studies IV (1979): pp. 1 and 17. The publication of this article took place some time after it was first presented, as a lecture, in June 1977 (hereafter cited as MacDonagh, 'Time's Revenge and Revenge's Time').

3 ibid., pp. 1, and 11-13.
inevitably debased by both a lack of urgency and a certain superficiality. In short, a situation in what had historically been the most violent part of the United Kingdom, at least since the Battle of Culloden, was to be redressed by less than adequate measures introduced in a spirit of moderation.

When this policy failed, the British Government, through the agency of its constitutionally subordinate executive at Stormont, had recourse to coercion. It then took until March 1972 — i.e. four years from the first manifestations of civil rights unrest — for this policy to be acknowledged as bankrupt. But by then it was late; probably too late. A great number of important reforms were still outstanding, the British Army was, after April 1970, regarded as but another arm of Stormont, large numbers of the population — all Catholics — had been interned and many shot, seemingly without good cause. Despite the emergence of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) (both wings) in an offensive role, there was much about Northern Ireland in early 1972 that echoed T.P. O'Connor's conclusion of some ninety years before on the stewardship of Ireland.

To any Englishman, whatever his party, such a record ... by any other people but his own, and in any other country but in Ireland, would bring prompt condemnation and swift resolve.4

From the vantage point of 1981, the prorogation of the Parliament which had served Protestant Northern Ireland for half a century did not greatly change matters, except negatively — inasmuch as it closed off one cause of the unrest. Granted, that event ushered in one of the most hopeful periods in the history of the Ulster Question since Ireland had been partitioned. Granted also, that in this period, which ended with the defeat of the Conservative Government in early 1974, there was courage and imagination shown by all parties interested in a lasting settlement based on agreement and conciliation. But the courage and imagination were devoid of strategy, and after February 1974, courage and imagination were exercised only by the Loyalists.

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Consider what was being attempted in this high period of political development. Essentially, it was an attempt by London (and Dublin, for the matter of that) to insist that Northern Ireland should continue to exist, but not in the manner, or according to the purpose, of the Protestant state it was set up to be. Consider further the delicacy of the Sunningdale Agreement of December 1973, here captured by Hugh Munro.

It asserted that the (Protestant) identity of Northern Ireland was so strong that the area had to have its own government and at the same time so weak that Protestant Unionists could be expected to join in running that government with Catholics who wanted to abolish it.\(^5\)

Sunningdale, and the Executive which it established, therefore, obliged the British Government to be aware that it might have to confront the Loyalists, and even more, be prepared to follow its policies through. The events of May 1974 demonstrated the extent to which this obligation was evaded.

The consequences have been as obvious as they have been profound. By embarking on the enterprise in Northern Ireland without vision, and failing, Britain enhanced the myth that the situation in Northern Ireland was also without hope. The years since the fall of the Executive have borne this out. They have been truly 'the years the locust ate'. Northern Ireland has demanded, but not commanded, the type of concentrated effort and attention over time which is necessary to re-establish a political dialogue on its future. Accurately, Munro has described the Province as a 'political corpse':

... it will never again generate a government — even were London to permit it a Protestant one — again, or say what future it wants for itself.\(^6\)

In the field of international politics nowhere was this lack of commitment to Northern Ireland the catalyst for tension and disturbance more than in Anglo-Irish relations. They were a clear manifestation

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\(^6\) ibid.
of the truth that friends suffer from each other's expectations. Britain required understanding in the face of a seemingly intractable problem self-restraint, if not self-denial, on the question of unity. In Ireland, however, the appeal to forbearance was rejected. There, the Government found the basic issue to be what it always had been since Partition and reaffirmed Yeats who, in a speech to the Seanad in 1925 said 'it is perhaps the deepest political passion with this nation that the North and South be united into one nation.'

Subsequently, the tenor of Anglo-Irish relations was determined according to the urgency with which Britain was prepared to satisfy this 'passion'. A general rule was seen to operate. Almost anything the British Government did on the periphery — such as engage in conferences with the IRA — was tolerable to the Irish Government, provided progress was being made in the centre — towards unity. When such progress was not in evidence almost anything that was done by London on the periphery was intolerable to Dublin. And when the British Government was inactive on both central and peripheral areas, or was ambiguous as to what it might be doing, or both, everything was intolerable to the Irish Government, all the time.

Conversely, it became an almost certain method of ascertaining the state of Britain's Northern Ireland policy to extrapolate from contemporary issues in Anglo-Irish relations. If the whole British intervention in Northern Ireland was being loudly denounced (as it was from 1969-71), then this was a demand by Dublin to be recognised. If the Leader of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition (Harold Wilson) could deceive his hosts in Dublin by talking to the Provisionals and yet Anglo-Irish relations suffer no injury, then Stormont was about to be prorogued. If tensions were high over security concerns (as they frequently have been since 1974), then it was because all formal political activity was abated. It was as though Ireland arrogated unto itself the role of Britain's selective conscience: understanding and forgiveness were not dependent on contrition for particular 'wrongs' but on the latter's general disposition towards national re-unification.

