

Terrorism Learning and Innovation: Lessons from PIRA in Northern Ireland

A closed workshop summary

Magnus Ranstorp
Hans Brun

CATS
Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies



Swedish Civil
Contingencies
Agency



Title: Terrorism Learning and Innovation: Lessons from PIRA in Northern Ireland
Authors: Magnus Ranstorp & Hans Brun
Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies, Swedish National Defence College

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1. Introduction

The conflict in Northern Ireland has been one of Europe's most intractable conflicts over the last three decades. Provisional IRA has been a central protagonist to the conflict and is one of the most sophisticated terrorist organizations around in terms of modus operandi, counter-surveillance, terror tactics and technical expertise (development of IEDs) in waging a protracted terror campaign in Northern Ireland and on the UK mainland.

On 17 April 2012, the Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS) at the Swedish National Defence College hosted a closed expert seminar entitled 'PIRA – Lessons Learned' with contributions from the leading academics on 'the Troubles' and unique practitioner insights into the dynamics of PIRA political and military strategy, the evolution of its tactical innovation and bomb-making skills, the view from inside the organization and those that battle it from the frontlines as well as the lessons learned in terms of conflict resolution and peace-building. The seminar concluded with reflections as to whether the Northern Ireland conflict offers transferable 'lessons learned' to other protracted conflict settings around the world.

The workshop proceedings highlight a number of important takeaways. Firstly, the danger of underestimating your adversary's determination and technical skill set. Secondly, the existence of safe havens and R & R facilities must be countered from day one. Thirdly, all security personnel must understand the importance of forensics and what to look for when conducting searches; good forensic work can lead us to the bomb makers. Fourthly, law enforcement and intelligence agencies must cooperate and coordinate their work; every operation should ideally be intelligence based. Lastly, hard power and soft power are not mutually exclusive; they combine each other and should be used under the guidelines of necessity and proportionality.

This report represents the seminar proceedings of contributions made during this closed seminar. As the seminar operated under so-called strict Chatham House rules - which states that 'participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed, - to ensure confidentiality of the meeting and the former sensitive positions of some of the contributors and to facilitate open-discussion, the exact identity of the contributors have been protected in this report.

This seminar constitute a part of a wider research project - where Dr. Magnus Ranstorp is the principal investigator - supported by the Civil Contingency Agency into terrorist learning and innovation in EU and the consequences for planning and protection of critical infrastructure.

The report authors would also like to recognize the support and contributions of other colleagues at CATS, especially Research Assistant Linus Gustafsson.

Magnus Ranstorp

Hans Brun

April 2013

2. Background to the formation of PIRA and the Northern Ireland conflict

The United Kingdom has been struggling with various types of political violence and terrorism since the end of the eighteenth century when the *United Irishmen* tried to free Ireland from the British. The Irish struggle for independence continued throughout the nineteenth century, when the *Fenians* used political violence to achieve the same goal. Eventually the twentieth century saw the Irish achieve a partial victory when most of Ireland gained independence from Great Britain in 1922. Political violence and terrorism linked to Northern Ireland continued to be a problem until the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.ⁱ In addition, Welsh and Scottish separatism has occasionally been an issue for Great Britain.ⁱⁱ

Even though this is not the right place to go into detail about the historical reasons behind “the Troubles”, as the situation in Northern Ireland was called, it might be useful to briefly discuss the background of the problem.ⁱⁱⁱ The Act of Union in 1800 officially united Britain and Ireland into the United Kingdom, but many Irish resisted the union both peacefully and violently throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1916, Irish Catholic pressure for home rule had become irresistible and Irish nationalists tried to oust the British with the Easter Rising; however, the superior force of the British Army easily crushed this effort.

As a direct result of this suppression by the British, Irish nationalists launched one of the first asymmetrical campaigns in modern history. Organized and led by Michael Collins^{iv}, this campaign became so effective that the British government initiated negotiations with the Irish in the early 1920s. However, Irish Protestants in Northern Ireland wanted no part of a semiautonomous Ireland. In response, the British government established two states in Ireland by passing the Government of Ireland Act in 1922. Northern Ireland consisted of six counties with a 67% Protestant majority and Ireland (Eire) consisted of 26 counties with a 90% Catholic majority.

Ireland gradually severed its links with the United Kingdom and established an independent republic in 1947. Northern Ireland remains a part of the United Kingdom but is locally governed by a Protestant administration based in Stormont Castle.^v

The Irish Republic did not accept the legitimacy of this arrangement, and its constitution claimed jurisdiction over the entire island. More importantly, the Catholic majority in Northern Ireland also rejected the legitimacy of this arrangement and sought to change it.^{vi} Due to insecurity bred from its minority status on the island, the Unionist population had established, in the memorable words of one of its leaders, “a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people.”^{vii}

While Unionists had long felt threatened by both Ireland and the Catholics, after the events of 1922 this polarization deepened in Northern Ireland. This was partly due to

the Catholics unwillingness to participate in the politics of a state they opposed and partly due to the bias of the Protestant establishment against a section of the community that it considered traitorous. As a result, many institutions in Northern Ireland became heavily biased in favor of the Protestants and Unionists. Until 1969, Northern Ireland's government franchise reflected property rather than population, excluded non-ratepayers, and awarded many Unionists with more than one property vote.

Housing allocations and gerrymandering of constituency boundaries was used to maintain Unionist majorities throughout the constituencies. The legal system and law enforcement also discriminated against the Catholics. As late as 1961, 88% of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was non-Catholic and the infamous reserve police, the B Specials, were exclusively Protestant and Unionist.^{viii} In the late 1960s, a Catholic middle class slowly emerged and became beneficiaries of British social legislation such as educational reform that was significantly more generous than that found in Ireland.

The political situation is at the time perceived as provocative and threatening to a number of groups within the Protestant community. One of these groups, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) resorts to violence during the summer of 1966 and kills at least two civilian Catholics and one civilian protestant.^{ix} The political situation deteriorates even more when the Catholic community starts to organize itself politically.

In response to gerrymandering and as a means of achieving political rights, the Catholic middle class drew together with students from Queen's University – one of Belfast's few integrated academic institutions – and working class Catholics into the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). NICRA, which was influenced by the American civil rights movement,^x was created early in 1967.^{xi} This was the first time the Catholic minority had accepted, albeit implicitly, the legitimacy of the British state by making demands upon it.

During 1968, NICRA arranged a series of demonstrations, sometimes in spite of the fact that they had been banned in advance by the authorities under the Public Order Act. One of these banned demonstrations was held in Londonderry on October 5, and leads to clashes with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), whose response was rather heavy handed, at least 75 demonstrators and 18 policemen were injured.^{xii} As a consequence of this, more demonstrations and counterdemonstrations were arranged during the remainder of 1968 and 1969.

The political situation in Northern Ireland deteriorates even further, and culminates in the middle of August 1969 with a series of riots in Londonderry, Belfast, and elsewhere.^{xiii} Hundreds of homes are torched in Belfast by arsonists. Thousands of people, most of them Catholics, become homeless, and Belfast experienced the largest population displacement in Europe since the Second World War.^{xiv} According to initial estimates of the damages, at least 523 houses were destroyed or temporarily uninhabitable, and between "5,000 to 6,000 people were estimated to be homeless or displaced, preponderantly (though not exclusively) in Roman Catholic areas of the city."^{xv}

The police were unable or unwilling to intervene and protect the population. According to a number of accounts, members of the B Specials abandoned their duties and took an active part in the rioting.^{xvi} For the first time since the border campaign of 1956-1962, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) responded with lethal violence and started to shoot at rioters and into neighboring Protestant areas, killing at least two Protestants.^{xvii} The RUC returned fire against real and imaginary targets, using submachine guns and armored cars carrying machine guns.^{xviii} At least two innocent people – a nine year old boy shot by a stray bullet in his own bed, and a British soldier on leave - were killed by the RUC’s rather indiscriminate use of firepower.^{xix} In Armagh City, a civilian Catholic was shot dead and two others wounded by the B Specials in an incident that was described as “amounting to grave misconduct on the part of the B Specials.”^{xx}

The Catholic community’s response to the unrest was to turn to one of its traditional defender, the IRA. At this time, the IRA found itself rather unprepared and incapable of defending Catholic neighborhoods. Somehow, the IRA managed to recover some of its weapons from old arms caches. One Catholic neighborhood was supplied with one shotgun and a single .22 caliber rifle as its sole protection against arsonists.^{xxi} The IRA possessed few weapons because several years earlier it had sold most of its guns to Welsh nationalists in the belief that weapons would no longer be required in Irish politics. The reason for this was that the IRA had gone through radical changes during the 1960’s.

The movement had become increasingly influenced Marxism due to the movement’s traditions, the *zeitgeist* of the 1960’s, and the perceived usefulness of Marxist theory in order to help explain and analyze neo-colonialism and the ongoing economic crisis in Ireland.^{xxii} The IRA had after some initial hesitation joined ranks with the civil rights movement.

At the time, the IRA leadership believed it would be possible to use the civil rights movement as a tool in order to establish a cross-community that would fight for social justice and the end of unionism using political means. As a direct consequence of this, the principle of non-sectarianism was of fundamental importance.^{xxiii} Due to its change of direction, the IRA was perceived as having failed the Catholic community during the riots, and for a time, IRA was reinterpreted as “I Ran Away.”^{xxiv}

A number of people were dissatisfied with the policies of the IRA and several meetings were held during the fall of 1969, and it soon became apparent that these dissidents were gaining support within the community. A consequence of the IRA’s inability to effectively protect the Catholic neighborhoods was that its traditional supporters to an increasing degree started to turn to the dissidents, or the Provisional IRA as they called themselves, who was perceived as being more able and interested in providing protection to the Catholic population. Within a short time the Provisionals received a massive infusion of new young recruits, who were radicalized by their experiences of police brutality or being burned from their homes by Protestant mobs.^{xxv}

This difference of opinion eventually led to a split of the IRA into two separate and rather different entities, the Provisional IRA (PIRA), and the Official IRA (OIRA).^{xxvi} Just

like the Provisional IRA, the Officials had an armed organization – OIRA – that carried out a number of attacks against a variety of targets, including republican rivals, and political organizations, the Official Sinn Féin (OSF).^{xxvii} Over the course of the Troubles, the Official IRA declined in importance and was eventually integrated into mainstream politics.^{xxviii}

Operation Banner

The rapid development of events and escalation of violence caught the Labour government, led by Prime Minister Harold Wilson, by surprise and rather unwilling to get directly involved. One of the British government's fundamental policies at the time was, according to its Home Secretary James Callaghan, to avoid getting "sucked into the Irish bog," and active intervention in Northern Ireland was to be considered only as a last resort.^{xxix}

During the summer of 1969, the British government tried to avoid getting directly involved in the vortex that Northern Ireland was turning into.^{xxx} The rapid development and the RUC's failure to stop the rioting forced the British government to deploy troops to Northern Ireland. At the time, this was intended as a temporary expedience; nevertheless, 35 years later, British Army troops remained in place, albeit in reduced numbers. The British military's involvement in Northern Ireland officially began on August 14, 1969, when the British Home Secretary accepted a request from the Northern Irish Government to authorize the deployment of soldiers to provide support for the RUC.

On August 15, soldiers were deployed with a mission that was initially rather straightforward: dealing with various riots and keeping the Catholics and Protestants separated.^{xxxi} The IRA responded quickly to this development with a statement from Dublin on the evening of August 18, claiming that they had sent a number of "fully equipped units" to Northern Ireland and that all its members had been placed on full alert.^{xxxii}

A warning was also given to British soldiers serving in Northern Ireland that should they "allow yourselves to be used to suppress the legitimate attempts of the people to defend themselves against the B Specials and the sectarian Orange murder gangs, then you will have to take the consequences."^{xxxiii} At first, the soldiers of the British Army were welcomed by the Catholics as protectors, even by some individuals who would soon form the core of PIRA.^{xxxiv}

The IRA increases the pressure

The split between the Official IRA and the Provisional IRA became official by the end of December 1969 when the official secretary of the Provisional IRA, P. O'Neill, published a statement that, amongst other things, clarified PIRA's position. According to this statement, PIRA declared:

[Its] allegiance to the 32-county Irish Republic proclaimed at Easter 1916, established by the Dail Eirann in 1919, overthrown by force of arms in 1922 and suppressed to this day by the existing British-imposed Six-County and 26-

County partition status. Already a majority of Army Units, individual Volunteers, and Republicans generally have given their allegiance to the Provisional Executive and Provisional Army Council elected by us at this Convention and have rejected the new compromising leadership in the election of which we did not even participate. The adoption of the compromising policy referred to is the logical outcome of an obsession in recent years with parliamentary politics, with consequent undermining of the basic military role of the Irish Republican Army. The failure to provide the maximum defence possible of our people in Belfast and other parts of the Six Counties against the forces of British imperialism last August is ample evidence of this neglect.^{xxxv}

The newly formed IRA Army Council met in January 1970 to discuss and develop its strategy regarding the use of force and violence. It was decided that, for the time being, the primary mission would be to create an effective, adequate force that could protect Catholic neighborhoods. When this had been achieved, the IRA would go on the offensive, using a strategy that combined defensive measures and retaliation.^{xxxvi}

After a number of incidents between the British Army and the Catholics, the positive relationship ended, and the Catholic population began to perceive the British Army as the enemy. A few of these incidents were staged by the IRA to grow and gain influence through creating a hostile attitude toward the British.^{xxxvii}

Between June 27, 1970, and August 9, 1971, the IRA was able to carry out at least 15 lethal attacks in Northern Ireland, killing at least a total of 26 people.^{xxxviii} The development follows the intentions of the IRA leadership to a rather high degree. In June 1970, severe rioting took place in several places in Belfast. On June 27, the IRA launches its first organized and sustained military action when IRA snipers take position around the Crumlin Road area and the Matthew's Catholic Church, firing down on Newtonards Road for five hours and killing four Protestant civilians.^{xxxix}

It is rather obvious if one studies the duration of these actions and the number of rounds fired that the IRA had been able to rearm themselves during the period of August 1969 to June 1970. There are some indications that this was done with aid from individuals within the Irish state. It should be noted that a significant amount of weapons and ammunition appear to have been supplied by various American sources.^{xl}

The IRA started to retaliate with lethal force against individuals who, in some capacity, represented the British state on August 12 when two RUC officers were killed by a booby trap hidden inside a stolen car in Armagh.^{xli} In Belfast, the IRA initiated an active search for informers, and they started to police Catholic neighborhoods, applying their own code of conduct. Two Catholic men, apparently petty criminals, were shot dead on November 16, 1970, in what appears to have been a disciplinary murder.^{xlii} Another Catholic man, accused of being an informer—the first Catholic to be accused of this—was shot dead on January 27, 1971. His body was left in the open, apparently as a message to the Catholic community.^{xliii}

At the beginning of 1971, the IRA started to actively target the British Army.^{xliv} The first British soldier to die in Northern Ireland was killed by a sniper in North Belfast on 6 February, 1971.

While PIRA's ranks swelled and greatly increased after internment without trial, Bloody Sunday incident and the downgrading of Official IRA's armed campaign, the Provisional IRA leadership emerged in the vacuum and decided to tighten control over its manpower security and weaponry in late 1972.^{xlv} As argued by McKearney, a former IRA member who was part of the 1980 hunger strikes, "there was no master plan for insurrection prior to the situation in Northern Ireland deteriorating and descending into violent chaos. Under the prevailing circumstances, there was a demand, first for defence, then reprisals as a deterrent and finally all-out assault to overthrow the state."^{xlvi}

Although the Troubles have experienced many distinct phases and forms of struggle it has been evident that PIRA was one of the world's most impenetrable organizations and displayed a high and often amazing degree of operational ingenuity in launching new and unexpected terrorist attacks. The ensuing intelligence and operational cat-and-mouse game between PIRA and its enemies over the last three decades have been matched by formidable levels of technical skills, innovation and learning curve in weapons design, bomb-making expertise and delivery of unexpected and sophisticated terrorist attacks.

Significant operational lessons exist in this complex and multilayered conflict as well as significant insights into the mechanisms of conflict transformation and peacemaking in Northern Ireland and its potential applicability to other conflict areas.

The following contributions in this report provide a unique and sharp insight into the complex political dynamics of conflict and the security/operational dimensions from multiple analytical and practitioner perspectives. Some of the most distinguished and knowledgeable academic experts on the Troubles share their analytical insights based on significant fieldwork and exhaustive interviews with PIRA and security sources. Seasoned explosive ordinance officers with extensive tours in Northern Ireland provide detailed overview of PIRA's technical expertise, innovative trajectory and operational modus operandi.

Complementing this security dimensions is the insider perspectives from two individuals who have been at the opposite end of the conflict. A former senior PIRA member, who acted as an informer and was convicted for a terrorist offence, testifies about life inside PIRA and how decisions were made. In many ways his story mirrors Brendan Hughes account in Ed Moloney's book *Voices From the Grave*.^{xlvii} Opposite to this account is one from a former Special Branch officer with considerable expertise in intelligence collection and agent handling who shares his insights about the challenges of actually running operations in Northern Ireland.

As forcefully argued by Jonathan Powell, PM Tony Blair's Chief of Staff and chief negotiator, "[...] one of the lessons that comes most starkly out of the Northern

experience is the importance of maintaining contact [...] it is precisely your enemies, rather than your friends, you should talk to if you want to resolve a conflict.»^{xlviii}

Two leading academics with extensive experience in talking to terrorists and who has intimate knowledge of the multilayered engagement within the framework of the peace process share their analytical reflections about the challenges along the road to peace. Finally, one of leading conflict transformation experts in Europe, provide an outsiders perspective on what the Northern Ireland conflict may teach us about the challenges of peace processes and peace building elsewhere in the world today.

3. PIRA – the Strategic and Operational Context (senior academic based in UK)

The Provisional IRA (IRA) seems important because it epitomizes many of the formative themes in international political development, but it does so on a scale that is manageable and can be studied with close attention to detail. At the heart of the story of the IRA, we find many of the themes that continually arise in international politics, such as the tensions between nation and state, religiously inflicted nationalism, the politics of non-state terrorist groups, and the state's response to terrorism. Emerging in ways that are both telling and provocative, these themes can be studied very close up, with a remarkable range of sources and a remarkable sense of different insights and perspectives.

In that sense, it is possible to imagine that there might be some lessons to be learned from this organization, its campaign, and the British state's responses to it.

