



Washington's Irish Policy 1916-1986

**INDEPENDENCE
PARTITION
NEUTRALITY**

Seán Cronin

John Devoy, the Fenian leader, described Woodrow Wilson as 'by descent an Orangeman' and 'the meanest and most malignant man ever to occupy the White House.'

De Valera was seen by the Americans as 'a master panderer to Irish national longings, the motive force behind the drive towards a Republic, towards economic self-sufficiency, and towards a united Ireland.'

These two quotations from *Washington's Irish Policy 1916-1986* illustrate the mistrust that clouded American and Irish relationships at official level. Washington took its bearings from Britain. It was unsympathetic to an independent Ireland, to a united Ireland, and to its stand on neutrality. In fact, as detailed in this book, the greatest threat to Irish neutrality in World War II came not from Germany but from Britain and the United States.

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SEÁN CRONIN

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ANVIL BOOKS

E
183.8
I6
C7
1987

First published in 1987
by Anvil Books, 90 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2
North America: Irish Books and Media,
2115 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, Minn. 55105

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Cronin, Seán

Washington's Irish Policy 1916-1986:
independence, partition, neutrality.

1. United States — Foreign relations —
Ireland 2. Ireland — Foreign relations
— United States

1. Title

327.730417 E183.8.16

ISBN 0-947962-14-X

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 87-080865
ISBN 0-937702-08-0

Origination by Computertype Ltd., Dublin
Printed in Great Britain by Richard Clay, Bungay, Suffolk

CONTENTS

This book is dedicated to
PAUL O'DWYER
who for more than sixty years manned
the barricades for Ireland and the Irish in
the United States of America

1 The Irish Question and America 10
2 The Cause and the IRA in the New York
3 The Defeat of the 1916 Rising 15
4 The American View of the Rising 17
5 The Irish Question in America and
the IRA 20
6 The Irish Question and the Republic
of Ireland Act 1922
7 The Irish Question and the Partition of Ireland 22
8 The Irish Question and the United States
Federal Government 24
9 The Irish Question and
10 The Irish Question and
11 Appendix: The American Documents 26
Index 27
Bibliography 28
Notes 29

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements 9

Preface 11

- 1 America and the Struggle for
Irish Independence 13
- 2 The Irish Free State and Partition 44
- 3 De Valera and the IRA in the War Years 71
- 4 The Defence of Ireland from Invasion 106
- 5 The American Note to De Valera 131
- 6 De Valera's 'continuous neutrality' and
the Cold War 162
- 7 Seán MacBride and the Republic
of Ireland Act 189
- 8 NATO and the Partition of Ireland 221
- 9 A CIA's-eye View of Ireland and a
Padlock on Partition 250
- 10 The North Explodes 282
- 11 Epilogue: The American Dimension 303

References 329

Abbreviations 347

Index 349

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is based on diplomatic papers in the US National Archives, Washington, DC; the Washington National Records Centre-National Archives and Record Administration, Suitland, Maryland, the Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri, augmented by material from the Public Record Office, London. I am grateful to these institutions, and the United Nations Library, New York, for their assistance and cooperation.

My special thanks to the US National Archives staff, in Washington and Suitland, without whose cooperation the book could not have been written.

I am indebted to Seán MacBride, SC, for material and his recollections of the events connected with the repeal of the External Relations Act of 1936, the declaration of the Republic of Ireland, and the discussions that led to the rejection of the US invitation to join the North Atlantic Alliance as a founding member in 1949.

I am also indebted to Hector Legge, former editor of the *Sunday Independent*, for supplying me with a copy of John A. Costello's memorandum on the circumstances which led him while in Ottawa to announce that Éire would repeal the External Relations Act and leave the Commonwealth — 'the last link with the Crown and Empire.'

The late Peadar O'Donnell gave me important information on the IRA Army Council's decisions regarding relations with the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and possible action against Britain in the event of a European war at that time; as well, he cast new light on the strange case of Stephen Hayes. The late Máire Comerford also supplied me with documentary material on the Hayes case.

I am grateful to Mrs Mary McGarrity Shore, daughter of Joseph McGarrity, for extracts from letters of the late Connie

Neenan, a leading figure in the Clan-na-Gael in the 1920s and 1930s and the IRA representative in America in those years. I must also thank Joe Stynes, a Clan-na-Gael veteran, for sharing some recollections of the same period.

I alone, of course, am responsible for opinions and conclusions.

Some of the material in chapter five on the US note to de Valera in February 1944 was published in the *Irish Times* of 30, 31 August, and 1 and 2 September 1982, while a shorter version of chapter eight was published in *Éire-Ireland* (St. Paul, Minn.) Summer 1985, titled 'The Making of NATO and the Partition of Ireland.'

The term 'Ireland' describes the island of Ireland, but is used interchangeably, depending on context, for the Irish state. The official appellation 'Northern Ireland' is used to describe the other part of the partitioned island of Ireland, and occasionally the 'Six Counties'.

I wish to thank Richard Roche, former literary editor, *Irish Independent*, and Dan Nolan of Anvil Books, for their assistance which is much appreciated.

June 1986

Seán Cronin,
Washington, DC

PREFACE

Of the millions of Irish who found refuge in America the overwhelming majority were seeking a better life, but politics played a part in their decision to emigrate because they were exploited and oppressed at home by a landlord class sustained by British power. The emigrants were politically aware and in the new world they used this knowledge to advance their own interests and those of their native land. Unlike other immigrants in America, the Irish did not cut the ties that bound them to the mother country. They formed what James Russell Lowell, US Minister to Great Britain, called 'the Irish nation in America' in a despatch to the Secretary of State in February 1881. Their children and their grandchildren were also part of this 'Irish nation in America'. In large measure they were responsible for the growth of the Fenian movement which became an important force among the American Irish, while their money and moral support enabled the Land League to bring about a social revolution in Ireland.

The tradition of Irish revolutionary figures seeking refuge in America began with Theobald Wolfe Tone, the founder of the United Irishmen, who landed at Wilmington, Delaware, on 31 July 1795, went to Philadelphia, then the capital of the United States, met the French Minister and made arrangements to go to Paris to seek French aid against the English government. He sailed for France on 1 January 1796 and before the end of the year had organized the Bantry Bay expedition.

Other United Irishmen who found refuge in America — some briefly, others ending their days in exile — included Napper Tandy, Thomas Addis Emmet, William James MacNeven and Samuel Neilson. In 1848, fugitives from the Young Ireland rebellion went to America, and a few years later John Mitchel and Thomas Francis Meagher arrived there after escaping from Van Dieman's Land. In the 1870's, Fenian pris-

oners like Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa and John Devoy sailed for America under a British amnesty. And in 1898, Thomas J. Clarke took the same route after fifteen years in English jails. Liam Mellows, who led the Easter Rising in Galway, escaped to America before the end of 1916.

Patrick Ford of Galway, editor of *The Irish World and American Industrial Liberator*, wrote in September 1874: 'This country is Ireland's base of operations ... here in this land to whose shores English oppression exiled our race — we are free to express the sentiments and to declare the hopes of Ireland.'

Charles Stewart Parnell addressed the House of Representatives on the struggle of the Irish tenants against landlordism, in February 1880, and Éamon de Valera addressed a joint session of both Houses of Congress in May 1964, when he was eighty-two and no longer the spokesman of Irish independence. During the crucial years 1919-20, however, he was given the invaluable opportunity to make America a platform for Irish independence.

This book tells the other side of the story, the Irish case as the US government saw it. No administration supported Irish independence and Woodrow Wilson for one was hostile to the idea. Franklin D. Roosevelt refused to take an initiative on partition although pressed by his Minister at Dublin, John Cudahy, to do so early in 1938. In 1940-1, Roosevelt denied arms to the Irish to defend themselves against aggression. In 1942, he landed US troops in Northern Ireland in order to relieve the British of that onerous responsibility, without bothering to inform Dublin. In 1944, he demanded that de Valera break relations with the Axis and end neutrality.

Five years later, the Truman administration called on the Irish government to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and forget about partition, which the State Department considered to be in the US national interest because the British had provided the Americans with bases in Northern Ireland which would be available in a conflict with the Soviet Union. The United States, of course, was acting as a world power and conducted its 'Irish policy' accordingly. Irish policy was to avoid great-power conflicts — in a word, neutrality.

This play of forces, as the politicians, soldiers and diplomats saw it, is a fascinating story and largely unknown. It is also a continuing story, hence its relevance.

CHAPTER ONE

AMERICA AND THE STRUGGLE FOR IRISH INDEPENDENCE

Some 3,873,104 natives of Ireland emigrated to the United States between 1820 and 1900. The largest exodus occurred in the 1840s and 1850s, during and after the great famine, when 1,694,838 hungry Irish, by official count, fled to America.¹

The immigrants and their American-born children maintained a lively interest in Ireland's politics, blamed England for driving them from their motherland and joined Irish-American societies to articulate their grievances and right the wrongs committed against their people. The Irish adapted easily to American politics; they were trained in Daniel O'Connell's school of agitation for Catholic Emancipation and Repeal of the Union with Britain, and they introduced bloc voting to US cities.

They also learned to petition their national government. On 22 January 1852, a 200-strong delegation waited on President Millard Fillmore at the White House to plead for the release of Young Ireland leaders transported to Australia by the British in 1848-9. Fillmore was sympathetic, but international law forbade him to interfere in Britain's internal affairs, he pointed out. That more or less is the standard answer Irish-Americans still get when they ask the federal government to do something for Ireland.² Britain is an ally of the United States.

John Mitchel, the most popular of the Young Ireland leaders, escaped from Van Dieman's Land — now Tasmania — to America in 1852. He was hailed in New York as a hero. When he announced his intention to press the cause of Irish independence while in America, a friendly journalist took him to one side and advised against such intemperate action. His hosts 'do not mean any affront to the British government at all — they mean to pay you a passing tribute of respect,' the journalist said, and Mitchel should not push the matter too far.³

In early 1854, as Britain and Russia prepared to go to war in

the Crimea, Mitchel went to Washington to put Ireland's case to Baron Stockl, the Czar's Minister. The Irish could strike 'a mortal blow' at England, Mitchel claimed. However, they needed arms which the Russians could supply. The Baron pointed to the map and remarked sadly that the combined navies of Britain and France blocked the Baltic and Black Seas; Russia could not aid an Irish rebellion, he explained. (Mitchel tells the story at the end of his magnificent *Jail Journal*.)

Fenianism began in New York among the Young Ireland exiles of the abortive Rebellion of 1848. Michael Doheny and John O'Mahony sent £90 to their friend James Stephens in Dublin to launch the Irish Republican (or Revolutionary) Brotherhood on St. Patrick's Day 1858. Stephens promised to organize 10,000 fighting men. No more money came because none was available, but the movement grew. In America it was called the Fenian Brotherhood and became a force during the Civil War, when tens of thousands of Irish served in the Union and Confederate armies and distinguished themselves in the battles of that great conflict.

In June of 1866, about 700 Fenians under Colonel John O'Neill crossed Lake Erie from Buffalo, seized Fort Erie, Ontario, and in a clever manoeuvre by night march were in position before a trainload of Canadian militia and British regulars arrived at Ridgway, Ontario. They cut them down. Despite their victory, the Fenians had to retreat to the United States, for they lacked supplies and reinforcements. The federal government arrested their leaders, including O'Neill.

A year after the Fenian invasion of Canada, the various factions of the movement came together in New York and founded the Clan-na-Gael. Under John Devoy, who was amnestied from a British prison in January 1871 by Prime Minister W. E. Gladstone, the Clan grew into a powerful organization. Devoy rescued Fenian prisoners in Australia, and during the Russo-Turkish war, when he thought Britain would intervene against the Czar, followed Mitchel's example and led a Clan delegation to Washington to ask for help from the Russian Minister, who replied that Ireland 'only wanted land reform and some concessions on education', not separation from England. Smarting under this insult, Devoy, in the autumn of 1878, produced the 'New Departure' policy, which urged the Fenians to 'take part in public affairs, obtain control of the parliamentary

representation and of the local public bodies — which later resulted in the formation of the Land League.⁴

‘We do not seek to embroil your government with the government of England,’ Charles Stewart Parnell told the House of Representatives on the night of 2 February 1880, ‘but we claim that the public opinion and sentiment of a free country like America is entitled to find expression wherever it is seen that the laws of freedom are not observed.... The struggle between those who own the land on the one side and those who till it on the other has been a constant one. But up to the present moment scarcely any ray of light has ever been let in upon the hard fate of the tillers of the soil in that country [Ireland].’ The Irish in America backed the war for the land and the funds they contributed helped to defeat landlordism.

The ruling faction of the Clan-na-Gael led by Alexander Sullivan also advocated ‘bloodless terrorism’ by dynamite in English cities, between 1883 and 1885. A memorandum prepared for the British Cabinet by the head of the secret service in 1885 called the Clan ‘the mainspring’ of the Nationalist movement in Ireland, including Parnell’s party.⁵ The IRB opposed dynamite tactics, as did Devoy, who said that ‘bloodless terrorism’ was fine in theory, but Englishmen would die and ‘England, having the ear of the world and control of all the agencies of news supply, would see to it that the world was duly shocked.’ Devoy’s strategy was to make Ireland ‘a formidable factor in the counsels of the world, and an ally worth dealing with in England’s next big war.’⁶

The men who put bombs in English cities and spent years in English prisons under barbarous conditions included Thomas J. Clarke, the first signatory of the 1916 ‘Proclamation of the Irish Republic’. Although Devoy did not agree with the campaign, he defended those who engaged in it. When the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, talked of ‘stamping out’ the ‘vile dynamite conspiracy’, Devoy sent him a telegram (for which he earned a rebuke from Parnell), saying ‘two can play at stamping’.⁷

‘From 1871 to 1916 [the IRB] was maintained almost entirely by moral and material support from the Clan-na-Gael,’ Devoy wrote.⁸ The Clan supplied £600 a year to the IRB, which by 1912 numbered only 2,000 members. The Clan, in the late 1880s, helped defeat an extradition treaty with Britain, a fishing

treaty with Canada and (in 1897) a joint arbitration treaty to settle 'questions in difference' between the US and UK.

In August 1914, Devoy reverted to his (and Mitchel's) revolutionary strategy and discussed an Irish rebellion with Count Johann von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador. Berlin should supply arms and military officers but no money. Devoy did not consult the IRB on these talks but took it for granted that the home organization would make 'England's difficulty ... Ireland's opportunity' according to Fenian tradition.

Devoy told Bernstorff that a rebellion in Ireland would divert a large part of the British army 'from the fighting front on the Continent and that therefore it would be to Germany's interest to help Ireland in her fight for freedom.' The Ambassador 'listened attentively and with evident sympathy,' Devoy wrote.⁹ The German historian, Fritz Fischer, disagrees with Devoy's conclusion. Bernstorff 'feared that such an attempt would give the politically and culturally dominant English element in the United States its chance to prejudice the United States against Germany.'¹⁰ Devoy worked with Captain Franz von Papen, the military attaché, who supported his plan. (As leader of the Catholic Centre Party in 1933 von Papen helped bring Hitler to power and was his Vice-Chancellor briefly.)

Sir Roger Casement was in New York in August 1914 raising funds for the Irish Volunteers. He wrote an article for Devoy's *Gaelic American*, in which he argued that the occupation of Ireland made British control of the seas possible and threatened American commerce in time of war. Casement conferred with Bernstorff and went to Germany in October 1914 via neutral Norway 'to save Ireland from some of the calamities of war,' he told the *Gaelic American* from Berlin in February 1915. In his diary he wrote that he hoped to establish 'a free Ireland, a world nation after centuries of slavery.' It could be done only if Germany won the war of course.

Devoy was the link between the IRB and Germany from 1914 to 1916. He was also the best known revolutionary Irish Nationalist of his time. He said Casement's mission to Germany was to get 'military help for Ireland when the opportunity offered,' to educate German opinion on Ireland, and to organize a military unit among Irish prisoners of war. As Irish envoy, Casement

made a treaty with Germany which Devoy described as 'a historical curiosity.' It stated in general terms how his 'Irish Brigade' would land in Ireland 'to recover Irish national freedom by force of arms.'

There was no Irish Brigade and nothing came of Casement's plans to raise one. About fifty prisoners of war joined. Devoy said Casement 'tackled the work in the wrong way.' Devoy was an expert in this field, for he had organized whole regiments for the Fenians in the 1860s — and nothing came of that either. The Germans could not have landed an Irish Brigade in Ireland at any time between August 1914 and November 1918. Britain controlled the seas.

Forming an Irish Brigade as such meant striking a blow for Ireland, Casement wrote Devoy on 14 April 1915. 'It will be an act in Irish history. Something done, and the future may yet see its fruit. It will have a deep effect on the *national mind*, and will uplift the spirit of our countrymen.'

Devoy was not impressed.

The IRB controlled the Irish Volunteers. A Military Committee to plan an insurrection made all the actual decisions for the IRB. On 5 February 1916, Devoy learned of the decision 'to strike on Easter Sunday, April 23.' Berlin must send 'a shipload of arms to Limerick Quay' *between 20 and 23 April*. The message was sent to Germany. Back came the reply that they could send arms to Fenit in Tralee Bay, but not Limerick, and needed the services of an Irish pilot.

The unravelling of the conspiracy began. A courier from Dublin told Devoy on 14 April that 'arms must not be landed before night of Sunday, 23rd.' The message stressed: 'This is vital.' Devoy despatched that message, too. By then the cargo ship with the arms, renamed the *Aud*, was on the high seas without a wireless or other means of communication.

On 18 April, the US secret service raided the office in New York which transmitted Devoy's messages to Germany. Devoy charged that the communications seized by the secret service were handed over to the British and the result was the capture of the *Aud* and the defeat of the Easter Rising. He blamed President Wilson, 'the meanest and most malignant man' ever to occupy the White House.¹¹ In this instance he blamed the wrong man. The British had broken the German code and

Devoy's 'secret' messages were no secret to British Intelligence by mid-April 1916.

By intervening in Ireland, 'Germany greatly overestimated her strength,' according to Fischer. The Western Front was to be 'relieved by an attack on England's base and ... the British Empire was to be weakened by the detachment of one of its members.'¹² Germany lacked the means to do either.

Devoy and Joseph McGarrity were key players in the drama of the Easter Rising. It was Devoy's third role in Irish history: organizer of the Fenian movement in the 1860s, author of the 'New Departure' in the late 1870s, and intermediary between Germany and the IRB in the 1916 rebellion. He called the Rising 'another chapter in the Fenian movement for Irish independence.'¹³ For Devoy, that's what it was.

Casement returned to Ireland in April 1916 aboard a German U-boat to stop the Rising and sacrifice himself for the cause of Irish freedom. He had grown disillusioned in Germany. The Germans sought only their own ends, he wrote in his diary. He was right of course. All great powers seek only their own ends.

The Germans sent the arms-ship *Aud* with 20,000 captured Russian rifles and 4,000,000 rounds of ammunition, ten machine-guns and 1,000,000 rounds, and 400 kilograms of explosives. Casement complained that the cargo was too small, the guns were no good. 'Well, they were good enough for the Russians to overrun East Prussia with and to drive the Austrians across the Carpathians, and if our fellows had got them they'd be able to shoot a good many Englishmen with them,' Devoy wrote in New York to Larry De Lacy in San Francisco, on 20 July, as Casement lay under sentence of death in Pentonville prison.

The US Senate, on 29 July, urged the British government to 'exercise clemency in the treatment of Irish political prisoners,' meaning Casement of course. The resolution went to the White House on the same day for transmission to London. For some unexplained reason, it lay there until 2 August, when it was sent to the State Department and within two hours was on the wires to London. The Embassy was closed and the message was not decoded till next morning, 3 August.

The Embassy First Secretary took the Senate resolution to Lord Grey, the Foreign Secretary, and near the end of their

conversation mentioned his official business. Grey promised to 'communicate the Senate's resolution to the Prime Minister and probably lay it before the Cabinet.'¹⁴ Casement was executed at six minutes past nine that morning. He was dead when Grey made his promise.

President Wilson did not want to intervene. 'It would be inexcusable for me to touch this,' he told his Irish-American secretary, Joe Tumulty, on 20 July. 'It would involve serious international embarrassment.' The Senate resolution might have saved Casement. It annoyed Grey. On 28 August, he wrote Colonel Edward House — Wilson's chief foreign affairs adviser — that the British government was not 'favourably impressed by the action of the Senate' which had 'taken no notice of outrages in Belgium and massacres of Armenians.' Warming to the subject, he went on: 'These latter were outrageous and unprovoked, whereas the only unprovoked thing in recent Irish affairs was the Rising itself which for a few days was a formidable danger.'¹⁵ Wilson had no sympathy for Casement or Irish independence. Later in that presidential election year, he told Jeremiah O'Leary, a friend of Judge Daniel F. Cohalan and Devoy, 'I should be sorry to have you or anyone like you vote for me. And since you have access to so many disloyal persons and I have not, I request you to convey this message to them.'

Early in 1917, the German Foreign Minister, Arthur Zimmermann, sent a telegram to the Embassy in Mexico that aroused America and led to the declaration of war by Congress in April. The telegram said Germany would wage unrestricted submarine warfare from 1 February. Zimmermann offered Mexico an alliance, financial aid and 'an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.' A copy of the telegram was sent to Bernstorff, the British intercepted it and the story was leaked to the US press.¹⁶

By 1917, Devoy, the Clan-na-Gael and Cohalan's organization, the Friends of Irish Freedom, spoke for a minority of American Irish, many of whom were pro-French and pro-Belgian if not pro-British. Most were unenthusiastic about joining the war on England's side. Wilson sent a message 'confidentially and unofficially' to Lloyd George, who had succeeded Asquith as Prime Minister, that if 'the people of the United States could feel there was an early prospect of the estab-

lishment for Ireland of substantial self-government, a very grave element of satisfaction and enthusiasm would be added to the cooperation now about to be organized' between the United Kingdom and the United States.¹⁷ Lloyd George's response was the offer of immediate Home Rule to Ireland with six counties of Ulster excluded. When John Redmond rejected this, Lloyd George summoned an Irish Convention which also failed. The incident did prove, if it needed proving, that American opinion carried weight with Britain.

The Irish in America who followed Devoy and the Clan and refused to support the war effort were persecuted. The *Gaelic American* and *Irish World*, which had supported Redmond up to 1914, were denied postal privileges, making their circulation difficult if not impossible outside of New York. Documents seized in the German New York Consulate before the Rising, showing that Judge Cohalan had offered advice to Berlin on the conduct of its war against England, were released to the press in September 1917. The object clearly was to destroy the Judge politically.

Cohalan was an adviser to Charles Murphy, the boss of Tammany Hall. At the 1912 Democratic Convention, which nominated Woodrow Wilson as the party's presidential candidate, Murphy controlled New York's delegates. Cohalan opposed Wilson and 'had very nearly frustrated his presidential ambition,' Devoy recalled. In his opinion this was Wilson's revenge.

Cohalan denied sending the message to Berlin, which read:

The Irish revolt can only succeed if assisted by Germany, otherwise England will be able to crush it, although after a severe struggle. Assistance required. There would be an air raid on England and a naval attack timed to coincide with the Rising, followed by a landing of troops and munitions and also of some officers, perhaps from an airship. It might then be possible to close the Irish harbours against England, set up bases for submarines and cut off food export to England. A successful Rising may decide the war.¹⁸

The disclosure effectively silenced Cohalan. The Friends of Irish Freedom, a front organization of the Clan, founded in March 1916, held no convention in 1917 and was quiet for the duration of the war. Despite his denial, the message contains

Cohalan's views and whether he gave it to the German office for transmission to Berlin, or someone else did, is hardly important now. One cannot believe that the Wilson administration would resort to forgery in order to make a case against the Clan-na-Gael.

Other damaging material was released to the press on 10 October 1916. The names of three leading members of the Clan — Joseph McGarrity, John T. Keating and Jeremiah O'Leary — were listed in a telegram signed by Zimmermann and sent to the Washington Embassy in January 1916. The revelation scared the Clan, and even Devoy dumped all material on the Rising. The telegram read:

You can obtain particulars as to persons suitable for carrying on sabotage in the United States and Canada from the following persons: (1) Joseph McGarrity of Philadelphia; (2) John T. Keating of Chicago; (3) Jeremiah O'Leary, 16 Park Row, New York City.

One and two are absolutely reliable and discreet. Number three is reliable but not always discreet. These persons were indicated by Sir Roger Casement.

In the United States sabotage can be carried out in every kind of factory supplying munitions of war. Railway embankments and bridges must not be touched. Embassy must in no circumstances be compromised. Similar precautions must be taken in regard to Irish pro-German propaganda.

McGarrity challenged the government to produce evidence that he had ever acted against the interests of the United States, although he admitted aiding the struggle of one small nation 'which has suffered the most, which has suffered the longest' to attain its freedom. O'Leary went into hiding. He was arrested in the West and brought back to New York and imprisoned. He complained that his former associates, including Cohalan, abandoned him. John T. Keating was seven months dead when recommended as an organizer of sabotage against the Allied war effort.