Yet despite cycles of demand, accommodation, co-operation, withdrawal, and assertiveness, the objective of unity was not advanced
by the conduct of Anglo-Irish relations. When the National Coalition passed from office in mid-1977, the Sunningdale Agreement was virtually in tatters. But by that time, anyway, it had adopted a low profile on Northern Ireland. Subsequently, the Labour Governments of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan did likewise (albeit for different reasons), and the contrast with the heady, innovative days of 1972-73 was marked. Who now speaks with any conviction at Anglo-Irish summits of power-sharing and the Irish Dimension? They are no longer well understood principles — they are probably not even principles — but rather private thoughts, spoken aloud only where the faithful are gathered.

In the gloomy light of this conclusion it is worth considering whether the pressure from Ireland upon Britain contributed, in any significant sense, to progress even in the civil rights area. The British Government was bound by its own conscience to do something about the justifiable grievances of the Catholic community in 1969. Whether the representations by the Republic during its period of 'second guarantor' extended or accelerated this process is arguable. At the time, the Irish (Fianna Fáil) Government was dissatisfied with the pace of reform; when the National Coalition came to power, the whole substance of Anglo-Irish diplomacy had changed. Thus the course of progress throughout the years was set and maintained by Britain without any apparent evidence that the Republic's influence was to the fore.

It is at this point that Yeats' phrase 'a trouble of fools' strikes a sympathetic chord. For what the conclusion to this point has stated is that Anglo-Irish relations, with their agreements, controversies, and all their panoply, were simply a waste of time — a necessary, sometimes elegant but frequently prosaic and irrelevant discourse between one nation that was effectively powerless to act, and another nation that would act, for the most part, in its own good time and according to its own bent. Britain and Ireland: two parties to a dispute, victims of untoward circumstances, perhaps not entertainers on an international stage, but inclined to deceive and divert, themselves on each other.
In the wider field of international politics, the Ulster Question offered more scope for this spectacle, although the drama which unfolded was inconsistent, varying with time and place from high tragedy to low farce. That at the United Nations was essentially played out between Britain and Ireland, with light relief being provided by the Soviet Union, and a cameo appearance by the United States. It was notable, however, less for the fact that it was an event with a pre-arranged format, and an inevitable outcome, than it was for its value as the earliest indicator of the response Northern Ireland would be accorded by the international community. What this episode in 1969 suggested, was later proved to be an enduring truth: the social and political injustice, and resultant civil violence within a country, is no more important than that country would otherwise be without such a disturbance. And judging from Ireland's later recourse, or lack thereof, to the United Nations, it was obvious that this lesson was learnt particularly well.

The general truth of the above conclusion may seem surprising in view of the statements made by successive Irish ministers for Foreign Affairs that governments throughout the world were concerned for the Northern Ireland problem. But those countries too, suffered from the expectations of their friends. Where the countries of Western Europe had previously been interested in Ireland because of their rivalries with Britain, they were now only saddened by the spectacle which confronted them in the Six Counties. It was always out of the question, for the most compelling reasons of European co-operation, that they would intervene, without invitation, either in regard to the situation in the North, or in the disputes it gave rise to between Britain and Ireland.

The only real exception to this was the Vatican, which maintained an apparently close interest throughout the period and was given to making occasional statements which were, as the circumstances demanded, critical or supportive of developments in Northern Ireland. It was, for

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7 E.g. Dr Garret Fitzgerald, in Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Debates, Official Report, vol. 275, 5 November 1974, col. 928; and 'Speech by Mr Michael O'Kennedy, T.D., ... outlining the principles of Irish Foreign Policy on the occasion of the formal launching of Patrick Keatinge's A Place Among the Nations at the Institute of Public Administration', p.4, Dublin. April 1978 (issued by the Government Information Services).
all of that, a modest role, rendered even more modest by the knowledge that the Vatican was not a country, nor even a state constrained by the same considerations as the countries of Western Europe. Its record, therefore, underlined the general passivity of those countries on the Ulster Question.

Within those countries, a somewhat different picture emerged. Numerous groups, it was clear, were moved by the tragedy of Northern Ireland and voiced their opposition by way of protests and demonstrations. Yet the frequency and loudness of their voices depended on the extent to which an event in Northern Ireland surpassed the almost daily excesses of life there. They were, in every sense, not only reacting to 'the politics of the last atrocity' but were doing so in a superficial way and without serious purpose. Like all dilettanti, they contributed nothing to the amelioration of the particular situations which grabbed their attention, and when the memory of them faded, their voices were stilled.

Again, there was but one exception — the movement in Holland which attempted, in a largely unpublicised way, to counter sectarian bitterness by providing the environment in which greater understanding might begin. Whether it had any success is hard to say. But it must be lauded for its frontal assault upon bigotry, and its refusal to be discouraged in the face of continuing adversity.