Today I will try to answer a series of questions simultaneously in a way that sets up a framework for the discussions during the rest of the proceedings. The operational, logistical, and practical aspects of what happened during the IRA campaign—the bombings, the shootings, and the responses to them by the police and the army—will be addressed directly by some of the talks that will follow. Therefore, I will focus on the broader political and strategic context; in other words, I will provide a framework for understanding what the Provisional IRA argued politically and what they did. That is, what did the Provisional IRA claim? And what was their justification for the campaign of violence that ran from their formation in 1969 until 2005?

While understanding their political argument is a necessary part of understanding the IRA, it does not paint a complete picture. There were other dynamics involved that did not arise in their rhetoric, publicity, or propaganda. Therefore, the question I am trying to address is this: Beyond the political arguments of the IRA, what other dynamics instigated their political violence?

In addition to these considerations, I will try to answer another question: How can we look back at this long campaign of violence and assess the validity or persuasiveness of the arguments? For example, set against what the IRA claimed the violence would achieve, how can we assess what it produced politically? And lastly, in the margins, I would like to hint at lessons we might learn that have relevance beyond the IRA. These lessons may apply to contemporary political violence in Northern Ireland as well as other challenges in terms of non-state political violence in the contemporary world. What was the political justification offered by the Provisional IRA? I will allude to this as I run through the other questions.

We should start with the birth of the Provisional IRA, which has to be understood in a particular historical moment in the 1960s. Looking at the birth of terrorist groups, it is

important to disaggregate one of the great crises of interpretation over the last several years in the wake of 9/11: the tendency to lump together all forms of terrorism as if there is a simple thing called “terrorism” that spreads in the same way all over the world. As a political historian, I think that is exactly what does *not* happen. Instead, there is a series of uniquely created movements that have fundamental similarities but which can only be understood within their unique historical moments.

In the late 1960s in Northern Ireland, there was a deep contest between a majority community that favoured being in the United Kingdom and a minority community that, for the most part, did not think the state was either legitimate or fair. Within that tension between two rival nationalisms, there erupted intercommunal violence. And within that context, the newly created IRA’s first justification was to offer defence. Many of those who joined during this period say they did it to defend their communities against violence from loyalist groups, particularly in working-class neighbourhoods in Belfast and in Derry. Their argument was that “the police are not defending us, our houses are being burnt down, we are being attacked and in some cases killed, and we need to have a defence.”

If that was the justification, at the same time there were other dynamics not often presented in the IRA’s public case. However, these dynamics emerge with close examination and through conversations with people who were involved. For example, associated with defence was unquestionably the motivation of retaliation.

It is less attractive to say, “I am retaliating against you because of what your brother did to my family,” but that mind-set unquestionably existed. In my interviews with people who joined the IRA in the early 1970s, which was when they became a formidable organization, the most cited reason had to do with hitting back—hitting back at the loyalist communities who attacked them and hitting back at the forces of the British state, whether the police or the British Army, who had deployed in 1969 and were engaged in the streets in early 1970s. Hitting back was an important motivation.

Are there any lessons here in terms of responding to the terrorism crisis? I would assert that one lesson is to avoid an overmilitarized response to terrorism. I am not arguing that there should be no military response to terrorism. The British military played an important role in preventing the situation from becoming even more violent. But in the early 1970s, the heavy-handedness of the British Army was a key factor that made the IRA more popular among those who would join it. During this period, the British Army was perceived by the IRA as its best recruiting agent. This echoes developments over the last ten years.

The overmilitarized response to terrorism following 9/11 has unquestionably been one of the big, counterproductive developments. We will hear later on from another speaker about the effectiveness of intelligence-based policing against the IRA. I think one broad arc of what happened was that an overemphasis on using the parachute regiment in the early 1970s was less effective than the later emphasis on intelligence-led policing. Is there a broader lesson we might learn from this? I suspect there is.

How effective was the defence policy of the IRA? One might consider that if somebody is attacking your street and you do not think the police will protect you, you might instinctively think it is legitimate to want a vigilante group to defend you. If I was seventeen years old and someone burned down my house, I might think that hitting back is an emotionally justifiable response. I think many people would.

Gerry Adams, the most important member of the IRA during the campaign (even if he denies ever being a member), argued that by 1972 the IRA had produced “a defensive force of unprecedented effectiveness.” Actually, the evidence is against him here. During the first three years of the existence of the Provisional IRA (from December 1969 to December 1972), 171 civilian Catholics were killed by loyalists or security forces; many more were killed before the Provos started to defend them. In many of those incidents, Provisional IRA violence had, if anything prompted a retaliatory cycle of violence from the other side.

Is there a wider lesson here? Yes—the escalatory periods of terrorist campaigns often involve a tit-for-tat cycle of intensification. That is exactly what happened in the early 1970s in Northern Ireland.

Before moving on to the second stage of the political argument, I would like to address two other interrelated dynamics that are tied in with the politics of defence, which I have described as retaliatory violence. One is something rarely found in public statements made by people associated with the republican movement, but it unquestionably exists in some of the more thoughtful treatments. That is the sectarian animus that drove much of the campaign in Northern Ireland.

People who were in the IRA, and some who are involved with Sinn Féin now, tend to say that the other side was guilty of sectarian hatred and bias during the conflict. That is a simplification. There was a profound sectarian dynamic between two communities that were inimical to one another and related vengefully. A great anger drove that sectarianism. Are there lessons here for the current Northern Ireland? Those who would like to start up IRA-style political violence in a more serious way in Northern Ireland would no doubt benefit if the situation became sectarianized again.

The other important aspect of defence is that a key motivator for using violence (considering the evidence from the period and the emergence of the Provisional IRA) was that it would transform a humiliating deference into a politics of defiance. In other words, rather than being in a position seen as humiliating defencelessness, their agency—through violence—would produce an attitude of greater defiance and empowerment for the community. Similarly, my colleague Dr. Rashmi Singh’s books about the politics of Hamas show that perceived humiliation is a key motivator behind some of the violence. So the first wing of the argument concerns what we could do with defence.

The broader politics of defence has to do with the politics of national self-determination. The Provisional IRA’s argument was that the very existence of the state of Northern Ireland undermined the national self-determination necessary for a united and independent Ireland. They also argued that the Northern Irish state was not only

illegitimate but also unfair and therefore had to be destroyed. Thus, a key part of their justification for violence was that constitutional reform of Northern Ireland was not possible. They embraced destruction and revolution rather than reform. Violence was the only way to produce effective change since constitutional methods had not been effective.

One hears this again and again in terrorist memoirs and statements: “There is no other way.” Another quotation frequently heard from people involved with IRA violence is “There was nothing else we could have done.” Historically, that is not true; there were many other things that could have been done. But the presentation was that constitutional politics were not working; Northern Ireland was beyond reform and therefore needed to be destroyed.

How do we assess these political elements? Self-determination-driven nationalism does not seem inherently unreasonable. I am not a nationalist, but most people are somewhat patriotic, and some strain of national self-determination is normally seen as healthy and natural. In that sense, the IRA represented one of the main themes of modern world history. The idea that national self-determination can resolve itself automatically in a contested territory like Northern Ireland, with a clear victory for one side or the other, seems unlikely.

Slightly more than 50 percent of the population in the unionist community, and a lower percentage in the nationalist community, wanted to remain in the UK. A clean result in favour of a united Ireland seems unlikely since a majority of the people living in Northern Ireland do not want it. Therefore, in terms of national self-determination, the IRA was never likely to achieve a result that would produce a united Ireland through violence.

There was evidence at the time as well. An interesting aspect of the Northern Ireland conflict is that there is a very strong archival record for what happened in the 1960s and 1970s—and to some extent for the 1980s—that we have good access to (the archives in Belfast, Dublin, and London).

The archives in Dublin show that in the independent Irish state in 1968, even before the Provisional IRA existed, the leading civil servant in the Irish state recommended to the prime minister of the Republic of Ireland that using force in the north would get them nowhere. He predicted that using violence in Northern Ireland would not produce an independent Ireland; rather, it would produce greater division in the north. Interestingly, he said that if the British agreed to leave Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland could not afford it anyway. Even at the start of the conflict, the state that the IRA wanted to join did not see it as viable in its private deliberations and reflections.

The key problem with the argument for using force is that the IRA used a Clausewitzian argument against the British state. Clausewitz asserted that the essence of successful prosecution of war is to make the opponent’s experience be more painful than it would be for them to give you what you want. The IRA’s basic strategy was to use violence until the British said, “OK, we’ve had enough. We don’t want these bombs to go off—you can have your united Ireland.” The problem with that is that they applied that

pressure to London in terms of “if you don’t give us what we want, we’ll carry on being violent.”

At the same time, among the loyalist community who wanted to remain in the United Kingdom, the Protestant paramilitary groups were able to apply pressure in the other direction, saying, “If you do give them what they want, you won’t get a united Ireland. You’ll just get much more bloodshed and some kind of civil war.” In other words, there was pressure on London from a violent direction and from another direction as well. This created a “Clausewitzian triangle.” It was impossible for the British state, even if its leadership wanted to, to withdraw from Northern Ireland; they would have had some type of post-Yugoslavia situation on the doorsteps of Britain.

The IRA argument for the necessity of force informs the bigger question of the degree to which terrorism might be judged to work. In the literature on terrorism, there is a rather fraught debate about this issue that is generally too polarized. On one side, there are those who say terrorism does not achieve its central goals and therefore does not work. On the other hand, people like Alan M. Dershowitz say that “because the Palestinians are treated too nicely, terrorism does work.” Therefore, the two views become polarized.

I think it is more complex than that. Regarding the IRA, I think it is inarguably true that the main political goal for which they killed people during the campaigns of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s—British withdrawal from Northern Ireland and the establishment of a united Ireland and an Irish state—was not achieved, nor in prospect, when they called off their campaign.

So, while people often look at the politics of Northern Ireland and say terrorism works, it could be argued that it might work in some respects but not in others. For example, terrorism might give a political party greater leverage or greater power in negotiations.

There were other aspects of the IRA’s political arguments that reinforced and gave cultural and ideological teeth to the broader argument about the necessity of force. One aspect was religion, although the people involved in the movement now tend to downplay the religious dimension. This organization was overwhelmingly drawn from one side of the community in the north of Ireland—the Catholic community. And there was, despite what they say now, a strong religiosity to some of the aspects of the movement. In particular, there were strong religious aspects to some of the statements made in the 1970s about contraceptives and the relaxation on contraceptives in the Republic of Ireland.

The ex-chief of staff for the IRA, Martin McGuinness, now deputy prime minister in Northern Ireland, said his people were read in nationalist and Catholic traditions, with greater emphasis on the Catholic aspect. Interestingly, for people like Adams and McGuinness, being Catholic and attending mass has outlived their commitment to harsh left-wing politics and political violence. They no longer talk about killing policemen or think it is a good idea, but they still make sure to attend mass. Catholicism was a part of it, even if they tend to play down the politics of it, and that reinforced one of the solidarity mechanisms of the movement. For example, the people

in jail during the 1981 period of the hunger strike might now say they only used the Bible to roll cigarettes and write messages, but at the time they were proud to say the Rosary twice a day.

This movement was reinforced by certain cultural dynamics. Similarly, but less importantly, there was a politics of culture with regard to Gaelicism and the Irish language. As a newspaper in 1971 put it, “Know Irish, speak Irish, be Irish.” Besides the political violence that characterized the IRA, there was always a hinterland of politics and culture. There was always something more to it in terms of the movement; there was Gaelicism, Catholic identity and solidarity, and also identification with certain ideological strains that would be unsurprising to find at the time.

In the early years of the Provisional IRA, there was a strong identification with anti-imperialism and with other anticolonial struggles. They could assert that their movement was part of what was happening in the West with the decolonization of the British Empire. That provided a sense of legitimacy—because anticolonialism was legitimate and colonial power was not—and a sense of hope because the dominoes were falling all around the world, and Northern Ireland was going to be another one.

If there was anticolonialism and anti-imperialism, there was also, for a time, a political argument for a particularly strong socialism. Prominent Sinn Féin politicians are now involved in meetings with business people who want to invest in Northern Ireland. In the 1970s and 1980s, on the other hand, they occasionally killed people involved in business and investment in Northern Ireland.

When I was writing my book on the IRA, the jail in which most of the republican prisoners were held—“The Maze” or “Long Kesh”—was closing down. I got access to the library that the IRA prisoners themselves had built up (there was not a prison library; they built up the library with books they brought in to read), and I thought it would be interesting to find out what they had read in prison for so many years. The first thing that was striking about the library was the extraordinary abundance of left-wing literature—shelf after shelf of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin. I am not claiming that the IRA was a Marxist organization; I think it was far more complex than that. However, a part of their political argument, particularly in the 1970s and early 1980s, had a strong, hard-leftist orientation, which played a part in forming aspects of their policies.

Now we will assess the viability of these different elements. It is not the case that Ireland will be as Catholic as some of the IRA leaders of the 1970s would have hoped. It is not the case that, despite the use of Gaelic in the jails and the commitment to learning Irish, that the majority of the nationalists will be Irish speakers in a fluent or first-language sense. It is certainly not the case that Northern Ireland will become a hard-left socialist economy. These political arguments have not been furthered in the way the proponents of political violence had hoped for.

Wherever there was greater strength in terms of their politics and arguments, the proponents of political violence offered violence in an attempt to undermine their opponents. I will use two examples: (1) undermining opponents within the unionist

community and (2) undermining their rivals within in the nationalist community. Most nationalists in Northern Ireland during the IRA campaign did not support IRA violence; they tended to support the constitutional nationalism of the Social Democrats and the Labour Party rather than the IRA. It is only since the IRA has given up its campaign of violence that their political party, Sinn Féin, has become the dominant party of northern nationalism.

The assumption that Northern Ireland points toward the dominance of extremism and the popularity of political violence is contrary to the evidence. During most of the Northern Ireland conflict, the political parties associated with political violence were repeatedly outvoted by political parties opposed to political violence. Now that the violence has ended, the political party associated with the IRA now puts forth arguments that are very different from the past; it searches for support but is not in alliance with the IRA. What the IRA's violence did do in two key ways was contribute to politics that did undermine rivals, both in the opposing community and in its own.

In part, the IRA campaign was read internationally as the campaign of the victim against the victimizer. For example, until last year, I had taught at Queen's University in Belfast for a very long time. The students I taught toward the end were children who had grown up after the Troubles had ended; they had grown up in a mostly peaceful period. They tended to think, if they came from the nationalist community, that the number of people killed in the Troubles by the RUC was much higher than it actually was.

Only a tiny portion of the people killed in Northern Ireland were killed by the police force. When I pointed out these figures to the students from the nationalist community, they were very surprised; they had grown up with such vilification of the police that they assumed the police killed more people than they actually did.

When I mentioned the Stormont regime of the Northern Ireland government, against which the IRA was rebelling, these students had grown up in Northern Ireland under new political circumstances. In the nationalist community, they would talk about the Stormont regime of the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s as if it were part of South Africa under apartheid. They would say things like, "Catholics did not have the vote," although Catholics did have the vote.

What happened was a delegitimizing of unionism, which meant that even though the IRA killed far more people than the British state did, the presentation of unionism has, for some people, been undermined.

A secondary undermining of their opponents was the undermining of the opposition within the nationalist community. A key part of what happened in the Northern Ireland conflict was that many of the battles that politicians had to fight were against people within their own communities. And again, there are echoes of this in situations like Hamas in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Much of the dynamic of the violence has been about conflict within a certain community—about who is going to represent that community to the outside world.

One way in which IRA violence was successful was that negotiating to end the conflict gave their political party, Sinn Féin, much greater leverage than it would otherwise have had. The British government thought, not unreasonably, that its main purpose in the negotiations was to stop the IRA from carrying on its campaign of violence. In such negotiations, stopping the violence requires talking to the people who represent the organization carrying out the violence.

In other words, there was a sense in which the violence produced a position whereby the IRA could determine who in the community would be involved with outsiders and have more leverage. That is undoubtedly one of the legacies. Whether it is a good or bad legacy, it is a legacy of political violence, and the violence magnified the role of the IRA's political party.

If we are looking for lessons in the current situation, there is, at the moment, a small group of people (sometimes referred to as dissident Irish republicans) within Northern Ireland keen to restart IRA-style violence. One interesting aspect of their politics is that much of the violence—much of the motivation behind their campaign—is meant to undermine Sinn Féin and people within the mainstream.

In other words, the violence that has been carried out has substantial intracommunal as well as intercommunal dynamics. The main opponents are the focus of attention: the IRA against the British state and the IRA against the unionist community. This can lead observers to miss facts—like the fact that the IRA killed more Catholics in Northern Ireland than the British Army did. There is a sense in which the intracommunal dynamics at the moment remain important.

I have tried to show that the political arguments of the IRA were not persuasive, not even in 1960 when the Provisional IRA was created. The political context of this is rather familiar: a group of people thought the state they lived in was illegitimate, was unfair, and could not coexist with the state they believed they belonged to. A big point about terrorism that has been lost in the wake of the atrocities of 9/11 is this: many of the cases of terrorism we examine, discuss, deplore, and try to address with counterterrorism are blood-splattered symptoms of problems of nationalism. It is often the mismatch between nation and state that generates the political violence.

While focusing on terrorism, therefore, we must not lose sight of the political context. This is not to say that one can waiver in resolving these conflicts. The reason they continue is because others cannot force determination, cannot turn up in Kashmir and say, "It's easy to resolve it," or visit Israel or Palestine and say, "If only you did this." These situations are much more complicated than that. In Northern Ireland, only after a very long time and a lot of unnecessary deaths did they arrive at a solution that could have been arrived at in the 1960s without a single death. The Northern Ireland conflict did not produce a model that may easily be exported elsewhere.

The IRA's political argument was good at achieving retaliation. One thing terrorism does is that it allows a person to hit back in a cathartic, satisfying way. It does not tend to achieve the terrorist organization's headline goal—it certainly did not for the IRA. Did it enable them to undermine their opponents? To some degree it did. Did it enable

them to get greater wake for their political party than merited by the votes for that party? I think it did. So what we have is an ambiguous set of outcomes.

What are the other lessons elsewhere? An overmilitarized response to terrorism is probably counterproductive. It is important to remember that most terrorist groups end their campaigns without achieving their essential goals. The panic that understandably occurs after a terrorist atrocity does not change the world in the way the terrorists thought it would. The agreement we have in Northern Ireland now is far closer to what the British government always said should happen than to what the IRA said.

As I mentioned earlier, in interviews people who were involved in the IRA often assert, “There was nothing else I could have done.” There are, of course, many other things they could have done. Most Catholic working-class people from Northern Ireland did not respond to the state of Northern Ireland by planting bombs.