'The campaign against us was intensified, and knew no bounds,' Devoy wrote in his *Recollections*. 'Neither our persons nor our properties were safe for an instant. Our loyalty to the United States was as abiding as theirs; in fact, it was more so because we were opposed to the sacrifice of American manhood

and American wealth for the purpose of pulling the chestnuts of any European power out of the hell-fire of the war. Even so our motives were impugned...'¹⁹

One Clan leader, John T. Ryan of Buffalo, fled to Mexico. Liam Mellows, who had escaped from Ireland after the Rising, was lodged in the Tombs prison, New York. No Irish property owner could be found to put up the \$7,500 bail to free him, the *New York Times* charged. Devoy denied it. 'They wanted him released on bail so as to use him as a bait to entrap others, in the desperate hope that they could frame up a conspiracy case,' he wrote in the *Gaelic American* of 1 November 1917.

The general election of December 1918 made Sinn Féin the representative voice of Irish Nationalism. On 21 January 1919, the successful Sinn Féin candidates who were not in prison established Dáil Éireann, the National Assembly of Ireland, issued a Declaration of Independence and ratified the Irish Republic proclaimed in arms on Easter Monday 1916. Dáil Éireann called on every free nation to uphold Ireland's claim to national independence. Two weeks later, the president of Sinn Féin, Éamon de Valera, escaped from Lincoln prison, England, and at the second session of Dáil Éireann, on 1 April 1919, was elected President of the Ministry of Dáil Éireann with the title *Príomh Aire* (Prime Minister). The following day he named a seven-member Cabinet of Secretaries: Home Affairs (Arthur Griffith), Defence (Cathal Brugha), Foreign Affairs (George Noble Count Plunkett), Labour (Countess Markievicz), Industries (Eoin MacNeill), Finance (Michael Collins) and Local Government (William Cosgrave).

'There is in Ireland at this moment only one lawful authority, and that authority is the elected government of the Irish Republic,' said de Valera on 10 April in his first public address to the Dáil. To secure international recognition, the Republican government would send accredited representatives to the Peace Conference in Paris and to the League of Nations.

Count Plunkett said England had carried out 'a campaign of vilification' against Ireland in Paris, but in America support was growing for the Irish cause. 'For a while after America went into the war there was very little liberty there. The Irish citizen suffered for his political faith in the beginning; but now that the tide is turning, the importance of having the greater portion of

America in favour of Irish liberty is being felt throughout the world...

‘However, we have won a footing in Paris, and Ireland is beginning to be heard in the world... We are only at the beginning of the fight. We shall have to fight on by our present means, combining with our friends in America. I do not say we should rely on extraneous aid alone. I firmly believe that such aid will be forthcoming. But Ireland is our battle field, and now that we have won a moral victory in Ireland we must carry on a systematic war against the enemy, not in the field the enemy selects, but where we choose; not by exposing ourselves to danger; not by flinging small armed numbers against England’s massed strength, but by getting the whole Irish race to enter the field as an army determined to achieve the freedom of Ireland.’²⁰

Dáil Éireann, or Sinn Féin — only elected members of that party sat in the new National Assembly — charted a rough course to independence based on President Wilson’s call for national self-determination (‘Peoples may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent.’)²¹ and a campaign of moral persuasion directed mainly at the United States. On 4 March 1919, the House of Representatives, by 216 votes to forty-five, urged the Peace Conference to ‘consider the claims of Ireland to self-determination.’ Three months later (6 June), the Senate requested the US delegation at Versailles to ‘secure a hearing for the representatives of the Irish Republic’. Wilson said no, in effect, telling Frank P. Walsh and Edward F. Dunne, two prominent Irish-American Democrats who were members of the American Commission on Irish Independence, that the unanimous consent of the four great powers — Britain, the US, France and Italy — was required for a small nation to appear before the Committee of Four. This was grist for Cohalan’s campaign against the League of Nations which the Senate failed to ratify in the ‘greatest victory for country and liberty since Revolution,’ as the Judge cabled Senator William Borah.²² It was also a defeat for the Irish Republic, which needed President Wilson and the League of Nations for international recognition as an independent state.

The Irish in America and the Irish at home operated on two different tracks. Devoy’s strategy of striking at Britain by helping her enemies could not work in conditions of inter-

national peace. Cohalan was determined to use the Irish-American vote as a bargaining counter in the 1920 presidential election. His favourite candidate was Senator Hiram Johnson of California, a conservative Republican who had opposed US participation in the war. Cohalan argued that Article X of the League Covenant denied Ireland's right to independent statehood because it upheld 'the territorial integrity and existing political independence' of member states, including Britain. To turn the American public against the League, he used funds raised for Ireland in his propaganda campaign against Wilson. In time, he appeared to confuse the League of Nations with the British government, and when the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles, because of the Covenant, he considered that a victory for Ireland.

Cohalan's campaign did not help the struggling Dáil Éireann. But then, as a political realist, Cohalan probably did not take the Dáil too seriously. De Valera went to America to win recognition for the Irish Republic, to float a loan, and to mobilize American support for the Irish struggle to break the connection with Britain, no matter what Article X of the Covenant said.²³

De Valera arrived in New York in June 1919. He returned home in December 1920. His views ran counter to the arguments of Cohalan and Devoy. De Valera wanted 'a just League of Nations', founded on the equality of sovereign states. He urged Americans to draft a new Covenant that would not guarantee the territorial integrity of existing states and thus would not deny self-determination to oppressed nations. 'Now is the time to frame it,' he told an audience at Boston in his first public speech in America. 'It is not enough for you to destroy, you must build.'²⁴

De Valera insisted that Dáil Éireann must set policy, and funds for Ireland must go to Ireland; they could not be spent promoting American political causes. This was unacceptable to Cohalan, who suddenly became an American patriot and would not be dictated to by a foreigner. Devoy and Cohalan opposed the plan to float a loan in America by means of a bond drive; it was against the law, the Tammany judge said. McGarrity supported de Valera and he knew more about finance than either Devoy or Cohalan. 'Look for \$100 million,' he told de Valera, 'and \$50 million will be subscribed.' (De Valera looked for \$5 million and got it.) Martin Conboy, a New York lawyer,

said selling Irish Republic bonds in this way was legal. His advice was endorsed by another leading New York lawyer — Franklin D. Roosevelt, the future President.²⁵

The feud between de Valera and Cohalan bubbled away through the autumn and winter of 1919 with Devoy watching warily from the wings. Then, in February 1920, the pot boiled over. De Valera gave an interview to the New York correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* (London) and for some reason used the Cuban analogy when answering a question about Britain's defence. It was not a spur-of-the-moment thing either; his answer was well thought out — and wrong as well.

'Why doesn't Britain do with Ireland as the United States did with Cuba?' de Valera asked rhetorically. 'Why doesn't Britain declare a Monroe Doctrine for the two neighbouring islands?'

This betrayed an ignorance not only of the Monroe Doctrine but of the Platt Amendment which governed relations between the US and Cuba. For all practical purposes Cuba was a US protectorate. Devoy pounced. The US had sent troops to Cuba in 1906, he noted, and had stayed for three years. Was this what de Valera wanted for Ireland? 'Such powers in the hands of the British government would certainly be abused,' he wrote in the *Gaelic American* of 21 February 1920 and heaped abuse on de Valera's head.

De Valera made a second error. He challenged Cohalan as chairman of the Friends of Ireland to condemn Devoy's attacks. Cohalan replied that he did not control Devoy or his opinions — which was certainly true; no one did. 'Into any controversy you may have with Mr Devoy or others I refuse to be drawn,' said Cohalan. He used the occasion to avow his Americanism which President Wilson had questioned. 'What I have done for the cause of the Independence of the Irish people recently and for many years past, I have done as an American, whose only allegiance is to America, and as one to whom the interest and security of my country are ever to be preferred to those of any and all other lands.'²⁶ He accused de Valera of interfering in American affairs and warned him off. The result was an open split among the American Irish.

McGarrity defended de Valera. He said the Cuban interview was being used to drive the President of the Irish Republic from America. The two groups sabotaged each other's efforts for the rest of that presidential election year. Neither the Republican

nor the Democratic conventions adopted resolutions calling for recognition of the Irish Republic, which was a severe blow to the hopes of Dáil Éireann. At the end of the election campaign, which the Republican Warren G. Harding won, de Valera launched a new mass organization, the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic. It soon supplanted the Friends of Irish Freedom, proving that de Valera was a more important name to the American Irish than Devoy and a better political tactician than Cohalan.

The Clan-na-Gael also split. McGarrity led the breakaway group. Without McGarrity it is possible that de Valera's mission to America would have ended in disaster. It was McGarrity, incidentally, who conferred on de Valera the unofficial title, 'President of the Irish Republic,' after he landed in New York.

Although officially America did nothing for de Valera or Sinn Féin, it did permit him to tour the country he had entered illegally as a stowaway. There was some pressure to have him arrested for making seditious speeches against an ally. But Washington, while keeping its eye on him, permitted de Valera to denounce Britain and raise funds for Ireland. Calls for the recognition of the Irish Republic were ignored. When letters were written to the State Department, 'it was the practice ... merely to acknowledge the receipt of a communication.'²⁷

Asked about Ireland's right to self-determination, Wilson once replied: 'You have touched on the great metaphysical tragedy of today... Of course, Ireland's case, from the point of view of population, from the point of view of the struggle it has made, from the point of interest it has excited in the world, and especially among our own people, whom I am anxious to serve, is the outstanding case of a small nationality. You do not know and cannot appreciate the anxieties I have experienced as the result of these many millions of peoples having their hopes raised by what I have said.'²⁸

For whatever reason, Ireland was not included in President Wilson's great crusade for self-determination of oppressed peoples. Perhaps because England was the oppressor and he was an Anglophile, or because power politics prevented it.

While de Valera was in America raising money and seeking recognition for the Irish Republic, the US Consul in Dublin

kept the State Department informed of the troubles in Ireland. On the day Dáil Éireann assembled in Dublin, 21 January 1919, Irish Volunteers in Tipperary ambushed two constables of the Royal Irish Constabulary escorting a consignment of explosives. The constables were killed, the Volunteers escaped with the gelignite. The ambush at Soloheadbeg set a pattern. Dan Breen, Seán Tracy, Séamus Robinson and Seán Hogan became folk heroes. By the end of April 1919, martial law was declared in Tipperary, Limerick, Cork and Roscommon.

With little central planning and minimum help from headquarters in Dublin, local units of the Irish Volunteers conducted a form of guerrilla warfare from 1919 to 1921. Dáil Éireann did not control it. The man behind the resistance was Michael Collins, who had reorganized the IRB, the Volunteers and Sinn Féin after the Rising, when his better-known colleagues were in prison. The IRB gave Collins enormous power. It permitted him to establish a first-class Intelligence service that penetrated Dublin Castle, the centre of British rule in Ireland, and physically eliminate its best agents. He was effective and ruthless.

Collins made the important decisions, not the Secretary of Defence, Cathal Brugha, or the Chief-of-Staff of the Irish Volunteers, Richard Mulcahy. Lack of Dáil control over the Volunteers worried Brugha and on 20 August 1919 he proposed that each Volunteer swear an oath to the Republic and the Dáil. Some deputies objected. Arthur Griffith, the acting head of the Dáil while de Valera was in America, replied: 'The army and the government of a country could not be under separate authority.' Brugha said the Volunteers 'should be subject to the government... The important thing was that the Irish Volunteers under their present Constitution owed allegiance to their own Executive. Since the Dáil had come into existence there had been no Volunteer Convention, but one would be held as soon as possible. It was necessary to have this matter adjusted.'²⁹

In September, Dáil Éireann was suppressed — also Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers, the Gaelic League, Cumann na mBan and pro-Sinn Féin newspapers. Commenting on this in the Dáil on 27 October 1919, Griffith said: 'The effect of these proclamations and suppressions has been of tremendous usefulness to the campaign in the United States of America. The President's letters testify to that. I regard all these acts which

succeed each other in regular procession as of the greatest assistance to our efforts in the United States, and it is there that the centre of gravity of the whole political situation is for the present fixed.'³⁰ Obviously, Griffith expected to win the fight in America, not in Ireland.

On 21 April 1920, the US Consul in Dublin reported rumours in Britain and Ireland 'that a rising was planned by Sinn Féin to take place on Easter Monday, April 5th.' Sinn Féin had denied it. On 3 April, the British authorities set up 'cordons and pickets of soldiers and police on all the principal roads leading to cities and towns of importance.' That day all telephone and telegraph wires were cut, apparently confirming the rumours. 'There followed throughout Ireland organized attacks, daringly conceived and practically perfectly executed on all the important revenue collecting offices in Ireland. All of these attacks were made at the same hour.' On the night of 3 April, more than 260 abandoned police barracks were blown up, burned down or tumbled stone upon stone, Washington learned.

The Consul reported a hunger strike involving about a hundred prisoners in Mountjoy, demanding political treatment. It began on 4 April. He described the scenes outside the prison as thousands of people, led by priests, recited the rosary. 'The picture presented by the crowd with its priests, all in a pouring rain, was most impressive and medieval.' This was repeated the following day, Sunday, with 'bigger crowds, more priests, and more excitement, and the same pouring rain.' The National Executive of the Irish Trade Union Congress called a general strike — 'with the exception of those engaged on newspapers, telegraph service, baking of bread, and essential food distribution, humanitarian services, and necessary work amongst horses and cattle' — to protest against 'the barbarous treatment of political prisoners and demanding their release.' The strike, on Tuesday, 13 April, was observed 'throughout Ireland except the Unionist parts of Ulster' and everybody ceased work. It lasted two days. 'The labour element with time on its hands was in a dangerous mood.' The government released the prisoners unconditionally. Work resumed on the morning of 15 April. 'The Sinn Féin press exulted in the victory that had been won, the Consul wrote. He added:

The events of the past few weeks have made Sinn Féin more

powerful than ever. Those who are not for it are afraid of it and dare not oppose it openly. Three months ago not over half of the people of the South and West of Ireland supported the organization, today all of Ireland except Ulster (and practically only parts of Ulster) is Sinn Féin in sympathy.

Sinn Féin realized that the action taken by labour, particularly the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, whose members worked on the railways and the docks and whose leaders were 'distinctly Bolchevistic' [sic], had been decisive, he noted. More would be heard of them. Many agricultural labourers were members of the ITGWU. Sinn Féin did not appeal to labourers in the West before the ITGWU appeared. 'Cattle driving and agrarian outrages on a scale never before known in Ireland are being carried on,' the Consul's report continued. 'Even priests owning land are suffering with others. Any interference from the RIC is met with assassination and murder of its members.'

Constitutional elements in Sinn Féin — Arthur Griffith, Erskine Childers ('whose wife is a daughter of a United States Senator'), Darrell Figgis, Robert Barton, Lawrence Ginnell and others — had a difficult problem because of the Irish Volunteers and 'the sinister' IRB, plus the labour unions in the South and West. Unless the 'sober', sane element, such as the men mentioned, are allowed to control Sinn Féin, the result must be 'a Workman's Republic', the Consul feared.

On 16 April, the US Consul dined at the Viceregal Lodge with Lord French, the Lord Lieutenant, and the new Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Nevil Macready. Lord French wanted James MacMahon, 'a devout Catholic', to be the main adviser of the new Chief Secretary, Sir Hamar Greenwood, rather than the Assistant Under-Secretary, Sir John Taylor. Between himself, Greenwood and MacMahon, 'there were hopes of bringing about better conditions in Irish affairs,' French said for the benefit of his American guest. MacMahon, who he did not name, was looked upon 'with favour' by Sinn Féin, French thought. The Consul reported that Macready had the reputation of 'having an iron hand in a velvet glove.'

It is evident that both Lord French and Sir Nevil have orders to do everything to conciliate Americans and American

opinion that is possible but both, fresh from London and from contact with their own friends and acquaintances as well as with members of the British government, apparently voiced British opinion when they spoke of the irritation in England caused by the freedom with which the propaganda for an Irish Republic is allowed to be carried on in the United States even while recognizing that political conditions preceding Presidential elections there are peculiar.

The Consul reported seeing much of Arthur Griffith during the month. 'Sinn Féin depends absolutely upon American sympathy and support and feels no doubt that it had it,' the report to the State Department added. Sinn Féin would like to see war between the United States and Britain, 'and, if possible, bring about a war between them.' Sinn Féin was in touch with 'agitators in India, Egypt and South Africa as well as with the Germans.' Sinn Féin leaders believed they could carry on their propaganda for Irish freedom in America without incurring any ill will.³¹

The US Vice-Consul in Belfast reported on 8 May 1920 that Lord Carson had said that if the Partition Bill were passed 'Ulster would make the best of it.' All agreed 'it would be impossible to force the Six Counties under a Dublin parliament against their will, and the possibility of an Irish parliament being able to do so [is] negligible, therefore, little risk is assumed in standing by the three excluded counties.' (This last refers to the Ulster counties of Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan — meaning 'exclusion' from Protestant Ulster because of their Catholic majorities.)

'The Sinn Féin outrages perpetrated on a wholesale scale throughout Ireland during the Easter week-end, were also carried out on a minor scale in Belfast and vicinity at the same time,' the Vice-Consul's report continued. 'Except for a section of the Irish Transport Workers Union, the working communities in Belfast evidenced very little sympathy for the Sinn Féin hunger strikers at Mountjoy. The National Union of Dockers held aloof from the movement, as did also the members of the Belfast branch of the Irish National Union of Vintners, Grocers and Allied Trades' Assistants, both of which organizations were looked to by the agitating forces for a sympathetic demonstration. By April 15th, the situation, as far as Belfast was

concerned, returned to normal.'

The Vice-Consul explained that the call for a general strike in Derry in sympathy with the Sinn Féin prisoners at Mountjoy was futile 'owing to the action of the Unionist workers among the trade organizations having their way.' There was rioting at night during the strike, troops and police were stoned and 'several civilians were wounded and removed to hospital.' Among those arrested on 13 April in Ulster were 'Denis McCullough of Belfast Corporation, a well known Sinn Féiner, and Owen P. Duffy, a prominent Sinn Féiner and provincial secretary of the GAA,' in a round-up of Republicans in the Counties of Armagh, Monaghan, Tyrone and Donegal.³²

In the Hearst *New York American* of 10 May 1920, Arthur Griffith denied there was an 'Ulster question' for Sinn Féin to resolve. 'The story propagated by England, that these are Six Counties in the North of Ireland that are opposed to independence, is a falsehood,' the Acting President of Dáil Éireann wrote. 'The methods England employs in Tyrone to deprive the electors of their rights in order to deceive the outside world are methods it also applies to the other Ulster counties. There is no 'Ulster Question' — there is a question of English intrigue, bribery, and force in Ulster. Remove these and not one of the Ulster counties would vote against Irish independence.'

On 14 May, the US Consul in Dublin, F. T. F. Dumont, reported 'the indifferent attitude of the general public' to the attacks on Crown forces. 'Even the fact that in cities and towns that individual policemen are shot down from the rear by gangs and that from fifty to 200 men attack parties of from two to eight police and shoot them down from ambush does not disturb the Irish public and the cowardliness of such attacks is seldom commented upon. Yet, if a single man is killed who is known to have been in favour of Irish freedom in the collisions which arise from the systematic baitings of soldiers and police by the populace, the Sinn Féin and Nationalist press can find no expression too vile to use and no accusation too improbable to make against them. It is little wonder that on two or three occasions within the last month the rank and file of the police and soldiers have taken matters in their own hands. In my opinion, the use of the Defence of the Realm Act by the authorities in an

endeavour to cow a people who absolutely refused to be cowed is primarily responsible for these deaths, no matter on which side they occur.'

The Consul thought that the poor agricultural labourer who worked long hours at a minimum wage was the backbone of the resistance in the countryside. The labourers were organized by the Irish Transport and General Workers Union which, he noted, had conducted a great strike in Dublin in 1913 under the leadership of Jim Larkin who 'became — and still is — the idol of the Irish working classes.' (Larkin, of course, was in America at this time, on trial for 'criminal anarchy'.) His union had organized farm labourers throughout Catholic Ireland, Dumont went on, and as any immigrant from Connacht landing in New York could say, the ITGWU was very powerful in the West of Ireland:

This Union, Bolshevistic and anarchistic as to leaders, is allied to Sinn Féin in the campaign for Irish freedom and its principals knowing the land hunger of the Irish peasant labourer, aid the campaign by stirring up this feeling in places such as Connacht where the inclination for freedom and the desire for land run side by side. The result has been the greatest agricultural agitation ever known in Ireland, greater by far than in the days of the Land League...

This last judgment is wrong. Dáil Éireann brought the land agitation to heel rather easily.³³ Also, Dumont consistently exaggerated the influence of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union as well as its 'pro-Bolshevik' character. His conclusion, based on the evidence he presented to the State Department, is accurate: 'But a whole race cannot be convicted of sedition. All of Catholic Ireland is seditious and would have to be convicted.' There's an echo of Edmund Burke in that comment.

Dumont noted that Sinn Féin's Intelligence service was superior to that of the RIC because of its alliance with the ITGWU. (A year later Collins warned William O'Brien that Dublin Castle was attempting to infiltrate the unions.) An academic told him Sinn Féin aimed at 'the creation of a self-supporting Irish nation, having a separate universally acknowledged existence among the nations of the world.' Although the Republican leadership of Sinn Féin would not compromise

short of independence, only about twenty percent of their followers were 'irreconcilable'. The Catholic Church favoured 'an autonomous Dominion' status for Ireland. The young priests were 'purely Sinn Féin in sympathy,' but must bow to the will of the hierarchy 'as a matter of Church discipline.' He explained:

There is a tremendous body of moderate opinion, composed of old Nationalists, business men and small land owners which, while determined that British rule over Ireland shall cease, wants peace and would strongly support autonomous Home Rule or the Dominion autonomy wanted by the hierarchy, if it can be clearly seen that independence cannot be obtained without rebellion. Organized labour, if one is to believe its leaders, will accept nothing but independence, but labour is accustomed to compromises by which it gains and if autonomous Dominion rule could be assured, these leaders would be forced by the rank and file of labour to accept it or they would be overthrown.

This is a shrewd assessment of what would likely happen if Britain made an offer of Dominion status. And, in fact, this is what did happen, with partition included. The Consul, whose confidential chats with Griffith must have helped his analysis, also stated that 'Sinn Féin will undoubtedly be willing (I have this confidentially from their leaders) to negotiate for Dominion Home Rule of the kind enjoyed by Canada. They want a Dominion which will include the whole of Ireland. They respect while they dislike Sir Edward Carson. What they want is to reach an agreement with him which shall include Ulster in the scheme and that once an agreement is reached it shall be submitted to the British Parliament for ratification. The leaders of Catholic Ireland will not treat directly with the British government under any circumstances, even the moderate element ... the Home Rule Bill now before the British Parliament is unacceptable to all parties to the Irish controversy.' [Emphasis in the original.]

General Sir Nevil Macready, the British commander-in-chief in Ireland, told Dumont over dinner at the Viceregal Lodge with the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary (Sir Hamar Greenwood) that 'the whole country was infected with the spirit

of outrage and revenge smarting under a sense of injustice; that protection *must* be given persons and property attacked.' Macready said the British Minister at the Vatican had raised the Irish question with the Pope. It was hoped that during the visits of Irish bishops and priests to Rome for the beatification of Oliver Plunkett, 'the Pope would indicate his attitude towards the murder and assassination policy of Sinn Féin and its attempts to start another world war in the effort it is making to attain freedom for Ireland and that he may give some indication of what he thinks of priests in Ireland who have practically counselled their parishioners to numb their consciences as regards outrages and murders made in the name of Irish freedom.'

Hamar Greenwood apparently said nothing worth recording. The Consul concluded his observations with these ominous words:

The only hope of peace between Ireland and England is a grant of full Dominion Home Rule with absolute Irish control of its own revenues, otherwise there must be rigid military rule with an army of not less than 300,000 men to ensure peace and this rule must be continued for years until the Irish are definitely cowed. Less than that number will mean a continuation of guerrilla warfare on the part of Sinn Féin, terrorism, and a condition of affairs that will put an end to Irish prosperity.

The Government of Ireland Bill provided a 'Southern Ireland' parliament in Dublin and a 'Northern Ireland' parliament in Belfast, both subordinate to Westminster. A Council of Ireland with equal representation from both parliaments would deal with matters of common concern. First, the British Bill partitioned Ireland, then provided for reunification when the Dublin and Belfast parliaments agreed to it. The Unionists disclaimed any responsibility for the measure and were not enthusiastic about it, since they wanted a *unitary* United Kingdom. Sinn Féin ignored it as an idle threat; Dáil Éireann was the parliament of a united independent Ireland, Sinn Féin insisted.

'This is the fourth Home Rule Bill to be introduced since 1885,' the *Manchester Guardian* commented. 'The first two were violently and successfully opposed by the Unionist party; the third was opposed with equal violence and passed over the veto

of the House of Lords just before the war, under the Parliament Act, but its operation suspended till, at latest, the end of the war, in order that securities for Ulster might be inserted. The fourth is introduced by a Unionist government under pressure of circumstances which have at last converted even Unionists into Home Rulers... Moreover, the 1914 Act gave a Parliament to Ireland as a whole, and though 'securities' for Ulster were to be inserted, Irish unity was, in form at least, to be maintained, whereas the present Bill, by setting up two Parliaments, frankly cuts Ireland in two and takes its chance of the severed portions setting up hereafter a unifying process like that of the divided earthworm. This may or may not take place. The movement would certainly be slow and it may never be completed.'