It was only in the international organisations of Western Europe that the Ulster Question was to any marked extent 'Europeanised'. The Council of Europe's interest was comprehensive and the Report produced in its name acknowledged a 'European dimension' to the problems of Northern Ireland. More importantly, it was understanding of the complexities involved. Potentially, this may be significant for it created a precedent in terms of expected standards of future responses. But no more than that. The acknowledgement of a dimension was an exercise in definition, not of solution; and as for understanding, it determined the Council only upon a course of further study. Realistically, no more could have been expected. The 'European dimension' to the Ulster Question, did not make it a European question. Thus, in so far as the Council of Europe was concerned, its ambit of action was cautiously and narrowly defined.
By way of contrast, the role of the European Community (EC), as proclaimed by Britain and Ireland, was to be more extensive. The shift in emphasis was due of course to the hope that was invested in it, rather than the record of its influence. The governments of both countries (but the Irish more so) saw in the EC a means by which closer economic interests and relations between North and South could be forged. Furthermore there was evidence which allowed such hopes to be entertained as reasonable, if not certain, expectations. And therein lay Western Europe's greatest potential contribution towards rapprochement in Ireland.

The same evidence, however, did not support the hope in, or the predictions of, political unity made by the more optimistic observers in the Republic. Three reasons account for this judgment. First, the EC has not developed politically to the point where it could adopt the Ulster Question, even if it wanted to. Second, notwithstanding the first reason, there was no apparent strategy on the part of the Irish Government to have the EC's influence exerted towards the objective of unity. Third, since the EC's character was determined by its sovereign member-states, there was never any likelihood that it would attempt to venture where they had feared to tread. And to this extent, the talk of Europeanising the Ulster Question in 1978-79 was as misleading as it was futile.

Only in the inter-state ('torture') case heard by the European Commission of Human Rights did a Western European organisation make a substantial contribution to the situation in Northern Ireland. But it was short-lived and unrelated to the central issue of unity. It was short-lived and, some would say, peculiar, because within twenty-eight months of the Commission finding that certain practices carried out by the security forces in Northern Ireland constituted torture, the appellate Court diluted the finding to 'inhuman and degrading treatment' without itself coming to an objective definition of torture. Short-lived also, because in 1978-79, documentary evidence of treatment similar to that which had been complained of in 1971, indicated that practically speaking the effect of the Strasbourg decisions was minimal. While this did not invalidate the principles behind bringing the case, it surely questioned the political will which Britain had to ensure the good government of Northern Ireland.
Thus, at each level of analysis in Western Europe, the relationship between a country or organisation, and the Ulster Question, was more or less well-defined. Where national governments had refused to respond, it was clear; where various organisations had chosen to respond, that also was clear, either from the definition of their interest or the role they assumed.

Beyond Western Europe the overall international impact was almost invariably malign. Essentially this was because the Ulster Question was approached from the perspective of the conflict it had given rise to and with the purpose of encouraging, and in some cases, escalating the campaigns of the various paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland of which the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) was the predominant. In the United States this influence was exerted without effective restraint for some seven years. And even in the leaner years which followed 1976, funds from the Irish-American support network were still providing the IRA with the sinews of war.

It is because of this continuing commitment in aid of Provisionals that the counter-measures taken by the US Government, the initiative of President Jimmy Carter, and the campaign against US support conducted by the Four Horsemen, are depreciated in this section. Notwithstanding that only a minority of Irish-Americans lent their support to the network, and that a great transformation was wrought in the American Dimension after 1976 to make it responsible, the fact remains that to US support down the years must be attributed a substantial (if undetermined) fragment of the violence, suffering and death which has been the lot of Northern Ireland.

A similarly undetermined fragment was the responsibility of the Libyan Government which appeared to be the only source which at any time rivalled the US network in the magnitude of its contribution to the IRA. And joined closely with Libya in this regard must be the various Palestinian organisations which the available evidence suggests were also involved. But here a certain cynicism must enter the assessment. In the United States, there was at least an understanding of the Ulster Question, poor though it may frequently have been, in terms of Ireland's
struggle against oppression. There was also a sympathy for the land and its people, in particular its Catholic people. As the focus shifted to the Middle East this quality was understandably and quite plainly lacking. What existed in its place was opportunism, perhaps buttressed, but certainly not determined, by a sense of revolutionary solidarity. The criterion for support seemed to be that the conflict existed and was available for exploitation to the embarrassment of Britain. Beyond that there was no ennobling motive to be discerned in the supply of arms from Libya and the Palestinians.

The remaining international influences upon the Ulster Question are diffuse and harder to assess. In descending order of likely importance the arms dealers, the Irish abroad in the 'old Commonwealth', and the matrix of international contacts obviously all played their parts, but they did so to no great effect. Their involvement, to whatever purpose, was either too infrequent or too shallow to alter the disposition of forces. In this sense they were so much ephemera when related to the basic issues in Northern Ireland.

But this conclusion is really the inversion, or reverse binocular image, of the main conclusion of this thesis: that outside Anglo-Irish relations, the Ulster Question has been accorded only the status of a messy, bloody little footnote to contemporary international concerns. It simply has not generated an imperative requirement for the international community to respond in a sustained or active manner. Surely it was significant that only the extreme left in Britain and Western Europe, and the extreme right in Britain agreed upon the contemporary strategic significance of Northern Ireland. If, as MacDonagh claimed, the Ulster Question persisted in Ireland, and between Britain and Ireland, because of the power of geographical and historical images over men's minds, then it failed as an international issue for precisely the same reason. The relations which were the concern of this thesis were located towards the diminutive end of international politics.