Most Catholics in Northern Ireland thought there was a chance of constitutional reform. Interestingly enough, that is exactly what Sinn Féin is saying now; they are arguing for reform as a tool for long-term transformation. With conflicts such as that in Northern Ireland, we should be aware of the idea of inevitability. Again, the archives from the 1950s and 1960s show it was evident at the time that a number of the things that helped produce the apparent legitimacy of the IRA should have been avoided.

As an example, there is a letter from 1957—before the Provisional IRA existed—from a nationalist MP in Northern Ireland saying, “When you get nationalist flags flown in nationalist areas, just leave them alone, because you are only going to cause trouble if you go in and take those flags down. No unionist is going to walk past those flags anyway as they are in nationalist areas, just leave them alone.”

A few years later, a young emerging preacher and politician named Ian Paisley raised a great fuss about nationalist flags flying in the republican Catholic parts of Belfast. The police were wisely going to leave them there, but he said he would take them down if the police did not: “If you don’t take them down, I will do it myself, causing lots of trouble doing it.” The police took them down, which led to intercommunal hostilities and violence. Many of the incidents during the 1960s resulted from unnecessary provocations like this, and they often generated violence.

An unfortunate legacy of the Northern Ireland conflict is that no faction—whether it’s the IRA, the loyalists, the police, the British state, the British Army, or Irish Americans—comes out clean. Despite the fact that the IRA killed more people than any other agent in that conflict, the IRA was not the sole villain or the only people who initiated the violence in Northern Ireland. In situations like this, if humiliation is allowed to endure—if circumstances reinforce a sense of powerlessness and the possibility of constitutional efficacy becomes remote or doubted—then conditions emerge in which terrorist violence is more likely to thrive. That is in no way a justification for violence, but it is an explanation.

The lesson to be learned is that political violence and conflict are not inevitable. The conditions that generate terrorist violence can be dealt with, and it is a tragedy that this did not happen in Northern Ireland until it was too late.

4. PIRA's Operational Art (UK-based defence analyst and former editor of Jane's)

My talk today, entitled 'The Operational Art of the Provisional IRA', will ambitiously cover 30 years of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In many ways, the period of 1970-2005 saw an onslaught of IEDs with a total amount of 19,000 IEDs in the United Kingdom, averaging one IED every 17 hours. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) had an entire section devoted to Research and Development (R&D) of IEDs, the engineering department, which was an elite division. It had an unprecedented level of adapted technical expertise compared to any terrorist group that has ever existed before or since.

Bombs

I'm going to pick out some examples to start with of that particular kind of pioneering of deadly ingenuity:

- The Brighton bomb in 1984 was the first use of a video recorder as a timing device. This was a very simple and reliable timer with long delay, and the timer was very commonly found in households in the 1980s. In addition, the timer was easy to connect to an explosive device. The device was set to explode 24 days, 6 hours, and 36 minutes after concealment, and consisted of 39 kg gelignite planted in a small space under a bathtub. Five out of the hotel's eight floors collapsed. The chimney crashed through ceilings and floors, and masonry was flung into the sea. As we all know, the bomb destroyed much of the hotel. Five persons were killed, lots of people were injured, some of them very seriously indeed.
After that attack, the IRA made an official statement that became a mantra of terrorism: "Today we were unlucky but remember, we only have to be lucky once, and you will have to be lucky always". That statement is quoted at every conference about terrorism that one might attend. This attack did change the situation in terms of security and the way the government had to be protected from then on; in other words, it changed British politics and security forever.
- However, even though the Brighton bomb used a new type of timing mechanism, it was not the biggest of IRA bombs. I call their biggest bombs "city destroyers", a term actually used for H-bombs. These bombs were so huge that they had the potential to destroy water mains. An example of such a bomb was deployed in London, Bishopsgate, on 24 April 1993. It was primed by switching on the hazard lights of a vehicle; the device ticked down and went off. The bomb itself was made up of 1,200 kg ammonium nitrate and Semtex, with a U.S.-made Ireco detonator. The IRA had many dozens of these, which they had acquired in the United States. The bomb caused a very, very powerful explosion that generated an immense amount of damage in the city. It damaged

buildings up to 500 meters away from the detonation point and at least 140,000 square meters of office space were destroyed. The bomb had the explosive power of more than one kiloton of TNT, which is equivalent to the explosive power of a small, tactical nuclear weapon but without the radioactivity.

- An even bigger bomb was detonated in 1996 in the very prestigious area of Canary Wharf. A vast amount—half a ton—of fertilizer and sugar had been packed in plastic bags together with 5 kg Semtex as a booster charge. It was equipped with several timing mechanisms and a booby trap device. The bomb killed two people, injured more than one hundred others, and caused more than one hundred million pounds of damage; just imagine what would have happened if this had been al-Qaeda. Within nineteen days of the explosion, the British government and the IRA were within sight of the negotiating table.
- The last of the big bombs—occurring in Manchester on 15 June 1996—created a 300-meter high mushroom cloud in the air and devastated a large section of the city centre of Manchester. This 1,600 kg bomb was one of the biggest bombs ever detonated in Britain, including the bombs that were dropped during World War II. Two hundred people were injured, and 75,000 people had to be evacuated. It caused 700 million pounds in damages.

Just to backtrack a bit and give you a snapshot of one of the worst days of the so-called “Troubles”, on Bloody Friday, the 21st of July 1974, we saw 22 bombs detonate in one single day in Belfast. Between 2:10 and 3:13 in the afternoon, a total of 22 bombs exploded in various parts of Belfast. Nine people died in the explosions: seven civilians and two soldiers. The number of injured were 77 women and girls and 53 men and boys.

Mortars

The IRA also developed and used other deadly weapons such as mortar systems. The mortars were another effective way of attacking the British government. At least 19 versions were developed over the years by the Provisional IRA. Perhaps the most well-known and spectacular example was the attack with a Mark-10 on Downing Street on 7 February 1991 that caused lots of damage but no casualties. This happened in the early 1990s during the first Gulf War, when the IRA campaign had gotten really dangerous, and the IRA had access to very sophisticated bombing technology.

Three of the mortars had been hidden in the back of a van; their warheads were filled with Semtex from Libya. The mortars were fired through a hole in the roof of the van. One of the projectiles landed in a garden at Ten Downing Street, the other two behind the Foreign Office. The mortar detonated in the garden, 13 meters short of the target, scorching a rear wall and forming a crater several meters wide, and the blast shattered the windows of the Cabinet room. Then-Prime Minister John Major and his cabinet had to dive under a table for protection and their meeting was of course swiftly adjourned.

This attack occurred when secret negotiations were going on between the British government and the PIRA; it was a way for the IRA to send a message: “...if you think

you're going to hoodwink us, just realize how militarily powerful we are." The Provisional IRA statement following the mortar attack on Downing Street was "...let the British government understand that, while nationalist people in the six counties are forced to live under British rule, the British Cabinet will be forced to live in bunkers."

The Mark-10 mortars were some of the biggest mortars ever produced. They were made of a number of steel tubes set at varying angles for maximum target coverage. The system was built by widely available materials. Oxyacetylene gas cylinders used for domestic heating were the top and bottom of the mortars; they were chopped off and bolted onto a flatbed of a hijacked truck, and this was linked to the detonation wire and timers. The projectile was launched by the propulsion charge in the base. This was a technique that the IRA used from early on; a spring-loaded arming pin popped out and allowed working parts of the fuse to detonate when it struck its target. The Mark-10 fired 15 cm shells with 11 kg of Semtex or 18 kilos of homemade explosives as far as 300 meters.

The bigger mortars nicknamed "Barrack Busters" such as the Mark-15 were targeted against police stations and army barracks. These stand-off weapons were launched from a safe distance via a simple elevation system. They could drop shells on targets close to the mortar and positions lower than the target of attack. These "Barrack Busters" destroyed police stations but also houses and streets. Targeting was inaccurate and the shell was point-detonated; sometimes they went off inside the mortar tubes. Despite these drawbacks, they did have propaganda value; they showed how creative and audacious the Provisional IRA could be and gave its member confidence in the movement.

The Mark-6 was used in several attacks on Heathrow Airport in 1994. This mortar system was made from drainpipes, had tail fins attached, and was fired from the ground and ignited by a car battery. Breeze blocks were used to weight the launch frame down. The warheads contained 1 kg of Semtex and were detonated on impact by a percussion cap; a simple and rather reliable system. During one of these attacks, the mortars were positioned in an open hatchback at Excelsior Hotel car park 400 meters away from the airport. The attacks caused some delays of approximately half an hour for traffic to and from Heathrow.

The IRA had access to commercial detonators of good quality, unlike the terrorists today who are forced to rely on homemade detonation systems. The people who designed these systems often lacked advanced degrees but were very good at improvising and utilizing widely available materials. One well-known IRA member once described this phenomenon, saying, "We weren't nuclear physicists, but we were good electricians." This quote captured the essence of the IRA's skillsets and ability to innovate with available material.

Explosives

During the thirty-year long campaign, the IRA deployed at least 14.5 tons of explosives. The IRA used every type of explosive known to man except nuclear devices. They used gunpowder. They used dynamite; one of the IRA's predecessors was actually the

first terror group ever to use dynamite, and this occurred two years after it was invented in 1866 by Alfred Nobel. The group also used Gelignite, potassium chloride, and ammonium nitrate (AN) in various blends and mixes, as well as aluminium powder, iron oxide, carbide, 808, TNT, ammonal, sodium chlorate and nitrobenzene.

Then, of course, we have Semtex, a favourite explosive among terrorists and insurgents. It is an extremely powerful explosive, e.g., 1.6 kg can blow up a two-story building. Semtex is highly stable and pliable, and it is very easy to design IEDs with it. The old Cold War stock was free from odour and very hard to detect. The IRA had vast amounts of Semtex; at least three tons were shipped in from Libya. They used it quite sparingly for very specific tasks and carefully targeted devices, but also as a booster for VBIEDs (car bombs) and small devices.

Car bombs were usually made with ammonium nitrate (AN), which was used as a bulk explosive. It was of course rather easy to gain access to the ingredients, especially in agricultural countries such as Ireland. This type of explosive had to be mixed properly and dried before use. In South Armagh, they had what can be best described as a conveyor belt where all the ingredients were mixed in order to be used as a bulk explosive. Interestingly, this combination has also been used by al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. It was milled using cement mixers, coffee grinders, food mixers, etc.

Detonation techniques

The IRA pioneered different types of mechanisms, thus turning existing ideas into a fine art:

- Command wire detonation was a very large roadside device that could be used in ambushes and detonated from a vantage point more than 100 meters away. Wires could be hidden under roads and in telegraph poles, or dug into hedges and left for several days. Sometimes there were malfunctions when cows used to eat the wires by mistake. Usually the wires worked as planned and killed a significant number of people. For example, an RUC armoured car fell victim to a command-detonated IED on 27 October 1982, killing three people. Another attack with a command-detonated IED was the Ballygawley bus bomb on 18 August 1988 that killed eight soldiers.
- Radio-controlled IEDs (RCIED) were developed and refined by the IRA; this technology has been copied ever since. Well-known attacks using this type of technology were the ambush at Warrenpoint and the attack against Mountbatten that were carried out on the same day, on 27 August 1979. The radio-controlled devices used in these two attacks were modified from model aircraft and other hobby products such as garage door openers. The ambush at Warrenpoint consisted of two large two ammonium nitrate bombs that killed 18 soldiers. The explosions were heard miles away across the Mountains of Mourne.

- The major benefit of RCIEDs is the absence of a command wire; there is always a risk that someone will see a command wire. The RCIED is wired in a certain way in order to activate a switch and complete the firing circuit. Another major benefit with RCIEDs is that it is possible to remain in a hidden position with clear view of the target; in Northern Ireland, the trigger operator could sometimes be hidden on the other side of the border, out of sight and out of reach. At the time, available bandwidths increased with the introduction of citizen band radios (CB), which were rather popular at the time.
- The use of RCIEDs started the so-called Wavelength War between the IRA and the British military, which tried to jam the frequencies and signals used by the IRA. In order to prevent jamming, the IRA obtained equipment from the United States that was modified in order to create a coded signal. When the British military succeeded in jamming the signals, the IRA simply moved to another waveband, or reverted to command-wire IEDs. Nowadays, the United States spends enormous amounts of money on jamming equipment and research and development in order to counter the threats from insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was the IRA that initiated this development.

Timers

The IRA used every type of timer one could think of, including watches, travel clocks, kitchen timers, central heating timers, parking timers, video recorder timers. The group pioneered the Timing Power Unit (TPU), which includes a timer, safe-to-arm switch, and a power supply. Unlike al-Qaeda, the IRA did not want to blow up absolutely everybody, but instead targeted the bombs against very specific targets, i.e., the police, troops, and politicians. These sophisticated mechanisms had a purpose. Everything had to be done much more precisely, and that meant technology and technological advancement, much of which was taught in the IRA community. At times someone went away for some training in other places. Eventually, the IRA ended up training everyone else.

The IRA usually connected the timers by incorporating them into a small plywood box containing a power source such as AA batteries or a 9-volt cell. IRA members mass-produced boxes according to their own standards, and they went from the “Belfast kitchen operation” to something more like a factory. These devices were built and designed in clandestine factories in the Republic of Ireland.

A hole was drilled through boxes and dowel pins inserted to hold the timers at the required delay. The pin was later removed to allow the timer to run down. The IRA usually wired timers in up to two detonators to ensure the VBIED would go off two hours after its timer had been set. The group also used parking meters – the Memopark timer – that had a highly reliable mechanism; the IRA actually bought so many of these meters that they became scarce in Northern Ireland.

Detonators

According to the Chinese, detonators are the dragon's teeth, and the IRA benefited from having a good supply for a certain period of time from the United States. The IRA actually received lots of support from the United States—not only funding, but also guns, detonators, and other technology of interest. Sometimes they stole civilian detonators from quarries and construction sites. They also produced their own detonators. This particular contraption was made by distilling Semtex for use as a detonating cord. They also used flashlight initiation, a rather sophisticated technology, in just another example of a trigger mechanism for an IED.

They would place a light-sensitive cell within the bomb and a flashlight from a distance to set it off; this is extremely lethal. A flashlight initiation could fire a camera flashlight from one hundred meters away and strike a light-sensitive cell to trigger the bomb. In 1992, a flashlight-initiated IED was used in a lethal attack against a RUC officer. Uncoded, it could be accidentally detonated by any pulsing light. Nowadays, we see this technique in Iraq and other places.

Passive infrared (PIR) devices have also been used as a trigger. A bomb with a PIR detonator is remotely armed when the target has been identified and sighted. The PIR system measures infrared (IR) light radiating from objects in its field of view, and sensors in the system respond to changes in the infrared heat signal. Today, PIR is being used by dissident republican groups in Northern Ireland, and recently, a PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland) officer in Randalstown was critically injured by a PIR-initiated IED in a parked car, which went off when the officer's car drove past. PIRs are also widely used by Iraqi insurgents in combination with explosively formed penetrators (EFP).

Miscellaneous

- The IRA cleverly adapted various methods to disguise its IEDs; everything you could possibly think of was used to hide and camouflage IEDs, from tape cassettes and books to shop-room dummies in cars to make people think that there was a person or persons sitting and waiting in the car, while it actually was a car bomb.
- The IRA also pioneered the use of booby traps and pressure plates by various methods including mechanic pressure, release pressure, tension, release tension, movement, electric cable, remote control, photocells, acoustic, and chemical. This is now used by the Taliban in great numbers.
- Another IRA invention was the so-called anti-disturbance device. As an illustration, a new type of IED with an anti-disturbance device was discovered in Castlerobin in the 1970s. This device was specifically designed to kill ATOs (Army Technical Officers, the British term for bomb disposal experts); one switch would set it off when the lid was removed from the box, and another switch would detonate the bomb when the lid was lifted. Whichever way it was

tilted or its lid lifted, the bomb would detonate. Afterwards, a British expert stated, "We now know that the Castlerobin bomb was of a better class than anything we'd meet before. It was nicely done, nicely arranged." In order to make it more difficult to disarm its bombs, the IRA would change its booby traps on a regular basis and could also place several different devices on a bomb.

- The use of mercury tilt switches is another illustration of the ingenuity of the IRA. This is basically a piece of technology used in ordinary heating systems and consists of a bubble of glass with a blob of mercury with two terminals. This switch will be activated when something moves, e.g., a vehicle moves. This type of technology was used for a series of assassinations such as the July 1990 killing of the parliamentarian Ian Gow; he was killed by a small bomb that had been placed under his car. It is now used by various dissident groups in Northern Ireland.

The targeting of London Electricity Sub-stations

State-of-the-art IEDs were used when London electricity substations were targeted in 1994. These devices were designed to take out electricity transformer units in London. At least 22 substations were targeted, and when a handful of transformers was disrupted, it would result in days or weeks of no power in London. The device was composed of a Timber box with three compartments. The first compartment contained the power unit, a very large battery originally used for electrifying rural fencing. The second compartment contained an unwrapped three-kilo Semtex block.

Finally, the third compartment contained a timer used to turn on central heating at appointed times, which made it possible to delay the detonation up to forty hours. This conspiracy to attack the electrical grid was discovered and stopped by coincidence. Later on, some 30 identical and apparently mass-produced devices were found in a bomb factory in the Republic of Ireland.

Technology Transfer to Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)

IRA also provided technology transfer and training to the FARC guerrilla. At any one time during the period of 1997-2001, between three to five IRA members trained FARC members. Apparently each IRA instructor was paid 2 million U.S. dollars for the training sessions. In 2001, Colombian authorities arrested three IRA members.

The IRA provided FARC with technical know-how in a number of fields. IRA members showed them how to use a detonator system that had thwarted British Army frequency-jamming systems. They taught them how to use human proxy bombs, homemade mortars, firing fuses, and impact detonation methods. In May 2001, during the Uribe inauguration, FARC carried out an attack with multiple-launch mortars originally constructed by the IRA; the attack killed twenty-one persons. Experts within the Colombian security forces noted "many similarities in both design and operation systems" with known IRA designs.

The IRA also provided FARC with fuel-air explosives, which is a weapon of mass effect. The IRA did develop this type of weapon and its own type of napalm. However, these types of weapons were never deployed in Northern Ireland.

Bombs and Diffusion of Technical Know-how to Other Conflicts

The IRA became experts at using IEDs and car bombs. The members' expertise has most likely been copied and used by other terrorist and insurgent groups.