The Liberal newspaper observed that Gladstone had consulted Parnell about the first Home Rule Bill in 1885. But Lloyd George did not send for de Valera, who anyhow was in America; and if he returned 'the first thing which Mr George or his Minister would do would be to clap him in prison.' The *Manchester Guardian* added: 'At present there is absolute disbelief in Nationalist Ireland that the Bill is seriously meant. Hope has been so often cheated and, as Irish opinion holds, pledges have been so often broken that no interest is any longer taken in Bills, or words, or any kind of promises....'³⁴

Partition, however, was 'seriously meant.'

The US Consul usually described Irish Labour, particularly the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, as pro-Communist. On 16 July 1920, he reported angry Irish workers denouncing the United States for convicting Jim Larkin on charges of 'criminal anarchy' and sentencing him to five-to-ten years in Sing Sing. Resolutions from Labour bodies throughout Ireland demanded his release. 'The great majority of Irish Labour is distinctly Bolshevistic,' Dumont reported to Washington. 'The *Watchword of Labour*, the organ of the [Transport] Union, devotes much of its space to educating its readers in the One Big Union (OBU) idea. It is an advocate of the Third Internationale of Russia and of a Soviet Republic.'

At Cork on 7 July, the Irish Trades Union Congress had called for labour-controlled food committees in every town, tilling of the land by agricultural labourers organized in co-operative societies, and 'a system of primary education suitable

to the needs and aspirations of the people of Ireland.' Dumont saw this as a challenge to Church-run education. He predicted:

It is certain therefore that some method of meeting the problem presented [by] Bolshevik Irish Labour will be evolved, so that the Church may keep its hold over Catholic labour, but that the Church will not intervene in the situation in Ireland until the question of self-determination is settled. In all of this, it must not be forgotten that Irish priests come mostly from the labouring class, that their fathers, brothers and sisters are usually workers, and that, due to these circumstances, their sympathies are normally with that class. This is also one of the primary reasons for their devotion to the Sinn Féin movement which, in the main, is a movement of the Irish Catholic democracy.

Sinn Féin had joined hands with Labour, 'Bolshevik though it is', in order to defeat the British government, which was afraid of its own Labour movement, Dumont believed. Irish Labour could not be suppressed because of its ties with Labour in Britain 'which, in the main, is sympathetic to Irish aspirations for self-government.' Labour's most powerful weapon was the general strike. A general strike in the United Kingdom 'is a thing the British government does not want.' To put down a general strike by force would invite revolution and might disrupt the Empire.

'In my opinion, the British government is letting things drift until it can determine the attitude of British Labour towards Ireland's claims to independence,' he concluded. 'Events in the past few weeks in British Labour circles have shown that British Labour believes in self-determination for Ireland but not in independence without the Empire.' The State Department sent the Larkin protests to the Attorney-General, A. Mitchell Palmer, the author of the 'Red scare' that put him in jail. (Larkin was pardoned by Governor Al Smith in January 1923.)

In September 1920, Dumont sought to describe the Black-and-Tan terror unloosed in Nationalist Ireland. 'The bitterness of feeling leads to horrors that can hardly be surpassed in a civilized country,' he declared. British ex-soldiers had enlisted in the Royal Irish Constabulary. 'These men, habituated to scenes of bloodshed in the Great War, are not policemen. They are en-

tirely without sympathy for Irish aspirations and enlisted in the Constabulary for the adventure and excitement of the life... When all is said and done, and without regard to old quarrels between the Irish and Great Britain, the British government is responsible for the present condition of affairs in Ireland.’³⁵

Lloyd George’s defence of the ‘murder gangs’ in his Guildhall Banquet speech, 9 November 1920, when he declared ‘we have murder by the throat,’ shocked and angered Irish-Americans. ‘We had to reorganize the police and when the government was ready we struck the terrorists and now the terrorists are complaining of terror,’ he boasted.³⁶

Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, died on hunger strike on 25 October 1920, after seventy-four days without food. On 1 November, Kevin Barry, aged eighteen, was hanged for engaging in an armed attack on British troops in the middle of Dublin, in which a soldier was killed. These events focused attention on the situation in Ireland, particularly in America where a Commission of Inquiry into Conditions in Ireland was set up by *The Nation* magazine of New York.

‘The orgy of destruction which is now ravaging Ireland is sending its repercussions to every corner of the civilised world,’ the Commission declared. ‘It cannot fail to postpone indefinitely the return of ordered tranquillity to civilization. In addition to all this, the political life of America, as well as its orderly social processes, is profoundly disturbed by the injection of an internecine war between peoples of our own flesh and blood.’

The Commission held public hearings in Washington and summoned witnesses from Ireland. At the opening session, on 19 November 1920, one of the witnesses called was Father Michael Griffin, a Catholic curate from Galway. He did not appear. He had disappeared from his home and could not be found. His body was located in a bog. He had been shot in the head, murdered by the Black-and-Tans.

‘There exists neither under the laws of war nor under the codes of Martial Law in civilized states any justification for assassination, pillaging, or terrorism, as a means of suppressing insurrection,’ the US panel reported. ‘And yet this Commission is reluctantly forced to the conclusion that such forces are relied upon by the Imperial British forces in Ireland to bring the Irish people once more under the control of the Imperial Crown.’³⁷

General Macready believed such methods were effective.

'These unauthorized reprisals had a marked effect in curbing the activities of the IRA in the immediate localities, and on these grounds were justified or at all events winked at by those in control of the police,' he wrote in his memoirs.³⁸

C. P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, in a private letter on 4 November, put the matter like this: 'The conditions in Ireland are almost incredible. Curzon, the other night approved the 'reprisals' provided they were not extravagant. In that case they ought to be carried out officially and a line drawn as to what constitutes extravagance. But really of course the whole position is anarchic and indefensible.'³⁹

The American Consul in Dublin informed the State Department on 28 January 1921: 'To maintain order thousands of new troops have been brought into Ireland and the country is an armed camp.... The present attitude of Mr Lloyd George, Sir Hamar Greenwood and Sir Nevil Macready, which is that the 'murder gang' of Sinn Féin must be hunted down and destroyed, leaves no hope of a near solution of the Irish question.'

By then de Valera had returned secretly to Ireland on a ship that sailed from Montreal.

Lloyd George pursued a 'double policy' towards Ireland: he permitted Sinn Féin leaders to remain at large, but hunted down guerrillas. Active areas were put under martial law and the death penalty imposed for possessing arms or sheltering wanted men. There were meetings in Dublin over cups of tea between de Valera and Lord Derby, in April; between de Valera and Sir James Craig, in May; between de Valera and General Jan Smuts, in June. These were reconnaissance missions, nothing was settled.

In May, there were general elections for the Northern and Southern parliaments. The Unionists swept the North, Sinn Féin candidates were returned unopposed in the South. On 22 June, the King opened the Belfast parliament with a call for peace. The same day, de Valera was arrested in Blackrock and released next morning. On 25 June, Lloyd George proposed a conference between the British government 'and representatives of Southern and Northern Ireland.' De Valera invited the Unionists to a conference on 4 July so that he might speak for a united country; but Sir James Craig, Premier of Northern Ireland, sent his regrets. Lord Midleton represented

the Southern Unionists and urged a truce. On 8 July, Midleton informed de Valera that Lloyd George had agreed to a truce. It went into effect on 11 July.

On 12 July, de Valera crossed to London to discuss an Irish settlement with the British Prime Minister. De Valera wanted 'the self-determination of the Irish nation to be recognized' — an Irish Republic. Lloyd George offered Dominion status — with Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.⁴⁰

The first conference ended in stalemate, but de Valera and Lloyd George corresponded until October, when the British Prime Minister proposed a new parley. De Valera accepted the invitation but decided not to lead the delegation. Instead, he proposed Griffith and Collins for reasons he would explain later. In the meantime, he had developed his *external association* formula to meet the problems of Northern Ireland and Dominion status: Ireland would be linked to the Empire but not part of it.

In a letter to McGarrity dated 27 December 1921, de Valera explained that he had remained at home as the symbol of the Republic and 'as a reserve' against 'tricks' of Lloyd George such as he played on the other Irish leaders — 'bad faith, etc.' He had to convince Republicans such as Cathal Brugha, Austin Stack, Mrs Kathleen Clarke and Mary MacSwiney — to accept 'external association' if Lloyd George and his Cabinet agreed to the formula. De Valera's arguments to McGarrity sound strained. The function of a leader is to lead and de Valera could not do that from Dublin. The British fielded their best team and Lloyd George, the cleverest negotiator of his time, was in charge. He had to carry with him a coalition of Liberals and Tories, then convince Parliament to accept the result — a tougher task than that faced by de Valera. One suspects that de Valera knew he must sign a document surrendering the Republic or accepting partition, and if he could not hold the first he must return with some form of a united Ireland. Allegiance to the Crown was out, he told Griffith. 'If war is the alternative we can only face it, and I think the sooner the other side is made to realize that the better.'⁴¹

De Valera explained to McGarrity: 'The oath [to the King] crystallised in itself the main things we objected to — inclusion in the Empire, the British King as King in Ireland, Chief

Executive of the Irish State, and the source from which all authority in Ireland was to be derived.' The British insisted on the oath, Griffith replied. De Valera would break on the oath and offer 'external association' with some form of oath that would not be allegiance.⁴² No doubt he could have drafted such an oath. He distinguished between *allegiance* to the King and *recognition* of the King as head of the British Commonwealth, de Valera's biographers claim.⁴³

Yet de Valera knew that 'Griffith would accept the Crown under pressure', he told McGarrity in the 27 December letter. This pressure reached its peak in the early hours of 6 December 1921, when the 'Articles of Agreement for a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland' were signed under Lloyd George's threat that they must do so 'or else quit ... and both sides would be free to resume whatever warfare they could wage against each other.'⁴⁴ This was power politics over the barrel of a gun, as brutal in its impact as Hitler's 15 March 1939 ultimatum to President Emil Hacha which ended with the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and the creation of the 'Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia.' De Valera would not have signed. 'There it was,' he told McGarrity, 'and I had to make the best of it.'

It was heart-breaking [he wrote]. The only hope was to try in private session to get the Dáil to turn down by a large majority the treaty as signed, and to offer our counter-proposals to the British. But MC had got the IRB machine working. The Dáil members of the IRB were told that acceptance of the Treaty would be the quickest way to acceptance of the Republic, and a lot of other stuff which time only will explode.⁴⁵

This letter changed McGarrity's mind about the merits of the Treaty. It may be the most revealing letter de Valera ever wrote. He tells how the plenipotentiaries were chosen — more for their weaknesses than for their strengths: Griffith was weak; Collins would change his political coat; Brugha and Stack were 'out of the question'; Duggan and Duffy were legal padding; Barton backed by Childers would hold the line. The Cabinet at home would hang on to their coat-tails and keep 'everything safe for the tug-of-war.' The Dáil would approve the Treaty because the Church and business backed it, but there would be no 'Parnell split'. He was wrong about the split.

Devoy's Clan-na-Gael had little influence on events in Ireland after breaking with de Valera. McGarrity, helped by Luke Dillon, the old dynamiter who had spent fourteen years in prison for attempting to sabotage the Canadian Welland Canal during the Boer War, 'reorganized' the Clan. Dillon became Secretary in Devoy's place. McGarrity, ever the resourceful operator, raided the *Gaelic-American* offices with the help of Larry De Lacy and Tommy O'Connor, an IRB courier, and seized the membership lists. The Supreme Council of the IRB recognized McGarrity's 'Reorganized Clan-na-Gael' which proceeded to inform all camps of Devoy's attacks on de Valera and 'disloyalty' to the Dáil and the IRB. Devoy responded by expelling McGarrity and Hugh Montague, the Clan Treasurer, but not Luke Dillon — perhaps in deference to his years in prison.

The indefatigable McGarrity purchased 500 Thompson sub-machineguns for the IRA after Michael Collins sent him a magazine illustration of the new weapon. They cost \$95,000. He sent two ex-US army officers to Ireland to train the IRA.⁴⁶ Among those trained in the new weapon was Tom Barry, commander of the West Cork Flying Column.

Only a couple of Thompsons saw service in Ireland in 1921. Federal agents seized the consignment in a coal-ship docked at Hoboken, New Jersey. Four years later McGarrity recovered the weapons through quiet diplomacy. A document gave power of attorney to Larry De Lacy. Later, two of the guns were found after a shoot-out between the FBI and the notorious Karpis gang, and on investigation it was discovered that a member of the Clan had sold them.⁴⁷ McGarrity shipped the Thompsons to the IRA in 1936.

McGarrity's initial reaction to the Treaty in his Philadelphia weekly *Irish Press* (10 December 1921) was favourable. 'Ireland's sovereign independence is acknowledged by the British Cabinet and their action is approved by Britain's King. This much is certain.' The following week the *Irish Press* followed de Valera's lead and opposed the Treaty because there was 'sufficient evidence that the minimum demands of Ireland have not been secured.'

On 10 December, Devoy told a convention of the Friends of Irish Freedom:

The agreement will undoubtedly be altered to some extent; but whatever alterations are made in it, Ireland will remain under it an integral part of the British Empire. Parnell said that no man can set limits to the onward march of a nation; and this agreement won't set limits to the onward march of the Irish Nation to the only goal that is worth having — to the Irish Republic.⁴⁸

Judge Cohalan at the same meeting called the Treaty a 'diplomatic triumph' for Lloyd George, due in large measure to the inexperience of the Irish negotiators. (The *New York Times* of 9 July 1921, reporting on the truce, wrote that Cohalan's group 'suspected that de Valera, as a conservative, might accept something short of an Irish Republic, such as dominion rule, in order to obtain peace.')

It is hard to avoid the conclusion based on this evidence that had de Valera accepted the Treaty, McGarrity would have done likewise, and Devoy and Cohalan might have emerged as champions of the Republic in the 1922-3 conflict. In fact, the opposite happened: McGarrity became the chief fundraiser and arms supplier for the IRA, while Devoy and Cohalan gave moral support to the Irish Free State, which received the old Fenian as the honoured guest of the nation in 1924. He died four years later at the age of eighty-six, an embittered enemy of de Valera who, he charged, had delivered 'the first blow to the Republic ... in the Cuban interview...'⁴⁹ McGarrity remained loyal to de Valera — although they disagreed politically after 1926 — until he started jailing Republicans in the mid-1930s.

Few Irish-Americans understood the Treaty clauses about coastal defence, partition and the Crown, issues that racked Ireland in 1922. The Irish Free State appeared to have authority over all Ireland, until the North opted out when 'the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920 (including those relating to the Council of Ireland) shall so far as they relate to Northern Ireland continue to be of full force and effect, and this instrument shall have effect subject to the necessary modifications.'⁵⁰ Who could understand this language without a lawyer? They did understand that at last the Irish could rule in Ireland, which was all that concerned them. The Treaty debate in the Dáil was beyond them, the Civil War dismayed them, the

executions and assassinations and destruction of great houses horrified many of them.

As a native of Tyrone, McGarrity was appalled by partition. One of his demands on de Valera during the Civil War was to insist on the goal of a united Ireland, and a ban on 'Document No. 2', as an alternative to the Treaty. He explained, 'I mean all of Ulster in with the same rights and privileges as any other part — nothing more, nothing less.'⁵¹

Official Washington paid little attention to post-Treaty Ireland. Although Irish-Americans remained hostile to Britain it ceased to matter. The Boundary agreement in 1925 legitimized partition 'as an accomplished fact', in the opinion of the State Department,⁵² and it did not become an issue until the eve of World War II.

America's importance in the Irish struggle for independence cannot be over-estimated. From America de Valera spoke to the world on the justice of the Irish cause. Millions of Irish-Americans raised funds and gave political aid to Dáil Éireann as the legitimate authority of the Irish people. Leading American Catholics, led by Cardinals O'Connell of Boston and Gibbons of Baltimore, men of national stature and moderate views, supported the Irish claim to independence.⁵³

Lloyd George was always conscious of the influence of the United States. As early as January 1921, he told Bonar Law: '[Sir] Auckland Geddes gives a most gloomy account of the situation in America and in the interests of peace with America I think we ought to see de Valera and try to get a settlement.'⁵⁴ Apparently he got the settlement he wanted, though not from de Valera.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IRISH FREE STATE AND PARTITION

The Treaty signed on 6 December 1921 was deceptively attractive to most Irish Nationalists despite partition, which it carefully disguised. Essentially, it was an agreement between the British government and Sinn Féin as the representatives of Irish Nationalism. Tom Jones's diary references make this evident. It was 'a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland' officially, however, and in this sense the Irish plenipotentiaries could claim to speak for all Ireland.

Ireland would 'be a free state of the British Empire with a Parliament' the original draft read, 'with the same Constitutional status in the community of Nations known as the British Empire as the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa...'

'I would let them call it the Irish Free State,' said Lord Birkenhead, Sir Edward Carson's former 'Galloper' Smith who in 1921 was a Conservative Minister of the coalition government. So it was 'styled and known as the Irish Free State.'¹ Smith acquired his nickname as 'galloper' to Lieut-General Sir George Richardson, GOC of the Ulster Volunteer Force — 'Carson's Army'.

Article 12 gave the Ulster Unionists the right to opt out of the Irish Free State if 'both Houses of Parliament of Northern Ireland' presented an address to the King within one month of the Treaty's ratification at Westminster. This effectively guaranteed the partition of Ireland. It was done on 7 December 1922, two days after the British Parliament had ratified the Treaty.

By then, 'Southern Ireland' of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, had become the Irish Free State and was engulfed in civil war over the same Treaty. Acting as the Parliament of Southern Ireland while maintaining the fiction that it was the

National Assembly of the Irish Republic, Dáil Éireann had ratified the Treaty on 7 January 1922. The vote disbanded the three-year-old Republic. Two members who did not represent 'Southern Ireland' constituencies, Michael Collins (Armagh) and Seán O'Mahony (Fermanagh), voted anyway. Their votes cancelled each other. Eoin MacNeill (Derry), the Ceann Comhairle or Speaker, did not vote. The House divided, sixty-four to fifty-seven.

The Unionist address to the King 'is the present legal basis for the partition of Ireland,' the State Department's research study concluded in July 1948.

The petition to the King set in train the second part of Article 12 which said:

Provided that if such an address is so presented a Commission consisting of three persons, one to be appointed by the Government of the Irish Free State, one to be appointed by the Government of Northern Ireland, and one who shall be Chairman to be appointed by the British Government shall determine in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, so far as may be compatible with economic and geographic conditions, the boundaries between Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland, and for the purposes of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and of this instrument, the boundary of Northern Ireland shall be such as may be determined by such Commission.

The Unionists did not seek partition — they would prefer all Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom — and the Nationalists did not want it. Sir James Craig said partition represented 'a final settlement and supreme sacrifice in the interests of peace.'² (Craig became Lord Craigavon as a result and the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland.) The Second Dáil accepted the Treaty because it offered peace. Followers of Michael Collins and the IRB saw it, sincerely, as 'a stepping stone' to full independence. But no one appeared to want a divided Ireland. The Boundary Commission came from the nimble brain of Lloyd George who, on 7 November 1921, was under strong pressure from Sinn Féin, the Conservatives and the Ulster Unionists. 'There is just one other possible way out,' he told Tom Jones, the assistant secretary of the Cabinet who played a key role behind the scenes in the Anglo-Irish negotiations. 'I

want to find out from Griffith and Collins if they will support me on it: namely that the Twenty-six Counties should take their own Dominion Parliament and have a Boundary Commission... Griffith told de Valera, 'the arrangement would give us most of Tyrone and Fermanagh and part of Armagh, Londonderry, Down, etc.'³ (Nationalists formed the majority in these areas as well as in South Armagh and South Down.) Lloyd George threatened to resign if the Unionists rejected the Boundary Commission. They ignored it.

The Commission's mandate — 'in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants' — was vague. How would it determine political opinions, count heads, divide territory? In 1925, when the Unionists would not appoint a member, the British government named one for them. The Free State was in a one-to-two minority. Its representative, Eoin MacNeill, was an inept politician. 'The wishes of the inhabitants' went by the board. A story leaked to the *Morning Post*, a London Tory paper, indicated that the Commission planned to award much of Protestant East Donegal to the North. Apart from that, there would be no change. MacNeill resigned in disgrace. W. T. Cosgrave, head of the Free State government, hastened to London and on 3 December 1925 the three governments agreed to the existing frontier. The boundary agreement was filed with the League of Nations as an international treaty and the partition of Ireland, which till then had been in dispute, was now 'settled' and a matter of international law.

Partition was disastrous for the Nationalist urban centres of Derry, Strabane, Enniskillen and Newry in the North, and much of the Free State also. It entailed a 'sweeping change in the equilibrium of Ireland's political and economic organization', according to Denis Gwynn.⁴ It reduced the population of the Irish Free State to less than three million. It took away the industrial sector with its entrepreneurs, manufacturers and skilled labour force — Protestant Ulster's contribution to Ireland's development as a modern society. 'The exclusion of the North-East has also made the Irish Free State much more homogeneous by the loss of the large Protestant minority which is concentrated in the North,' Gwynn wrote.⁵ Partition created a confessional state in the South, dominated by the Catholic Church; and 'a Protestant State for a Protestant people' in the North, with special laws to keep the Nationalists subdued.

Also swept away in the Chequers agreement of 3 December 1925 was the Council of Ireland of the 1920 partition act, which carried over to the Treaty, permitting representatives of the two Irish parliaments to discuss common problems. The Unionists did not want it. It never met. Chequers decided that the two Irish Cabinets would hold joint sessions. None was held. No meeting of government heads took place forty years, until 1965, when Séan Lemass drove to Belfast to meet Terence O'Neill who visited Dublin a short time later. Unfortunately, the only result of their meetings was the emergence of the Rev. Ian Paisley as the leader of Protestant extremism in Northern Ireland. Branding O'Neill as an 'archtraitor', Paisley accused him of betraying Northern Ireland to 'the whore of Babylon, the Church of Rome, the enemy of liberty and freedom down through the ages.'⁶ O'Neill's crime was to urge conciliation between Protestants and Catholics. For this, Paisley called on God 'to rid us of the archtraitor, the Prime Minister, Captain Terence O'Neill,' as he told a Sandy Row, Belfast, crowd early in July 1966, shortly after Queen Elizabeth had visited the city, when two Catholics were killed and others wounded.⁷ That kind of talk was common in Sandy Row, the correspondent of the *New York Times* reported.

Paisley's prayer was answered. O'Neill resigned in the spring of 1969 as the North headed down the road to chaos. The Stormont government could not control the streets. It called in the British army to restore order when it was too late.

In its first decade, the Irish Free State made little impact on America. Many Irish-Americans considered it a creation of England and not truly independent. They disliked allegiance to the Crown, Dominion status, partition. Mindful of this, when Timothy A. Smiddy presented his credentials as Minister to Washington on 7 October 1924 he avoided being introduced to Calvin Coolidge by the British Ambassador. This small problem of protocol bothered the State Department. Until then all Imperial matters were handled by the British Embassy. Now the Irish wanted to run their own diplomacy, probably to avoid Irish-American criticism. Smiddy, a former professor of economics at University College, Cork, arrived at the White House without his 'chaperon' — the British Ambassador — the State Department protocol officer complained:

Mr Smiddy apparently considered himself a full-fledged debutante, while Mr Massey still felt that he was in the sub-debutante class. The Department thoughtfully noted that neither procedure 'shall be deemed to establish a precedent'.⁸

The first US Minister to Dublin, Frederick A. Sterling, presented his credentials on 27 February 1927, a time of renewed tension and violence in the Irish Free State. A few months later, the strong man of the government, the Vice-President of the Executive Council, Kevin O'Higgins, was assassinated. Drastic coercion laws followed. Some weeks later, de Valera led his Fianna Fáil party into the Free State Parliament, thereby conferring national legitimacy on the Treaty, partition and the state. At least he no longer was in the political wilderness.

The boundary dispute provided a minor problem of administration for the United States. Its Belfast consulate covered ten counties: the six comprising Northern Ireland; and Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan and Leitrim which, after 1922, belonged to the Irish Free State. The State Department found this arrangement untidy, and it caused 'embarrassment and annoyance'. It wanted to correct the matter as quickly as possible, but could do nothing since the boundary remained in dispute until December of 1925. The State Department

instructed the American Ambassador at London on March 18, 1924 that it did 'not desire to take such action at a time when it might imply adherence to the point of view of either of the interested governments.' The Ambassador replied that 'any action which the Department might take in this regard might be interpreted both in the United States and in Ireland as an indication of favoritism toward one or the other political factions in Ireland' and action was therefore postponed. The adjustment of the boundaries of the consular district of Belfast to conform with those of Northern Ireland was eventually made in July 1925 (at the beginning of the fiscal year 1926). The appropriate changes in the Department's publication which listed consular districts were not made, however, until after the Governments of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, and the Irish Free State had reached a boundary agreement.⁹

The adjusted boundaries of the Belfast consular district were promulgated in the 1 January 1926 issue of the quarterly publication, *Foreign Service of the United States: Diplomatic and Consular Service*, rather than in the issue dated 1 October 1925, which appeared before the Chequers agreement.

The 1948 State Department study of the Irish partition question asserted:

American representatives abroad continued to report to the Department on the development of the partition problem and to discuss it with British and Irish officials. No further statement of United States policy on the subject, however, appears to have been made until 1938.¹⁰

When de Valera took office in the spring of 1932 he began to discard those articles of the Irish Free State constitution which gave the Crown a role in the government, including the oath of allegiance and the Governor-General, who represented the King. These, of course, were also part of the Treaty, and as the National Government of J. Ramsay MacDonald, the erstwhile Labour Party leader, pointed out, de Valera's actions were in breach of that agreement. De Valera retained the land annuities as well, cash payments by Irish farmers to Britain.