Should this be surprising? Ireland in general, and Northern Ireland in particular, lacks just about every characteristic which could thrust it into prolonged international prominence. In general this has been appreciated by the principal parties to the Ulster Question. Although
recourse was occasionally made to various material and spiritual cafeterias in the international arena, the force of the action has been centripetal and not centrifugal. There has been no escape from the knowledge that the international locus within which all must be decided was defined by Belfast, Dublin and London. For those without, there was only fascination; for those within, the compulsion to be rid of persistent ghosts:

King, nobles, all,
Looked aghast and strange;
The minstrel-group sate in dumbest show!
Had some great crime
Wrought this dread amaze,
This terror? None seemed to understand ...
I again walked forth;
But lo! the sky
Showed fleckt with blood, and an alien sun
Glared from the north,
And there stood on high,
Amid his shorn beams, a skeleton!

8 'Vision of Connacht in the Thirteenth Century', by James Clarence Mangan, as cited in Oliver MacDonagh, 'Time's Revenges and Revenge's Time': p. 18.
APPENDIX I

RELEVANT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE

IRISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY
The angry response of certain Irish-Americans to any attempt to discuss the realities of the question has, I think, to do not so much with love for Ireland—certainly not in the sense of loving the actual Irish who live there—as with the natural human tendency to resist any intrusion on a system of satisfying fantasies.

(Conor Cruise O'Brien)¹

As a result of United States Government restrictions on immigration, the Irish-born population of that country numbered only 290,000 in 1970.² However, the population estimates of those considered to be Irish-Americans varied, then and subsequently, between a minimum of 13 million and a maximum of 30 million. Irrespective of which was the more accurate figure, it was obvious that the community which had produced over one-quarter of all US presidents was, in American terms, thriving, and in relation to the population of the land of their ethnic origins, vast.³ Ironically, the Protestant Irish-Americans, who were overwhelmingly responsible for such a high level of representation in the office of Chief Executive, are not the concern of this analysis, as David McKittrick wrote of them:

[They] have assimilated so well as to become practically invisible. Very few take an active interest in Northern Ireland affairs.⁴

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³ On occasions there has been an almost excessive, if touching willingness on the part of some small area of Ireland to 'claim' a United States President. In 1976, for example the Longford News, alone of all the newspapers in Ireland, carried the front page headline 'Clondra Man Loses American Election' to announce Gerald Ford's defeat by Jimmy Carter, and the ensuing gloom which had settled over the Co. Longford village from whence his forbears were alleged to have departed (review of provincial papers, Irish Times, 8 November 1976).
⁴ David McKittrick, 'Irish Everywhere in the Land of Immigrants', the first of four major articles on the Irish in America, Irish Times, 3 September 1979, p. 10, (hereafter cited as McKittrick, 'Irish Everywhere', Irish Times, 3 September 1979.)
Even for the Catholic Irish-Americans this finding was not necessarily different. In relation to those born in Ireland, they (and, one assumed, the Protestants as well) were subject to what Dennis Clark described as that 'strange ambiguity' about exile groups and immigrant communities by which he meant:

They are mortgaged to the past, yet they have often advanced into a future not yet perceived in the old country. Inevitably the new host country deeply affects immigrant ties to the homeland. Movement from a less developed nation to one resounding with modern media and sophisticated technology causes conflicts in the immigrants. Usually, the immigrant bears in himself the love and memory of the native land where he spent his most impressionable years. Yet, he must seek a livelihood in a nation frequently hostile to the values he was taught to cherish. This has been true in the mid-twentieth century for immigrants from Ireland to the United States.\(^5\)

But perhaps the greatest irony of all was that this whole undermining of the Irish identity in America had been from the late nineteenth century, encouraged and accelerated by the Catholic Church in America, the very body which had helped forge it in the first place. According to historian, Lawrence J. McCaffrey:

Although Irish-American Catholicism retained old country puritan, devotional, and peasant ideals, liberal bishops, mainly from the Midwest, insisted on Americanization while their conservative colleagues in the East demanded Romanization. In America, as in Ireland, the two cultural systems, Romanization and Anglicization, continued to modify the original Gaelic personality, and the Catholic church and its educational system literally became the agents of anti-Irish cultural imperialism.\(^6\)

In the '60s and '70s, too, the Church was faced with an issue — ecumenism — and a problem — that of an activist and sometimes rebellious clergy — which determined it to adopt no more than a passive role with regard to Northern Ireland. The former, of course, did not preclude

\(^5\) Clark, *Irish Blood*, p. 73.

an active role, it merely made the Catholic Church loath to risk re-opening old Catholic-Protestant antagonisms. The latter was a caution: with the effects of the hippie revolution and the Vietnam protest movement making their mark with a crisis of institutional confidence, the Church was not about to embrace a cause which might only exacerbate the disruption it was already experiencing.\(^7\)