Two overseas incidents deserve to be mentioned since they bear the hallmarks of IRA influence on IED design. Firstly, in an ambush in Iraq in October 2005, eight British soldiers were killed by insurgents via a bomb triggered by infra-red beams. A UK military officer stated that "the photographic flashgun unit was replaced with infra-red and the coded infra-red, but basically, they were variations of the same device." Secondly, pipe bombs were discovered in Jenin pipe in April 2002, and they were very similar to IRA devices in Northern Ireland. I am convinced that these pipe bombs were either supplied by IRA members or made by Palestinians under direct IRA supervision. "When I saw the bombs, it was like a flashback to Northern Ireland."

Finally, a snapshot of dissident activity on Northern Ireland. On August 3, 2010, a car bomb exploded in Derry, which is a high-value target since it will be the "city of culture" soon. A car containing 90 kg of homemade explosives detonated outside Strand Road police station and also damaged nearby shops. The next day, a UVBTIED (Under Vehicle Booby Trap Improvised Explosive) was found in the driveway of a British Army major's home in Bangor, County Down. A controlled explosion occurred after 30 houses in the neighbourhood had been evacuated. It should also be mentioned that the Strand Road Police Station had been the target of a mortar attack; the shell struck a wall but failed to explode.

The Extent of the Threat

Today's dissident groups lack most of the components that made the IRA such a formidable opponent, i.e., comparable weaponry, expertise, organization, trained personnel, funding, and a cohesive command chain. However, they are still to be taken seriously due to their commitment and fanaticism, and they have been able to get their hands on some of the IRA's weapons and stocks of explosives.

Are they gaining in expertise? It seems they are trained or drawing on older skills. This is illustrated by the murder of PSNI officer Ronan Kerr. In this attack, the perpetrators used Libyan Semtex stolen from the IRA. The design of the bomb was a classic IRA design. In another attack, the perpetrators used a booby-trapped VBIED with a trip wire attached to the buckle of car seat belt, intended to set off a stolen military grenade attached with a magnet; also a classic IRA design.

It is clear that terrorists learn from precedent. The IRA's expertise and experience of bomb making and deployment over 30 years form much of that precedent. What the Provisional IRA invented and developed when it made bombs, at least 17,000 of them, has somehow filtered through—whether directly or by copying textbook examples—to

current groups, including those that are currently trying to make trouble in Northern Ireland.

5. PIRA, Improvised Explosive Devices and Counter Measures (former British Army EOD officer)

I intend to cover both PIRA's capabilities and the threat they pose as well as possible countermeasures.

In terms of countermeasures, what constitutes success or failure? I argue that success is 10 per cent luck and 30 per cent equipment. Historically, Americans have relied on equipment. The British could not afford new equipment and have been forced to rely on good training, skills, and procedures (tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs)). This is where the drills and skills come in. Overall, good training and skills compose the remaining 60 per cent to defeat the bomber.

PIRA IED Capability

The British Army started the campaign in Northern Ireland by examining smoking holes in the ground instead of attacking the networks behind the bombs. The planning and sourcing phase of a terrorist attack is when the network ideally should be attacked. By the time the bomb has been fabricated and put in place, it is too late.

We could get resources in place such as counter-IEDs to mitigate the blast, and we could perhaps do some forensic analysis. Forensic analysis has come a long way and has been exploited with success over the last five years in Iraq. I once found a bag with various wires inside it in Iraq that had been discarded in a garage and ignored. I worked out from that one bag that its previous owner had built 400 devices. There were no biometrics or forensics—it was only junk thrown away in a garage.

Why was PIRA effective?

First, they learned. They had an active program of observing. They deliberately staged hoaxes in order to analyse the behaviour of the police and the security forces—timing them, filming them, and discovering their security forces' methods. Secondly, after an incident or an attack, the IRA would carefully analyse it. They conducted a rather careful and detailed post attack analysis and investigation. "What worked? What failed? What went wrong?" Thirdly, they applied a very systematic approach when they planned and carried out their attacks.

In addition, and most importantly, they had access to a safe haven in the Republic of Ireland, just as we see today in Pakistan (with the Taliban). In their safe haven, they were able to operate fairly unhindered when it came to developing, testing, and producing different devices. The presence of a safe haven was critical to the existence of their "engineering department." It gave them the time and space to innovate and build. As mentioned before, this "engineering department" was considered to be an elite unit within the IRA and was able to recruit some ingenious people.

Some of the IRA members had what I would describe as farmyard engineering skills (i.e., heavy engineering, welding, and fabrication—all the skills necessary to build devices such as the different mortar systems). When it came to the large bombs that they used on the British mainland, the key to success was hiding the devices. These bombs were hidden in secret compartments in trucks and other vehicles using sophisticated welding workshops in South Armagh and Ireland. Those working in the border areas had also been involved in smuggling for years. They had extensive knowledge of the land and how to run smuggling operations; there is essentially no practical difference between smuggling pigs and smuggling arms.

In the early days, PIRA used army manuals, and the bomb makers used rather unsophisticated literature to gain knowledge of various basic circuits that could be used for bomb making. Various army manuals, mainly from the United States, were also used (some of these manuals have been translated into Arabic by militant Islamists).

PIRA IED Capability

There are three basic PIRA IED bomb mechanisms: time, victim operated (VO), or command detonated.

- *Time*. In the early years, they used various time-delayed devices. They were crude—designed around an alarm clock and often used for bombs hidden in cars. Then called a “bomb in a car,” these eventually became car bombs. They used no safety mechanism; the clock literally counted down. This was of course highly dangerous, and premature initiations occurred often. In order to solve this, they developed the TPU—the timer power unit. The aim of the TPU was to standardize and make life safer for the bomb maker and the people who placed the bombs at the target. As previously mentioned, PIRA bought as many Memo park timers as they could. That gave them up to 60 minutes of delay. They also used a light bulb as a simple but effective safety mechanism together with the park timer.
- *Victim Operated (VO)*. The IRA often used hoaxes (phone calls), saying that there was a bomb at a certain place to lure the security forces into a trap, often with a VO device. In one particular case, a helicopter flew over the area and took some pictures (early imagery intelligence) that showed the presence of a command wire and milk urns apparently containing a bomb. The command wire and the milk urns were a hoax. Instead, nearby was a derelict building with a pressure plate hidden inside. In other words, the IRA knew and understood that the “bomb” with the command wire would draw the security forces into the area to investigate; they also understood that there was a good chance that some of the soldiers would go inside the derelict building to search for shelter from the rain so common in Ireland. Another example from Northern Ireland illustrates the importance of not losing equipment; a soldier had lost a water bottle while on patrol without noticing this or not notifying his commanding officer. The IRA found the bottle, put a bomb inside it, and placed it on a path that was patrolled by the Army, knowing that a soldier would probably pick it up. A third example

illustrates how the IRA could manipulate their victims with their social skills. At Christmas at a security force base in Northern Ireland, soldiers were told not to accept any Christmas gifts from the public. Two soldiers were approached by two young ladies who gave them a tin supposedly containing candy and chocolate. One of the soldiers took the tin, put it in his cupboard, and forgot about it. He came back one day feeling hungry and discovered that there was a bomb inside the tin (the bomb in this case malfunctioned). The point is that even with the most fortified security base in the world, thinking outside the box can get a bomb inside it.

- *RCIED*. This was mentioned by the previous speaker. All I will say about it is that there were a lot of premature initiations when they used radio controls for model aircraft. As a solution, they started to build sophisticated decoders and encoders in order to reduce the possibility of premature initiations. Why? First of all, unlike digging down a command wire, it allows for rapid emplacement, providing a long reach. You could also destroy forensics. The IRA became more forensically aware over a period of time and started to put what we called “forensic charges” onto their devices. The main charge would function, and the smaller charge would destroy any forensic evidence. The importance of dominating the electromagnetic spectrum is extremely important in any counterterrorist campaign. It does not matter if it is about secure communications or electronic countermeasures—you must find the frequencies that you can use safely. The IRA was constantly looking for a window in the spectrum that the British security forces were not using or jamming. In certain cases, when they could not find a window, they looked for other means. For example, in the case of an abandoned car (you may have heard of a break glass sensor used in burglar alarms), the IRA placed one of these sensors on a window of the car. They also tried to place copper plate close to each other (overlapping) that they fired a bullet through (thus closing the circuit) to get around the British jamming methods.
- *Infrared*. The loyalists pioneered the use of passive infrared, but the IRA went for active infrared. In this particular case, they were not very successful. Good TTPs, good drills, and procedures saved these soldiers from this device—an active infrared receiver and a transmitter generating an invisible infrared beam linked to bomb and small forensics charge. In this case, the equipment malfunctioned, probably because it was too heavy for the tree branch on which it was placed. In another example, a car was parked with an active infrared receiver connected to a homemade claymore; this device was discovered by an Army patrol before it detonated.
- *Mortars*. These have been mentioned before; they were designed and produced in several different versions, sometimes hidden in vehicles (usually where the engine is located). The IRA would take out the car engine, put a Mark 12 or Mark 16 mortar in its place, cut out a hole, cover it with paper, paint it the same colour as the rest of the car, and wait for a patrol to pass by. At the time, these

projectiles could penetrate most armoured vehicles used in Northern Ireland. The Mark 13 was used against fortified positions; it was a very crude device, but it worked. The Mark 14 used photo slave flash units to bypass British countermeasures and set off the mortar system. The Mark 15 was often used in rural attacks, and typically had eight or nine tubes.

Ingenuity and countermeasures

Defeating the mortar threat is very difficult. Sometimes it is necessary to reinforce buildings and structures. The key is good intelligence. If you know the range of the mortar, it becomes possible to predict likely firing points and take steps to dominate those firing points and keep them under surveillance. If done correctly, countering the threat is halfway done.

Another important countermeasure is patrol (mortar base-plate patrols). It is not enough to use different types of surveillance on likely firing positions; it is necessary to patrol the area irregularly, avoiding patterns and predictability to avoid being killed in an ambush. If all else fails, one must rely on TTPs. If the mortar is fired, it is necessary to mitigate the effect, get blast protection, and don personal protection. All this saves lives; it is important to train on alarms and attack drills. As mentioned, it can also be necessary to harden bases.

On one occasion, the IRA built an 8,000-pound device that (luckily) got bogged down in a field during transportation towards the target, which was a certain checkpoint. The bomb was built in Ireland and transported into Northern Ireland with a tractor. A dummy driver was used in the tractor (a technique later used in Colombia). Proxy bomb attacks were also used in Northern Ireland against bases. In one such attack, a man was strapped to a vehicle and forced to drive it—a form of involuntary suicide. The target, a checkpoint, survived due to prefabricated concrete blast panels. The blast panels worked so effectively that the blast was directed to nearby houses and damaged them.

The IRA used a number of different VBIEDs. On one occasion, they decided to attack Romeo-15, a heavily fortified checkpoint manned by the British Army. They did so in an unusual and clever way. They put a bomb in a transit van that had its wheels replaced with railway running wheels. They used a digger to put the van on a railway track that passed the checkpoint; they ran the van downhill, using the emergency lights on the van as a marker. A command wire was connected to the bomb, trailing the back of the van. The device functioned, but luckily no one was killed.

In the early days, while driving along the roads in South Armagh, we got hammered by various IEDs hidden under the roads in culverts and other hidden places. What did we do? We started to increase the armour on our vehicles. Sometimes armour does not do the job due to the sheer size of the bomb, and in these cases we took to the air, using helicopters instead.

The IRA used several devices. One was typically detonated to slow down vehicles and/or lure our response teams into the area. A second device was usually the big one. To combat this, in 1990, certain procedures were introduced to minimize the risks, such

as stopping at a certain distance. The IRA knew that of course and would place devices in likely locations they determined based on watching our routines.

How do we best counter the threat? Do not underestimate the value of information operations and psychological operations. They can be very useful tools. Hotlines can be useful as they give the public an opportunity to provide the security forces with information without exposing themselves to risk. We received very useful support from scientific advisers (SIAD) with close ties to academia and research in terms of development and advice on countermeasures to the IRA's pace of research and development. For all intents and purposes, they functioned as our own "in-house" technology experts.

Intelligence-based counter-terrorist searches can be rewarding and effective. It is important to know what tools and signs of bomb making to look for. Teach your people what to look for—and that is component part recognition. It is necessary to be able to identify the individual components in a certain mortar system. This can lead the security forces to the network that produces and/or transports the devices into the area of operations. Finding the people who built a certain device is of the utmost importance.

During the early years, the searches were not intelligence-led but instead had the character of "smashing the place up" and were to a large degree counterproductive. This type of behaviour actually worked as a recruiting tool for the IRA. This changed during the late 1970s and early 1980s when a more intelligence-based approach was introduced, and the searches were conducted systematically as opposed to kicking in the door and just trashing the place. This new approach was a lot more effective, produced better results, and made more efficient use of personnel and resources.

Other search methods that were useful included the development of "high risk" teams; every infantry company assigned a search advisor who knew what to look for and had the training to carry out effective search operations. This was important and useful. In addition, the Winthrop theory turned out to be a lifesaver. In general, when looking at components of devices that have been hidden, there has always been some form of systematic approach used by the person hiding the components. If I asked you to hide something in a certain bush and then tell your friends where the material is hidden, you will use a certain approach in order for them to find the right place, usually in the form of a permanent marker of some kind (such as a rock) that will not disappear and can be identified at night.

The Winthrop theory really taught the guys on the ground that the guy hiding components would look for something permanent, visible by day or night, and easily accessible. Winthrop was a systematic theory for conducting a search as effectively as possible, and it was a great way to reduce the threat in terms of prevention.

Ground-penetrating radar was used in Northern Ireland to some effect. Bodies buried under concrete floors can be found with this technology. This can be a very useful technology for search operations under the right conditions.

A typical search operation in Northern Ireland usually looked like this: Some sort of

intelligence was received, most likely from the police. We would usually start with an over flight with a helicopter looking for “ground signs”: signs of disturbances such as recently disturbed earth. Then we would send in a search team, which used Winthrop theory when conducting their search.

The role of intelligence was extremely important. In the early days, this was done by using overt surveillance, cameras on the border, and recording patterns of life and routine activities in the communities. Over time, the gathering of intelligence became more technical.

Intelligence can be collected in many different ways. It can be done using human intelligence (HUMINT) in the form of informers and infiltrators, by using different types of surveillance, by analysing various electronic signals (signals intelligence, SIGINT), by analysis using various types of photography (imagery intelligence, IMINT), and finally by analysing the weapons and weapons systems used by the opponent (weapons intelligence, WIS).

Patrolling is an important countermeasure and a useful tool for gathering intelligence; it can be used to look for mortar base-plate locations while working as a form of deterrence and to keep opponents guessing. A snap vehicle checkpoint (VCP) can be used in combination with patrolling. A snap VCP involves entering an area without a pattern being formed, stopping suddenly and deploying troops, setting up a roadblock, checking the traffic, and gathering intelligence (such as who drives where, or who travels this road). This is an important form of deterrence; snap VCPs keep the opposition on their toes, keep them guessing. This is because permanent checkpoints are easy to avoid; a snap VCP can be deployed anywhere, anytime.

After an attack or a bombing, it is important to be first on the scene and search for important signs and components left behind by the opponent. Such clues can lead to the perpetrators, which can help us take out the network behind the attack. These finds are great intelligence. If the security forces are “search aware,” then it becomes possible to find the people who are making the devices. That is a significant blow to the opponents’ network. Awareness is very important; the importance of dissemination information relating to IED components is extremely important and useful.

Never forget the F3EA cycle: find, fix, finish, exploit, and analyse. Find something, try to fix the bomb-maker through surveillance or other means, finish that person with non-lethal or lethal means (arrest or termination), exploit the location and search for tools and forensics, and analyse all the data. There is no use analysing your finds if you do not disseminate it thoroughly. Get the result out there to your colleagues and partners, and it will generate more finds and arrests.

What then are some of the “Lessons Identified”?

- Intelligence is key.
- Dissemination of intelligence is important.

- Exploitation
- Every soldier is a “sensor” and should be used as a tool to gather intelligence.
- Do not underestimate the usefulness of psychological operations and deception.
- Consider consequences of fielding new counter-measures. Be careful, and think of how you could be guiding the terrorists’ threat projection.

6. “PIRA and operational decision-making: a view from the inside” (ex-PIRA member)

I am from the southwest region of Ireland. It is as far away as one can get from Northern Ireland and still be on the island of Ireland. When I was a young teenager in the 1960s, the Northern Ireland civil rights movement (NICRA), which was inspired by the civil rights movement in America, was active. During this time, French students rioted, and for some reason, Cuba seemed to fit well in my life at the time.

I came from a very traditional Irish republican background: my dad had been to jail, my uncle had been to jail, my aunt had been to jail, my grandmother had been to jail, my grandfather had been to jail. At that stage - in the mid 1960's - Northern Ireland seemed to be at peace with itself. Everything that had to do with the IRA at that time seemed like something from the past. To many people my age, it seemed old. The republican struggle seemed to be over. The IRA's nationalism and Catholicism seemed outdated. In the summer of 1969, instead of wondering theoretically about what was happening in other parts of the world, it looked to us as the revolution had come home to roost, more or less where you lived. For many people like me, history became reality, quickly and brutally.

When I was 15, I joined the IRA in Kerry, which is located in southwest Ireland. It was a pretty easy process. I simply approached someone whom I knew. He said, "I'm not surprised to see you." It was a traditional, old-style republican area. The republican tradition was strong. After the War of Independence with Britain, there was a split within the republican movement. What followed was a relatively brutal civil war. In the area in which I grew up, it was particularly brutal.

As a result, I grew up with two sets of memories: (1) the British occupation and the realization that Britain still occupied a piece of Ireland and (2) the people who had lost the civil war. Most of them went into constitutional politics in Ireland, but a small group did not. This group was revered to some degree. It was a bit like the mafia. This group had stood for their views indefinitely; consequently, they garnered a great of respect. Even if they were irrelevant on one level, they were relevant at another level. In the area in which I grew up, some of these people were respected immensely, in a discreet and quiet way but perhaps not within a normal political framework.

I grew up in a respectable movement. To me, it would have been unfathomable to think that killing a British soldier in Northern Ireland was either a crime or a sin. In 1969, the IRA split into two factions: the Official IRA and the Provisional IRA. The Official IRA drifted toward Marxism. Based on instinct and intellect, I probably belonged in the Official IRA. However, looking back, I saw the Provisional IRA as a broader popular front. If I was going to fight a war to defeat the British, it seemed to me that I needed a broader framework than the one that the Official IRA could provide. The Provisional IRA could provide that framework, as it had people who were nationalistic and political.