These developments were reported to the State Department by the Embassy in London and the Legation in Dublin. In December 1933, the Embassy forwarded the texts of letters between J. H. Thomas, Dominions Secretary and a former railway union leader, and de Valera, which *The Times* published on 6 December 1933, the twelfth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty.

De Valera pointed out that bills then before the Oireachtas (Parliament) conflicted with the Treaty and his government wanted 'to make clear beyond any possibility of doubt the attitude of the Irish people towards the British Commonwealth with which they had never voluntarily associated.' He went on:

In every generation they have striven with such means as were at their disposal to maintain their right to exist as a distinct and independent nation, and whenever they yielded to British rule in any form they did so only under the pressure of overwhelming material force.

The Treaty of 1921 involved no fundamental change in their attitude. They submitted to the Treaty because they

were presented with the alternative of immediate war. They did not accept it as a final settlement of their relations with Great Britain. Still less did they regard the Treaty in the sense in which the British government seek to interpret it — as giving Great Britain a permanent right to interfere in their constitutional development.

De Valera assumed from a British government statement of 14 November 1933 that it had 'decided not to treat as a cause of war or other aggressive action a decision of the Irish people to sever their connection with the Commonwealth.' He asked for 'a direct and unequivocal statement' of the British government's attitude to these measures, which would also be 'the first step towards that free and friendly cooperation in matters of agreed common concern between Great Britain and Ireland...'

Although he did not want a quarrel with de Valera, Thomas was a firm guardian of imperial privileges and prerogatives. He replied that the Irish people had accepted the Treaty and confirmed it in subsequent elections. The British government could not believe that 'the Irish Free State government contemplated the final repudiation of their Treaty obligations in the manner suggested and consequently they do not feel called upon to say what attitude they would adopt in circumstances which they regard as purely hypothetical.'

The US Chargé d'Affaires, James Orr Denby, thought Thomas's reply 'was couched in markedly conciliatory terms.' Denby did not believe that de Valera would fight an election on the issue of the Republic. He described de Valera as 'a master panderer to Irish national longings, he is the motive force behind the drive toward a Republic, toward economic self-sufficiency, and toward a united Ireland.' The Cosgrave party considered his policy 'very narrow nationalism and inexpedient isolation.' De Valera's followers, particularly the younger ones, examined national issues 'not rationally but emotionally'. They scorned common sense and prudence and underestimated the constitutional status of the Free State. The more enthusiastic Republicans were banded together 'in a technically extra-legal organization known as the Irish Republican Army' which numbered between 40,000 and 50,000 and was pledged to achieve the Republic by force if necessary. De Valera's social vision was to establish 'a Christian Socialist Republic', which

Denby said would mean 'a great deal of levelling down and a redistribution of wealth.'

De Valera's popular appeal was due not so much to his personal courage and striking 'cross-roads' oratory, but to the social services he had provided — relief works, housing schemes, pensions for widows and orphans, benefits for the unemployed, Denby informed Washington. However, unlike many of his followers, de Valera was not prepared to use force to achieve his ends — at least not immediately. He would arm to establish the Republic and end partition. Presumably, Denby had in mind the Volunteer Force formed in the spring of 1934.

The purpose of the Volunteers was not to march on the North but to wean young Republicans from the IRA, which by 1934 was attempting to push de Valera from the left towards the Republic. Before he took office, de Valera met representatives of the IRA, including Seán MacBride and George Gilmore, to ask them to disband and join the Volunteer Force he planned to establish. They refused. Henceforth, relations between de Valera and the IRA deteriorated.

Denby described the North in positive terms for the State Department:

With its shipyards, linen mills and rope and twine manufactures in the industrial area around Belfast, Northern Ireland forms part of the economic life of England but as the people for the most part are Anglo-Saxon Protestants (as opposed to the Celtic Roman Catholics of the South) there are also strong racial, religious and cultural bonds with Great Britain. A great gulf exists between the loyalist leanings arising from these causes and the separatist spirit in the South.¹¹

Denby had a weak grasp of Irish politics and since his facts were often wrong his analysis suffered accordingly. He did not know that by 1934 de Valera and the IRA were almost at war. The IRA had broken with the shadow Second Dáil in November 1925. It fell back on its own authority — the Executive and Army Council — for legitimacy. De Valera followed suit a few months later; he used a defeat at the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis to withdraw with his followers and launch Fianna Fáil. By 1934, the IRA had split on the issue of Republican Congress, when its

left wing demanded a social revolution while the Twomey-MacBride leadership concentrated on pressing de Valera to declare a Republic. De Valera had his own programme. He was determined to achieve it in his own time and his own way. He was not a socialist, or a 'doctrinaire Republican', and some even questioned whether he was anti-imperialist.

A few weeks after the above despatch, Denby used Freudian terms to describe the Irish. Their problems were due to their temperament and 'a national inferiority complex'. They did not know when they were well off. They controlled their domestic and external affairs but wanted more. Materially, they would be worse off in a small Republic than as part of the British Commonwealth, although they might 'gain inner spiritual health thereby'.¹²

The US Legation then and later relied on opposition sources for its information and analysis. Some of these sources were so fanatically anti-de Valera that Denby began to distrust them. A few of de Valera's critics, he complained on 16 February 1935, 'are inclined to believe that he is not quite sane in so determined a pursuit of further independence for the Free State since the country, in their opinion, already possesses all the essentials of freedom.' He gave this opinion:

Mr de Valera has, of course, an unusually fine mind and ungracious observations of that sort in respect of his sanity are not made seriously...

The British government insisted that the Treaty was valid and the oath must stand. The annuities, £5 million a year, must be paid. The Governor-General's office must be retained and respected. De Valera complained in the Dáil that a minority in the state — meaning the Cosgrave opposition, no doubt — encouraged the British not 'to yield to claims of simple justice'.¹³

In May of 1933, the oath was removed. The Governor-General's office became a cipher with the appointment of Dónal Ó Buachalla, a 1916 veteran, who would not live in the Viceregal Lodge or attend public functions. The annuities question led to an economic war which continued till the Anglo-Irish agreement of April 1938. De Valera moved cautiously on constitutional issues, replacing the Free State constitution, which was based on the Treaty, with a new constitution in 1937.

The US constitution may be taken as a model for all republi-

can constitutions. It opens: 'We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America.' It is a secular document. No religion is mentioned. The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, adopted two years after the constitution was ratified, states explicitly: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.'

One wonders why de Valera did not follow this model which says the minimum necessary and leaves interpretation to later generations. Whatever his reasons, de Valera chose not to draft a secular constitution. His preamble refers to 'the Most Holy Trinity', which would exclude Unitarians and Jews. Article 44 (since rescinded by plebiscite) noted 'the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens.' This came dangerously close to establishing a state religion. In strict Catholic theology of that time, 'error' had no rights. By contrast, the Irish Free State constitution of 1922 is a secular document, perhaps because the Treaty forbade any religious preference [Article 16].

The good points of the 1937 constitution are that there is no reference to Crown or Commonwealth, and it proclaims Irish sovereignty over 'the whole island of Ireland', a declaration of intention rather than of fact, like the reference to Irish as 'the first official language'. (English is 'a second official language'.)¹⁴ If this is make-believe, at least it does no one any harm. Stating that woman's place was in the home [Article 41:2] was silly even in 1937; and adding that 'No law shall be enacted providing for the grant of a dissolution of marriage' was to deny the Irish state a right that even the Roman Curia recognizes and reserves to itself.

Adoption of the constitution by the electorate of the Free State, on party lines, did not alter by a square inch the territory of Northern Ireland. Yet it made clear that, despite the Boundary Agreement of 1925, partition was unacceptable to Irish Nationalists in the South as well as in the North. The demand for 're-integration of the national territory' became 'much more active' after 1937, the State Department observed

in the 1948 study of the partition problem. 'The de Valera government was firmly committed to a policy of ending partition and sought advocates for that policy not only in Ireland but also in the United States.'

Relations with the United States improved dramatically from de Valera's point of view with the appointment of John Cudahy as Minister at Dublin in 1937. Cudahy, a member of the well-known Chicago meat-packing family, was active politically in the Democratic Party and professionally as a writer and journalist. A non-career diplomat, he had spent four years as Ambassador at Warsaw and took the less important Dublin post because of his deep interest in Ireland, the homeland of his ancestors. For Cudahy, the door to de Valera's office was always open and he was the repository of much confidential information on Anglo-Irish affairs. De Valera told him partition was the fundamental issue. 'If I thought I could prevail by force I would favour the use of force,' de Valera said.¹⁵

Before Cudahy arrived in Dublin, Irish affairs received little attention in Washington. Although an Irish-American politician, James A. Farley, had propelled Roosevelt to the White House, Ireland was hardly taken seriously there, as the following colloquy between press and President indicates:

Q: Ireland is sending over the head of its Department of Commerce to talk of the possibility of reciprocal trade agreements with us. Can such an agreement be drawn by you or must there be a tariff message to the Congress?

President: No. Tell me, can we enter into a trade agreement with Ireland without the consent of Great Britain?

Q: I think so. Ireland claims they can. (Laughter)¹⁶

It was considered a good omen for Anglo-Irish relations when Malcolm MacDonald, son of the former Prime Minister, was appointed Dominions Secretary in November 1935. He was young — in his thirties — and it was rumoured that he sympathized with the goal of a united Irish state. In mid-September 1937, he and de Valera met privately in Paris. MacDonald made clear that the British were committed to the Unionists — Dublin and Belfast would have to resolve their differences themselves. 'I said we would therefore have to consider a campaign to inform British and world opinion as to the iniquity of

the whole position,' de Valera replied, according to his own notes of the meeting.¹⁷

On 17 January 1938, a new round of Anglo-Irish negotiations opened in London. De Valera's agenda was Irish unity, return of the Treaty ports, settlement of the economic war. The British wanted to talk about the defence of Ireland in the event of war. De Valera's own estimate of the international situation was that a European war was imminent. In the British view, the de Valera government faced three choices: an alliance with Britain, friendly (pro-British) neutrality, or hostility to Britain — including a possible attack on the North. From the point of view of Britain's military chiefs, the most desirable option was the first: an Anglo-Irish alliance; failing that, they would settle for friendly neutrality. They concluded that while Britain held the Treaty ports an Anglo-Irish alliance or even friendly neutrality was unlikely. Consequently, to appease a potentially hostile Ireland, they recommended handing back the Treaty ports.¹⁸ Of course, de Valera did not know that.

The talks adjourned on 19 January. De Valera told Cudahy there was 'complete deadlock' on partition. He predicted 'utter failure' except on trade and financial matters, which he considered 'trivial and not touching vital differences between Ireland and England,' as Cudahy informed the State Department.

Partition is the vital issue, he [de Valera] said, and he will insist that this be liquidated even if such insistence means complete failure of negotiations. He said Irish people are determined that Northern counties be given free opportunity to become part of Southern Ireland, no Irish leader would dare conclude any agreement which ignored this issue. He said incentive of discussions from British approach was defence but he would make no concessions on British occupation of Irish territory with partition left undecided.

De Valera sketched Ireland's strategic importance to Britain. 'Ireland controlled the north and south naval approaches to England and that it was essential in any adequate defence of England to have control of Lough Swilly and Cobh,' Cudahy reported. De Valera stressed, 'No concession could be made to British military forces in these strategic points or on Irish soil unless the crucial question of partition was resolved satis-

factorily to the Irish people.'

The conversation at Government Buildings covered a full afternoon. 'Any leader who attempted to concede Irish sovereignty would find the Irish people in open rebellion against his action,' de Valera asserted. In a non-partitioned Ireland, de Valera claimed, 'the Irish people would be friendly and co-operative partners.' He was certain that British statesmen had not forgotten the experience of an unfriendly Ireland during the 1914-18 war, and 'unless all differences between Ireland and England were liquidated' the Irish people would be equally hostile if war broke out again.

Defence and the unity of Ireland 'were inextricably one problem,' in de Valera's opinion, 'and must be solved as one.' He talked 'with great earnestness' about the importance of the North to Irish Nationalists. The Irish people had no voice in the creation of Northern Ireland. 'He spoke bitterly about the suppression of the Catholic Nationalist minority in Northern Ireland...' He did not wish to coerce the Unionists. 'All he asked was that they send representatives to a parliament in Dublin where the rule of the majority in representative government should prevail.'

De Valera blamed Northern Ireland's existence on 'the minority Conservative element in British politics, the same element which had always opposed Home Rule for Ireland.' He would urge the British to send for Lord Craigavon and tell him the welfare of the Empire depended upon a friendly Ireland, and sympathetic relations between the two islands could not be established while partition lasted. As patriots, Craigavon and his followers should yield to the will of the majority in Ireland.

Northern Ireland could not exist without British subsidies, de Valera insisted. If these were withheld, if British military forces were withdrawn, then Craigavon could be persuaded to adopt a 'reasonable' point of view. Cudahy asked for a memorandum detailing British subsidies for Northern Ireland and de Valera promised to provide it.¹⁹

Cudahy talked to de Valera on 21 January 1938 and on the following day informed Roosevelt that the negotiations were suspended and that the one important issue for the Irish was partition. Until partition was resolved, de Valera had told him, there could be no Anglo-Irish settlement. Undoing partition

was basic to good relations between Britain and Ireland, de Valera maintained. There is no doubt that Cudahy believed him and agreed with him.

Cudahy became an advocate of the de Valera position. Resolution of the Irish question would mean 'the approval by a great share of American public opinion of closer American-British relations,' which was Roosevelt's own goal. He argued that Ireland occupied a vital strategic position in the defence of Britain — which was de Valera's argument; and he suggested that the President should call in the British Ambassador, Sir Ronald Lindsay, and tell him he was 'interested in the settlement of Anglo-Irish differences' — stressing the key one, partition.

'You are the only one who can do this,' Cudahy reasoned, 'and if you do not do so I think the opportunity for cooperation between these two neighbouring islands, which means so much for the peace of the world, will be lost for a generation, at least.'

Cudahy's final argument was close to a direct quotation of de Valera about the British sending for Craigavon and appealing 'to him as a patriot ... that the defence of England is at stake...' The Minister believed 'the result will be surprising.' If Craigavon failed to respond positively, the British government would halt its subsidies and withdraw its troops and the capitulation of the Unionists would follow, presumably.²⁰

The Irish Minister at Washington, Michael MacWhite, who had formerly served as the Irish representative to the League of Nations and before entering the diplomatic service was an officer in the French Foreign Legion, officially informed the State Department of progress — or lack of progress — in London. And de Valera sent Frank Gallagher, then editor of the *Irish Press*, later head of the Government Information Bureau and always the Taoiseach's close adviser, with a personal letter to FDR. De Valera's letter stressed the 'great opportunity' for peace between Ireland and Britain provided 'the one remaining obstacle ... the partition of Ireland' was eliminated by the British government, which alone had the power to remove it. The letter concluded:

Knowing your own interest in this matter, I am writing to ask you to consider whether you could not use your influence to get the British government to realize what would be gained by

reconciliation and to get them to move whilst there is time.²¹

De Valera's diplomacy did not succeed. Roosevelt refused to be used as a lever to ease the British out of Northern Ireland.

'What do you think I should say to this letter from John Cudahy?' the President asked his Secretary of State. Cordell Hull, on 10 February, submitted a draft reply for Roosevelt's signature. Dated 9 February 1938, the tone of the letter was friendly but the message was unmistakeable: the partition of Ireland was no concern of the US government.

I quite agree with you that a final solution of Anglo-Irish relations, and of the Irish internal problem, would be an immeasurable gain from every point of view, but I am not convinced that any intervention — no matter how indirect — on our part would be wise or for that matter accomplish the effect we had in mind. In the long run considerations of national defence may well lead England voluntarily to take the action you now urge us to advocate. She is not blind to such considerations, but I feel it would be a healthier solution, even if a slower one, if her decision were reached voluntarily, and on the basis of her own self-interest, than as a result of representation from a third party.²²

Roosevelt's reply to de Valera was dated 22 February. Again the tone was friendly. The President could do nothing officially or 'accomplish anything or even discuss the matter' through diplomatic channels. Joseph Kennedy, the new US Ambassador to Britain, who was sailing that day, would 'convey a personal message from me to the Prime Minister, and to tell the Prime Minister how happy I should be if reconciliation could be brought about.' He sent warm regards to de Valera 'as an old friend' — a reference to their meeting in August 1919 when Roosevelt, then a Wall Street lawyer, had advised de Valera that his plan for raising a Dáil loan in the United States was perfectly legal.²³

Roosevelt's letter to Chamberlain and Kennedy's remarks may have encouraged the British Prime Minister to settle with de Valera in April 1938 on everything except partition. However, when the crunch came, de Valera was not prepared to break off the talks with Chamberlain on the partition issue despite his pledge to Cudahy.

The Anglo-Irish agreement was signed on 25 April 1938. The British returned the Treaty ports unconditionally. An Irish payment of £10 million resolved the land annuities dispute. The threat of a breakdown on 23 March was removed when J. W. Dulanty, the Irish High Commissioner in London, saw Kennedy who talked to Chamberlain.²⁴ The issue was trade duties on Northern goods and despite his united Ireland sentiments de Valera would not give way.

There was no defence pact with Britain because there was no united Ireland. According to the British, de Valera did not seem enthusiastic about getting the ports: he complained about the cost of maintaining them. But that may have been a bargaining ploy. In return, the British got Éire's 'friendly neutrality,' more or less as the War Office had predicted. De Valera made clear that partition and defence were 'one problem', as he told Cudahy. Éire would not be used as a base for an attack on the United Kingdom, including the North, despite partition.

Republicans on de Valera's left were suspicious of the talks. Mary MacSwiney was convinced that there must be a secret alliance. In a letter to the *Irish Independent* on 20 January, she wrote that there could be no compromise on Irish unity in exchange for trade or financial benefits. This was a widely held opinion, de Valera told Cudahy. 'No leader would dare go counter to such a sentiment and any leader who did would be repudiated...'

Cudahy's discussion of de Valera's character fascinated officials at the State Department. When the American Minister asked the Irish leader about Chamberlain's 'personality', de Valera replied that the British Prime Minister was 'the proponent of a cause, just as he, de Valera, was, and the cause was the thing. The individual who projected the cause was merely an instrument.'

The comment astonished Cudahy. 'I have never heard a more cold-blooded analysis of the human equation in negotiation,' he wrote.

Pierrepoint Moffat, head of the European Affairs division, passed Cudahy's despatch to his superiors, James C. Dunn and Sumner Welles, saying it 'sets forth rather dramatically the personality of Mr de Valera, his complete disregard of the human equation in negotiations, and his uncompromising pursuit of long-term objectives.'²⁵

De Valera saw himself as the instrument of Irish Nationalism and his foreign policy must advance reunification. His resources were limited. As in 1919-21, American opinion was one of these resources. Despite later attempts by Roosevelt to portray de Valera as 'dreamy', 'impractical' and 'romantic', he was a realist in international politics. By following the recommendation of the War Office on the ports, Chamberlain guarded the imperial interest, although Churchill disagreed:

These ports are, in fact, the sentinel towers of the western approaches, by which the 45 million people in this Island so enormously depend on foreign food for their daily bread, and by which they carry on their trade, which is equally important to their existence.

The primary purpose of the ports, Churchill explained, was the defence of Britain. If the ports or any part of Ireland fell into enemy hands, 'then the matter would pass into the region of force, and if we possessed superior forces we should be able to rectify the situation,' he added.

But what guarantee have you that Southern Ireland, or the Irish Republic, as they claim to be — and you do not contradict them — will not declare neutrality if we are engaged in war with some powerful nation? The first step certainly which such an enemy might take would be to offer complete immunity of every kind to Southern Ireland if she would remain neutral. What answer will Mr de Valera or his successors — the world does not end with the life of any man — what answer will Mr de Valera give?

De Valera had given no guarantees, made no promises, Churchill warned. 'Mr de Valera has given no undertaking, except to fight against partition as the main object of his life. But behind and beneath him there are other forces in Ireland. The dark forces in Ireland renew themselves from year to year. When some are conciliated, others present themselves. They are very powerful in Ireland now. . . . Therefore, I say that the ports may be denied to us in the hour of need and we may be hampered in the gravest manner in protecting the British population from privation, and even starvation. Who would wish to put his head in such a noose?'²⁶

Churchill claimed the 1938 Anglo-Irish agreement repre-

sented 'astonishing triumphs' for de Valera. The latter told the *Irish Press* more soberly: 'Any agreement which leaves our country partitioned can only be a partial agreement.' He thought it made it easier for the British government to end partition since its parliament had created it. 'Without British force and British funds, partition could not continue for any length of time,' he went on. 'The act creating partition envisaged the ultimate unity of Ireland. So did the Treaty. In these provision was made for safeguarding the rights of the minorities both by the system of proportional representation and by the clauses requiring equality of treatment for religious denominations.' De Valera said:

These provisions have been set aside or ignored by the Belfast government, and no protest has been made by the British. Gerrymandering and discrimination on religious grounds have deprived the Nationalists, who constitute over one-third of the population, and are the largest religious group, of their natural rights. The position is intolerable.²⁷

In mid-March 1938, before the agreement was made with the British, de Valera told Cudahy of Éire's role in a future war. Because of British obstinacy on partition, a defence pact with the United Kingdom was not possible. 'The position of Ireland would be one of neutrality with the understanding that Ireland would never take sides with any enemy of Great Britain.' [Emphasis added].

While suggesting that Ireland must inevitably, because of its position, align its foreign policy with Britain, de Valera stated the basis of his cultural Nationalism.

He [de Valera] said it was quite apparent that in external affairs Ireland must by necessity of events take a course parallel to England. This was made more manifest by the recent events in Austria and he was satisfied that Ireland on the continent would suffer a fate similar to Austria. England acted as a shield against the continent threatened with war and he was convinced that the international political outlook of Ireland would more and more fuse with that of England. He was only concerned that in this process the Irish race might be absorbed by the English, and for this reason he stressed the importance of the Irish language as a distinct racial influence of Irish permanency.²⁸

In these conversations de Valera cautioned Cudahy on the need for confidentiality, since he considered the State Department pro-British.²⁹ No diplomat is bound by such pledges, of course, since he too is an 'instrument' of his country's policies.

Cudahy analyzed the Anglo-Irish agreement for the State Department in a despatch dated 2 May 1938. Calling the decision to surrender the Treaty ports a 'most impressive concession' by Britain since they 'dominate the trade routes to the British Isles,' he explained:

Berehaven is the most westerly port which can be used in any system of transatlantic convoy; Cobh, shielded by Spike Island and containing the dockyard of Haulbowline, is an ideal base for naval forces protecting the vital trade to Great Britain from the North Atlantic and from the South Atlantic approaches to the English Channel; Lough Swilly is the only naval base for vessels passing the North Atlantic coast of Ireland. However, these Irish ports in the opinion of strategists have a far-reaching significance in a blockade which may extend from Norway to the Faroe Islands, to Ireland, south to Ushant Island and the French coast of the Bay of Biscay.

Churchill claimed in his war memoirs, *The Gathering Storm*, published in 1948, that in 1921, during the Treaty negotiations, he had brought Admiral Beatty to the Colonial Office to explain to Michael Collins 'the importance of these ports to our whole system of bringing supplies into Britain.' He added: 'Collins was immediately convinced. 'Of course you must have the ports,' he said, 'they are necessary for your life.' Thus the matter was arranged, and everything had worked smoothly in the sixteen years that had passed.'

In handing over the ports unconditionally — there was no secret agreement to return them in time of war, de Valera informed the Dáil on 28 April — Britain scrapped the defence clauses of the Treaty. There were no limitations or restrictions on the sovereignty of the Irish state other than those it wished to retain, such as the External Relations Act. Under the Act, enacted in 1936, Éire retained a tenuous link with the Crown and Commonwealth on the accreditation of Irish diplomats whose credentials were signed by the King.

On the annuities, which many in Ireland considered 'ransom money', the British Exchequer would receive the £10 million within six months, a settlement de Valera described as 'in the national interest'.

The Opposition leader, W. T. Cosgrave, 'made an unimpressive argument,' according to Cudahy. His government could have taken over the ports but considered the cost of maintenance, a half-million pounds a year, too high, the Fine Gael leader told the Dáil. The Labour Party leader, William Norton, remarked that the agreement was silent on partition, settlement of which was essential to lasting reconciliation with Britain — a statement he might have borrowed from de Valera. Only Jim Larkin voted against ratification of the agreement.³⁰

The *Irish Independent*, which often spoke for the Church and the Opposition, denounced de Valera for selling out the Nationalists of the North and neutrality:

The Six Counties have been abandoned without even an expression of sympathy; the land annuities of which de Valera said over and over again he would never pay one penny, are impliedly admitted as a liability to be met by a payment of £10 million; and the British are evacuating the Treaty ports, presumably to have them henceforth maintained by the Irish taxpayers as outposts of defence for Great Britain. The Ministers who proclaimed that they would 'smash their way out of the British Empire' have marched into it on the ruins of Irish agriculture and over the corpse of Irish neutrality... Our neutrality is abandoned and we are, in effect, committed to an offensive and defensive alliance with Great Britain involving this country in all the horrors of war.³¹

The conclusion on neutrality was certainly wrong — as wrong as the prediction that the agreement would involve Ireland 'in all the horrors of war'.