In addition, both the Irish-born and (particularly) those of Irish descent, were subject to secular influences which decreased further the likelihood of them maintaining a real Irish awareness. Within the United States, following the First World War, they rapidly achieved prosperity and gained respectability in their own right, and concomitantly, according to Lawrence McCaffrey, acquired a more American and less Irish identity.\(^8\)

In this process they spawned a whole range of confusing and conflicting paradoxes. Those upon whom journalist Pete Hamill bestowed the title, 'The Old Irish' (i.e. Irish immigrants to the USA in the first quarter of the twentieth century) underwent a transformation which he obviously found contemptible — from being advocates of revolution and social justice in the early years of their exile, to being conservative and even reactionary within little more time than a generation.

Men who had been members of Sinn Fein, the I.R.A.'s political arm, talked of revolution in Belfast in 1922 and by 1952 were convinced that Joe McCarthy was a great Irishman. Men who joined the Democratic Party because F.D.R. stood for social justice found themselves voting for James Buckley because he would control the unruly blacks.\(^9\)

Not surprisingly, Professor McCaffrey reports that, by the early 1970s, the erosion of an ethnic identity was even further advanced


In February, 1972, I gave an Irish culture test to about 100 students in a large ethnic history course at Loyola University of Chicago. All of those who took the test identified themselves as Irish and had attended Catholic secondary schools. Less than three percent could identify important political figures such as O'Connell, Parnell, Pearse, or de Valera, and only about fifteen percent had some knowledge of literary personalities such as Joyce, Yeats, or O'Neill. [emphasis added].

But, according to Hamill, the falling away from the old identity noted in the foregoing did not compass the destruction of the soul of Irish-America. Indeed, this was countered by the emergence, during the 1950s and 1960s, of a generation he styled the 'New Irish'—'interior Irish exiles'—largely of the Left and of New York, sustained in their loyalty to the old ideals by an eclectic recourse to the reading of Irish history (with a heavy overlay of Jewish thought), the political example of Paul O'Dwyer\(^1\) (the subject of Appendix II), and the 'new Christianity' as espoused by the Berrigan brothers.\(^2\) Among those Hamill numbered in the new Irish were writers Jimmy Breslin and Daniel Patrick Moynihan and (although he is not so clear on this point) politicians such as Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy.\(^3\)

With a somewhat different perspective to present, McCaffrey substantially confirmed the intellectual and political alignment of the New Irish claimed by Hamill, although he did not use that specific term:

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10 McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America*, p. 207, note 14; see also pp. 171-3.

11 An eminent Irish-born New York lawyer, civil rights activist, and in the mid 1970s, President of the City Council of New York. His interest in Northern Ireland dates back over forty years, and since 1972 at least, has been strongly identified with sections of the Irish-American community which support, directly or indirectly, the Provisional Irish Republic Army. See Appendix II, pp. 614-19.

12 Hamill, 'Notes on the New Irish', p. 39. The Berrigan brothers were activist Catholic priests, prominent in the protest movement against the Vietnam war.

13 ibid.
According to Andrew M. Greeley and his colleague William McCready at the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago, public opinion samples indicated that, next to American Jews, the Irish are the most liberal group in the United States on such issues as civil rights, religious and racial tolerance, social reform and peace. Harris and Gallup polls concur with Greeley's findings. [emphasis added].

However, as successful as the New Irish may have been in resisting American pressures towards isolation from their ethnic origins, they, in common with the Old and the young Irish, were subject to a form of imposed isolation from, of all places, Ireland. Of these complementary developments (rather than pressures), McCaffrey wrote:

In addition to the decline in Irish emigration to the United States, the decision of posttreaty Ireland to promote a more exclusive brand of nationalism, and, more recently, the Irish government's emphasis on the Irish as a European rather than a Diasporic people has widened the communication gap between the Irish at home and in America. Contemporary nationalism with its paradoxical combination of provincial Gaelic and cosmopolitan common market and European community dimensions neglects the rich, cultural potential of uniting the Irish at home with sophisticated, intellectual Irish colonies in the United States and in the British Commonwealth.

Thus, as a consequence of these and a number of less clearly defined influences, Clark observed that the outbreak of the Northern Ireland troubles:

... simply did not engage all Irish-born or Irish American people. Many believed that Ireland's major problems were rooted in economic, social and religious conditions largely independent of England and Northern Ireland.

With the passage of time, and the claim upon the imagination that events such as the introduction of internment without trial and Bloody Sunday could make, this resistance to become involved was overcome, in a

14 McCaffrey, The Irish Diaspora in America, p. 171 (McCaffrey lists a number of Greeley's analyses for further reference on pp. 206-07).

15 ibid., p. 153.