In addition, some of them were extremely religious, whereas others completely lacked a political background.

I was still at school when I joined. My first experience involved individuals' coming from Northern Ireland to join the IRA. Most of them were young men who were coming down for training. We established training camps in relatively mountainous areas. I had contact with a lot of young men from Belfast. One year earlier, those men would have been sporting Manchester United or Liverpool FC clothing and listening to pop music. In a short span of time, everything changed. They were not people who had grown up with conviction or read revolutionary literature. Most of them wanted to strike back against the loyalists who attacked them. These loyalists had the assistance, or encouragement, of the British state.

As a result, a deep reservoir of bitterness developed quickly. Nevertheless, the IRA's organization and structure from the 1930s survived. Even though the organization was small, it had a constitution and a charter that remained intact. Further, it had a command structure, standing orders, and a tradition. It also still had guns hidden that worked, even though they had been stored for a long time.

One of my first jobs was to collect approximately 27 machine guns, revolvers, and rifles from storage. They were old, but they were still lethal. They had been stored and held by the IRA since the 1940s. There were some angry, disaffected young men. A group of older people waited for this moment to arrive and could provide an ideology, a structure, and a way to get rid of the humiliation that the younger men were striving to overcome.

Trainings in the early days were based upon British Army training manuals and IRA training manuals that had survived for 60 years. Much older people who were active during World War II and the Border Campaign resurrected and led the training sessions. They taught the new IRA recruits how to make homemade explosives. A large reservoir of knowledge already existed in 1969 into which the Provisional IRA could tap. I did that for a couple of years, with the odd mission of stealing explosives and ammunition from various places.

At one point, after being active for a few years, I was making a bomb, which exploded at my parents' house. I was arrested and spent six months in jail when I was 17. When I was released, I re-joined the IRA and started to train people again, this time for the IRA's general headquarter (GHQ) staff. The staff consisted of a number of older, more experienced people who ran the organization on a daily basis. We set up relatively large training camps, training 40 to 50 people at a time over one or two weeks. They came from all over Ireland and Northern Ireland.

At that time, the IRA started to develop its first mortar systems in which I trained people. I took some time away to manufacture mortars. Next, I went to a place near the Irish border where I was in charge of an IRA bomb factory for approximately four months. We manufactured two tons of explosives each week Monday through Friday. The explosives were transported into and distributed to various parts of Northern Ireland. All of the explosives were fertilizer-based.

In 1974, I was sent to Northern Ireland. I took part in a rocket and mortar attack on a police and Army base in County Tyrone in which a young, part-time soldier lost her life. In addition, several other soldiers were injured. Over the following months, I participated in a lot of activities, including bombings, shootings, and armed robberies. At that time, I was fully involved in the IRA and stopped living at home. I lived in other people's homes or in fields. In August of that year, I murdered a detective inspector in what was then the RUC Special Branch. Being from southern Ireland, I had a romantic and stupid view of Northern Ireland in which Protestants and unionists did not really fit because it would have destroyed a lovely story.

Upon arrival in Northern Ireland, I began to find out that the young people in the Provisional IRA did not truly understand what the British government was about. Their enemy was really the unionist population on the ground that they could see and to whom they could relate. They were the people who they thought had attacked and victimized them. Except for part of the IRA leadership and perhaps some more thoughtful people, London could have been a million miles away. So, I was not particularly happy having shot a man who was a part-time farmer and a part-time policeman.

The local Northern Irish IRA members saw this man as a planter and someone who had come to Ireland hundreds of years ago and taken land from the Irish. I was coming from a completely different background in which the main goal always had been to drive out the British Army.

Over a period of time, I began to have some serious doubts about what I was doing. I was going to ask a person whom I knew well about the doubts that I was having about it all. I used to stay in a place just across the Irish border in the Irish Republic in which possibly a dozen IRA people were staying at any given time. One evening, as I was making tea, the news came on. A policewoman had been killed in a bomb explosion in Bangor. It turned out that loyalists, rather than the IRA, were responsible. The person whom I was going to ask the question turned to me and said, "I hope she's pregnant, and we got two for the price of one." He later served as the IRA chief of staff for a long time

Shortly after that experience, I left the IRA. I travelled to London, England, started a small business, and got married. Over that period of three or four years, I thought about what I should do about it. Eventually, I returned to Ireland, went to work for the Irish government, and re-joined the IRA. Specifically, I worked undercover for the Irish authorities for approximately six and a half years.

I am going to go back a bit now and build upon it later. I am fascinated that some of the other contributors have said that the IRA was a relatively small organization. On one level, it was fairly easy to grasp. Nevertheless, there were so many engines, arguments, and "making it up as you go along" going on in there in relation to the politics and the equipment. Different factions stood against each other. Who had the upper hand varied over time. It was a little bit like democratic governments at another level. The British government could be a Labour government with its own view of

Northern Ireland and be replaced by a conservative government with different ideas about Northern Ireland. The IRA worked the same way when it came to internal politics. That is, there were different leadership factions that sometimes had influence, whereas sometimes other people had influence.

When I re-joined the IRA, no one was particularly surprised to see me back. They viewed my time away as a leave of absence. Re-joining was not difficult. At that time, it was a much different organization. In the early 1970s, it was a fairly ordinary mass movement. Given that 8,000 people went to jail for republican-related crimes during the troubles, there were a lot of people involved.

Gradually, as the police began to take more of a role in counterterrorism in Northern Ireland, police primacy was restored in 1975. The police learned a lot of lessons. In fact, everyone learned lessons. Slowly, the wider aspects of the IRA campaign started to be contained. The IRA became more professional and needed fewer people. It drew on expertise. Its security on many levels was tighter. It began to prioritize people for jobs and use quality control when manufacturing bombs and equipment in its engineering department. However, all of the ideological differences remained within the IRA. It was never an organization that developed a cohesive political ideology.

When I started to understand it again, I eventually obtained a job in the Republic of Ireland. I was in charge of the IRA in the Southern Command, which mostly completed support and backup tasks for the IRA in Northern Ireland. It gave me insight into the organization. I was also a member of Sinn Féin's national executive. The IRA used to have an Army Convention at which people came together to elect the leaders of the organization. It took place once in 1970 and again in 1986. It was difficult to get so many people together for security reasons.

At the convention, the first thing the present delegates did was elect an executive, which consisted of 12 people. Those 12 people chose a chief of staff and the Army Council. The chief of staff chose the GHQ staff, which basically consisted of the chief of staff, who functioned as the chief executive, and his adjutant, who was responsible for keeping the political people in touch with the military people. The quartermaster general looked after and was responsible for the weapons supply as well as the import of weapons to the country. He made sure that the volunteers had the right type of equipment and weaponry.

There was also a director of training, director of finance, director of intelligence, and director of engineering. The director of training sometimes ran four IRA training camps in the Republic of Ireland simultaneously. He sometimes had 10 people working for him and 10 full-time training officers. They had to have houses to live in and food to eat.

Further, they always had to have open contact. This person would go to the GHQ and sat at meetings with people like Gerry Adams, and he might be 20 years of age, and you might forgive this person for thinking he was a very important part of the organization. But in reality he wasn't really, he could be replaced by a hundred different people. There were a number of people, such as Sean Hughes, who never attended a

GHQ meeting, but played a much more important role in the organization than the director of training. These two people lived in different realities.

To outsiders, this organization must have seemed a bit strange. If someone was willing to give information in Sean Hughes' neck of the wood, this person might know absolutely nothing about the IRA GHQ staff; you would have someone else coming in and giving information on the GHQ staff. You must forgive people for being confused about who actually had real centre power within the IRA. The difficulty of understanding the IRA was made even more difficult due to the fact that the IRA operated in two different countries and that the British state used two different organisations to counter the IRA; the police and the military.

So on one level you had the police on Northern Ireland who had some, but no real access and complete understanding to what was going on in the south (in the Republic of Ireland) and in addition to this, the police had to try to coordinate their efforts with the British military and military intelligence, which was easier said than done.

In Northern Ireland, the British authorities dealt with people getting killed. If they recruited someone as an agent or an informer who was an ordinary member of the IRA in Belfast with no grasp of the organization as a whole, no strategic role, and no real importance, he might have become part of a group that attempted to kill the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland the next week. Now, he was suddenly hugely important to you. Another person who could tell you what the GHQ staff was doing and had the trust of the entire organization would never be part of that operation. So, you would have to take up two jurisdictions immediately and think of an organization that was multi-layered and difficult to analyse and understand, even if it was small.

So, I was on the IRA's GHQ staff and Sinn Féin's national executive. I was close to all of the relevant people. However, there was a century-wide gap between the six men who actually ran the organization and me. Although I knew them, they held all of the secrets, including where the bodies were buried, tightly among themselves. Even though I was right beside them, in some aspects, I was a million miles away.

When they began to develop their own weaponry, they used their own people. The people possessed some basic skills. They were also creative and careful; after all, the master bomber is just someone who is neat and tidy and knows some stuff about electricity. The not-so-master bomber would disappear for obvious reasons. In the rural areas of Ireland, people grew up on farms and knew about farm machinery. They had lifelong experience in adapting and improvising daily. As a result, they could put the van on the railway line. These people designed, built, and transported the huge bombs to London. The welding was done by men who had spent their entire lives fixing and repairing farm machinery and cars. They knew how to do these things because of their upbringings.

The main reason that this organization failed was the lack of imagination. I cannot remember the exact words of Che Guevara, but he said something like "where even the slightest resemblance of democracy exists, guerrilla warfare will fail." The majority of people in Northern Ireland viewed themselves as deeply British. Most people in the

Irish Republic at that stage did not care much about Northern Ireland one way or the other; they simply wanted it to go away.

The IRA leadership was made up of intelligent people, but they were caught up in something that they did not know how to end. A serious effort to stop the conflict was made in 1974 with the Sunningdale Agreement; there you already had the Good Friday Agreement. For different reasons, the Sunningdale Agreement failed. In addition, the leadership ended up with the same or a worse deal 20 years later. It is important to keep in mind the attacks and retaliation, resentment, and sense of power that these types of activities produce. Eventually, the IRA leadership tentatively began to explore the possibilities of negotiations again.

Adams and McGuinness decided that they were going nowhere. They believed that it was time to engage with other people. The IRA could keep the struggle going, as it had tons of weapons from Libya. However, it was essentially at a fairly low level. Gradually, it was being strangled by British countermeasures. Therefore, instead of doing what the IRA had been doing in the past, which was to continue until it literally was beaten, for 20 or 30 years, it tried to make a virtue out of weakness. The IRA came to a point where a lot of people were tired, people were looking for a way out of it, and they exploited that very much.

An awful lot of people talk about Gerry Adams's great strategic ability – sometimes in the mid-seventies, I am being a bit disparaging now, I have known Adams since I was 15-16 - sometime in the mid-1970s, he read a book or two and discovered that there was something called a “long war.” He got this idea from Vietnam without recognizing that the Vietnamese conflict was truly an international conflict that involved North Vietnam, the old Soviet bloc, and China, which supported FNL and North Vietnam. So, Adams decided that the IRA was going to fight a long war on the backs of his own people from a small part of South Armagh, a part of west Belfast, a part of Derry, and a part of county Tyrone.

The moral and human cost of that policy was that those areas expectedly had the highest rates of tranquilizer consumption, suicide, mental illness, broken homes, and family violence. It was nonsense for him to believe that these people could fight a long war when the odds were so stacked against them. He asked them to carry the burden with little possibility of success just because he had read a book. Some say that “if Gerry hadn't created the long war strategy, the IRA would have been defeated a long time ago.” It is impossible to know.

For Adams, McGuinness, and a handful of other people, the Good Friday Agreement has been good. It landed them good jobs and brought them political power at some level. However, there were costs. I believe firmly that these men have yet to pay the cost politically.

So, you get to a certain stage when you are looking at this organization. I will give you an example. When the IRA planted the bomb in the Brighton Hotel that almost killed Margaret Thatcher, members of the IRA Army Council had to meet and discuss the attack because they had to consider the political and organizational implications. Seven

people voted on whether the attack would be carried out. Only Adams and McGuinness voted against it because they thought that such an attack would provoke a major security crackdown by not only the British government, but also the Irish government. Further, they knew that if they killed a sitting British prime minister, the British government would not negotiate with them because the British people would not tolerate it.

Even though they were against the attack, it happened. In spite of everything, this organization had a strange sense of complete authoritarianism and, to some degree, democracy that it inherited through its constitution. The bizarreness of this executive – the last executive had been elected in 1970 – sixteen years later that same executive is still there, split 6-6, that is 6 pro Adams and McGuinness, and 6 against them. Even 16 years later, they are completely hampered. Each faction is trying to get support for its ideas, only to be vetoed. Some of them were in their seventies and played no part at all.

Nevertheless, if someone wanted to change something fundamentally, he needed their support. Most of the time, attempts at change were unsuccessful. Once they got rid of that, in the mid-eighties, at a new convention held in 1986 when they replaced the people in the executive with people whom they trusted, they (i.e., Adams and McGuinness) could initiate what they wanted to do more effectively. Further, it became possible to move in a more political direction.

The long war strategy essentially failed. They managed to kill one soldier in Belfast in eight years. Yet, the IRA sent consistent internal messages that the war would be won or lost in Belfast. Well, if you killed one British soldier in eight years, you were losing this war. The other fascinating thing was the sense of how much it was driven on. The long war meant that the IRA started to pace itself. As a result, intelligence and law enforcement agencies were able to get on top more because they could pace themselves as well. Certain patterns began to develop. Sometimes, sections within the IRA avoided carrying out attacks that could have been successful because they started to pace themselves.

Gradually, people began to be released from jail. They got married, started families, and settled down. They had to live. They began to take holidays. In 1974, people in the organization were out in the fields all of the time. Now, they are living at home. It is all different. Over time, that long war slowed down. People started to dream of ordinary jobs and lives, which created some problems internally. The IRA finance department was known to be engaging in fraud and scams. People who worked in the IRA finance department were assumed to be a bit better off than most other people in the IRA. It was not that it was rampant, but there was enough of it to begin to undermine its sense of purpose.

The fundamental drive behind it all was probably bitterness. I was once sent over to England to kill Prince Charles and Diana in London. It is hard to see how their killing would accelerate the unification of Ireland. We tried to work out the thought process behind it and realized that the only explanation and reason must be revenge. In this

case, it was revenge for the IRA hunger strikes. So, the motivation was bitterness. A lot of the killings in Northern Ireland, particularly in rural areas, such as Fermanagh and Tyrone, were incredibly incestuous. The killer was often someone who lived a few hundred yards away. It was frequently someone who the victim knew, incredibly dark and incestuous, and that. All of these things kept a lot of that engine going.

When members of the IRA began to try to think in broader and more political terms, they quickly realized that the organization had support among the people in a different way than Sinn Féin did. Adams was right about two things. First, the IRA did not really produce soldiers because it was an organization comprised of disaffected young people, the vast majority of whom would probably never apply to join the military. Second, the IRA always had more support than Sinn Féin. This is interesting because it goes to the heart of the acceleration of the support for Sinn Féin once it entered into the political arena.

I stayed at a lot of houses during my years with the IRA. Some of them were the homes of SDLP supporters. They supported the IRA quietly because of the great hidden darkness. A lot of hate and darkness never rose to the surface. They would go down to the polling booth and vote SDLP, but they would not call the police if they saw someone from the IRA with a gun in the streets. There was a long tradition of secret IRA support among people who voted for constitutional parties.

When members of the IRA started to think about changing their attitudes toward politics in 1984, Adams was shot in an assassination attempt by loyalists. He still had his arm in a sling when I met him. There were some European elections when we met that Sinn Féin contested. He came to the area in which I lived to speak and stayed in my house that night. We talked until four in the morning. I said to him, "If in 1972, when the local parliament was abolished by the British government, if we had called a cease fire then, would we not be in a much better position today?" He replied, "We can't rewrite history." However, he went on to say, "We are treading water. Margaret Thatcher won't negotiate with us, and our support base will not tolerate us negotiating with Margaret Thatcher. When Thatcher goes, business might be resumed again, but not until then."

Several years later, I was in Holland talking to a person from a British intelligence agency. I did not tell him about my conversation with Adams. Nevertheless, he said, "If we didn't have Margaret to deal with, and Gerry didn't have to deal with some of his people, we have no doubt we could do a deal with Gerry." That is essentially what happened. So, people like Adams and elements of the British government had a certain common purpose. It does not mean that Adams was passing on information to the British; the opposite was true. However, it was in the British government's interest to make sure that Adams was not killed or jailed. They identified someone who seemed to be able to come to accommodation with.

During that period, the internal politics of the IRA went back and forth. There was a series of attempted coups in 1984. If they had been successful, we would be living in a completely different world. They were the people about which this person had been talking when he discussed what would happen if Adams did not have to deal with some

of his people. He did not really have to deal with them, as they quickly died. As previously stated, there was a common purpose.

7. Law Enforcement and Intelligence: The View from the Front (ex RUC Special Branch officer)

A lot that has been written about Northern Ireland has been written with a rather limited perspective. Academia has access to open-source material and sometimes other forms of information that I would suggest are not completely reliable. There is a degree of revisionism going on in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland, and if the revisionists get their way, the police and security forces will be regarded as war criminals instead of the very honourable people that they were, who kept Ireland from anarchy. That is something that I feel very strongly about, and I only have to be given half a chance to tell 'the greatest story never told': what the RUC, in particular, and the security forces in Northern Ireland have achieved against a very formidable enemy.

What I am going to talk about in general terms is the RUC Special Branch approach and model for dealing with terrorism. This model is effective; it has been proven to be so—not just in bringing the IRA and other groups to a standstill, but in the fact that its utility is being exported elsewhere. The US government is applying this model in Iraq and other places around the world. The following themes are important to keep in mind.

Human source recruitment

There has been a very, very strong and definite emphasis on human sources recruitment in global practices of terror prevention. If you look at any other theatre in the world with a conflict—take Iraq or Afghanistan as an example—and how much sophisticated equipment that the world powers have at their disposal, you see that they still couldn't find a guy who was living in a cave. Human source intelligence will find that cave, human source intelligence will find that guy, and then they will hopefully recruit him or produce information that will lead to his arrest.

A proactive and intelligence-led approach

The pro-active and intelligence-led element was fundamental in what we did—and what we do—to such a degree that it is the policing model in the UK and perhaps in the rest of the world. The foundation of this approach is making the best use of your resources; it's the cheapest and most effective way for you to do business.