After the Dáil vote, Cudahy talked with de Valera in his chambers. The Taoiseach restated the national objective of a united Ireland. The agreement had received 'unanimous acceptance' in the country, Cudahy observed, which was hardly accurate, since extreme Republicans, Fine Gael, the *Irish Independent* and perhaps some bishops opposed it. Northern Nationalists might feel betrayed again. The agreement had left the Opposition with no arguments other than that 'it should

have been done before.' Cudahy concluded:

In politics the electorate is not concerned with history. The voters think in terms of the present and more emphatically of the future ... Mr de Valera has again illustrated his consummate skill as a political tactician and his daring. With characteristic resolution and courage he staked everything on the London negotiations and in the results achieved the applause of the country... Mr de Valera's position was never more impregnable and there does not now appear any threat, actual or potential, to his enormous prestige as the dictator of the country.

De Valera told the admiring envoy that he would have liked to compliment Chamberlain publicly on the agreement, but feared his praise would be misinterpreted. 'As it was,' Cudahy claimed, 'he said, there was considerable adverse criticism that he appeared to be on too friendly terms with the British.'³²

The Times (London) thought the agreement might 'mark the beginning of a new era of confidence and of appeasement in Anglo-Irish relations.' Malcolm MacDonald, winding up debate in the Commons, saw the agreement benefiting international relations. 'There are other countries outside the Empire,' he reminded the House. 'There are the United States, where Irishmen take a great part in foreign affairs and in politics, and in moulding the international relations of that country. One has but to read the American press to see how this series of Agreements has resulted in improving the friendly relations which exist between the United States and this country...'³³

The last act in the drama was played at 6 o'clock in the evening of 11 July 1938 when British troops left Spike Island, and two hours later de Valera raised the tricolour over the harbour defences. In Cobh he received an address of welcome. And at Midleton he opened a Volunteers' hall and made a short speech.

'On behalf of the living generations I thank Almighty God that in our time He has seen fit to reward the sacrifices and efforts of the past, and I pray that He may be willing in our time also to see brought to final success the efforts of those who preceded us, by restoring the unity of our country and bringing the whole of this island again into the possession of the Irish

people,' the Taoiseach declared.³⁴

'Ireland to maintain friendly neutrality with Great Britain and call on latter to protect its coasts only in case of threatened attack by third power,' the Dublin Legation informed Washington during the Munich crisis. 'Ireland will refrain, if possible, from issuing any proclamation of neutrality.'³⁵

De Valera was at Geneva, presiding over the Assembly of the League of Nations, and Joe Walshe, secretary of the Department of External Affairs, answered the US Legation's queries. 'Should any third country endeavour to use Ireland as a base for attack against Great Britain, Ireland, because of its small and poorly equipped army and lack of a navy being in no position to prevent this, would then invite England to enforce its neutrality,' he said.³⁶ De Valera would not have put it in quite that way.

On 17 October, after the Munich pact, the Beaverbrook *Evening Standard* published an interview with de Valera, in which he again damned partition. There was no analogy with the Sudetenland, he said. Party politics in Britain created partition in Ireland and kept it going. Certain factors gave it a religious complexion; but it was not based on religion. In the event of war, it represented a highly dangerous element for England and Ireland.

'Discontent, particularly along the border, is widespread,' de Valera said, 'and if a new war were to come while partition lasts the sentiments of the majority of the Irish people would be exactly those of 1914 and after.' That made a plain point obvious: 'and after' included the 1916 rebellion. An independent united Ireland would cooperate with Britain to resist a common attack, but not while Ireland was partitioned.

If such a war occurred while British forces were in occupation of any part of Ireland, Irish sentiment would definitely be hostile to any cooperation. The present position is a source of danger to us and should be brought to an end. I originally entered Irish politics because of threatened partition. I intend to dedicate what life is left to me wiping it out....

The *Daily Telegraph* next morning quoted Lord Craigavon's reply. The Unionist Premier said: 'I can only repeat the old battle-cry of Northern Ireland, 'No Surrender'.'

In May of 1939, Frank Aiken, the Minister for Defence, sent the army's Assistant Chief-of-Staff, Colonel Michael J. Costello, to Washington to buy arms. Ireland must be able to defend itself and its policy of neutrality when war broke out in Europe, and few doubted that war was more than a few months away.

Michael Joseph Costello — Mickey Joe — was the Irish army's most talented officer. He knew America and its military well, for he had studied at Fort Leavenworth, in 1926-7, with his colleague, Major-General Hugo MacNeill. He soon discovered that the Roosevelt administration would sell no arms to Ireland unless the British gave permission. America, it seemed, did not recognize Éire as a fully sovereign state.

The chief of the arms control division at the State Department, Joseph Green, informed the British Embassy of Costello's mission. He explained, according to his memorandum, 'the hesitation of this government to facilitate the purchase of arms — artillery in particular — in this country by the Irish government without definite assurance that such purchases would be agreeable to the British government.'³⁷

Denied access to arms, Colonel Costello decided to return home. He was booked to sail from New York when the Irish Legation told him to return to Washington because of an urgent call from the State Department that he might be able 'to enter into contracts with American manufacturers for artillery and artillery ammunition.'³⁸ On the same day, Green was told by the British Embassy that Ambassador Sir Ronald Lindsay had learned from the Foreign Office that it had no objection to the Irish arms mission. 'Okay without reservations' was Green's paraphrase of the message.³⁹

However, the British Embassy wanted a list of Costello's purchases. Green would say no more than that they were 'arms, ammunition and implements of war' — as defined in the President's proclamation dealing with such sales. The actual amounts would be published in the monthly press release of arms export licences issued by the State Department.⁴⁰

Green had been trying to pump Costello for information from the start of his mission. At a dinner in the Irish Legation on 17 May, Green asked Costello about the purpose of the arms. Were they intended for use against Northern Ireland, he wondered?

He [Costello] assured me that this was not the case. He

explained that his government had entered into a secret agreement with the British government to support Great Britain to the fullest extent in case of a war with Germany. He went into some detail as to the terms of that agreement, which envisaged the fullest military and naval cooperation and the use of all the Irish armed forces. He said that, for political reasons, the very existence of this agreement could not at present be made known to the Irish people. He said that he could assure me most positively that the arms which he was attempting to purchase would not be used against Northern Ireland; that the Irish government fully realized that it would be disastrous to Ireland to attempt 'to stab England in the back' in the event of a war with Germany; and that the only hope of obtaining the annexation of Northern Ireland lay not in conquest but in the good will which would result in fighting shoulder to shoulder against Germany.

According to Green, Costello informed him that the Irish had tried to purchase supplies in Britain but were told that the output of arms there was insufficient for Britain's own immediate needs. They advised the Irish to send a military mission to the United States and that their military attaché would cooperate with it. As head of mission, Costello had wanted to do this; but 'the Irish government was fearful that, should its cooperation with the British government become known to Irish-Americans, it might be subjected to widespread criticism in this country which would have dangerous repercussions in Ireland.' He said that Sir Ronald Lindsay was kept fully informed of what he (Costello) was doing, but had not been asked 'to take any active steps.' Green replied that he did not believe that active cooperation by the British Embassy in his mission was necessary to accomplish the end which he had in view, 'but that it might be exceedingly helpful if he were to repeat our conversation to his Minister and if his Minister were to ask Sir Ronald to take advantage of some convenient occasion to inform me that he was fully cognizant of Colonel Costello's mission in the US and that he hoped that the Colonel would succeed in carrying out what he was trying to do.'

Next morning, Joe Green informed the Assistant Secretary of War of this conversation. He was told that one reason why Colonel Costello may have been anxious to explain his mission

in that way was because the head of US Ordnance had asked him 'What use the Irish government intended to put the arms desired if they were obtained?' Costello replied, 'Your guess is as good as mine.' Colonel Johnson, the Assistant Secretary, went on to say that this remark had not 'served to remove the doubts which several officers of the War Department already had and which he knew were shared by the White House and by officers in the Department of State.'

These doubts led Colonel Johnson to issue instructions that while Colonel Costello was to be treated with every courtesy and assisted in purchasing some of the arms listed in his memorandum, 'means should be found to place so many obstacles in his path in the obtaining of the artillery desired that it could not possibly be delivered within two years.' However, if the British Ambassador made the statement suggested by Green, Colonel Johnson 'would immediately modify those instructions so that the artillery would be dealt with on the same terms as the other arms listed.'⁴¹

Six days later when Green informed the British Embassy of Costello's mission, the Counsellor said 'he thought it probable that everything which Colonel Costello had told me in regard to those proposed purchases of arms was true but that he personally knew nothing about the matter and did not believe that Sir Ronald had any definite information.'⁴²

The contradictions in the various accounts of this mission probably owe something to Colonel Costello's efforts to conclude his task successfully, as well as to the bureaucratic and policy obstacles placed in his path. Certainly, there was no secret agreement with Britain on defence, stemming from the agreement of 25 April 1938. But there was a mutual understanding that Ireland — Éire of the new constitution — would not be a base against Britain, and no doubt this is what Costello tried to stress. What is not in doubt is that the British government had a veto over Irish arms purchases in the United States.

'The sequel was that, with the exception of the 155 mm guns for the defence of Cork Harbour and the Shannon estuary, I got what I needed,' Lieut-General Costello recalled forty-four years later. The arms were not delivered because the Department of Defence considered the cost too high. Actually, said General Costello, US prices were lower than those charged by the British.⁴³ The result was that the Irish army was totally

dependent upon Britain for its wartime military supplies.

De Valera told Cudahy that the arms mission was successful. Costello had purchased anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, but the cost of ammunition was prohibitive — 'twice as much as the same ammunition cost in Europe,' the US Minister told Washington.⁴⁴

The Irish civil service, which took its cue from the British civil service on most matters, apparently reasoned that Britain would take care of Ireland's arms needs and that anyway neutrality could not be sustained. De Valera did not involve himself in details of defence, said General Costello. He left these matters to the experts. The trouble was that the experts were not listened to either.

The incident provides a lesson in international politics. US foreign policy was pro-British. Ireland was in the British sphere of influence and considered hostile to Britain. The US paid little attention to Irish sovereignty before its diplomatic note in February 1944 to close down Axis missions in Dublin.

Even de Valera himself had little faith that Irish neutrality would succeed. Cudahy had a conversation with him on 14 August 1939 in Government Buildings about 'Ireland and the next war.' Ireland and the United States occupied 'analogous positions', Cudahy argued. 'In a contest between the totalitarian concept and that of Republicanism the sympathy of the American and Irish people must go with the democracies.'

De Valera agreed. He thought that in a long war Ireland inevitably would be drawn in on the side of Britain and France. 'Even in the face of the greatest hostile provocation,' the Irish government would try to maintain neutrality. But Britain's enemies would not permit unrestricted access to the United Kingdom market. 'Ireland could not avoid being involved in a general war in Europe,' de Valera feared.

Cudahy added:

He went on to say that geography not ideology or political opinion determined the position of Ireland in the next war. Nature had determined England as a shield for Ireland against the storms of the continent, and in the wars of the past Ireland has been spared invasion because of this protective physical proximity of England. But all this had been changed by modern methods of transportation and communication.

The two islands were now one, strategically, and in any war of proportions, it was an ignorant viewpoint which thought that Ireland could witness with indifference a conquered England. Certainly Ireland's turn would be next.

Shipping food to England might be 'the proximate cause' to drag Ireland into war on the side of Britain, de Valera surmised. 'Do you think the enemy would permit us to load English ships unmolested?' he asked, when Cudahy suggested that Britain could transport Irish livestock. 'No, they would strike at our ports, demolish them, and put an end to the whole traffic. I am no soldier, but I know enough about war to know that the military approach would be to destroy Irish ports and put Ireland out, as a supplier of sustenance to England. That would be far more simple and effective than to continue an unnecessary surveillance of the Irish Sea.'

Since Ireland's trade with Britain made up nearly 95% of the state's external commerce, it could not be discontinued without great financial loss and a drastic fall in the Irish standard of living. Any suggestion of an embargo on trade to Britain was unacceptable.

Most people in Ireland considered the spending of money on defence 'egregious folly', de Valera went on. They argued that it was futile for Ireland to resist invasion by a great power. 'Since no military effort could be adequate, why waste money on an army at all?' De Valera answered his own question thus — according to Cudahy's paraphrase of his remarks:

His policy of military preparation was opposed by the hostile opposition of the majority and was very unpopular, he said, but he was determined to go on and get the country ready for the war which every thoughtful statesman in Europe now realized was inevitable.⁴⁵

CHAPTER THREE

DE VALERA AND THE IRA IN THE WAR YEARS

A partitioned Ireland could not join Britain in war, de Valera reasoned in 1938. Like the IRB in 1914–16, the IRA would take the opportunity offered by war to rebel against Britain in the North with the help of Germany. The examples of the first world war were always in de Valera's mind. He had entered politics as an Irish Volunteer in 1914. He had participated in the rebellion of 1916. He had been condemned to death, released in a British amnesty and had seen Nationalist Ireland turn on John Redmond, who had put the country in the war on Britain's side. De Valera would not make Redmond's mistake.

One night in March 1939, de Valera discussed the coming war with William Bullitt, the US Ambassador at Paris. 'De Valera appeared to be genuinely worried about present relations between Great Britain and Ireland,' Bullitt reported the next day. 'He said the feeling against England was rapidly mounting in Ireland because of the refusal of the British to do anything to further union of the six Northern counties with the Irish Free State.' A united Ireland, de Valera believed, would

see England as strong as possible. Under the present circumstances if war should break out he expected public opinion in Ireland to follow much the same course that it followed in the war of 1914: there would be first great sympathy on the part of many Irishmen for the British cause; but sympathy would be followed by intense hostility, difficulties and disorders as soon as the British should attempt to conscript the Catholic Irishmen of the Northern counties. In the end Ireland probably would be once more in revolt and he and his associates would be in the same position that the Redmondites were in at the end of the last war.¹

Making allowance for the fact that de Valera was attempting to get Roosevelt's ear in stressing the dangers of partition, the fact

that his prediction was wrong is due to two reasons: first, despite the demands of the Unionists, Britain did not conscript the North; second, the IRA lacked leaders of the calibre of Tom Clarke and Seán MacDermott who in 1914-16 had guided the IRB to rebellion, and there was no John Devoy or Joe McGarrity to build support in the United States. Seán Russell, Chief-of-Staff of the IRA, was in hiding in America when the war in Europe began. He died in August 1940 aboard a German submarine off the coast of Ireland. McGarrity was ill for months before his death, also in August 1940. Consequently, 'England's difficulty' did not become 'Ireland's opportunity' in the second world war.

Germany opened relations with the IRA early in 1939, welcomed Russell to Berlin in May 1940, put him aboard a U-boat for Ireland — but sent no arms ship like the *Aud*. The IRA frittered away its manpower in pointless 'operations'. Unlike de Valera, its leaders seemed not to realize the potential for rebellion in the Nationalist North. Finally, unlike Redmond, de Valera remained the unchallenged leader of Irish Nationalism throughout the war years.

On 31 August 1939, the German Minister, Eduard Hempel, called on de Valera as Minister for External Affairs to gauge his attitude to the war which would begin the following day. Hempel was a diplomat of the old school and de Valera trusted him. De Valera warned that Germany must not interfere in the partition issue through 'the anti-British radical Nationalist group', as Hempel put it, meaning the IRA.²

On 1 September, Germany invaded Poland. On 3 September, Britain went to war and de Valera announced Éire's neutrality 'to keep our people safe from such consequences as would be involved by being in the war,' he told the Dáil on 29 September. Two days after Britain's declaration of war, Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, asked the Naval Staff for a special report 'upon the questions arising from the so-called neutrality of the so-called Éire'. He wanted answers to, among other questions, the 'possible succouring of U-boats by Irish malcontents in West of Ireland inlets? If they throw bombs in London why should they not supply fuel to U-boats?'³

On 27 September, the British government appointed Sir John Maffey, former Governor-General of the Sudan, 'Repre-

sentative' in Dublin. 'The extreme Republican element in Éire had always opposed having a British Minister in Éire not to be put on the same basis as the Dominions,' Dulanty told Joe Kennedy. (He may have said 'High Commissioner'.) 'Germany has a Minister to Éire and Éire is neutral so if we did not have a British Minister now where would neutrality be?'⁴

On 30 September, Cudahy reported to Cordell Hull: 'The neutrality of Ireland is bitterly criticized by IRA followers as pro-England and these critics consider de Valera 'in the pocket' of the Chamberlain government.'⁵ When the Royal Navy sought 'facilities' at Berehaven, de Valera said no. Éire was neutral. 'The question of the ports was at the very nerve centre of public interest in that matter, and the public mood would react with intense violence to any action invalidating their integrity,' he told Maffey.⁶

Irish neutrality won national endorsement. The Republican proposition that 'England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity' received no encouragement, not even among perfervid Nationalists in the North. The IRA had no leader with a national reputation. When Russell departed secretly for the United States, five months before the war began, his successor, Stephen Hayes, was unknown outside Gaelic football circles in his native Wexford. His claim to leadership rested on the fact that he had helped win a majority of delegates for Russell's 'action plan' at the 1938 IRA convention.

The 'action and propaganda' campaign which opened in England nine months later was loosely based on an IRA plan of the late 1920s to sabotage British war mobilization when the Soviet Union was expected to be the enemy. In McGarrity's mind there was the precedent of the Clan's 1880s dynamite campaign which cost no lives. Both concepts were incorporated in the S-Plan drafted by Jim O'Donovan, Collins's 'Director of Chemicals' against the Black-and-Tans. The bombing campaign was no more than a minor inconvenience to the British and accomplished nothing for the Irish cause. By 24 July 1939, there had been 127 explosions, no loss of life and sixty-six members of the IRA were serving prison sentences, according to the Home Secretary, who introduced the Prevention of Violence Bill on the same day. It became law on 28 July — a record. The IRA campaign ended shortly after the war began — except for minor

explosions in public places and incendiarism.

The S-Plan was an 'action and propaganda' directive. In the copy seized by Scotland Yard, the propaganda section was left blank. There was no attempt to inform the public of the purpose of the campaign. 'In order to exercise maximum world effect, the diversion must be carried out at a time when no major war or world crisis is on,' the opening paragraph stated — and by any reckoning 1939 was a bad year for that.⁷ The campaign gave de Valera his chance to pass anti-IRA laws — the Offences Against the State Act. On 22 August, he brought into force those parts of the Act which empowered the government to establish a Special Criminal Court of army officers and intern IRA suspects. From his point of view, the timing was excellent.

The S-Plan leaned heavily on the Clan for its propaganda, but the campaign drew little notice in America. The Irish Republican Alliance, a front organization of Clan-na-Gael, pledged 'moral and financial support to the IRA in its new offensive against the British Empire,' its secretary, the editor of the *Irish Republic*, told a press conference in New York. Some irate reader sent the clipping from the city's most popular morning newspaper to the State Department demanding an explanation.⁸

McGarrity tried to interest the Irish of Philadelphia and a 'mass meeting' on 19 February 1939 was addressed by two members of the House of Representatives, James J. McGranery — President Truman's Attorney-General more than a decade later — and Francis J. Myers. They called for a united Ireland and an 'impartial arbitration commission' to resolve the partition question. McGranery asked the President 'to avail us five minutes of your precious time' to discuss the matter, but received no reply. The White House passed his letter to the State Department where it was filed.

The bombing campaign created little interest among the American Irish. The Clan had 'only a skeleton of an organization', according to Cornelius Neenan, its former secretary and one time IRA representative in America, who opposed both Russell and the campaign. Neenan said 'Joe McGarrity was completely captivated by the Russell programme for sabotage in England.' But even McGarrity could not rekindle the enthusiasm of 1919-21. The Clan 'had little influence other than in New York, and possibly San Francisco,' Neenan noted in a letter forty years later to McGarrity's daughter, Mary Shore.

McGarrity accompanied Russell on his tour of Irish centres to explain the campaign. The FBI arrested Russell in Detroit when King George VI was in Windsor, Ontario, just across the river. McGranery and seventy-four members of Congress issued a public protest and he was freed on bond and disappeared from public view.

De Valera had planned to visit America on the 20th anniversary of his first tour and to preach against partition. He cancelled when Chamberlain threatened to extend conscription to the North, but more likely his decision was influenced by Russell's presence in America. According to Neenan, no one in the Clan knew Russell was coming, including McGarrity, who left a sick bed to travel to New York where he told the IRA leader, 'You are not to move from this country until I tell you.'

At Coventry on 25 August 1939, a bomb exploded in the main shopping street, killing five people and injuring about a dozen seriously. The bomb was in an abandoned carrier-bicycle. The cyclist was thought to have panicked as the hands of the alarm clock moved to the appointed time, 2.30 pm. However, the IRA's O/C Britain for part of the campaign, Tony Magan, in a lecture at the Curragh Internment Camp in 1958, said the placing of the bomb was deliberate, a reprisal for the mistreatment of an old Irish woman by the British authorities who arrested her as an IRA supporter. The bomber himself, in an interview with Radio Éireann on the fortieth anniversary, said he had been instructed to place the bicycle where he left it.

Three men and two women were charged with murder. Peter Barnes and James Richards, whose real name was James McCormick, were found guilty on 14 December and sentenced to death. The others were acquitted. Barnes and McCormick were members of the IRA. Neither man had placed the bomb; McCormick allegedly made it. 'I wish to state that the part I took in these explosions since I came to England I have done for a just cause,' McCormick said. 'As a soldier of the Irish Republican Army I am not afraid to die, as I am doing it for a just cause. I say in conclusion, God bless Ireland and God bless the men who have fought and died for her. Thank you, my lord.' It was a manly speech. In her book on the Coventry explosion, Letitia Fairfield comments, 'Cheerful indifference to a capital charge and the ensuing sentence is not necessarily a sign of

virtue.... In James Richards [McCormick] it appeared to spring genuinely from the satisfaction a man feels at having performed what he believes to be his highest duty.'

Barnes and McCormick were to die on 7 February 1940. Late Friday, 2 February, President Roosevelt made a telephone call to Sumner Welles, the Under-Secretary of State, telling him to inform the British Ambassador, Lord Lothian, that he (Roosevelt) 'had been advised — not officially but through a personal friend — of the impending execution in England on 5 February [sic] of certain Irish terrorists.' Welles's memorandum states what happened next:

I told the Ambassador that the President desired me to say to him, naturally informally and quite unofficially, that the President, having in mind his own experience as Governor of the State of New York, wondered whether these executions, in view of the effect which they might have on certain sections of public opinion, might not be deferred. The President's thought was that a reprieve might be granted by the proper authorities in England for a period of six months and if conditions at the expiration of that period then changed, a further brief reprieve might then be granted.

The Ambassador said that he had discussed this matter with the Irish Minister on February 1 and had sent a recommendation in this very sense to his own government. He said that he was perfectly glad to have this message from the President; that he fully shared the opinions expressed by the President and that he would immediately telegraph his government communicating this message.¹⁰

Despite Roosevelt's intervention, Barnes and McCormick were hanged on the appointed day, 7 February. Nationalist Ireland went into mourning. Shops, theatres and cinemas closed. Masses were celebrated for the dead men. It was the kind of national reaction de Valera had feared. He talked to Maffey about a reprieve and wrote Anthony Eden on 29 January, saying, 'It will matter little that Barnes and Richards [McCormick] have been found guilty of murder. With the background of our history and the existence of partition many will refuse to regard their action in that light. They will think only of the cause these man had in mind to serve.' He appealed to Chamberlain on 2 February. A reprieve would 'secure better relations

between the people of Ireland and the people of Britain,' he wrote. 'We have felt unable to act as you wish,' Chamberlain replied.¹¹

In his St. Patrick's Day broadcast to America in 1940, de Valera said he was speaking from 'the proud capital of a liberated people, at least so far as those who dwell in five-sixths of our island are concerned.' He spoke of partition:

So hateful was the division of Ireland to Irishmen of the North, no less than those of the East and the South and the West, that not a single Irish representative could get himself to vote for it. The majority of our people regarded partition with horror, the minority acquiesced reluctantly ... The people of the partitioned area were not consulted before being cut off, and in one half of the area the people in a free local plebiscite would tomorrow vote for reunion.

The division of Ireland was the equivalent of taking Massachusetts or Vermont from the Union by force, de Valera said. 'So it is futile to look for any real friendship between Ireland and Britain while partition lasts.' He told the Associated Press: 'The political task that remains for us, therefore, is securing extension of that freedom to the whole national territory.'

In an interview on 19 March with Hugh Smith, Dublin correspondent of the *New York Times*, de Valera said he looked to the support of the Irish throughout the world to end partition. Those who complained that this was coercion of Ulster, were themselves coercing the Nationalists of Tyrone and Fermanagh, South Down, South Armagh and Derry City. 'Such an obvious denial of democratic right cannot persist,' de Valera warned.¹²

During the 'phoney war', from September 1939 to May 1940, de Valera battled the IRA on the streets, in the courts and in prisons. Gerald Boland, newly appointed Minister for Justice, signed internment orders for seventy men who, he was 'satisfied', were members of the IRA, an illegal organization. On 23 October 1939, one suspect, Patrick McGrath, a 1916 veteran, joined two others in a hunger strike, the old method of prison struggle during the War of Independence.

'I reported de Valera's grim determination not to give way and his final change of heart when the prisoners were on the

verge of death,' Cudahy informed Washington as the strikers were removed to hospital, then permitted to go free.