16 Clark, Irish Blood, p. 34.
minority of the Irish-American population at least. As Hamill wrote of this transformation at the time:

[T]he Northern Ireland situation has been one of the great forcing grounds, because it allows — after too long a time — for direct rather than oblique confrontation with Irishness.17

Nevertheless, what followed was not so much a confrontation between Irish-America and the conflict in Northern Ireland, as in effect, three confrontations — between each of the categories of that community and the conflict. Hence, in considering support for the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) — a very relevant and useful index in the light of developments throughout the period under review — Clark maintained:

There does not seem to be a single personality type supporting the Provisional IRA.18

Once again, it was an observation substantially confirmed in the writings of the other two principal sources used to this point.

Hamill, for example, detected in the interest of the New Irish an intellectual, and, one infers, a moral ascendancy over that evinced by the Old Irish who, he claimed:

... wanted to know whether Bernadette Devlin was a Communist, and were'nt the Chinese trying to take over the Falls Road, and who were these new I.R.A. men who were asking for social justice? ... They did not recognize Wolfe Tone in Martin Luther King; they saw no parallel between the Famine and Dachau; they didn't understand that what Le Roi Jones was trying to do with black culture was precisely what the Gaelic Revival was all about in Ireland, what Yeats and Synge and Lady Gregory had tried to do, with astonishing success, with Irish culture.19

Whatever reservations may be held about the coarse mesh with which the above writer sifted his American and Irish histories, McCaffrey saw

18 Clark, Irish Blood, p. 52.
the Old Irish, and the young for the matter of that, in a similarly unflattering light.

In pubs ... Irish American college students ... sing nationalist ballads, demanding that Britain return the four green fields to Cathleen ni Houlihan.20 And a number of Irish-Americans contribute money to I.R.A. front groups.... Many of the young middle-class pub balladeers are ignorant of Irish history, untouched by Irish culture, and are only romantically reacting to the enthusiasm of youth, the Irishness of their names, the beat of the music and the need for a cause. Their elders who support I.R.A. violence by contributing money seem to represent the residue of Irish-American ghetto paranoia; most of them are still seeking an identity through the old slogans and hatreds of Irish nationalism.21

In this at least he was in fundamental disagreement with Clark who, although he found the historical knowledge of the Irish-American support community to be 'gross and truncated',22 found it also to be possessed of a common uncompromising animus insofar as Ulster was concerned.

The people supporting the activist network in the United States are hard-bitten North of Ireland types, whether actually born there or not. They are not zany bog men or fatuous American blarney stone lovers. They are mostly people with direct experience with the North, steeped in its rancor, and gritty as the stones of Antrim. They do not shrink from dreadful acts. If activists are American-born they tend to be people who have generally come through a hard school themselves, who perhaps served in one or more of America's brutalizing wars, and are imbued with a high tolerance for violence, a tolerance that has become something of a characteristic of Americans. The I.R.A. support network is not an Aer Lingus tourist crowd. It is more like an extension of the Falls Road ghetto. [emphasis added].23

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20 'Four Green Fields' is a popular nationalist song written by Tommy Makem, in which Ireland is referred to as an old woman (the Cathleen ni Houlihan tradition).


23 ibid., pp. 29-31.
As this is not a thesis in sociology, the above conflicting views were presented only to note that scholarly opinion was divided on a particular point rather than to argue the relative merits of one over the other.

Notwithstanding such obvious differences, two characteristics clearly emerged from the cameos presented. The first was that support for the I.R.A. was, albeit for different reasons, 'across the board'; this was in sharp contrast to the support which terrorist groups have attracted over the past decade and a half — and which was lent exclusively by those whose philosophies could be located within the left or liberal parameters of the political spectrum. The second was that there existed in the United States, to a greater or lesser extent, the counterparts of those in Northern Ireland who were known as 'the hard men'.

In sum, the variety of nationalism which prevailed in the interested Irish-American community in the early years of the current troubles was 'ethnic' rather than rational, which, to paraphrase Clark, meant that it was derived from a process of 'direct socialization'. Furthermore, no matter what sub-group of the community was taken as a referent, the conclusion to be drawn was that it was conducting a long-distance love affair with an organism which existed only in its collective imagination. So far as the situation in Northern Ireland was concerned, this was to have the most profound implications: because it was essentially the creation and pursuit of many illusions it was, in turn, to create its own comedy of errors. And, because it was understood among many if not all, that the affection aroused should be appropriately expressed in terms of arms and cash, the drama was to quickly descend into tragedy.

There were, however, two other traits of American society in general, and hence of the Irish-American community in particular, which should be noted. The first was noted in so many authoritative works on American political sociology over the years that it has attained the

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24 See Chapter 14.
status almost of a truism. As Gabriel Almond argued, the American
tends to be both 'an optimist as to ends and an improviser as to the
means'. He is, moreover, 'compulsive' in his belief that one can
'by effort and good will achieve or approximate one's goals.'
Unfortunately, as Almond points out, this cheery, problem-solving
disposition is flawed by a combination of 'anti-intellectualism'
and 'simple rationalism'.