Importance of the criminal justice system

Despite our critics in Northern Ireland talking about 'shoot to kill polices', in any training with firearms I have ever done, you certainly don't train to wound someone. If you feel that you need to use kinetic force, you are certainly trying to kill them. Had there been such a policy in Northern Ireland, I can say with a good amount of certainty that they would have lost it in two months; we knew who the bad guys were and where they were from. The difficulty was in getting evidence and putting them before a court. That

is something that those in the early days got massively wrong with internment, detention without trial, and denying people due process.

These people ended up in Long Kesh or the Maze prison in 1971; think of Guantanamo Bay 2012. You can't lock these people up and deny them what they are due, and that is their day in court. You don't win all the cases. If you live in a democracy, that's the price you pay.

Intelligence collection

Northern Ireland is a very, very small place: 1.7 to 1.8 million people. The conflict was carried out on the republican and loyalist side by a very small amount of people. What really confused things morally was the intelligence collection in the early days; there were too many noses in the intelligence trough—RUC, the military, MI5—with competing agendas that were not necessarily moving in the same direction at the same time. As mentioned earlier, the security policies changed a number of times.

Northern Ireland has been unique in many aspects of British policing in that they were the only police force since their creation that were routinely armed and had access to emergency legislation; the great British bobby did not have that, much to their regret. So the police had primacy for national security since the creation of the state until 1969, when the military was brought in, and effectively from '69 up until '75-'76, when there was martial law in everything but name. So the general commanding officer of the military had the final say in anything relating to national security. This was not a good move, and a lot of things that nationalists and republicans take issue with can definitely be laid at the feet of this change in terms of responsibility.

Now, the security service, or MI5, quite rightly has had responsibility for national security since October 2007, in line with the rest of the United Kingdom. This trinity that you see here (RUC, the military, and MI5) was not a marriage made in heaven. Anyone in here from an intelligence background will tell you that knowledge and intelligence is a scarce commodity; it is to be guarded, to be protected.

'From need to know to need to share' was not on the agenda at the time, and the sharing and dissemination of intelligence sometimes is not as timely and effective as it should be. Things did not always go according to plan; people lost their lives as the result of professional and agency jealousies, and that is certainly an unfortunate truth within the conflict of Northern Ireland.

Primary intelligence sources: human intelligence and technical surveillance

Certainly from my experience in the Northern Ireland context, far and away the greatest emphasis was on the human side of business. Terrorists were relatively easy to recruit. My experience is that there are very, very few of them who had any really deep drive or ideological commitment. A lot of them, in my experience, were very much like me except that they were born in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was peer pressure, it was excitement, it was all sorts of things that got them mixed up in this—what was a

very legitimate nationalistic expectation turned into going one step further and breaking the law and trying to kill people.

The human side of business was very effective in that certainly the IRA was penetrated at every level. And I think that in many respects—I may not get a lot of agreement—but in some ways informers brought the IRA to that position and realization that ‘we can’t win this war’. Conversely, they could not be defeated, so you are in this conundrum: how long do we let our own people suffer? How long do we prolong the agony?

Most people were affected in Northern Ireland, where—being a small place—you don’t have to go too far to get to this direct fact of terrorism where your family or extended family are being directly affected. The people who suffered most were in the nationalist ghettos that the IRA ruled with an iron fist and were subjected to security force harassment and repressive behaviour. That is an undoubted fact.

Experience and expertise developed over time, and we were able to build up an intelligence picture as a result of terrorist legislation. It was possible to stop people, search them, and question them. There was a lot of surveillance, which was very useful when generating an intelligence picture. It made it so much easier for me to get information on you as a target, to approach you. Not in your daily life, but on your holiday. I become your best friend, and after a few weeks I have to spoil the good news and tell you who I really am and what I am doing. That was very, very effective: approaching IRA suspects in particular when they were out of their normal area of operations and had let their guard down. Some very important recruitment was made that way.

Everyone can be recruited, and we went to some extraordinary lengths to get alongside our targets. That was the biggest problem in Northern Ireland: getting close enough to the target. As I said, everyone can be recruited, and one thing sticks in my mind. When a very senior member was asked to work for us, he just said ‘what took you so long?’ He said he was just there, waiting to be asked, and it would have saved us a lot of trouble if we had known that.

The technical side of things developed into a massive entity, probably in the last twenty years. I can’t say much due to the Official Secrets Act, but if you think of your own knowledge and access to technology in terms of smart phones and computers and other things that can be done, prior to that it would have been unthinkable. That is another dimension to our weaponry. That said, we were always two steps behind the bad guys because we are limited to legal means. Legal, necessary, and proportionate—these things don’t apply to the bad guys.

Special Branch

Policing in Northern Ireland was conducted through the vast majority of the conflict by dividing Northern Ireland into three regions: the North region with a Special Branch headquarter in Ballykelly, the South region with a Special Branch headquarter in Portadown, and a Special Branch headquarter for Belfast in Castlereagh. All of these stations in the each region had a Special Branch presence, and as I said earlier, the

green army and the blue police were our eyes and ears in the streets 24/7. Informers, by their very nature, can suffer from selective amnesia; they choose to tell you what they want to remember and forget what they think is not important or can incriminate them. Our eyes and ears in the streets, – the soldiers and the policemen on patrol, were factual, people we trusted in and placed great reliance on.

All of these regional headquarters gave us a facility, a one-stop shop to feed intelligence into, to analyze and exploit it in quick time. It was a really, really effective way to do business in Northern Ireland. As I said, you look at that map, and you can drive from one end of the country to the other in any direction in heavy traffic in under two hours. That's the type of coverage we were working with.

We had intelligence, surveillance, and specialist firearms teams; we were good to go after a piece of information, whether it was search and seizure, substitution of explosives, or whatever (i.e. access to in-house expertise and a quick reaction time). It was a very, very effective way of doing business. In two of these locations, Castlereagh and Portadown, we had holding centres after 1977, which were effectively conveyor belts for interviewing terrorist suspects.

During my time in Special Branch, I would spend probably half of any given month sitting behind a desk, trying to recruit a guy that we had arrested under terrorist legislation. Was it repressive? I would say no, because we usually had very strong intelligence on a certain person's involvement with terrorism, and that was a great enabler for us to get where 'X marks the spot'. We had the opportunity to talk to suspects for seven days. What we also found during that period was that threats, coercion, and violence, were totally counterproductive. There is nothing you can do to reinforce that stereotype more than to treat a terrorist suspect the way he expects to be treated.

Certainly there were cases where people were subjected to threats and injuries, but in my personal experience, it was totally counterproductive. What I found to be more useful and beneficial was trying to get these people to help me: 'how would you like to help me save lives?' No matter what your political slant is, that is very difficult to argue with. The communities these people were coming from were suffering; there were people being killed and maimed on a regular basis. That argument—wanting to help—was something we used to great effect.

Tasking and Coordinating Group (TCG) process

The TCG process was created in Northern Ireland and has later been replicated throughout the United Kingdom for policing. It has also been rolled out elsewhere, particularly in Afghanistan. It coordinated and prioritized the decision-making process in relation to intelligence. People could go to TCG, not just with operational matters that needed to be exploited but also with speculative operations when they wanted a 'pattern of life' done on a target, or, shall we say, 'premises entered and inspected' to see if what we were being told was actually there.

This enabled every agency to have a seat at the table in TCG. It got us away from 'the three noses in the through' and working towards our own ends. It was definitely recognized that the RUC had the veto on the decision-making process, because the RUC were the only agency who had executive powers; the British military could in wider terms make arrests, but the security services could not then, and cannot now, make arrests.

This was a very, very important process, and if you go back to those three regional HQs, there was a TCG in each of them as well. So it really did speed things. Yes, all the intelligence finally made its way to HQ, that was much more important than this facility's ability to get its eyes on the intelligence first; the main mission was trying to do something about it to save lives.

Northern Ireland intelligence priorities: political, strategic, and tactical

It was touched upon earlier on that there were many people being killed so the tactical side was very important. What we were trying to do was to establish a 'security first' mentality, stop people getting killed, and get some breathing space, and then maybe something else could happen. The strategic side was very, very nice to know; the IRA changed their tactics a number of times over the years from killing local police officers to sending members of the British military home in coffins in great numbers. And then they decided that wasn't going to work because it was in the confines of Northern Ireland, so they took their expertise not just to Great Britain in terms of massive commercial bombings but also to killing British military officers in places like France, Belgium, and Holland to show us that they could fight this war anywhere we had military personnel.

When it comes to the political side of things, I think it is important to say that Special Branch does not have the right to gather political intelligence. But as has been mentioned, we are not talking about conventional political parties here. Every terrorist group in Northern Ireland had a political wing that acted as their mouthpiece. And the mouthpiece of Sinn Féin arose because it was an integral part of the IRA; it didn't exist alone. It was very, very important, and it was only until the later stages—when I was involved in some of the elements of decommissioning—when it became evident that there was a very clear political message emanating from within Sinn Féin that had to be dealt with very, very carefully in case the peace process was derailed.

Investment in quality people and training

What we found throughout the conflict is that our problem was quite straightforward in that the terrorists seeking to kill and murder members of the population were from our own communities.

We did not have a cultural, linguistic, or nationalistic issue in general terms. These guys lived down the road from us. In order to be effective against them, we found that it was really important to invest in quality training and get quality people. Selectivity was common throughout my experience in Special Branch—over 85% of the applicants applying for intelligence, surveillance, or specialist firearms training were unsuccessful.

It was the best of the best that you were taking, because it was the most contentious and important area of policing in Northern Ireland.

The chances were that it was the most junior officer in the place who would take that phone call at 23.40 on a Friday night from one of our tried and trusted friends saying, 'I got a bomb in the car, what do you want me to do with it? I've been told to take it to the city centre'. There is no time to ring the boss, to call in a meeting at HQ; this guy wants an answer. This was in the pre-mobile phone days; its one coin in the box, this guy is taking his life in his hands, ringing you for directions. So if you don't select and train and pair the right people, you are not going to do well at this.

We did not always get it right, but I can say categorically that we got it right more times than we got it wrong, and that is simply because we got the right people. Success? Four out of five terrorist operations were prevented through the use of intelligence. Some of the IRA members would say that it was nine out of ten, and I won't argue. Even the head of MI5 has certainly mentioned similar figures without reference to the RUC—that was the type of success rate we enjoyed. However, unfortunately the state is not judged by its successes but by its failures, and in Northern Ireland there were 3,600 people killed for something, and this has gone full circle and returned back to conditions that were accessible all those years ago. To me, that is an indictment on what's happened.

Northern Ireland is still very much a divided society. It takes very, very careful and considered policing. I think that is something the PSNI have done right. If anything, from an old-timer's perspective, it has become so risk-averse that they're trying to knock operations on their head all the time now instead of trying to run with things. It is very, very easy for outsiders to say 'why weren't these people arrested?' The question is in trying to get a successful connection with evidence versus moving in too early and losing everything, possibly costing an informer's life. That is a very, very difficult decision to make.

8. Lessons Learned from Negotiations/De-Commissioning: “Talking to Terrorists” – Part I (leading UK based academic)

I am going to talk about the dominant interpretations of Northern Ireland. What I am going to reflect upon is how Northern Ireland as a conflict, over a long period of time—30 to 35 years—is perceived both by the participants and by others around the world, and how it may or may not be a model for other areas around the world. I think one of the questions in the last contribution started to allude to that. So I hope I can put some flesh on the bones, obviously, for talking to terrorists, talking to the IRA, and also talking to the Taliban.

Even in the last ten years we had ‘talking to Hamas, engaging with Hezbollah’, the issue of how to deal with the ETA or the remnants of ETA, and a very different model with Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers, after some 10 to 15 years of stop-start negotiations. So this issue is on the table if you like.

What I am going to say is that you cannot separate the operational realities that we heard about—from bomb making to IRA strategy and ideology—from the political process. But what I am going to try to do is put those altogether, trying to come off with a sort of balanced over-all interpretation of what happened in Northern Ireland.

What I am about to say, normally, in academic contexts, would strike a discordant note. It is an unpopular thing to say and it gets me into trouble with other academics—saying some of the unspeakable things that academics are hardly allowed to say. For me, it is very important and admirable that people look to Northern Ireland as an inspiration, and a subject that can possibly provide lessons for Palestine, Iraq, East Timor, and Sri Lanka. And I don’t see any harm in that. But what I would say is that the lessons all around the world look plausible, move seemingly in the right direction but oftentimes simply do not work. There may be lessons, but the lessons all around the world are slightly misleading ones.

What I want to go over first, as a sort of caveat, is this: many of those who are selling these lessons I respect. Others who did not work for the peace process have ended up re-inventing themselves as conflict resolution experts. What follows then is a critique of the ‘peace-making industry’, if you like, but from someone who has supported the peace process all along the way. I think that is important for me to say that. Otherwise people get confused about precisely which lessons I’m trying to draw.

There are lots of exciting things about the Northern Ireland story that translates very well around the world. It has a certain appeal and a certain glamour. Actually, the last two presenters you heard at this meeting spoke of some of the lesser-told tales, that of an individual involved in an organization who did not follow it through to the sort of

political path it ended up with—the tale of the informer. And also the tale of law enforcement. That is a story never told.

So those two are examples of lesser-told stories that played an important part in the establishment of a peace process. Stories that are told more often are the intelligence officer's tale; the reporter's story of Northern Ireland—I'm thinking for example of Peter Taylor, a pioneer reporter. The Nobel Peace prize winner's tale; the rejectionist turned post-facto peacemaker—I'm thinking of Jeffrey Donaldson, who was opposed to David Trimble's work during the peace process and wasn't involved in the peace process but, subsequently, has sold it around the world. We also have quite a few well-intended but peripheral players' tales, such as Monica McWilliams.

Also very intoxicating is the intermediaries' tale: those who were involved in links with IRA and British intelligence officers right from the 1970s and became known in the 1990s; those links are of course another very important tale. I could go on forever about those various different stories. But there is a common narrative about Northern Ireland that is sold around the world. And it is not the story that you have heard during the last two contributors' remarks. So, just very briefly, that common understanding of the Northern Ireland peace process goes as follows:

First of all, in Northern Ireland, the British state faces an organized threat from the Provisional IRA, and they demand a British withdrawal from the province. The British state tries to defeat the IRA through security policy but it fails to do so in terms of pure defeat, and the two sides reach a stale-mate. Second, after three decades of stasis, the recognition of this stalemate is accepted by all sides, and the British government changes its course and decides that rather than trying to defeat the terrorists in the IRA, it will negotiate with them. The third lesson drawn out from that is that this made possible an inclusive peace settlement, a settlement defined by the fact that it brought in the extremes on both sides of the political spectrum who had engaged with and involved themselves in political violence.

So, obviously the key lessons that we heard have been learned from conflicts around the world. They are as follows. Firstly, states should be prepared to talk to terrorists. Lines of communication should be maintained at all times. Secondly, talks should not be predicated on rigid preconditions. That is a very important issue that I shall come back to because such preconditions discourage terrorists from taking up the process of dialogue. Too many preconditions on decommissioning, for example, prevent a process of negotiations. Thirdly, in a conflict, a genuine sustainable settlement can only be reached by the accommodation of the extremes, even if that risks undermining the moderates.

Above all I want to question this influential and often-stated idea—mentioned in connection with Afghanistan during the last five years—that the key solution, and the only solution that led to peace in Northern Ireland, is that you must set aside your scruples and at the end of the day talk to your enemy, talk to terrorists, engaging with the extremes. This is the only real variable in a genuine peace process. In terms of Northern Ireland, this is what changed in the 1990s and the British state's approach

toward Northern Ireland; there was a shift from this unwinnable military war, and both sides put aside their moral scruples for the greater good and got around and did it.

Now, let me be emphatically clear about what I am saying: this is a part of the story. It is a part of what happened, but other things have been forgotten. On the one hand, forgotten; on the other hand, wilfully neglected, which also forms part of the story. First of all, the idea that 'talking to terrorists' was somehow an innovation of the 1990s as a sign of a new phase in the British approach is probably one of the most misleading of all commonplaces about Northern Ireland. When it was part of a wider and clearly defined strategy, talking to the IRA was an important piece of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

My own view is that it was very much the correct thing to do strategically, probably morally as well, certainly in 1993 and probably before that. But only in the conflict when it was a sign of drift, when it was a symptom of exhaustion or part of a simple desire for extraction from the problem—and that impulse existed at the highest level in the British state, and I am including the Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson—in the early and mid-1970s when it was part of that process, the act of 'talking to terrorists' strengthened the IRA's perception that it was their violent campaign that was delivering results. That 'one more push', if you like, would force the British out of Ireland or at least force the British to negotiate with you above the heads of the existing population.

It also had a broader radicalizing effect. We haven't heard much about the loyalist community so far. It encouraged violent loyalists; it encouraged them to mobilize, use a more radical and outspoken rhetoric, and increase their campaigns. You could see this occur in various moments in time. And perhaps most important of all—this act of talking to terrorists: its headline banner. Talking to the IRA, risked undermining more moderate, reliable partners for peace that you need in any genuine peace process.

Often I think those are set aside and forgotten. When I say moderate partners I mean, on the one hand, moderate nationalists. I mean moderate unionists. But also crucially, I mean the Irish government, a critical player during the entire conflict that was very much opposed to, or suspicious of, the British government going behind its back to negotiate with elements of the IRA for a host of very good reasons, and was very upset in terms of what that meant for its own role in any future Northern Ireland settlement. And of course it was very worried about the IRA as a threat towards its own state.

Now again, there are many Afghan parallels, so I can keep coming back to them. That instinct to talk on behalf of the British state was there all the way through the violent history of Irish nationalists going back to the 1890s. The instinct of the British state to reach out to violent Irish nationalists has always been there. It is not something new. Likewise, the instinct for our violent Irish republicans to talk to the British state has always been there. OK, so this is a story going on and on. And the idea that some sort of transformational approach happened in the 1990s on behalf of either side is actually very misleading.

Let me say something also about the origins of the peace process more broadly. Let's not forget that it is a peace process and not a process of bilateral negotiations between

the IRA and the British government. Because when we talk about this issue, obviously, the talks with the IRA are seen as the most exotic, most interesting side of the equation. They are only one part of the story. And I think it is very easy to forget that reality.

People tend now to view the peace process in Northern Ireland through the prism of the latest manifestation of the deal, which is that hardliners on both sides created the final deal or settlement. People tend to think that was the process—to bring the extremists. Again, that is part of the process, but it was simply not the absolute priority at the onset of the Northern Ireland peace process. There was that commonality of purpose, to use a phrase used earlier.