Cudahy next reported that fifty-three interned prisoners 'were unconditionally released on 25 November as a result of an order in the High Court releasing one of the prisoners in *habeas corpus* proceedings on the ground that the warrant of arrest and detention was invalid.'¹³

Seán MacBride, a former Chief-of-Staff of the IRA and by 1939 a leading barrister, argued that the law conferring power of internment on a Minister was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court upheld him. In a discussion with Cudahy on Christmas Day of 1939, the top official at the Department of External Affairs, Joseph Walshe, contended that the government should have the right to intern suspects 'in the interests of the state'. The right of the state to defend itself took precedence over the rights of citizens. The law should be amended accordingly. For the safety of the state, the government must have authority to make preventive arrests and detain suspects.¹⁴

The statute was duly amended and became law in February 1940. By changing one word, internment was made legal. Cudahy commented that when de Valera was found guilty of violating his own constitution he merely altered the law. This was the kind of practice he denounced when it occurred in the North, Cudahy noted.

In their Christmas Day discussion, Walshe asserted that the circumstances were different in the North, where the rights of Nationalists were denied by the Unionists. A few days earlier, sixty Republican internees had taken control of Derry prison. They held off police and troops for five hours and the country rang with their praises. Walshe said that in the North internment was a punitive measure designed to cow Nationalists. The struggle for Irish unity was a just cause. The Irish government, on the other hand, proposed internment to guard the Irish state from its enemies. Cudahy's despatch went on:

Mr Walshe referred to the two death sentences passed by the British court in the Coventry explosion case and said that his government had made official representations to the British government in the sense that it considered these death sentences too severe and unjustified. He said that, although the prisoners refused to testify, the proceedings had established

that the bomb had exploded prematurely and that the deaths and injuries which it had caused had not been intentional and moreover that the past activities of the IRA in England had proven that it was not the intention to take life but only to cause material damage.

He expressed a certain admiration for the courage and stoicism displayed by the prisoners during the trial.

The US diplomat found difficulty with Walshe's reasoning that a foreign government may not do to the IRA what the Irish government proposed to do — 'arrest its own citizens and hold them indefinitely without trial.' De Valera had insisted many times that the IRA had no popular support 'and should not be taken too seriously,' but 'the government knows from previous and personal experience that any body of fanatically patriotic Irishmen cannot be easily suppressed and are always dangerous.'¹⁵

The Cudahy-Walshe discussion took place two days after the dramatic raid on the Magazine Fort, at the entrance to the Phoenix Park, Dublin, when IRA Volunteers overpowered the ten-man guard and loaded a half-dozen lorries with 1,085,299 rounds of .303 and .45 ammunition, the bulk of the Defence Forces' supplies. The lorries sped north towards the border and were lost in the night.

'The raid on the Magazine Fort created consternation in the city,' Cudahy reported to Washington. 'It was the first attack on the government by the IRA and no one, including the government, knew whether it was merely a 'stunt' ... or whether the attack was preliminary to some more serious action.'

Cudahy's sources were unsure what the IRA planned to do with the ammunition. Some speculated that the organization might mount an attack on the North. Others dismissed it as a publicity move. The Minister reported on 10 January that the Irish army and police had recovered about a million rounds of ammunition.

When he asked de Valera about the raid, the Taoiseach admitted that

the government was much upset and humiliated by the Phoenix Park coup, but said there was no evidence that this was the beginning of an attempt to take over the government.

He said such an attempt could come later if the IRA continued to develop. The whole IRA movement was, he said, inspired, stimulated and finally sustained from American sources. He thought Clan-na-Gael was largely responsible. Large sums of money came to the IRA from America, and he intimated that Clan-na-Gael obtained much of these funds through sales of Sweep tickets, although he said he had no evidence of this — only a well-founded suspicion.

De Valera said the army had been lax and 'needed a shaking up like any other organization and this raid was certainly a shock to it.' When Cudahy asked what the IRA wanted, de Valera replied that 'the whole emphasis of the movement was on the word Republic; the IRA was made up of recalcitrant, vindictive, vehement, venomous, violent Irishmen who could not bring themselves to believe that twenty-six counties in the country were united in a government which had achieved Irish emancipation.'

'They sincerely believe,' de Valera continued, 'that I am under the British thumb.' The IRA was not satisfied with the way freedom had been achieved. They believed in more combative methods. They wanted to see England 'severely trounced with the Irish on top and victorious.' He called partition the root of the evil.

Cudahy talked with the Papal Nuncio, Monsignor Pascal Robinson ('a most delightful personality . . . very active and alert mentally') who was well informed, Cudahy believed, on the underground group. 'His opinion coincides with my own to the effect that the influence and importance of the IRA movement is much overrated, that the membership is small and the organization lacking in any able leadership.'

Having seized the ammunition by a surprise coup they were unable either to distribute it or to hold it [the Papal Nuncio continued] and the ease and rapidity with which the authorities recovered it without the slightest opposition denoted to the country that the IRA is but a small group without popular support and composed in the great majority of young men misguided by a false sense of patriotism who wish to complete by violence the task of unity begun by the Old IRA in 1916. Many of the leaders were members of the Old IRA and therefore colleagues of de Valera and members of his government

in the 'Rising' of Easter Week 1916 and it is not believed that these men contemplate any coup against the government nor action which might involve the country in civil war. Their activities were directed against England to induce that country by fair means or foul to relinquish its hold on the six Northern counties.

Cudahy's report concluded: 'The Nuncio added that the guard had been tripled about Sir John Maffey, the British Representative, since the raid, and he is now accompanied by two cars filled with detectives. He did not think that the IRA would harm Sir John but they might kidnap him and set him loose in Northern Ireland. He believes that de Valera is in no danger personally from these misguided citizens.'

Major-General Michael Brennan, the Chief-of-Staff, was due to retire at the end of 1939. After the raid on the Magazine Fort he hoped to have his term extended, he told the Legation, for otherwise people would think he was being punished. From the way the matter was put, it seems he was seeking the help of the Americans in his attempt to stay on. The Legation did nothing for him, and Colonel Dan McKenna, the Quartermaster-General, was made Chief-of-Staff with the rank of Major-General. The Legation considered him a good choice.

The IRA bombing campaign in England petered out after the execution of Barnes and McCormick. The last of the minor explosions which marked its close occurred on 18 March 1940 at a City of Westminster refuse depot. The chief result of the campaign was that ten women and eighty-four men spent the 1940s in prison, ranging from Brendan Behan's three years' Borstal for possessing explosives to twenty years' penal servitude for causing an explosion; but all were freed by the end of the decade.

Apart from the occasional gun fights with the police, North and South, the Magazine Fort raid was the last IRA operation of any significance from 1939 to 1945. There were hunger strikes lasting up to fifty-five days in the spring of 1940 and shorter outbreaks later; but from mid-August 1940 the IRA represented no threat to de Valera.

Whatever hope or illusion Germany held for the IRA died with Seán Russell aboard a U-boat off the coast of Ireland on 14 August 1940. Frank Ryan, a former IRA leader who had fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War, was with Russell.

Knowing nothing of his companion's plans, Ryan returned to Germany.¹⁶

Three months earlier, a papal diplomat had reported from London to the Vatican that the IRA was drawing popular support from de Valera on the national question, a view held independently by David Gray, Cudahy's successor as US Minister in Dublin. Gray, who was a relative by marriage of Franklin D. Roosevelt, told the President in May 1940 that de Valera's only slogan was a united Ireland, but 'the IRA has the affirmative position, and he is on the defensive as far as popular appeal is concerned.'¹⁷

The German threat to Britain, and Ireland too, changed the popular attitude towards the IRA. By mid-May 1940, there could be no doubt any longer that Hitler was the enemy of small nations. The IRA was seen as pro-German and therefore dangerous.

In the autumn of 1940, Stephen Hayes led a hunted organization with no plans for the future other than to await the return of Russell from America. He wrote to the Clan-na-Gael but received no reply. 'Around September or October, I got a message from Moss [Twomey] telling me that [Seán] MacBride had asked him to inform me that Seán [Russell] was dead since August,' Hayes wrote from Mountjoy prison shortly before Christmas 1941.¹⁸

Hayes was no longer leader of the organization and the letter, to Máire Comerford, a veteran of the independence struggle, was to answer charges in an IRA 'Special Communiqué' that he was a government agent. David Gray thought the Mountjoy letter was a government plan to charge and jail Hayes legally for his own protection. An IRA court had condemned him to death after members of his staff kidnapped and tortured him to force a confession. After the IRA's Adjutant-General, Seán McCaughey, was captured by the Special Branch on top of a Dublin tram, Hayes managed to escape from his captors and gave himself up. When McCaughey was charged with kidnapping, Hayes testified against him. For turning state witness, Hayes was damned in the opinion of most Republicans, though some thought he had been treated badly. McCaughey's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and Hayes was kept in protective custody for five years.

Hayes maintained that the 'confession' published in the 'Special Communiqué' issued by the IRA in September 1941 was a fabrication. David Gray told the State Department that 'while the fabric of the document is probably falsehood, it is evident that there is a residuum of truth in it dangerously embarrassing to the government. The account of Devereux's murder ... is one example.'¹⁹ He went on:

The fact that Hayes was kidnapped for betraying the organization is at least *prime facie* evidence that he had betrayed it, and was in fact a stool pigeon and informer. I had been told, on what I believe to be good authority, that, with the connivance of some government agency interested in enlisting his services, he obtained a pension by the substitution of a tubercular person before the medical board, Hayes himself having no disease or physical disability. I have reason to believe that the government was anxious over his disappearance before it became public, an anxiety which they would have hardly entertained for an ordinary citizen.

During the summer I was entertaining an American newspaper man at dinner and we were discussing underground and subversive activities in Ireland. He asked me if I knew where Stephen Hayes was. I said, 'No, I did not know that he had disappeared.' He said that he had recently asked the question of Frank Gallagher, the government's press representative and that Gallagher had replied that Hayes was in government custody and that the correspondent could publish it on his authority. The correspondent, who is a shrewd young man, said that he would be glad to do so if they would let him see Hayes. This, Gallagher told him, was impossible. I think this happened in August, 1941, a month or more before Hayes's escape from his captors.

According to Gray, the government initially claimed that Hayes had spun out his 'confession' to save his life. They told Fianna Fáil people that the document was dictated to Hayes by a German agent. (Hermann Goertz, the German agent, was still free at the time.) 'I have confirmed this from a Cabinet Minister,' Gray reported. 'They express the belief that it is a Ribbentrop manoeuvre to discredit the government with the people, and that the document has characteristics distinctly not Irish.' Gray described the Hayes affair as 'a sensational episode dis-

closing an attack upon the Irish government.'²⁰

Dr Edmund Veesenmayer, the German 'expert' on small nations, writing from Belgrade to a German Foreign Office official on 18 November 1941, commented: 'The whole Hayes affair may be traced to an extremely clever ploy of the English Secret Service; the material delivered by the English Secret Service does not seem to have been sufficient, from the English government's point of view, to realize the long-awaited blow against Ireland; the peculiar tenacity and patience of British diplomacy do not constitute a grave danger in the coming months.'²¹ (Veesenmayer was commenting on a Hempel despatch from Dublin on the Hayes affair.)

'Elder statesmen' of the IRA — former Chiefs-of-Staff, Moss Twomey and Seán MacBride, among others — agreed that Hayes was indeed 'wrong'. Republicans active at the time had no doubt about his guilt. Hayes's brother-in-law, Larry De Lacy, a sub-editor on the *Irish Times*, also was arrested by the IRA and taken to a cottage in Glencree, County Wicklow, from which he managed to escape. He informed Máire Comerford, who went searching for Hayes. Moss Twomey was present when she met McCaughey and Charles McGlade, 'but he never uttered a word.' McCaughey was courteous and heard her out but said nothing. McGlade, a Belfast IRA officer, did not speak. No one seemed interested in justice for Hayes, she told the author.

'I wanted justice done,' she explained thirty-seven years later. 'I cared little about Hayes as a person. I had only contempt for him. But I wanted the movement's honour restored.' Peter Mohan, another Hayes partisan, visited him in Mountjoy and insisted on his innocence. 'He stayed in Ireland, he didn't leave,' he said.²² (Hayes died in December 1974.)

Hayes's own accounts are not reliable. Other filled in the gaps for him — Peadar O'Donnell in *The Bell* and J. P. Gallagher in *The People*. 'You will see that where Stephen's memory has been defective I have in places temporarily invented an explanation or suggested one, hoping that the sight of the manuscript may remind you, or him, or in some cases Military Intelligence of the true facts of the time,' Gallagher wrote Miss Comerford on 27 July 1962. O'Donnell invented nothing, but he did provide a plausible explanation as to why the IRA headquarters staff arrested Hayes — because he would not go along with their

pro-German views. Tadhg Lynch, who assisted in the arrest of De Lacy, thought Hayes and his brother-in-law were working for someone — either the Irish or British governments.

Hayes was considered a weak man who drank too much and was beyond his depth as the chief of the IRA in 1939–41. The strongest influence on him undoubtedly was De Lacy, who fled to America in 1915 after arms he held for the Irish Volunteers were seized. Later his place in California was raided and documents found therein were published by the British government as propaganda against Sinn Féin. (*Documents Relative to the Sinn Féin movement*, HM Stationery Office, 1921). De Lacy had worked with Devoy and McGarrity and was involved in the Thompson sub-machine gun haul by federal agents at Hoboken, New Jersey, in 1921. In the opinion of Seán MacBride and Peadar O'Donnell, both with long experience of Irish underground policies and intrigue, De Lacy played a central role in the Hayes affair. Veessenmayer's theory about the involvement of 'the English Secret Service' may be correct.

In September 1943, the FBI sent a detailed memorandum to the State Department on the IRA, based on the report of a confidential informant. 'At the 1938 convention of the Irish Republican Army, held in April, Seán Russell was elected Chief-of-Staff, with the assistance of Stephen Hayes,' J. Edgar Hoover's memorandum to Adolf A. Berle, Assistant Secretary of State, noted.²⁴ 'The proposed campaign in England was the main subject for consideration. The pro-Russell group, headed by Hayes, actively sponsored the beginning of the English campaign and Hayes was elected chairman of the IRA Executive Council.'

The FBI reported that Irish police found a letter dated 8 September 1939 from Hayes to Russell in America, written as a courier waited, saying:

Just an urgent note before bearer leaves. The war has changed the whole position here. The lads are anxious to have you back as soon as possible. You will be needed here at once. Ask Clann [sic] to try and rush supplies.

The Hoover memorandum stated that Russell reportedly left the United States towards the end of 1939. According to the FBI's informant, 'Russell died on the European continent in the

presence of Frank Ryan.' The FBI learned in May 1941 that Russell was dead but not the circumstances of his death.²⁵ (The Clan put out a false report that the British had taken Russell off a ship at Gibraltar and executed him.) IRA setbacks in 1939-41, the FBI memorandum continued, had

resulted in a marked deterioration in the quality and quantity of IRA personnel. As a result of this, allegedly considerable dissatisfaction developed, particularly among the Northern members of the Irish Republican Army. Stephen Hayes was still Chief of Staff of the Irish Republican Army and allegedly had become a chronic alcoholic by this time. Hayes was successful in avoiding arrest during this entire period and, according to some reports, some suspicion arose concerning him.

The Belfast officers 'decided to purge Hayes'. They arrested, interrogated, beat, threatened and tortured him to force a confession of treason and he complied. The confession was 'inaccurate and untrue', the FBI memorandum stated.

The IRA continued to disintegrate after the elimination of Hayes. In the summer of 1942, *Gárdaí* captured a hundred Thompson sub-machineguns in Mayo. Arms were seized near Belfast. In August 1942, the IRA planned a campaign in the North. On 2 September, about twenty Volunteers commandeered a lorry near Carrickmacross, drove across the border and, after an exchange of shots with an RUC patrol, retreated to the South. Thus ended the 'offensive' against Northern Ireland.

The FBI document gave the precise strength of the IRA on 31 December 1942 as 1,553 — including 508 interned members and one hundred others serving long-term prison sentences. The Chief-of-Staff was Hugh McAteer, his deputy was Charles Kerins, the Adjutant-General was Liam Burke of Belfast, and the headquarters staff consisted of two other Belfast men, Harry White and J. Smith. (In fact, McAteer was in Crumlin Road prison, Belfast, on 31 December 1942. He escaped on 15 January 1943 and resumed his former position as Chief-of-Staff.)

The memorandum devoted some space to Helmut Clissmann who arrived in Dublin as a TCD exchange student and later opened the Anglo-German Academic Bureau at 18 Upper Mount Street, Dublin. He became friendly with such leading

IRA figures as Frank Ryan, George Gilmore, Seán MacBride, George Plunkett and Peadar O'Flaherty.

It is stated that this contact was casual and that there was no evidence of serious collaboration between Germany and the IRA, even after Tom Barry of Cork, the then Chief of Staff of the IRA, visited Germany in 1937, where he was known to have been treated as a distinguished visitor.

The IRA after 1936 tried to find a new policy, with MacBride recommending political action and Russell opting for pure physical force. With the IRA rank and file, notably in Dublin, adopting a broadly left policy, Russell as Chief-of-Staff ran into 'a spectacular protest', chiefly in the South, 'against the appointment of Peadar O'Flaherty and R. Clements to the Army Council because of the alleged pro-German tendencies of these individuals,' the FBI memorandum declared.

'It is reported that the first serious step to solicit German support is believed to have been taken early in 1939, when Seán Russell allegedly arranged through Helmut Clissmann for Jim Donovan to visit Germany on behalf of the Irish Republican Army,' the document went on. 'Reportedly Donovan made this trip and paid a second visit to Germany in the same year and for the same purpose.'

Not all these statements are accurate. Clissmann had nothing to do with the 1939 IRA contact with Germany. The document says that Russell kept these trips secret from the Army Council because he was uncertain how they would be received. It notes that McGarrity, when in Dublin in July of 1939, opposed 'cooperating with Germany except as a means to an end' because he saw no merit in forcing the British out of Northern Ireland only to replace them with Germans. The document added:

According to this report also, McGarrity's sentiments were those held by the vast majority of the Irish Republican Army, very few of the members of which have shown, according to this informant, any definite indications of attachment to National Socialist ideology.

McGarrity, a businessman, was anti-British and, from the mid-1930s, anti-de Valera. He admired Germany, though not Nazis as such. However, it is likely that the FBI's 'highly confidential source which in the past has proved accurate and reliable ...

formerly a prominent leader of the IRA and still closely acquainted with its activities,' as Hoover described him for Berle in the memorandum dated 10 February 1944, was attempting to convince the Director that Irish Republicans in America were not necessarily pro-Nazi or even pro-German. The document was despatched by special courier to the Assistant Secretary of State.

Most of the information in the memorandum has since become known. At the time Hoover gave it to the State Department, little of it was known. (This naturally raises curiosity as to the identity of the 'highly confidential source' who clearly lived in America but had an intimate knowledge of what was happening in IRA circles in Ireland.) The memorandum noted that Stephen Carroll Held went to Germany on Hayes's instructions in April 1940 and memorized a plan called 'Operation Kathleen' for a German invasion of Northern Ireland. (Hayes told a journalist that the real purpose of Held's trip to Germany was to get Frank Ryan out of a Spanish prison and thereby embarrass the de Valera government. As for 'Operation Kathleen', he said it was 'drawn up by an IRA hanger-on when he must have lowered a few'. One of its proposals was that panzers could be towed to Ireland behind U-boats!)²⁶

The FBI memorandum agreed with Hayes on the reason for Held's visit. The Germans dismissed 'Operation Kathleen' as not feasible, which is hardly surprising. Hayes was at Held's house when Hermann Goertz, the agent, arrived from Germany. Goertz was 'embarrassed by Hayes's general behaviour and addiction to alcohol,' the FBI wrote. He concluded that 'little could be gained by collaborating with the IRA and developed his own circle of friends and associates.'

The FBI memorandum consists of 194 pages of single-spaced typescript. Two pages are allotted to the IRA constitution. A listing of the organization's principal officers through the years follows, with such familiar names as Moss Twomey, who became Chief-of-Staff in 1926; Jim Killeen, longtime Adjutant-General; Seán Russell, Quartermaster-General; Michael Price, Seán MacBride, Peadar O'Donnell, Michael Fitzpatrick, Frank Ryan, George Plunkett, Pete Kearney, Tom Barry, George Gilmore, Donal O'Donoghue, Tom Daly and Patrick MacLogan.

Saor Éire, an organization of Irish workers and working farmers, launched by the IRA in 1931, was 'definitely com-

munistic' according to the FBI memorandum. Republican Congress in 1934 was similar, but then 'considerable opposition reportedly developed ... to the Communist elements in Ireland.' By 1936, Congress 'had ceased to function'. Some members joined the Communist Party and 'proceeded to Spain to fight on the side of the loyalists in the Spanish Civil War.'

At its convention in August 1936, the IRA decided to form its own political party, Cumann Poblachta na hÉireann, and at an extraordinary convention a month later agreed to contest elections. The new Republican Party was launched on 7 March 1937 with Paddy MacLogan as chairman and The O'Rahilly, Nollaig Brughá and Seán Keating as officers. (One of its moving forces was Seán MacBride. Except for the policy of abstention, Cumann Poblachta na hÉireann prefigured Clann na Poblachta, which was founded a decade later.)

In late 1936, the report stated, the IRA smuggled 400 Thompsons into Ireland from America via Cork, and Russell distributed them through the country. In March 1937, twelve were seized in Sallins, County Kildare. Later, Russell was suspended, then dismissed for flouting Army Council instructions. 'But during 1937, with the aid of Stephen Hayes, an IRA leader of Wexford, was able to procure the support of sufficient delegates to the 1938 IRA convention to reinstate himself.'

The English bombing campaign grew out of the 1938 convention. It was funded by Clan-na-Gael (actually by McGarrity), the document asserted. With Seán Russell and his followers in power, most of the old-time leaders left the organization. (They included Tom Barry, the nonpareil guerrilla leader of the War of Independence.) Others moved to the sidelines. MacBride insists that he left in 1937 because the new constitution had 'no oath, no King, no Governor-General, no appeal to the Privy Council', and opened the way to repeal of the External Relations Act and a declaration of the Republic, which he brought about nearly a dozen years later. The constitution also claimed the whole of Ireland as the national territory.²⁷

The FBI document listed the Army Council elected in April 1938: Stephen Hayes, George Plunkett, Moss Twomey, Jack McNeela, Larry Grogan, Martin Coyne and Tony D'Arcy who withdrew in favour of Russell. Twomey resigned and was replaced by Patrick Fleming of Killarney. Coyne — better known as the writer Máirtín Ó Cadhain — opposed the English

bombing campaign and resigned; his replacement was Victor Fagg of Athlone.²⁸ The confidential informant had such accurate knowledge of the 1938 convention that if he was not present he must have been briefed by one who was there.

The report noted that Seán MacCool, who was appointed Chief-of-Staff in the spring of 1942 when IRA fortunes were in the doldrums, 'has always been pro-Communist in his outlook and had achieved little toward improving the position of the organization by the time he was arrested on May 22, 1942.' The report recalled that in 1934, at the famous convention that produced a split between the Twomey-MacBride forces and the O'Donnell-Gilmore leftists, MacCool had seconded Michael Price's motion binding the IRA to continue 'until the establishment of an Irish government functioning on definite Socialistic principles.' However, he did not follow Price and the 'anti-imperialists' out of the IRA.

One man in America at that time possessed the information contained in the FBI report. Cornelius Neenan was chief agent of the Irish Sweepstakes, an illegal lottery in the United States. Interviewed by the FBI after Russell left America in the spring of 1940, he was interrogated several times after the United States entered the war. The information in the FBI report for the State Department comes under the heading of 'background briefing'. No individual is compromised. The themes are anti-Communism and anti-Nazism. Naval intelligence and 'several Government Depts.,' also questioned him, Neenan wrote in a letter to Joe McGarrity's daughter.²⁹

On 24 July 1942, the Office of War Information informed the Chief of Naval Operations that 'IRA agents in Northern Ireland are attempting to create friction' between US and British troops. 'Information on the strength of the combined forces in Ireland, together with other military secrets, has allegedly been sought by IRA members, who may be cooperating with Nazi agents,' the OWI stated. It provided a potted version of Irish history studded with errors: James Stevens [sic] founded the Irish Republican Brotherhood in 1848 and 'Sir Roger Casement reportedly united Irish Volunteers and Citizen Army as well as Sinn Féin groups' in 1916; in 1939, 'the real head of the IRA was alleged to be Joseph McGarrity of Philadelphia' who was replaced in March 1941 by Cornelius Neenan. (McGarrity was

dead in March 1941; Neenan had been ousted from the Clanna-Gael in a dispute over the Irish Sweeps, and the IRA and the Clan were separate, independent organizations.) According to this report, the IRA 'reportedly planned widespread sabotage' of US war production and would 'accept help from anyone ... to further its programme for an Irish Republic.'

The report claimed 'thousands of IRA in Boston — in police force there — and New York among city employees, utility workers, waterfront workers'. The IRA in New York, meaning the Clan, had met a Nazi group in Yorkville's East 86th Street early in 1941. Since Yorkville was inhabited by Germans and Irish, such a meeting may well have taken place in one of the area's many bars and restaurants. Mike Quill, the Transport Workers' Union leader, was 'an alleged IRA member'. The IRA was also accused of collaborating with Communists. Presumably, the report was written before the German attack on Russia in June 1941. It said many Irish-Americans working in war plants were anti-British and opposed to President Roosevelt's Lend-Lease for Britain.