In complicated questions of social and public policy
there is a genuine distrust of complex and subtle
reasoning and a preference for an earthy 'common
sense'. 26

Since there has been no serious challenge to the proposition
that the conflict in Northern Ireland demanded, at the very least,
'complex and subtle reasoning', it followed that the Irish-American
community was given to expecting 'initiatives' from the British
Government which took little or no account of the imperatives which
the latter faced. When such moves were not forthcoming, or when they
failed, it also followed that that community would be less than under­
standing of the difficulties involved in mounting further moves, and
would mark its dissatisfaction with a somewhat petulant outburst of
criticism for past failures and demands for renewed efforts, the
scope of which were frequently beyond what even the Irish Government
was proposing.

The second trait was a more recent phenomenon — the scarring
experience which had been the United States involvement in, and with­
drawal from, the Vietnam war. For many American observers the fact
that Britain had deployed its military on the island of Ireland was
sufficient not only to conjure up the ghosts of recent misfortune,
but also to ensure that the American experience in Vietnam was equated
with the likely course of events in Northern Ireland. In doing so
they displayed, but to an even greater extent, not only the same
coarseness of historical vision noted earlier in Hamill, but also a
curious but understandable inability to forgive a close ally (Britain)
for the sins they had themselves committed.

26 Gabriel Almond, 'American Character and Foreign Policy', Robert L.
Pfaltzgraff, Jr., ed., Politics and the International System
Obviously, neither these characteristics, nor the attitudes of the Irish-American community previously mentioned, were solely responsible for the subsequent development of the American dimension; other factors within Northern Ireland such as internment and Bloody Sunday proved just as capable of provoking the same type of reaction. Nevertheless, it was significant that for the period these attitudes and characteristics enjoyed a free rein, the activities which distinguished Irish-America were those which contributed to the escalation and continuation of the more violent aspects of the conflict in Northern Ireland.
APPENDIX II

NOTES ON PAUL O'DWYER
As a worker (and lawyer) for civil rights in the United States, Paul O'Dwyer's credentials were honourable, some would say impeccable. For many years, however, despite his lengthy interest and involvement in Northern Ireland political affairs, and despite the strongly Irish character of the projection of his late brother and former Mayor of New York, William O'Dwyer, he was himself relatively unpopular in conservative Irish-American circles because of his uncompromising agitation on behalf of minorities. During this time he established himself as a firm supporter of the Zionist cause: by his own admission he ran guns for the Stern Gang. In 1948, he successfully defended the nineteen-year-old son of the poet Louis Untermeyer who had been discovered with a cache of rifles apparently intended for the Irgun—arguing that the young man was only doing 'what every freedom-loving person should be doing.'

In 1968 he concentrated his attention on the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland and formed the American Committee for Ulster Justice (ACUJ) in 1971. Within a year, however, his commitment had led him to embark upon a path notable for its excesses and inconsistencies. On the one hand he, with the help of legal and other associates, campaigned over issues such as internment and detention, and succeeded in getting the Democratic Party to include in its 1972 platform a plank condemning discrimination and repression in Northern Ireland. Four years later he availed himself of an opportunity presented to him by the Rev. William Arlow, writer Ulick O'Connor


3 ibid., a lengthy article by James T. Markham in the New York Times, 17 July 1972, p. 17, claimed that the recipient group was the Irgun Zvai Leumi.

and Senator Trevor West to make an unpublicised visit to the North and meet representatives of various Protestant paramilitary organisations. In doing so O'Dwyer took considerable political risks in the event that his visit was made known to the electorate: he was due, the following year, to stand for re-election as President of the Council of the City of New York and such knowledge could almost have been guaranteed to prejudice his appeal with sections of the electorate, Irish and non-Irish. He also displayed an understanding of those that he met which was, in this writer's opinion, remarkable. With clarity of insight and logic, O'Dwyer produced in his 'random notes' perhaps the most clear-headed assessment of the loyalists positions, their mood, and their capabilities, yet undertaken by an Irish-American, or even by a militant Republican outside of the North.

On the other hand, it was possible to regard this achievement as little more than an aberration in terms of the positions O'Dwyer took throughout the period under review. His legal firm, O'Dwyer and Bernstein, provided all its legal services for the Provisional front organisation, the Irish Northern Aid Committee (registration, representation corporately and of individual members in relation to alleged NORAID-related activities) free of charge, and O'Dwyer himself was a guest of honour at a number of NORAID functions. For these and like purposes he succumbed to the rhetoric and unreal perspectives found in the more extreme Provisional formulations, as was evident in his description of the situation in Northern Ireland as one which, 'for sheer savagery, threatens to surpass the genocidal mania of Adolf Hitler.' It was surprising, therefore, that O'Dwyer should then

5 As it was, the electorate were kept in ignorance, but O'Dwyer lost anyway.

6 Memorandum on official letterhead of the President of the Council, the City of New York, dated 10 December 1976, addressed to the Honourable Trevor West, Reverend William Arlow, Ulick O'Connor, Reverend David J. Bowman, and entitled 'Random Notes on November 20th'.