Sinn Féin involvement was muted, was preferable, was ideal. But it wasn't the deal or the end of the peace process. And the settling trend in terms of a broader peace process—to borrow a phrase from Tony Blair—had a momentum of its own. To adapt that phrase a bit, Tony Blair tells Sinn Féin at a crucial moment in negotiations that the settlement train is leaving the station, 'Either you get on it or you are going to miss it'. Now, I am not sure Tony Blair would actually let the settlement train leave the station without Sinn Féin or the IRA. The point is there was a settlement train, which they were not on until the last critical moment in that peace process. Crucially, in so far as their involvement was measured or allowed, it was on certain, rather important, and restricted preconditions.

The preconditions were there in the peace process. Many impatient people thought they restricted or slowed up the peace process. My own view is that they were actually crucial to the eventual deal, they provided a foundation and some sort of momentum. Constructive ambiguity about those preconditions was actually a rather helpful device. So moving the goal post slightly was a useful thing to do. To use phrases like 'exclusively peaceful democratic means' is what the IRA was supposed to commit itself to before it got involved in the peace process.

Well, obviously, that has ten or twenty different interpretations. So that constructive ambiguity is important. But the existence of some rules of conduct mattered. And here I think is a broader international lesson that is completely forgotten—the existence of some rules of conduct, of preconditions to keep the show on the road, are absolutely crucial. And in fact it is very hard to run the show at all without them.

Decommissioning here is a striking issue. Decommissioning was regarded by some people at the time as a red herring. Why ask the IRA to decommission? Keep on complaining about this when we have a chance of a settlement? 'This is slowing things up, this is becoming a difficulty'. The IRA decommissioning becomes a very slow, sore issue after the process. One thing it does is to undermine the moderates who negotiated the deal in the first place. But, without decommissioning, Northern Ireland would be a much more unstable place now, no matter where those guns were. I think that is a fair point to make.

Let me make a boring point then, which is that the key component in Northern Ireland was that normal politics—that's really the essence of what I am trying to say—by which

I mean democratic and peaceful politics, was preserved and protected by a number of things. On the one hand, by the RUC, by maintaining an attritional war against the IRA. Whether or not the IRA was defeated or not is another question entirely. And also by the process itself. The process was protected and preserved by normal, democratic politics.

So this is less exotic than it seems, but it is also perhaps more complex than it seems when it has been sold around the world. You might in fact say that it's actually two peace processes running side by side in the early 1990s, and that we have forgotten one of them. We have talked lots and lots about the negotiations between the IRA and the British government. The stop-start negotiations, which were always likely to be important. But at the same time there have been multiparty talks going along with all the constitutional parties from the early 1990s, and these were becoming critically and increasingly important.

Crucially, when it came to a crisis—which it did at a series of moments—the government prioritized the latter talks. They prioritized the moderates, to talk to the moderate parties. They kept the moderate show on the road at the expense of Sinn Féin. That is something that is often forgotten. That achievement should not be underestimated.

The second point—my last big point—is another one that is all-too-often ignored. To some it is a controversial point. Ultimately, if talks between the British government and the IRA became part of the success story in 1998, it is only when it became clear that the rules of the game changed. What do I mean by that? In the broadest terms, the terms for dialogue between the British government and the IRA were set by the war that preceded them. You must understand that process.

It is becoming increasingly clear by the early 1990s that the IRA has been heavily infiltrated by informers. It was also affected by spectacular defeat, subject to an attritional criminal justice process, which kept their volunteers off the streets. Kept the volunteers from planning and carrying out attacks. There is also—what became clear in the 1990s, which hasn't been mentioned yet—a sectarian dynamic to this conflict that has become much clearer than ever before. Loyalists were taking the war to the IRA much more aggressively than they had ever before. They started to out-kill the IRA in Belfast for the first time. That is an absolutely crucial dynamic.

So the internal sectarian dynamic of the conflict was changing as well. There are plenty of people who will say that the IRA was never beaten. There are others who will say that the IRA was completely beaten. I think there are better ways to reflect on that. That said, at the risk of making myself unpopular among academics, you just have to acknowledge hard power at play, creating the conditions for successful soft power in Northern Ireland. And that soft power hasn't been fully understood even in itself. It is not simply this bilateral process in negotiations.

There is a difference between different types of hard power and different types of soft power that is important to reflect upon. In the early period of the Troubles you had a disastrous application of hard power. I think everyone agrees on that. It was reactive. It

was public. It was confrontational. And it was built on bad intelligence. That is the crucial difference. But once you had, particularly after 1975, a reorganization of the security apparatus is good hard power if you like. It's behind the scenes. It's precise, based on good intelligence, and above all—and this is the crucial difference. It separates the target, the terrorists and the terrorist organizations, from the community in which they operated much more effectively than it had ever done before. That is the key shift in terms of hard power.

I would go as far as saying that there is a collective amnesia about that reality for two reasons. One is that it suits the IRA. The second is that the British state does not simply want to address the dirtier things it did, or more difficult things it did. The British state—look at the memoirs of Tony Blair and the chapters on Iraq and Northern Ireland—I know which chapter he wants to talk about more often. That is an absolute crucial consideration. Northern Ireland is the 'good news story', seen as a soft-power triumph in comparison to other, murkier elements that went on. Those murky elements are things he doesn't want to talk about.

The ambiguity, the things that are hidden by the Official Secrets Act are absolutely crucial in considering what happened. It is understandable, it is highly politicked that the British government does that. It does not need to tell the IRA that it was beaten. But what I would ask you to do is to challenge the idea of a stalemate, the very notion of a stalemate. Maybe it was a stalemate of sorts, but what did that stalemate actually mean?

Just in terms of the broader lessons as a final concluding thought—first of all, moderates were prioritized in creating this condition for settlement. We haven't really talked about them yet. There is a triumph of politics here. The security war was also important, and these two things need to be married together and balanced together. But in terms of the international lessons— Hamas, the Taliban – the crucial differences is between – an obvious one – if you talk to terrorists who are on the crest of the wave compared to talking to terrorists who believe that their momentum has been disrupted, and that their usual means of proceeding requires them to find an alternative path. I think that is the key lesson. Maybe a basic one but often forgotten in terms of Northern Ireland.

9. Lessons Learned from Negotiations/De-Commissioning: “Talking to Terrorists” – Part II (leading UK based academic)

I am going to echo some of the things we have already heard today. The previous contributor discussed mostly the British state’s approach to the peace process, I am going to slightly shift the focus and discuss why Irish republicans engaged in the peace process, what they wanted to achieve, and conclude with why there remain some dissident republicans and a dissident republican threat. I will start by talking about what the IRA actually wanted and how they formulated their strategy.

IRA Objective I: Looking toward the Brits.

The IRA’s strategic vision from the beginning was always based upon a view that it was going to be some form of negotiating with the British state. From early on, at least from 1971, the Provisional IRA mentioned in their propaganda that they were going to ‘fight the British to the conference table’. That continued to be the case throughout the conflict. There were basically four arguments for this.

Firstly, as Danny Morrison once stated, ‘the objective was to eliminate every option the Brits had, until they were forced to come round to talking to the republicans.’ Secondly, the purpose of ‘armed struggle’ was according to Tom Hartley to keep the ‘pot boiling’ until the British agreed to talk on IRA terms. Thirdly, as expressed by the republican newspaper *An Phoblacht* in 1987, the IRA had the idea that ‘if and when the situation presents itself, for negotiating a settlement...the IRA’s attitude will be that it will talk and fight at the same time.’

Fourthly, there were some historical and international influences; the IRA thought they made a mistake in the 1920s when they stopped fighting during negotiations with the British, and in addition to this, they had studied the Paris peace talks between the U.S. government and the North Vietnamese and drawn the conclusion that it was necessary to keep up the pressure, just as the Vietnamese did in their struggle against the Americans. Until a negotiated solution had been achieved, the IRA aimed at upholding ‘a republican veto’.

IRA objective II: A ‘republican veto’

A number of reasons existed for IRA to hold out a ‘republican veto’. Firstly, IRA military activity was designed to prevent ‘normality’ while fostering instability. Secondly, Sinn Féin electoral activism aimed to garner support and ‘republicanise’ the populace, particularly in the 1980s. Thirdly, it was designed to prevent settlement based on ‘power-sharing’, with SDLP endorsement, which was the British solution from about 1972 onwards.

The British state had from the early 1970s always looked for a power-sharing settlement in which some form of nationalist party and a unionist party would work together in the local government. The 'Long War' strategy ensued, and the 'republican veto' was to be imposed by a strategy known as the 'Armalite and the ballot box'; this choice of strategy would according to the IRA both force Britain to the negotiating table on republican terms and allow the IRA to fight while negotiating.

Campaign failure or why IRA strategy failed

A number of factors contribute to the failure of IRA strategy; they could not escape the reality of Northern Ireland. Firstly, the policy of "Ulsterisation" and 'normalisation' confronted the IRA with a conundrum they could not solve. Secondly, the British 'sectarianised' the war—but only in the sense that makes manifest the fundamental nature of Northern Ireland (i.e., Northern Ireland was already a sectarian, divided society). Thirdly, the IRA campaign generated a loyalist backlash, especially in Belfast and East Tyrone as pointed out by Kevin Toolis in his book *Rebel Hearts*. Fourthly, the conflict was according to Gerry Adams eventually reduced to 'Irish people killing each other'.

A decline in IRA's 'Armed Struggle' was also due to the fact that eight out of ten IRA operations in Belfast were thwarted; very few British soldiers were being killed, and there was a surge in loyalist violence. In addition to this, SAS exacted a heavy toll on IRA in East Tyrone; 21 volunteers were killed during the period 1987-92. Finally, the IRA was heavily infiltrated, and they were aware of this problem; during 1992, the IRA killed more alleged 'informants than it does British soldiers'. The IRA leadership realized that its ability to carry out attacks were decreasing and was being ground down in key areas of Northern Ireland. In other words, the military side of the republican veto was not working, and neither was the political side due to a political failure by Sinn Féin, as the following numbers illustrate.

- 1983—British general election: 13.4 % of the vote; Adams reelected for West Belfast
- 1984—European election: 13.3 % of the vote
- 1985—Northern Ireland local elections: 11.4 % of the vote
- 1987—British general election: 11.4 % of the vote (Adams reelected)
- 1989—Irish general election: 1.2 of the vote
- 1991—Irish local elections: 0.7 % of the vote
- 1992—British general election: 10.0 % of the vote (Adams defeated)

The significance of this was that Sinn Féin was not in a position to prevent the kind of power-sharing solution it most feared; it was unable to put the SDLP under enough pressure and prevent them from going into some form of political settlement. The republicans became more and more concerned that they would be increasingly isolated and marginalized. Yes, they could still carry out some form of violent campaign, but they would be pushed out to the margins of political life. For this reason, we can conceptualize the peace process as 'escape hatch' from a campaign that was failing.

However, the republicans were not abandoning their objectives by engaging in the peace process. They were aware of their military weakness, but at the same time, they believed that they could utilize negotiations and the political process to conduct 'war by other means'. They entered that process confidently declaring that the IRA was an undefeated army; this notion was very important to them, making it possible for them to advance their objectives through the political process. They believed they could achieve political power on both sides of the border by giving up the armed campaign. This development was encouraged to a significant degree by the British state. These factors helped uphold the notion that the campaign ended in a stalemate, something that suited both the IRA and the British state.

The dissidents

Lately, dissident republicans have emerged and are challenging the peace process. Since 2007, we have seen a definable dissident campaign. The following are only the significant attacks.

- Constables Jim Doherty and Paul Musgrave are shot and seriously injured in Londonderry and Dungannon, respectively (November 2007).
- Constable Ryan Crozier is seriously injured by under-car bomb near Castlederg, County Tyrone (May 2008).
- One hundred fifty-pound landmine attack on PSNI officers near Rosslea, County Fermanagh; only partially explodes (June 2008).
- Two officers receive minor injuries in attack on PSNI foot patrol in Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh (August 2008).
- Two hundred twenty-pound 'beer-keg' bomb found in hedge in Jonesborough, South Armagh (September 2008).
- Three hundred-pound car bomb found in Castlewellan, County Down; thought to have been destined for Ballykinler Army base (January 2009).
- The murder of two soldiers, Patrick Azimcar and Mark Quinsey, and the wounding of four other men at Massereene barracks in County Antrim (March 2009).
- The murder of Constable Stephen Carroll in Craigavon, County Armagh (March 2009).
- A 600-pound bomb left near Forkhill in South Armagh (September 2009).
- The wounding of a woman in east Belfast by an under-car bomb; intended target thought to be her partner, who is a PSNI dog handler (October 2009).
- A 400-pound bomb partially exploded at the HQ of the Policing Board in Belfast; same day as attempted attack on PSNI officer in Garrison, County Fermanagh, thwarted by undercover police (November 2009).
- The serious maiming of Police Constable Peadar Heffron by under-car bombing (January 2010).
- The murders of Gerard Staunton in Cork and Kieran Doherty in Derry (January and February 2010).
- The detonation of a 250-pound car bomb outside Newry courthouse (February 2010).

- A fifty-pound car bomb that exploded outside the regional HQ of MI5 in Belfast (April 2010).
- One 200-pound car bomb that narrowly failed to detonate outside a County Tyrone police station (Aughnacloy); and another that did explode outside Strand road police station in Derry (August 2010).
- Booby-trap bombs left under the cars of a serving police officer (Kilkeel) and an army major (Bangor) in County Down, and another that targeted a civilian security worker in County Tyrone (Cookstown) (August 2010).
- The partial detonation of a bomb outside a school in Lurgan, County Armagh, which injured three children (August 2010).
- A 200-pound bomb that exploded outside the Ulster Ban in Derry (October 2010).
- A bomb attack on the 'City of Culture' offices in Derry, to be repeated later in year (January and October 2011).
- An attempted 'double tap' bomb attack on police officers in North Belfast (January 2011).
- Bomb left at Londonderry courthouse (March 2011).
- Murder of PC Ronan Kerr in Omagh (April 2011).
- Five hundred-pound bomb left on A1 Belfast-Dublin road (April 2011).
- Bomb attacks on homes of retired forensic doctor and PSNI officer in Claudy; followed by attack on police patrol in Newtonabbey (September 2011).

Does this herald the return of the Troubles? I would say no, but realism is required in viewing the seriousness of the threat. According to the United Kingdom's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, the threat level emanating from dissident republicans are judged to be 'severe' in Northern Ireland, and 'substantial' on the British mainland. It was classified as 'Tier One' security threat in a recent National Strategic Defence and Security Review. It seems to be far more than just the 'death throes' of the Provisional IRA campaign and has arisen against the backdrop of mostly functioning political institutions.

The principal reasons for the dissident emergence are threefold. Firstly, the official exit from the stage of the Provisional IRA was both unpopular and opened up space—both practical and political—into which the dissidents could potentially move. Secondly, Sinn Féin's endorsement of the PSNI and entry into government with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) was anathema to many republicans. Thirdly, the failure of Sinn Féin in the southern Irish general elections seemed to suggest that the grander strategy had gone off the rails.

Perhaps the experienced disillusionment and departure are best captured by a statement of Tony Catney, founder of Republican Network for Unity: 'The thing that was called a process [towards Irish unity] has no movement in it at all. It is completely static and by definition, it is not a process. It is now an institution. And it is an institution that is firmly based on the premise that the "Six Counties" really is "Northern Ireland", and really is part of the United Kingdom'.

10. “Securing the Peace in Northern Ireland: Lessons For Other Conflicts” (German academic)

My task was to present a broader analysis and discuss other conflicts in order to ascertain whether there are any common themes and lessons to be learned. It is possible to draw broad conclusions from many of the various conflict settings around the world. I was tasked with reflecting on the contributions so far and comparing them with similar cases to which these ‘lessons learned’ can be applied. I am not responsible for the topic that was mentioned in the agenda — I will not provide insight to the Northern Ireland conflict because so many experts have already contributed much to our understanding of the complexity of the situation.

Secondly, I will also try not to make this identical to other cases — each case has a different background, different development, and a different context. What can be done is to reflect on facts and findings, and then to decide whether or not these findings are of interest to the case.

The background to my reflection is, firstly, the bits and pieces that were presented earlier, in addition to a report we conducted on the European Union regarding security transition, some weeks ago, which compared nine cases.— Northern Ireland was one such case; others included Kosovo, South Africa, Colombia, etc. What I can say is that some of the things I have heard indeed align well with some of our findings, but there are also some conclusions that I would like to present.

What I would like to start with is a comment that was made stating that hard power plays a role and hard power matters. I agree with that; hard power plays a role because it contributes to bringing about the right moment. It was mentioned that terrorist groups become interested in getting into contact first, and engage in talks and negotiations later on. On the other hand, hard power is a significant factor only if it clearly distinguishes between perpetrators and innocent communities. You might bring about effects the opposite of those desired or anticipated if you target civilian communities, which might in the end lead to even more support for armed actions against the state.

Secondly, it was also mentioned that over-militarization might prolong the time frame until the right moment occurs for negotiations. I agree with that as well; this can be easily observed in many places, such as Afghanistan. Narrowing down the strategy to a military solution neglects the need for developing political contacts and a political framework, which are necessary to attract the stakeholders and engage them.

Another idea that was mentioned was that there are more unified - joint positions - in insurgencies. It is much easier to find a common enemy than to agree on political alternatives once the process of negotiations has started. This is precisely what makes negotiations so difficult: all of a sudden, many different factions and alternatives must be dealt with and it is imperative to understand and find out whom to talk to, who has

the legitimacy to talk, and who the most relevant actors are/ This is a very important task that requires a cyclic, dynamic analysis, and there is a need for intelligence and law enforcement to keep pace with the changes in these organizations (i.e. terrorist groups and insurgents).

One of the most difficult challenges face in such situations is that there are completely different perceptions of what can be achieved through negotiations and what should be done. Usually, if you start negotiations, you have an agreement regarding the procedure, and you also agree on the subject. What is often neglected is the fact that negotiations are not intended to bring about a compromise from the very beginning for the participating parties; it is in reality a shift of tactics in order to achieve the same goals through different means.

That brings about an understanding of negotiations that is not simply 'a better way of dealing with the conflict.' It is a different method, with different means. However the task remains the same: to achieve an understanding of the root causes of the conflict and the strategic context. This is necessary in order to find an approach which in the end pays off for all participants.