The report listed a couple of score of alleged IRA members — three quarters of whom had no connection with the organization. Liam O'Flaherty, the novelist, was 'reported to be IRA organizer in the US'. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the Communist leader, was described as 'an Anarchist member of the IRA'. Brian Feeney, business manager of the Tunnel Workers Union (Sandhogs), Jim Gavin of the National Maritime Union, Hugh and Patrick Holohan, who ran a steamship company, were named as members of the IRA. Hugh Holohan had fought in the 1916 Rising, which the OWI document did not mention, but by the 1940s had lost interest in Irish affairs. The rest were US Communists and many were Jews. Some belonged to the American Newspaper Guild, which may be where the author got his 'information'.

The Irish in Boston were 'seriously disaffected from the war effort', the OWI reported. Many were Christian Fronters, that is, followers of Father Charles Coughlin, who hated Communism and the Soviet Union, and 'tend to approve of the persecution of Jews in Germany.' The Irish were Boston's largest ethnic minority, and, according to the report,

There is a pronounced tendency among the Irish in Boston to

see the war in terms of narrow, sectional problems. The development of a foreign policy with which they are out of sympathy has been accompanied by an estrangement between the Administration and certain prominent Irish political leaders. The Irish tend to regard men like Jim Farley and Joe Kennedy as symbols of Irish influence and are incensed over their elimination from national affairs.

The conversion to support of Administration's foreign policy recently expressed by the Very Rev. Robert I. Gannon, President of Fordham University, suggests the possibility that liberal elements of the clergy in Boston might be persuaded to foster a clearer understanding among the Irish of the war's true implications.

The report compiled by the OWI's Bureau of Intelligence concluded that the IRA was 'composed in the main of fanatics, terrorists and saboteurs' who cared little for the ideologies of their allies, and warned:

The presence of a large body of Anglo-American troops on Irish soil is almost certain to antagonize the proponents of a united Ireland and may possibly bring about a renewal of the terroristic activities of the IRA. Such activities, though aimed at England, would vitally effect the American war effort.³⁰

Seven weeks after the OWI delivered its report to the Chief of Naval Operations, the US Consul-General in Belfast blamed Irish-Americans for increased tension between GIs and British soldiers in Northern Ireland. Irish-American soldiers had a tendency 'to respond to the influences of the Nationalist movement in Ireland,' the Consul-General complained:

One cannot but notice the anti-British sentiments of Irish-American soldiers. One is impressed by the fact that they for the most part express an Irish Nationalist point of view in the so-called Irish question. In talking with the senior Catholic chaplain in the American forces a few days ago, he expressed the opinion openly that the British should get out of Northern Ireland. In other words, there is a disposition on the part of those who have religious and kinship ties with the Catholic population of Ireland to espouse the so-called Irish point of view ... They are susceptible to Irish Republican Army influences.³¹

When word leaked out in the summer of 1941 that the US had sent technicians to build bases in Northern Ireland, at least one academic warned Secretary of State Cordell Hull against acquiring 'a vested interest in a keg of dynamite.'³² Warner Moss, Professor of Government at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, also conveyed his fears to members of Congress. Indeed, his phrase about 'a vested interest in a keg of dynamite' was used by Senator Elbert D. Thomas, the Utah Democrat who, before he ran for office, was a professor of political science. 'Whether Northern or Southern, the presence of American armed forces on Irish soil will involve us in domestic Irish politics,' Thomas told Sumner Welles. 'In the long run it will be wiser to make our presence a contribution to the solution of the Irish problem rather than its aggravation . . . I have always felt that the de Valera government might find American aid useful in the solution of the partition problem.'³³

The White House cover story was that the US technicians were working for the British Ministry of Defence. America, of course, was still neutral — on the British side. Roosevelt, on 11 July 1941, told a press conference that the naval air base being built in Northern Ireland came under either Lend-Lease legislation or direct British purchase. The Americans were paid by the British government, which was perfectly legal, the President declared. American steel was used to build the bases in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, and presumably that made everything right.

The Irish government queried the State Department about these US bases twice: on 15 October and 6 November 1941. De Valera asked 'to be informed officially of the purpose of these activities and of the intentions of the American government.' He was told his questions related 'to territory recognized by the United States as part of the United Kingdom and inasmuch as the matter of the inquiry concerned the United Kingdom and its defence measures, the Irish government should address its inquiry to the government of the United Kingdom.' He was also given a quotation from Roosevelt's cover-story press conference statement.³⁴

War or no war, the US had injected itself into the Irish problem on the side of Britain. An official communication to the Irish government, which claimed sovereignty over all Ireland, declared that the US considered Northern Ireland 'part of the

United Kingdom.' There was no ambiguity about that.

Immediately after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, Churchill sent de Valera a strange telegram, saying 'Now is your chance, Now or never. 'A nation once again'. Am very ready to meet you at any time.' It was delivered at two o'clock in the morning by Sir John Maffey. What it meant, if anything, was never fully explained, but it did not mean 'a bargain about the North', Lord Cranborne, the Dominions Secretary, told de Valera in Dublin on 16 December — eight days later. (On 8 December, Churchill replied to Cranborne's request for elucidation that he 'certainly contemplated no deal on partition.')

De Valera replied to a direct request by Cranborne that he should use his influence to put the Irish people on the side of the Allies, with the comment that 'on account of our history and the existence of partition' a section of Irish 'were still strongly opposed' to Britain.³⁵

In Cork, on 14 December, de Valera expressed Ireland's sympathy for the United States. 'There is scarcely a family here which has not a member or near relative in that country,' he remarked. America had helped the Irish win the freedom they enjoyed 'in this part of Ireland'. They sympathized 'in a special manner with the people of the United States . . . in all the anxieties and trials which this war must bring upon them.' The state's foreign policy would not change, however. 'We can only be a *friendly neutral*,' de Valera said.

Our circumstances of history, the incompleteness of our national freedom through the partition of our country made any other policy impracticable. Any other policy would have divided our people, and for a divided Ireland to fling itself into this war would be to commit suicide.³⁶

With America in the war, de Valera's interpretation of neutrality appeared to undergo a subtle shift. Partition did not permit any other policy — such as supporting America in the war, for instance — because it would divide the people and destroy the state. (In this context, 'suicide' has no other meaning.)

At Christmas 1941, Churchill and Roosevelt met in the White House to plan their war strategy. Roosevelt 'offered to take over

the defence of Northern Ireland, freeing British troops for use elsewhere,' according to the historian, James MacGregor Burns.³⁷ Again, the President did not think it necessary to seek the opinion of the Irish government about stationing American forces on Irish soil. On 22 December, Roosevelt sent de Valera a message of thanks for his sympathy speech and remarked that 'Ireland's freedom was at stake as well'. He did not say that within a month, US troops would occupy Northern Ireland.

The above would appear to suggest that the initiative for the stationing of US troops in Northern Ireland came from Roosevelt, but General George C. Marshall's notes of the 23 December meeting of the 'Big Two' make clear the proposal came from Churchill, Marshall's biographer, Forrest C. Pogue, writes that FDR 'agreed with Churchill on the importance of substituting American for British units in Northern Ireland.'³⁸

The first US troops landed in the third week of January. De Valera protested in a public speech. No matter whose troops occupied Northern Ireland the Irish people's 'claim for the union of the whole national territory and for supreme jurisdiction over it' would stand. He denounced partition as 'one of the cruellest wrongs that can be committed against a people.'³⁹

The Irish Minister at Washington, Robert Brennan, told Sumner Welles, the Under-Secretary of State, that his government feared American forces in the North would be used to attack the South. Welles called this 'so fantastic as to be almost incredible.' Brennan said the presence of US troops in Northern Ireland 'was regarded by the Irish government and people as an official sanction by the United States of the partition of Ireland.' Welles did not bother to deny this, but said Northern Ireland was under the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom.⁴⁰ In his official reply to de Valera, Roosevelt ignored partition; he declared that the United States had not 'the slightest thought or intention of invading Irish territory or threatening Irish security.'⁴¹ But surely landing troops in Northern Ireland without the consent of the Irish people was an invasion of Irish territory?

De Valera took almost two months to reply. He raised the question of sovereignty in Northern Ireland to charge that

The American government's seemingly unreserved recognition of that [British] sovereignty, by sending its soldiers to the

disputed territories without any reference to the Irish government, appeared to be a taking of sides and a worsening of Ireland's position vis-à-vis Britain, which the Irish government could not but deplore.⁴²

Roosevelt instructed the State Department not to reply.

De Valera's relations with the IRA were cool but not unfriendly from 1926, when Twomey effectively took over as Chief-of-Staff, to 1932, when Fianna Fáil took office. Twomey, MacBride, Gilmore and Russell met de Valera, who claimed that his programme to abolish the oath, remove the Governor-General and abandon those clauses of the Treaty restricting Irish national sovereignty would make a declaration of the Republic a formality. The IRA should accept majority rule and disband. It could put its programme to the people. The IRA view was 'once the Republic is again proclaimed and functioning, the organization as we know it, dissolves.' Some leaders were offered commissions in the army. MacBride indignantly rejected Aiken's bid to make him a colonel.⁴³

After 1933, relations between Fianna Fáil and the IRA grew strained and by 1934 were non-existent. There was no basis of unity with 'a group who have not given the slightest evidence of any ability to lead our people anywhere except back into the morass,' de Valera told McGarrity in a 'strictly personal and confidential' letter, dated 31 January 1934, which Seán T. O'Kelly conveyed to the Clan leader.

'If this country is not to be a Mexico or Cuba,' de Valera warned, 'a basis must be found, or else the party that has got the confidence of the majority here will have to secure order by force. There is no alternative. We have undertaken a responsibility to the people at present living, to the future, and to the dead. We will not allow any group or any individuals to prevent us from carrying it out.'⁴⁴

The IRA was an element of the national tradition, as far as de Valera was concerned. By 8 May 1940, he would call on all citizens to rally to the defence of the government as war moved towards the shores of Ireland. 'Danger threatens now from within as well as from without,' de Valera warned in a national broadcast. 'And although only a small number is involved, a deadly conspiracy exists which does not hesitate to call the

people's representatives 'the enemy' and to declare war on the government which the community has freely elected. The government will do its part in ridding the people of this armed menace, but the people also have a duty.

'If they value what has been won for them they will now, as in the days of the Black and Tans, be the eyes and ears of the national defence. What has happened in the last few weeks, the exploding of a time bomb in the police quarters in Dublin Castle with utter disregard for human life; the attempt yesterday to shoot down without mercy two Garda officers; these things must have opened the eyes of everyone to the seriousness of the position. Were these deeds allowed to continue, civil war would be the inevitable consequence and such a weakening of our strength as to make our country an easy prey to an invader.'

This speech went to Washington and the US Minister noted particularly the link with neutrality — when 'small nations throughout Europe are devoting all their efforts to national unity ... to defend their independence is the moment that a group in this country has chosen to attempt to destroy our organized life.' De Valera warned: 'The law will be enforced against them ... And in the last resort, if no other law will suffice, then the government will invoke the ultimate law — the safety of the people.' In other words, the IRA was a 'Fifth Column' threatening the independence of the state, no longer part of the national tradition.⁴⁵

Yet de Valera treated the IRA as Nationalists when, in February 1940, he asked Chamberlain to save the lives of Barnes and McCormick, and in July 1942 he appealed to Churchill for young Tommy Williams of Belfast.⁴⁶ A reprieve committee organized by MacBride collected 200,000 signatures. Gray reported:

The effect of the authorization of this hysterical reprieve agitation culminated in large and general demonstrations throughout Éire during the hour at which Williams was executed. Thousands of people knelt in the streets and groups of IRA or hoodlum sympathisers compelled the closing of all shops and the half-masting of flags. The police made no effort to prevent these disturbances until after the hour was over. The consequence of glorifying Williams as a patriot-hero was embarrassingly felt within the next few weeks by the assass-

ination of two detective officers of the Éire police. I am creditably informed that the Minister for Justice protested vigorously against the course which produced these results but was overruled by Mr Aiken and Mr de Valera.

The US Minister complained to de Valera that the pro-IRA campaign had 'engendered dangerous anti-American and anti-British sentiment, the while the censorship banned publication of any expression of sentiment calculated to incite anti-Germany feeling.' He said de Valera replied that 'We would be fools to permit anything to appear against the Germans.'

Gray did not seem to understand Irish Nationalism or de Valera. In this long memorandum — a copy of which was delivered to President Roosevelt by Myron Taylor, the US Special Representative at the Vatican — he asserted: 'The effect of Irish neutrality is overwhelmingly in the interest of the Axis powers . . . Among the lunatic fringe of Irish Nationalism, it has become a fetish. They speak of being proud of Irish neutrality, of being ready to die for it, as if it were some heroic principle.'

Of course Irish neutrality was a 'heroic principle' to men and women who twenty years earlier were subjects of the Crown, with no control over their country's foreign policy. Neutrality represented independence and sovereignty in the Twenty-six Counties. Williams's execution told Nationalists again that sovereignty did not extend to all of Ireland. War or no war, that remained a fact.

Gray, in his memorandum, accused de Valera of telling him 'that while the Irish government was *in fact* neutral, they were not neutral *in feeling* as long as the 'enemy' (Britain) remained on their soil. I asked him if I could take this as an interpretation of Irish neutrality and he said, 'Yes'.'

Under Mr de Valera's leadership, Irish neutrality has become a synonym for Irish independence [Gray continued]. Notice has, in effect, been served on all political opponents of the Fianna Fáil (de Valera) party, now in power, that discussion of the advisability of neutrality is tantamount to treason.

The censor would not permit publication of James Dillon's pro-American speeches, Gray complained. He blamed Frank Aiken, the Minister responsible for censorship, who, he believed, exercised an evil influence on de Valera's policies. By opposing US troops in Northern Ireland, de Valera again appeared as 'the

champion of Irish Nationalism against British Imperialism.' But he also had 'embarrassed himself by encouraging IRA activities both in the North and in Éire, which react against his own government...'

In this strategy of using elements hostile to himself to strengthen his position generally, he has shown his old-time skill and astuteness, but the time may come when he will have to make a choice between our friendship and that policy of domestic politics which plays the game of the Axis.

De Valera always sought to guard his Nationalist credentials by allying himself with those who were considered 'extreme Republicans': Cathal Brugha and Austin Stack during the War of Independence and Treaty debates; Oscar Traynor, Seán Moylan and Frank Aiken in Fianna Fáil. But he never encouraged the IRA to engage in violence, regardless of who was in control — Michael Collins, Liam Lynch, Frank Aiken, Moss Twomey, Séan MacBride or Seán Russell. Gray did not understand the dualism in de Valera's thinking between 'Éire' as a sovereign state and 'Northern Ireland' as a part of the Irish nation. In April 1943, after warning Sir John Maffey that the conscription of Northern Nationalists would 'incite resentment and ill-feeling throughout Ireland', de Valera told the British Representative that if he were a young Catholic in the North he would join the IRA.

The politics of the IRA were beyond Gray's comprehension. 'There can be little doubt that the IRA is being financed and in part directed by German agencies in Éire,' he wrote in the same long memorandum.⁴⁷ 'The money needed for the recent activities in Northern Ireland can derive from no other source than Germany.' The truth was that Germany gave neither money nor direction to the IRA in the second world war. To be true to the Irish revolutionary tradition, the IRA would have had to reject any such offer — like Devoy in 1914. Guns yes, money no.

'The well-meaning but somewhat ill-balanced Cardinal Primate has recently played into the hands of the Germans by referring to American troops in Northern Ireland as overrunning the country against the will of the Irish Nation,' Gray informed Washington about an address by Cardinal MacRory, Archbishop of Armagh. Then he added:

This in the circumstances is tantamount to offering the sanction of the Church to IRA groups who have already issued a manifesto, probably instigated, declaring war on America as well as on Britain.

The manifesto in question warned that American troops could be drawn into the Anglo-Irish conflict if they continued 'to use North East Ireland as a military base without the free consent of the Irish people.' The *Irish Press* of 1 September 1942 carried part of the statement in boldface. The story was approved by the censor. Therefore, said Gray, de Valera approved the 'sentiments therein'.

The Cardinal's statement to diocesan priests on 27 September 1942, at the dedication of Cavan's new cathedral, annoyed the Minister greatly and he decided to take the offensive because of the reference to US troops in Northern Ireland. They met on 7 October. Gray said US troops had both a legal and a moral right to be in the North, because Britain had invited them and they were fighting the Nazis. The Cardinal did not agree. The US had virtually condoned partition by putting troops in part of Ireland 'without the nation's consent', he repeated. It was not enough to get Britain's consent since the British had no legal or moral right to be in Northern Ireland either. Gray learned that the Cardinal Primate, like the head of the Irish government, rejected the 'legal and moral' claims of the United States to put troops in Ireland against the will of the Irish people.⁴⁸

In the weeks leading up to the US note of February 1944, the State Department was attempting to establish a connection between de Valera's Minister at Washington, Robert Brennan, and the IRA. Adolf Berle called on J. Edgar Hoover to uncover the 'plot'.

The Director of the FBI informed Berle by letter that the Irish Republican Army Veterans Inc., also known as the Irish Republican Army Clan-na-Gael, 'has been defunct as an organization since December 7, 1941.' It had not held its annual commemorations of the Easter Rebellion, and 'its mouthpiece *The Gaelic-American* has engaged in no propaganda or Irish political activity since Pearl Harbour, according to informants.'

Actually, State had mixed up two organizations. *The Gaelic-American* was Devoy's old weekly and represented the Clan-na-

Gael that had remained loyal to him in the 1920 split with de Valera. The McGarrity breakaway supported the IRA. James MacDermott, the editor of the *Gaelic-American*, supported Brennan, Hoover said. (Séamus MacDermott, a brother of Seán, the 1916 leader, was a member of the old Clan.) Others who cooperated with Brennan, the FBI Director added, were James F. McLoughlin, former New York State Superior Court Clerk, Leo T. McCauley of the Irish Consulate, and Michael Murphy, President of the United Irish Counties Association.

The Irish Republican Army Clan-na-Gael was 'the real Irish Republican Army', Hoover explained. It opposed the Éire government and considered all its sponsors 'traitors to the cause of Irish freedom'. In case his report confused Berle, Hoover added the explanation that his 'reliable confidential informant, formerly a prominent leader of the IRA', had advised that in the spring of 1943 'Robert Brennan, Irish Minister to the US, attended an Irish Republican Army meeting in New York City and was 'nearly lynched by the IRA members'.' Hoover said Brennan had 'absolutely no contact with the IRA'. And as Éire's Minister he was 'anathema to the IRA'. This memorandum is dated 10 February 1944.

The Clan itself was no threat to the US authorities, as Neenan made clear. In a letter to Joe McGarrity's daughter, dated 19 August 1978, a year before he died, Neenan said 'the Clan more or less faded' after her father's death. However, the FBI and other US government agencies kept tabs on its members. 'This was brought about by the Clan Records 1916 to 1924 being impounded plus some incidents caused by careless Clan members.' Neenan himself 'came in for attention by the FBI, Naval Intelligence, and several Government Depts., but he recognized the fact that the interrogators were only doing their duty, especially as they were operating on old records going back to 1920.' Neenan, whose Clan code name was 'Brady', added:

For example they mentioned Jerry [Jeremiah] O'Leary and were surprised to learn that three of Jerry's sons were in the Army. He also had a son-in-law with Naval Intelligence who operated out of the very same building in Church Street, New York, where Brady (Neenan) was being investigated. Major

Enright, Chicago, was also mentioned who had two sons in the Army. Major Enright had led 40 soldiers from Chicago to fight with the Boers in Africa against England. The Major was one of the Clan Executive for many years.

Neenan went on to state that due to his 'activities ... at home and in the US', a prominent Washington official had told Congressman (later Attorney-General) James McGranery 'that Brady should be in a concentration camp.'

Neenan stated that a sailor from Ireland arrived in America 'with a written message addressed to Brady and the Clan.' The message was from the Chief-of-Staff of the IRA asking for 40,000 rounds of ammunition for Thompson guns. Neenan took the message to the Clan Executive in Philadelphia. He gave no date but said it was the middle of the war and 'the request was impossible'. In fact, he thought the request was 'totally unreasonable' because it 'could not be sent with any serious hope for fulfillment'. Then the news came out about Stephen Hayes and his 'suspicion was proved only too right.' (The Hayes arrest occurred six months before Pearl Harbour.) Copies of the Hayes 'Confession' were sent to the Clan for distribution to all clubs in the United States. Neenan's account went on:

The purported confession made sorry reading containing some shameful disclosures dealing with murders, bank robberies, and other frightful acts. Brady [Neenan] pointed out that the impression created depicted the entire IRA as a bunch of criminals and he implored the Clan NOT to circulate the copies. However, some copies got through and, as was to be expected, the FBI and other Govt. Agencies formed the impression that the IRA operations were similar to those carried out by the Mafia.

Neenan wrote bitterly that the Clan took McGranery to court for the return of the \$4,000 Russell bond money which the Congressman had kept in his safe in \$100 bills, serial numbers recorded. But three Clan members swore the money was theirs. Their lawyer was an enemy of McGranery, which did not help matters, Neenan said. 'Sad to say the Clan won the case. This was due to a Jury which never grasped the significance and later the Clan fought among themselves and practically all of the money went to various lawyers.' He concluded with some remarks on Joe McGarrity:

Often when thinking back over incidents we all agreed that Joe would have been subject to all kinds of harassment, even by the treachery of some members of the Clan. Joe's intense Nationalism, his tremendous support of the IRA, his constant spending of monies all for the sake of furthering Ireland's freedom; there is little doubt that he would have been subjected to much annoyance and even persecution due to his unchangeable attitude on Irish Independence. Owing to the raging pro-Britishism in the US at the time reaching down from the President right to almost all politicians, the news media, etc., all those espousing the Irish Cause would automatically invite investigation. Had he lived, Joe McGarrity would have been a chief target.⁴⁹

Connie Neenan retired to his native Cork City in the 1960s and died on 25 July 1979 at the age of eighty-seven. He had emigrated to the United States in 1926, after serving as Commandant of the Second Battalion, First Cork Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Imprisoned in England during the Tan war, he fought with the Republicans in the Civil War. He represented the IRA in America, was Secretary of the Clan-na-Gael, organized the Irish Sweepstakes, became a Director of Waterford Glass, and was a founder in the post-war years of the American League for an Undivided Ireland, which lobbied Congress to end partition by cutting off aid to Britain. Among those he worked with were Charles Rice, a colleague of John Devoy; and Paul O'Dwyer, secretary of the League, a County Mayo-born lawyer and brother of William O'Dwyer, the Mayor of New York.

Maurice O'Neill of Caherciveen, County Kerry, was executed by firing squad on 12 November 1942 for the murder of a detective during a police raid on a house in Dublin. There was no evidence that O'Neill had fired the fatal shot, or indeed any shot; and there was outrage in South Kerry where Republicanism of the Civil War variety was strong.

Two years later, there was outrage in North Kerry when Charles Kerins of Tralee, the last wartime Chief-of-Staff of the IRA, was hanged in Mountjoy for the murder of Detective Sergeant Denis (Dinny) O'Brien. 'He was the bravest man I ever saw die by hanging,' commented Seán Kavanagh, the prison governor, who had been a Collins man in the IRB, was a

friend of O'Brien and had seen many men die by hanging.⁵⁰

Many strands of physical-force Nationalism came together in the O'Brien-Kerins case. 'The mere affinity there is between theological parties, the greater commonly is their animosity,' said the philosopher David Hume. Politics is a kind of religion.

O'Brien was a member of the Four Courts garrison with his two brothers when the Civil War began in June 1922. He had remained in the IRA until after Fianna Fáil came to power. He joined the 'Broy Harriers', defenders of the state against the Blueshirts. During the war, he became an assiduous hunter of the IRA. On the morning of 9 September 1942, while driving to work at Dublin Castle, he was ambushed outside his home and shot by three men who fled on bicycles.

When Kerins was arrested in June 1944, the Legation reported that documents in his possession, some of which were read into the trial record, mentioned Seán MacBride, Mrs Austin Stack and Dan Spring, a National Labour TD from Tralee, 'as sympathizers or members of the IRA'. Some of the documents mentioned 'formation of a new Republican Party and discussed the advisability of contesting certain seats.' Some of the material was censored, the Legation said, indicating that the government was using the case for political purposes.

Other evidence to the fact that O'Brien had formerly been a member of the IRA and that this was a motive for the murder could not be printed by the newspapers. It indicated that O'Brien and others of his unit were specially employed to watch the activities of the IRA because of their former connections with it. The censor also would not permit the newspapers to print the names and addresses of certain witnesses, at least one of whom was obviously frightened about identifying Kerins.⁵¹

In the Dáil, Jim Larkin (Junior) asked about the use of the censorship to prohibit an advertisement for a Kerins reprieve rally. This was justified by de Valera as necessary 'to maintain order and preserve the state and to prevent an organization getting ahead and using this as a cloak for reorganization.' Larkin, Dan Spring and Paddy Finucane, an independent Republican deputy from Kerry, were suspended by the Ceann Comhairle when they insisted on pursuing the matter in the Dáil.