7 Embassy of Ireland, Briefing, 17 April 1975.

8 'Testimony by Paul O'Dwyer', to an ad hoc committee of Congressmen, 15 October 1975, as cited in the United States Congressional Record - House, 4 December 1975, p. 38732, (hereafter cited as 'O' Dwyer Testimony', United States Congressional Record, etc.
proceed to a position from which he at once supported the Social Democratic and Labour Party and the Provisionals (whom he saw as frustrated agitators for human rights and defendants of the beleaguered Catholic community), for each of whom the other was anathema. The perspective was only marginally less distorted when he attempted to see 'obvious parallels' between the British Government's experience in Northern Ireland and his own Government's involvement in Vietnam. As his NORAID connections suggested, he favoured the active participation of the IRA in any negotiations designed to settle the future of Ulster, on the rather dubious basis that it had 'some significance in the lives of the people'. According to O'Dwyer there were lessons to be drawn from recent American experience:

For years, the United States Government refused to even consider talking to the Viet Cong and we were told that if the Americans withdrew the Communists would come down from the North and murder everyone in sight. It didn't happen.

Perhaps there were very few reprisal killings in Vietnam after 1973, but a cynic might point out that the situation which followed the Viet Cong victory must surely have been less than tolerable if more than one million of the population of South Vietnam chose to become refugees rather than remain. Moreover, O'Dwyer ignored the fact, supported by electoral and survey data in Northern Ireland and the Republic since the current troubles began, that both the IRA and its political wing, Sinn Fein, had failed to be endorsed to anything like a significant degree by the Irish people.

However, in this matter he was at least in concert with two successive British Secretaries of State, Whitelaw and Rees, who had under various guises tried to bargain with the IRA and found the practice to be untenable. And, of course, it followed that O'Dwyer succeeded in

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11 ibid.
12 See Chapter 2, pp.102-110; and Chapter 3, pp. 166-72.
distancing himself and his organisation from those parties which otherwise may have found his record and civil rights activities commendable — among them the Irish Government. But by the time he made his statement about the Viet Cong, he had in any case already taken up a position hostile to Dublin. In 1975 he was critical of Irish politicians for their indifference to Northern Ireland and for their speeches in the United States telling Irish-Americans 'what to do and not to do with their contributions'.

For all that, the views of one of New York City's most prominent politicians only became truly disturbing when it was apparent that, despite his insight into the Protestant paramilitaries, he advocated complete withdrawal of the British presence in Northern Ireland. As he saw it, it was no more than the perpetuation of a three centuries-old policy 'to keep the people divided'. Since Catholic and Protestant Irishmen had demonstrated an ability to get along in other parts of the world, he found the British Army not only a 'mischievous influence' but also an 'unjustifiable indictment of the Protestant population'. It was, therefore, an 'outrageous lie' to suggest that it was required in the North to keep the peace.

Thus in one, simplistic and uncomplicated stroke, O'Dwyer dispensed with the wisdom and the rare accord of both the British and Irish Governments, countless authoritative commentators, and the prevailing consensus among the Catholic community of Northern Ireland that the British Army was necessary for the maintenance of what passes as normalcy in the Province. Conveniently forgotten was the existence of tribal hatred which led to the bitter inter-sectarian street fights of 1969 and the early 1970s, and which then moved one Unionist Senator to proclaim at large in the members' dining-room at Stormont:

If only the bloody British Army hadn't come in we'd have shot ten thousand of them [Catholics] by dawn.15

And inexcusably ignored by O'Dwyer was the fact that the British Army, by the time of his statement, was present in Northern Ireland to counter the terrorism of the IRA (which he did much to support), and which, if unchallenged, could very well lead to a Protestant reaction upon various hostage Catholic communities in terms of the outburst cited above, or even civil war.

O'Dwyer's views, therefore, were overall as dangerous and irresponsible as the activities and views of NORAID and the Irish National Caucus. His association with both, it followed, was unlikely to enhance the image of either among the great majority of Irish-Americans who were wary of them from the beginning. Insofar as the ability to influence events in Northern Ireland through the US Government was concerned, his high point would seem to be the 1972 Democratic Party platform plank. From the perspective of non-governmental influence there was little to distinguish him from the executives of the Irish National Caucus and NORAID except that he could, and did, claim to speak as the 'second ranking elected official' of America's most populous city. And after the municipal elections of 1977, even that distinction could no longer be made.

16 'O'Dwyer Testimony', (United States) Congressional Record - House, 4 December 1975, p. 38732.
APPENDIX III

Security Statistics
## SECURITY STATISTICS

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<td>129</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>Civilians killed</td>
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<td>Bomb explosions</td>
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<td>399</td>
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<td>Firearms recovered</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>1,595</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>590</td>
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<td>7,717</td>
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<td>Explosives recovered</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>2,748</td>
<td>41,488</td>
<td>38,418</td>
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<td>11,565</td>
<td>21,714</td>
<td>3,809</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>147,542</td>
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<td><strong>Persons charged with serious security-type offences</strong></td>
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<td>na</td>
<td>531</td>
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<td>1,362</td>
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<td>664</td>
<td>7,752</td>
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*Including murder and attempted murder, firearms and explosives offences and theft. na=not available.

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