It was earlier mentioned that decommissioning is important. This is very true, although one must also recognize the importance and symbolic value of arms, especially for non-state actors. It gives them a leverage they otherwise would not possess. Often negotiations start with demands on the renunciation of force, which, as we have discovered through our research, is hardly acceptable for those groups. They see their access to arms as the only instrument they can use to put pressure on the state.

In some cases, the state is not necessarily the good guy; in some cases, the non-state actors — insurgents — might have a more legitimate case than the state. What has to be done is to find a formula that keeps this symbolic value of arms in place while simultaneously opening up the spectrum for commissioning. This might be in the form of mixed patrols, as in Kosovo, for a transition period.

Now, moving on to the more important political challenge: is it better to start the process top-to-bottom or bottom-to-top? It is of course much easier to start from the top. It has rightly been said that what has been done in the past might not yet have been paid by Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, and that is very true. Once the leaders of an insurgency group start to negotiate and enter political life, they will be perceived much differently as they will not be able to deliver what they have promised.

The issue of keeping intact the legitimacy of representation during the transitory period is truly a difficult challenge. One should not rule out in the long run the possibility that the leader may be removed or replaced by other persons during the transitory phase. That connects to what was previously mentioned about new actors - dissident or breakaway factions - that enter the scene and might gain more legitimacy, and can perhaps even claim greater legitimacy regarding representation.

The second point is about collective grievances. If you accept that at the beginning of the process of an insurgency, it is a great deal about grievances. The question is what

happens to them during a transitory phase? Is it just eliminated? Does it change? Will frustrations emerge in the political process? Does this issue have to be taken into account? The question really is about what happens at the bottom of these organizations. We have experienced in some cases — such as Nepal — problems with rehabilitation schemes implemented by the state and the international community. If such schemes do not work out, the frustration will undermine the cohesion of the organization.

Although not previously mentioned, another point is community and local peace building. Is it a top-down approach that just transforms the organization? Or is it instead a community-based approach? I am not well informed about how it worked in Northern Ireland, but there is of course always a risk to the state if the state runs rehabilitation programs on the community level. The state also pays a premium for those who have been radicalised in the past and thus ignores the interests of other people living in the communities, which might result badly for social and political cohesion in the country, for the integrity of society.

The next point is whom to talk to, when to talk, what to talk about, and how to engage. I am convinced that in cases of talking to representatives from non-state armed groups, it would be an ill-advised approach to focus solely on what is understood to be the moderates. This is the case precisely since the moderates do not necessarily represent the mainstream of the organization. One should already have a concept of how to deal with the different factions within an organization and how to develop a negotiation format which allows for interaction with representatives from several factions within the organization, including the so-called radicals as well as the pragmatists.

I think it is also necessary to create a sustainable negotiating format. Should one talk to people who do not know anything about negotiations, who only know how to fight? That is a prescription for disaster. It is important to build the capacity for negotiations, and though it is difficult it is very important. What is required for those who represent non-state armed groups in negotiations is an understanding of their own objectives. It is not just entering negotiations because one is pressured to do so, or because it is the right moment. It is also about understanding what can be achieved through negotiations and having a set of realistic objectives. One should not underestimate the risk that people take when they engage in negotiations.

Intra-communal fighting can also be a problem. The counterpart must understand this risk, this dynamic that the opponent is facing back home. Engaging in negotiations is all about trust, and once you do it, you should be serious about it; otherwise it will not work. Another interesting finding is that contrary to what has been said about decommissioning here, we have found out that — at least for the transitory period — it is very important to maintain mechanisms for cohesion and discipline. This means that in order to avoid a kind of fragmentation, this must be done at a very early stage during negotiations.

Another point is that what should be assured is a local understanding of justice, and that this must be taken into account before importing traditional justice mechanisms.

This means that for people on the ground, within the communities — it was mentioned before that perpetrators live down the street — it is important to create mechanisms that provide the opportunity to people living in the community to trust and reflect outside a traditional legal process.

Amnesty has not been mentioned so far but I believe that it is an important issue. It can play an important role but should be made conditional, collaborating with justice mechanisms that mean disclosure of truth and apologies.

Finally, let me conclude with another of our findings. It is important to involve local actors in monitoring activities. It is also important to plan for the timely transfer of oversight competencies to inclusive national policies. This means that transition should be understood as a step within a process, and not as a kind of leverage to dissolve the structure and then later come back to the original policy, which was actually one of the root causes for the conflict in the first place.

11. List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AN	Ammonium Nitrate
ASU	Active Service Unit
ATO	Ammunition Technical Officer
CAB	Records of the Cabinet Office
CB	Citizen Band
CIRA	Continuity Irish Republican Army
CLMC	Combined Loyalist Military Command
CO	Colonial Office
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
CSJNI	Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland
DCAC	Derry Citizens' Action Committee
DHAC	Derry Housing Action Committee
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
F3EA	Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, Analyze
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FRU	Force Research Unit
FNL	Front National de Libération
CAG	General Army Convention
EFP	Explosively Formed Penetrator
GFA	Good Friday Agreement
GHQ	General Headquarter
GOC	General Officer Commanding
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
HUMINT	Human Intelligence

ICA	Irish Citizen Army
ICJP	Irish Commission for Justice and Peace
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IICD	Independent International Commission on Decommissioning
INLA	Irish National Liberation Army
IPLO	Irish People's Liberation Organisation
IR	Infra-Red
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRSP	Irish Republican Socialist Party
LAW	Loyalist Association of Workers
LVF	Loyalist Volunteer Force
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MRF	Military Reaction Force
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NUM	New Ulster Movement
OC	Officer Commanding
OIRA	Official Irish Republican Army
OSF	Official Sinn Féin
PD	People's Democracy
PIR	Passive Infra-Red
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
RCIED	Radio/remote Controlled Improvised Explosive Device
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
RIR	Royal Irish Regiment

RIRA	Real Irish Republican Army
RSF	Republican Sinn Féin
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
RUCR	Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve
R&D	Research and Development
R&R	Rest and Recuperation
SAS	Special Air Service
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
SIAD	Scientific Adviser
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
TAOR	Tactical Area of Responsibility
TCG	Tasking and Coordinating Group
TPU	Timing Power Unit
TTP	Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
TUAS	Tactical Use of Armed Struggle
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UDP	Ulster Democratic Party
UDR	Ulster Defence Regiment
UFF	Ulster Freedom Fighters
USC	Ulster Special Constabulary (B Specials)
UUC	Ulster Unionist Council
UVBTIED	Under Vehicle Booby Trap Improvised Explosive
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
UWC	Ulster Workers' Council
VBIED	Vehicle Born Improvised Explosive Device
VCP	Vehicle Checkpoint
VO	Victim Operated

WIS

Weapons Intelligence

12. Glossary

An Phoblacht	The official newspaper of Sinn Féin.
Armalite	Refers to civilian versions of the M16 assault rifle. ¹
B Specials	A reserve police force in use between 1920-1970.
CH timer	Central heating timer. Used as a mercury tilt switch.
ECM	Electronic countermeasures.
EOD	Explosives Ordnance Disposal.
F3EA cycle	Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, and Analyze.
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
Fenians	Term from the 19 th century for the Fenian Brotherhood and the Irish Republican Brotherhood.
FNL	Front National de Libération or National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam.
Gelignite	Blasting gelatin. Invented by Alfred Nobel in 1875.
GFA	Good Friday Agreement. Also known as the Belfast Agreement.
GHQ	General Headquarters.
H-bomb	Hydrogen bomb.
HUMINT	Human intelligence. HUMINT is usually divided into two basic categories; clandestine HUMINT (e.g. spies, informers, infiltrators) and overt HUMINT (e.g. activities of State Department personnel).
IED	Improvised Explosive Device.
IMINT	Imagery Intelligence. The collection, interpretation, and dissemination of intelligence via satellite and aerial photography.

Internment without trial	Arrest and interment without trial of individuals suspected of being involved with terrorism, primarily Irish republican terrorism.
Ireco	American manufacturer of detonators for the civilian market.
Long Kesh	See “the Maze” below.
The Maze	Her Majesty’s Prison Maze (also known as Maze Prison, The H Blocks or Long Kesh). A prison in Northern Ireland that was used to house paramilitary (both republican and loyalist) prisoner during the conflict in Northern Ireland.
MI5	The British agency responsible for domestic security and counterintelligence. Not to be confused with MI6 (Secret Intelligence Service, SIS), which is responsible for foreign threats.
MP	Member of Parliament.
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.
OIRA	Official IRA, sometimes referred to as ‘sticks’.
Operation Banner	The operational name for the British Armed Forces to Northern Ireland 1969-2007.
OSF	Official Sinn Féin.
PETN	Pentaerythritol tetranitrate. Sometimes referred to as PENT, PENTA, TEN, corpent, penthrite, or nitropenta. It is a rather powerful high explosives.
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army.
PIR	Passive infrared.
PM	Prime Minister.
Provisionals, Provos	Nicknames for the Provisional IRA.
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland. It is the successor of the RUC, which was renamed and reorganized as a part of the Good Friday Agreement.
RCIED	Radio-controlled Improvised Explosive Device.

RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary. The official name of the police force in Northern Ireland between 1922-2000.
SB	Special Branch. A unit within the British police responsible for issues of relevance for national security. The first branch of Special Branch was formed in 1883 to counter the Irish Republican Brotherhood.
Semtex	A specific and potent type of plastic explosives invented and manufactured in former Czechoslovakia.
SIGINT	Signals intelligence. SIGINT can be broken down to two fundamental components; communications intelligence (COMINT) and electronics intelligence (ELINT).
Sinn Féin ties to the IRA.	A political party founded in 1905 with very close ties to the IRA.
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party.
Six counties	The six counties that constitutes Northern Ireland.
Stormont	The parliament of Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Assembly).
Sunningdale Agreement	An early attempt to establish a mechanism for power-sharing in Northern Ireland. Failed due to unionist opposition and a loyalist general strike in 1974.
TCG	Tasking and Coordinating Group.
TPU	Timing and Power Unit.
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures.
Ulsterisation	Primacy of the police.
UVBTIED	Under-Vehicle Booby Trap Improvised Explosive Device.
VBIED	Vehicle Born Improvised Explosive Device.
VO	Victim operated (as opposed to command detonation or detonation by timer).
WIS	Weapons intelligence.

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14. Endnotes

ⁱ See Tim Pat Coogan, *The I.R.A.* (London: HarperCollins, 2000), 3-38.

ⁱⁱ See Adrian Guelke, *Terrorism and Global Disorder: Political Violence in the Contemporary World* (New York: L.B. Tauris & Co., 2006), 230.

ⁱⁱⁱ For an excellent account of the conflict in the context of Irish history, see R.F. Foster *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988). For historical accounts of the conflict since the birth of the civil rights movement, see Tim Pat Coogan *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal, 1966-1996, and the Search for Peace* (Boulder, CO: Roberts Rinehart, 1996) and J. Bowyer Bell, *The Irish Troubles: A Generation of Violence 1927-1992* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993).

^{iv} Michael Collins became a major source of inspiration for Ho Chi Minh and the North Vietnamese military leader Vo Nguyen Giap due to his use of the flying column and his ability to avoid set piece battles with the British. See Ulick O'Connor, *Michael Collins and the Troubles* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 164-168. For more on Michael Collins, see James Mackay, *Michael Collins: A Life* (London: Mainstream Publishing, 1996) and Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins. A Biography* (London: Hutchinson, 1990).

^v See Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA*, (London: HarperCollins, 2000), 3-37.

^{vi} Louise Richardson, "Britain and the IRA," 66. In Robert J. Art, Louise Richardson (ed), *Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007).

^{vii} The actual statement made by the first Prime Minister James Craig, was, "All I boast is that we are a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant State." See *Hansard Parliamentary Debates* (Northern Ireland), vol. 16 (April 24, 1934), col. 1091.

^{viii} Michael Dewar, *The British Army in Northern Ireland* (London: Arms and Armour, 1985), 20.

^{ix} David McKittrick et al, *Lost Lives: The Stories of the Men, Women, and Children Who Died as a Result of the Northern Ireland Troubles* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2008) , 25-29. See also Michael Dewar, *The British Army*, 24-25.

^x Richard English, *Armed Struggle. A History of the IRA* (London: MacMillan, 2003), 98.

^{xi} Different dates are mentioned in the literature regarding the creation of NICRA. English mentions January 29, 1967. Bew and Gillespie mention February 1, 1967. See English, *Armed Struggle*, 91 and Paul Bew and Gordon Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: A Chronology of the Troubles 1968-1999* (Lanham, MA: Scarecrow Press, 1999), 1.

^{xii} Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland*, 3-10. Dewar, *British Army*, 27.

^{xiii} Richardson, "Britain and the IRA", 66.

^{xiv} At least 1,600 Catholic and 315 Protestant families had to leave their homes due to arson, damage, intimidation, and looting. See Martin Dillon, *The Dirty War* (London: Hutchinson, 1988), 9. This was the largest population displacement in Europe up until the wars in the Balkans in the 1990s.

^{xv} Riots in Belfast. Care of the Homeless and Displaced, 29 August 1969. CAB/9/B/312

^{xvi} Dewar, *British Army*, 33.

^{xvii} Regarding the border campaign, see English, *Armed Struggle*, 71-78, and M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?: The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement* (London: Routledge, 1997), 66-72.

^{xviii} Dillon, *The Dirty War*, xxxxi. Dewar, *British Army*, 29-30. One other person was killed by the RUC under unclear circumstances, McKittrick, *Lost Lives*, 36.

^{xix} Dewar, *British Army*, 30. See also McKittrick, *Lost Lives*, 33-41. The RUC's use of force and its failure to carry out its mission, was criticized by the Scarman Report who among other things stated that the use of machine-guns "was a menace to the innocent as well as the guilty, being heavy and indiscriminate in its fire: and on one occasion (the firing into St Brendan's block of flats where the boy Rooney was killed) its use wholly unjustified." See Government of Northern Ireland. Violence and Civil Disturbances In Northern Ireland in 1969. Report of Tribunal of Inquiry (1972), para 3.7.1.

^{xx} Conclusion of the Scarman Tribunal, *Lost Lives*, 36.

^{xxi} Dillon, *The Dirty War*, xxxxi.

^{xxii} Smith, *Fighting for Ireland*, 74-75.

^{xxiii} Smith, *Fighting for Ireland*, 81-82.

^{xxiv} J Bowyer Bell, *The IRA 1968-2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 78.

^{xxv} Smith, *Fighting for Ireland*, 87

^{xxvi} Bowyer Bell, *The IRA*, 70. Regarding the official reasons for the split, see Smith, *Fighting for Ireland*, 86.

^{xxvii} English, *Armed Struggle*, 175.

^{xxviii} Richardson, "Britain and the IRA," 68.

^{xxix} Quoted in Peter Neumann, *Britain's Long War: British Strategy in the Northern Ireland Conflict* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 16.

^{xxx} See, for example, Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Stormont Castle on Monday, CAB /4/1458/15. It is clear that the British government is trying to keep the use of hard power at a minimum. It is also clear that it still had not realized just how many problems some members of the B Specials are about to create.

^{xxx} Alistair Irwin and Mike Mahoney, "The Military Response," 199. In James Dingley (ed) *Combating Terrorism in Northern Ireland* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 198-226. See Also English, *Armed Struggle*, 102-103.

^{xxx} Statement made by Cathal Goulding, at the time IRA's Chief of Staff. See CAB/9/B/312. See also "IRA has Units in the North," *Irish Times*, August 19, 1969, 1.

^{xxx} CAB/9/B/312.

^{xxx} See, for example, "Troops Greeted by Bogside Defenders. B Specials Move Back," *Irish Times English*, August 15, 1969, 1. See also English, *Armed Struggle*, 133.

^{xxx} "Inspired Leak Condemned by IRA," *Irish Times*, December 29, 1969, 11. See also Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland*, 24; English, *Armed Struggle*, 105–108. From here on, I will consequently use "IRA" for PIRA IRA and "Official IRA" for Official IRA (OIRA) to avoid confusion.

^{xxx} Smith, *Fighting for Ireland*, 90.

^{xxx} See English, *Armed Struggle*, 134–140 for a detailed description of this development.

^{xxx} Bew and Gillespie, *Northern Ireland*, 28; McKittrick, *Lost Lives*, 49–51.

^{xi} See English, *Armed Struggle*, 116–119 regarding American gun-running networks and the attitude of the Irish state toward the IRA. See also T.J. English, *Paddy Whacked: The Untold Story of the Irish American Gangster* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 317. According to A.R. Oppenheimer, networks in the United States were by 1973 able to support the IRA with approximately 300 guns a year, A.R. Oppenheimer, *IRA: The Bombs and the Bullets. A History of Deadly ingenuity*, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 155-162

^{xi} McKittrick et al, *Lost Lives*, 56–57.

^{xii} McKittrick et al, *Lost Lives*, 58–59.

^{xiii} McKittrick et al, *Lost Lives*, 60.

^{xiv} English, *Armed Struggle*, 137; Coogan, *The IRA*, 342–343.

^{xv} Tommy McKearney, *The Provisional IRA: From Insurrection to Parliament* (Pluto Press Ireland, 2011).

^{xvi} Ibid: p.107.

^{xvii} Ed Moloney, *Voices From The Grave: Two Men's War In Ireland* (Faber & Faber, 2010).

^{xviii} Jonathan Powell, *Great Hatred, Little Room: Making Peace in Northern* (Bodley Head, 2008).

Terrorism Learning and Innovation: Lessons from PIRA in Northern Ireland

The conflict in Northern Ireland has been one of Europe's most intractable conflicts over the last three decades. Provisional IRA has been a central protagonist to the conflict and is one of the most sophisticated terrorist organizations around in terms of modus operandi, counter-surveillance, terror tactics and technical expertise (development of IEDs) in waging a protracted terror campaign in Northern Ireland and on the UK mainland.

On 17 April 2012, CATS hosted a closed expert seminar entitled 'PIRA – Lessons Learned' with contributions from the leading academics on 'the Troubles' and unique practitioner insights into the dynamics of PIRA political and military strategy, the evolution of its tactical innovation and bomb-making skills, the view from inside the organization and those that battle it from the frontlines as well as the lessons learned in terms of conflict resolution and peace-building.

This report constitute a part of a wider research project – where Dr. Magnus Ranstorp is the principal investigator – supported by the Civil Contingency Agency into terrorist learning and innovation in EU and the consequences for planning and protection of critical infrastructure.



CATS
Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies

Swedish National Defence College (SNDC)
Box 27805
SE-115 93 Stockholm
www.fhs.se