The US Legation reported on 11 December, after the execution, that 'Kerins's friends sought by every means to have the sentence delayed and commuted but the government was able to lessen the force of the appeals by the use of censorship and the police power.' A newspaper story out of Tralee on local reaction to the case was banned by censorship.

It was not the pitifully weak IRA of November 1944 that de Valera feared but its power to mobilize Republican support in time of crisis. As he had told Lord Cranborne in December 1941, the IRA represented that 'section who, on account of our history and the existence of partition, were still strongly opposed' to Britain.⁵² Because of the IRA, neutrality was the only policy the Irish state could pursue in the second world war.

De Valera would never forget the example of John Redmond who had been driven from the political stage by his own generation of 1916 rebels. He made sure that it would not happen a second time.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEFENCE OF IRELAND FROM INVASION

On 10 May 1940, when Germany invaded the Low Countries, de Valera made a public protest. He had worked with the Dutch and Belgians at the League of Nations, he told a by-election rally in Galway. 'Today, these two small nations are fighting for their lives and I think I would be unworthy of this small nation if, on an occasion like this, I did not utter our protest against the cruel wrong that has been done them.'

On 15 May, Holland surrendered. The speed of the attack and the ruthless bombing of Rotterdam had deeply impressed the Irish public with the sense that war was drawing nearer their shores. On 16 May, the new US Minister in Dublin, David Gray, commended de Valera on his outright condemnation of Germany's onslaught on a neutral country. The United States, too, was neutral, but from a distance of 3,000 miles could afford to be more outspoken than Ireland.

A former newspaper editor, Gray wrote lively opinionated letters to the President from his post in Dublin, beginning 'Dear Boss'. After his hour-long conversation with de Valera, he sent a long account of the Irish leader's views to the President. When he suggested bringing a US military attaché from London to Dublin to inspect Éire's airport defences in case of a German parachute landing, de Valera demurred.

'He [de Valera] said he was afraid that if he showed our attaché the dispositions the Germans might ask the same privilege,' Gray wrote. 'It did not occur to him that the Germans already knew them. He is trying to get five or six hundred machine guns in England but it is doubtful if they can be spared just now.'

This was the beginning of a sometimes stormy relationship between de Valera and Gray, who admired the British but had little patience with the Irish and their Nationalism. He behaved at times more like a pro-consul than an envoy, and his direct line

to the White House gave him great influence.

'The most that could be expected of the Irish army at present is to cope with parachute troops on a small scale and possibly to intercept arms landed by submarine for the IRA,' Gray's letter to the President went on. He said he told de Valera that neutrality was not going to save him 'and that he had to consider his situation from the viewpoint of assisting in the defeat of Germany.' De Valera agreed, but was not sure how fast he could go. He was waiting further on events.

'I asked him if that was not what the Low Countries and Scandinavia had done to their cost? He said yes, but that he had to be very cautious. I asked him if he had not had staff consultations on an agreed upon plan with the Allied command? He said no, that he was afraid to do that, not because it would increase the danger of German invasion, but because it would tend to divide public sentiment at home. I told him that of course he must be the best judge of that, but that he must weigh that danger against being caught defenceless.'

He then told me that he had something on his mind that he wanted to talk about. He said could I inquire confidentially of you whether in view of the fact that Ireland and the Irish bases commanded the North Atlantic trade routes both by sea and air you could proclaim that the United States was vitally interested in the maintenance of the status quo as regards Ireland. I said, 'What you would like would be an American guarantee of your independence?' He admitted that it was, but saw that it was out of the question to ask *that*. He said that if I received a favourable reply to this inquiry that he would consult his Dáil and Ministers and make a formal approach. He said such a pronouncement would strengthen his leadership very greatly. He is frightened by this situation but not prepared to cope with it. His interest *even now* is in the foundation of an institute for higher Celtic studies. I like him and admire him but he is not the man for a war. He went to America while Collins was making the decisions. The trouble is that he has no slogan, except 'a united Ireland' and that is out for the present. The IRA has the affirmative position, and his is on the defensive as far as popular appeal is concerned.

I am spending the week-end with Seán T. O'Kelly and the Nuncio at Granard and I will find out if there is a chance of

the Church calling a 'holy war'. But it would mean abandonment of neutrality. I told him I had made arrangements to see Craigavon next Wednesday and asked him if he had any line of compromise in mind to secure a measure of cooperation at least. His suggestion was that Ulster join them in neutrality and in return he would reaffirm publicly their adherence and loyalty to 'external association' with the British Commonwealth. He said he got that expression and conception from Mr [Woodrow] Wilson.

Gray, who had served briefly in the US army at the end of the first world war, retained a strong interest in military affairs. He lectured de Valera about Britain's interest in controlling 'both sides of the narrows of the Irish Channel'. Was de Valera prepared to lease the ports? 'This had not occurred to him. I asked him if he did not think that some concerted action with the North were possible, say a common examination of the situation by a committee of public safety? He said he thought not, that it would be easier to deal directly with Westminster.'

I asked him if he did not think that the crisis was the time to make progress towards union, that a compromise now might produce results that would otherwise be impossible for years to come assuming the Allies won. If they did *not* win, Irish freedom was a vanished dream. He agreed in principle but could devise no line of compromise. He has gone out on a limb and he is lonely there, but does not know how to get back.

Gray discovered one sidelight of Irish politics. The leader of the opposition, William T. Cosgrave, did not speak to the leaders of the government. At Castle Forbes near Granard, where Gray spent the weekend, Cosgrave was there on Saturday night but left on Sunday when Seán T. O'Kelly arrived. Gray talked with both of them, of course, and learned that 'neither the government nor opposition will do anything like stabbing Britain in the back but neither will they go farther than a beneficent neutrality, unless the Germans attack.'

He planned to go 'to Ulster' the following day — 17 May — and he would visit Cardinal MacRory on the way. He had arranged it with the Nuncio. 'The McEntees (Minister for Commerce) are lunching with us today,' he went on, explaining his social schedule to the President. 'Last night we had

Desmond FitzGerald an opposition Senator and a member of the Cosgrave government. These little parties work out well. Take care of yourself.’¹

The United States turned down de Valera’s request for a declaration proclaiming that it was ‘vitally interested in the maintenance of the status quo as regards Ireland,’ as de Valera phrased it. From the Irish point of view it seemed reasonable. But Roosevelt, in an undated reply, explained to Gray:

We had to tell you that it was impossible to take the action which Mr de Valera suggested, since such a declaration would imply that we were departing from our traditional policy in regard to European affairs and would undoubtedly lead to misunderstanding and confusion in the United States and abroad.

It is safe to assume that from then on de Valera listened to America’s counsels with some scepticism. The United States had raised the possibility of leasing Irish ports to Britain, but when de Valera asked for a US statement of support for Irish neutrality it was not forthcoming.

Following the evacuation of Dunkirk starting 27 May, the surrender of Belgium on 28 May and the fall of France on 18 June, Britain was an island under siege. ‘British fortunes in the war were at their lowest ebb,’ Anthony Eden told the Americans.² On 17 June, the Churchill War Cabinet sent Malcolm MacDonald to Dublin to persuade de Valera to allow the Royal Navy use of the Treaty ports and declare war on Germany. At a minimum he sought permission for British ships to use Irish ports and British troops to occupy strategic points in Éire. As Eden explained to the State Department:

His instructions included the possibility of exploring, as a *quid pro quo*, some form of union between Éire and Northern Ireland. All that Mr Malcolm MacDonald obtained from Mr de Valera in reply was that he could only contemplate a United Ireland on the basis of Ireland as a whole being neutral in the war.

MacDonald’s proposals were much vaguer than Eden suggested. He mentioned a joint defence council for the island,

which de Valera rejected. De Valera asked for British arms and munitions to repel an invasion and MacDonald replied that Britain did not have enough weapons for its own defence. Robert Brennan, Éire's Minister at Washington, was refused US arms at first, then managed to get 20,000 US Springfield rifles through a Canadian dealer, after the British said they had no objection to the sale. Gray took the credit for the transaction.

In June 1940, offers of a united Ireland erupted almost daily. On the 18th, Ambassador Joseph Kennedy cabled Cordell Hull that Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, had presented a plan for a united Ireland to Churchill, which he thought would win US support for Britain. According to Kennedy, it recommended that:

- (1) the general staffs of both North and South should meet and plan their defence, and (2) that England should furnish them with whatever equipment is necessary to enable them to defend themselves; in return for that England to guarantee a united Ireland immediately on the completion of the war, the constitution of which will be drawn up by the representatives of the North and the South with a chairman to be selected by the United States. Bevin is of the opinion that something must be done for Ireland within the next 48 hours or a very critical situation will arise.

Nothing was done within the following forty-eight hours or later, and guarantees of a united Ireland at the end of a war Britain seemed about to lose only reminded de Valera and his colleagues of the Home Rule-cum-partition formula of 1914. Bevin was quite serious, however, but, even at that late hour in the fortunes of Britain, Churchill demanded that de Valera must show 'loyalty to Crown and Empire.'³

MacDonald was in Dublin twice that month dangling 'a declaration of a united Ireland in principle' before de Valera in return for an immediate declaration of war by Éire and 'permission ... for British naval vessels to have the use of Southern Irish ports and for British troops and aeroplanes to be stationed in Éire', which would intern all Germans and Italians and suppress the IRA. In return, 'the British government to provide equipment as early as possible to the Éire government...'

The offer required Unionist consent which de Valera knew was not forthcoming. He suggested a neutral united Ireland to

Chamberlain, the author of the plan. Anything less 'could only lead to internal weakness and eventual frustration,' he wrote.⁵ Even with their backs to the wall, the British would not swallow a neutral Ireland. Lord Craigavon was 'profoundly shocked and disgusted' by Chamberlain's suggestion, which he denounced as 'treachery to loyal Ulster'. Instead of appeasing de Valera, the Unionist leader proposed 'immediate naval occupation of harbours and military advance South', followed by martial law.⁶

In his talks with de Valera, MacDonald constantly stressed Churchill's warning that Britain 'certainly would not coerce Northern Ireland.' This nullified his other claim that 'the establishment of a united Ireland was an integral part of our plan, from which there would be no turning back.'⁷ The two propositions were contradictory.

'It had gone hard with him to turn down any scheme which would bring about a united Ireland, the dream of his life,' de Valera told Maffey some weeks later. 'But in the present circumstances acceptance would have been impossible. It would have meant civil war.'⁸

In his monumental *In Time of War*, Robert Fisk interprets the British offer as 'a re-negotiation by proxy of the old 1921 Treaty.' It provided de Valera with a second chance to bargain with the British. 'Churchill wanted to regain something that was lost but de Valera sought an independence that had been denied him; for this reason, his last rejection of Churchill's offer was even more dramatic than the proposals themselves.'⁹

Churchill wanted the ports, not a united Ireland. He turned to Roosevelt for help when the June negotiations collapsed. 'We are also worried about Ireland,' he cabled. 'An American squadron at Berehaven would do no end of good I am sure.' The President could not oblige 'as we have squadron off Portugal and another visiting South America. I think you will agree that maintenance main fleet Hawaii is vital.'¹⁰ De Valera would have welcomed a US naval presence off Berehaven in the summer of 1940 and Ireland's relations with America would have taken a different turn after Pearl Harbour.

In April 1941, Frank Aiken feared 'an invasion by either England or Germany and that he is not sure which one is most likely to try it first,' Charles Lindbergh wrote in his journal on 24 April after a dinner at which the Irish Minister was guest of

honour and spoke freely to his American friends.

On 3 December 1940, Hitler ordered his naval staff to prepare a landing 'if Ireland requests help.' He thought 'the occupation of Ireland might lead to the end of the war.'¹¹ (David Gray reached a similar conclusion in the spring of 1942.)

In the event of a German invasion, the British thought the landing would be at Cork; the Germans themselves preferred the Wexford-Dungarvan area. Either way, the British planned to drive into Éire from Northern Ireland to meet them. In June 1940, Major-General Bernard Law Montgomery commanded the 3rd Division stationed in Northern Ireland. He had plans to seize Cork and Cobh — Queenstown, as he called it. Opposing him was then Major-General Michael J. Costello's 1st Division, which was charged with the defence of Cork and Cobh. Costello, who recalled that Monty was in the Cork area in 1920-21 and was bloodied when he ran up against Tom Barry, was quite sure that the British could not take either Cork or Cobh with one division in 1940. 'The only serious threat during the emergency was from the British,' Costello believed, and the Irish army had full intelligence on their movements and intentions.¹²

Supporting the views that the British intended to seize the ports at some point was their refusal to supply arms and ammunition to the Irish army or give de Valera a pledge not to invade. According to Dick Mulcahy, the Fine Gael representative on the Defence Council, de Valera in 1940 suspected that Churchill wanted to regain control of all Ireland.¹³ Because of partition, Mulcahy believed 'the Northern Nationalists are pro-German and the section of the South who are pro-German would probably not be so but for partition.'¹⁴ This view supports de Valera's linkage of partition and neutrality.

When Churchill charged in the Commons (5 November 1940) that to deny the ports in the south and west coasts of Ireland 'to refuel our flotillas and aircraft and thus protect the trade by which Ireland as well as Great Britain lives, is a most heavy and grievous burden, and one which should never have been placed on our shoulders,' de Valera replied in the Dáil two days later:

There can be no question of the handing over of these ports so long as this state remains neutral. There can be no question of

leasing these ports. They are ours. They are within our sovereignty, and there can be no question, so long as we remain neutral of handing them over on any condition whatsoever. Any attempt to bring pressure to bear on us by any side, by any of the belligerents, by Britain, could only lead to bloodshed.¹⁵

Joseph Goebbels, the German Propaganda Minister, noted in his diary under date 10 November 1940: 'De Valera however has given Churchill a clear, brusque refusal on the bases question. Whether the old fox will let that stop him is another problem.' (Hitler's order to the navy to make plans for a landing 'if Ireland requests help' grew out of this Churchill-de Valera exchange. There were also German plans to send arms and military specialists to Ireland in the event of a British invasion, and Frank Ryan was held in Berlin to participate in the enterprise.)¹⁶

In Churchill's view, Éire did not have a legal right to be neutral as a British Dominion, which it was officially because of the External Relations Act. On 8 December 1940, he promised Roosevelt that 'a Council of Defence for all Ireland could be set up out of which the unity of the island would probably in some form or other emerge after the war' if de Valera supported the Allies. Four days later, he complained that the British 'take it much amiss that we should have to carry Irish supplies through air and U-boat attacks and subsidise them handsomely when de Valera is quite content to sit happy and see us strangle.'¹⁷ In January, he banned military supplies to Éire.

Churchill, it seems, was under the illusion that most people in 'Southern Ireland', as he insisted on calling the Twenty-six Counties, were pro-British. Anthony Eden was equally certain they supported neutrality. De Valera hinted privately to Maffey that he hoped for a British victory. Gradually he won the confidence of the British Cabinet, if not of Churchill, for a policy that was in line with what he had outlined to the *Westminster Gazette* correspondent in 1920, which got him into such trouble with Devoy — that an Ireland independent of England would never allow itself to be used as a base of attack against England.

Dr Eduard Hempel, the German Minister, had no illusions about de Valera's feelings. He informed Berlin in February 1941 that de Valera wanted an Allied victory and had made political and economic concessions despite his neutrality.

In America, however, Éire was portrayed in the press as in league with the Axis. De Valera was considered pro-Nazi by many Americans. Apart from Cardinal O'Connell of Boston and Archbishop Curley of Baltimore, Irish neutrality had few public defenders. Until Pearl Harbour, the Friends of Irish Neutrality, with Paul O'Dwyer as secretary, had put the case for Ireland as best it could. At a James Connolly commemoration in New York, organized by the Transport Workers' Union of America, Liam O'Flaherty delivered a fine speech on Ireland's right to stay out of great-power conflicts. Although America was neutral at the time, pro-British sentiment was strong and such remarks were considered pro-German.

Dr William J. Maloney, who had worked as a publicist for de Valera's American mission in 1919-20 and whose book, *The Forged Casement Diaries*, inspired Yeats's poem 'Roger Casement', appealed to the Irish government through *The Nation* magazine to give the ports to Britain. Cyrus Eaton, the Cleveland industrialist, urged Pius XII to tell all Catholics to oppose Hitler, 'because once the Church had spoken, Italy can no longer range herself on the side of these ruthless aggressors nor Ireland continue to remain aloof from the struggle.'¹⁸

After winning a third term in the November 1940 presidential election, Roosevelt sided openly with Britain and launched the Lend-Lease programme — which incidentally pulled America out of the great depression finally. The country's national security depended on the survival of Britain, Roosevelt declared in a radio address to the nation on 29 December 1940. Appealing to Irish-Americans, the President asked: 'would Irish freedom be permitted as an amazing pet exception in an unfree world' if Britain lost the war?¹⁹

In Dublin, Gray seemed to think his mission was to get Éire into the war, or, failing that, to get the ports, for Britain.

In March 1941, de Valera sent his trusted lieutenant, Frank Aiken, to America 'to examine the possibility of our obtaining arms and supplies there.' He would explain Irish neutrality to neutral Washington. Gray's despatches depicted Aiken as an evil influence on de Valera; an extreme Republican and pro-Nazi. Two months earlier, Maffey had described Aiken for his superiors as 'anti-British but certainly not pro-German.'²⁰

Official America kept Aiken on a tight, busy schedule of no

importance. From 3 to 15 April, he inspected army installations, while the Adjutant-General instructed his base commanders: 'It is not desired that Mr Aiken be given any honours, that he be entertained, or that publicity be given his visit.'²¹

He had formal talks with Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, and one of his young assistants, Dean Acheson. He had an undiplomatic exchange with Roosevelt in the White House dining room. The President grew so heated that he yanked the tablecloth and the cutlery flew about the room, according to one account. Aiken told Colonel Charles Lindbergh, the noted aviator, who opposed Roosevelt's pro-British policies, that he had to interrupt the President's monologue in order to put his request for munitions and ships. When he asked for a message for the Irish people, Roosevelt replied that he could say he supported their resistance to German aggression.

'Can I also tell my people that you support them in their resistance to British aggression?' Aiken asked.

'There's no such thing as British aggression,' the President replied.

According to Lindbergh, 'Later, when Aiken found he would be able to obtain practically nothing from this country and that the administration was blocking his every move, he suggested to the State Department that all facts in regard to the Irish-British-American relationship be given out to the press. Shortly afterwards, he read in the papers that Ireland would be allowed to obtain two ships, and \$500,000. (The money to be used for refugees in Ireland!) 'I'd hate like hell to think our nuisance value was only a half million dollars,' Aiken said.'²²

In the Dáil, de Valera delivered a spirited defence of Aiken's abortive arms mission. Gray had suggested it, de Valera asserted. 'Whenever I met the representative of the United States here, I made it almost a constant practice to make representations with regard to arms and certain necessary supplies,' he explained. 'This led to the suggestion that it would be well if a member of the government could go to the United States to put the case directly and immediately.'

Aiken had made a strong effort to explain Irish policy to the President.

'Naturally, we did not wish to have any section of the people of the United States think that the arms which we were trying to get

to be used against any aggression, whence ever it may come, would not be used against one particular aggressor,' de Valera continued. 'That would be a very serious matter. Our principal concern was, not that our people here should know the position — because they knew it clearly and could be in no doubt — but that those in the United States should not misunderstand the position ... It was a delicate and difficult matter. There was no use in suggesting that we were bungling it, or that my relations with the President of the United States were not good. My own personal relations with him — in so far as I can call them personal relations — have always been of the friendliest character. Therefore, there was no question of any wrong action being taken by us.'

De Valera quoted a New York evening newspaper which said that when Wendell Willkie, the defeated Republican candidate of 1940, had visited Dublin in the spring of 1941, 'they parted company in Dublin in a white heat of fury.' De Valera denied it. 'Whatever general discussion went on there was no questioning of our right to do what we were doing and there was no retreat or anything of that sort.'

Ireland's national struggle received considerable support in the United States because a large section of the population was friendly to Ireland. 'The position of the administration of the United States is that they are not actually in this war but that they are definitely supplying all possible aid, as they openly say, to Britain. ... Our difficulty is that our policy of neutrality does not fit in with the policies which are being pursued in the United States and in Britain at the present time. It is natural for people engaged in war to act as if those who were not with them were against them. That is not so in our case. We are not against them but we have a right to choose our own course. We have a right to make that choice with an eye to what is in the best interests of our people ...'

They were as free as any other nation 'in this part of Ireland, but this part of Ireland does not represent the territory of which our people have been struggling to get possession for centuries.' As long as that wrong remained unrighted the Irish people would not be convinced 'that the fighting is all for freedom on one side and all for slavery on the other.'

De Valera may have been answering Roosevelt's rhetorical question. 'Could Ireland hold out' if the Nazis won?

Until Ireland as a whole was free there was no use 'in talking about grand principles which are being fought for on the one side

and neglected on the other.' Ninety per cent of the people supported neutrality. De Valera said of James Dillon's argument that Ireland should join the Allies: 'It is magnificent but it is not common sense.' It was better for the censor to suppress such opinions on both sides. As for the war being fought for Christianity, he observed: 'We have a large number of Christians on one side and a large number of Christians on the other.'

We know more about the war now and why it was fought and who suffered and what happened to small nations caught up in the conflict against their wills. It may be that Roosevelt had the better of this argument, but he spoke for a great power, and de Valera spoke for a small divided nation.

Perhaps de Valera had this in mind also, for he went on to refer to the work of the League of Nations. He had worked for the League at a time when he believed in settling 'by means of conference things which if they were not settled would lead to war.' The great powers found practical reasons for not doing their duty to the League of Nations. He did not add, for it was unnecessary to do so, that the outcome was the great conflict then raging in Europe.

'However, I do not think we have got any responsibility for the present war,' he declared. 'So far as the question of our entry into the war is concerned, if I could detach a number of countries from it I would do so. I think the less of humanity that becomes involved in it the better ... We may find ourselves in it. If we do ... I hope our people will fight for something which they are sure is right and one of the things which we can be sure is right, is that we here are a nation and that we do not want to interfere with anybody ... We want to live and let live. If anybody does attack us, then everyone of us can die, if necessary, fighting for what we are certain is a just cause — and I say that, no matter from which side we are attacked. That is the position we are taking and it is not a cowardly position.'

On US arms he said: 'We cannot compel anybody to give us what they say they are themselves short of, or what they do not want to give us.' On the ports, he remarked that Ireland was being asked 'to enter this war'. Despite newspaper stories in the United States, 'We are not belligerently anti-American or belligerently anti-British.'

He concluded: 'Ireland in this war is doing its national duty, its duty to its own people. Of that I have no doubt.'²³

De Valera's July 1941 Dáil speech put the Irish case for neutrality simply, succinctly and directly. It claimed that the Irish had no responsibility for the war, or any business being part of it, which he denied had anything to do with Christianity, freedom or civilization. The Irish cause was just and would be defended against all great powers.

This may not have been the whole truth. But it was the only truth Frank Aiken's censors permitted during 'the Emergency'. It justified neutrality, which in the later stages of the war might be more accurately called 'non-belligerency'. As in February 1920, de Valera recognized a special strategic relationship between Ireland and Britain. Éire, a small state, was dependent on the United Kingdom, a great power, for its military and material needs. Unlike Cuba and the United States, the Irish relationship with the British was that of a client, not a vassal.

Roosevelt did not send Aiken home completely empty-handed. He offered to sell or charter, 'preferably the latter', two merchant ships to the Irish government. Dublin thanked Washington on 2 June 1941 and also hoped the United States 'will find it possible at a later stage to make arms and equipment available for purchase by the Irish government since it is the declared policy, frequently reiterated, of that government to use the arms exclusively in defence of the Irish people against aggression.' Such a policy was not incompatible with the policy of the US government, the Irish note added, which was a diplomatic lie. On 17 June, the State Department directed, 'No reply to the note is required.'

When Brennan delivered the note, Sumner Welles expressed America's sympathy for the victims of the 30 May 1941 bombing of Dublin. The Irish government could not understand the motives of the Germans, Brennan said. Their success in Crete 'made his government all the more fearful that some attack upon Ireland may now be planned by the Germans,' Welles's memorandum of the conversation stated.

An American historian, Carolle J. Carter, offers an explanation. After studying German war files she concluded that the Luftwaffe planes were on a bombing mission over Britain, 'on a radio beam directed from Germany.' The British 'bent the beam' and 'the pilots dumped their loads on partially blacked-out Dublin.'²⁴

The US ships cost \$600,000 apiece. Éire had no dollar reserves

and its sterling assets were tied up in London. The US bureaucracy was of little help. 'The Irish ship question has become a terrible mess,' a memo to Welles dated 22 September 1941 read. 'Negotiations with Maritime Commission began early in June. Legal and financial problems.'

Éire's industries could not get raw materials. The British needed all their shipping space for themselves, they said. 'There will be no lack of meat and potatoes and bread but difficult problems of distribution will have to be solved with insufficient coal and gasoline,' Gray told Washington. As a way of putting political pressure on Dublin this was not necessarily a bad thing, he suggested. Talking to John Leyden, the civil servant in charge of the Ministry of Supplies, Gray blamed 'Irish extremists' in America for alienating 'majority opinion' there. Americans would not sanction sacrifices for an anti-British Ireland. The moral of Gray's message was that if Éire joined the war against the common enemy, the Irish would get all the supplies they needed from a friendly America — particularly raw materials and guns.

Gray reported, on 22 September, 'growing dissatisfaction with de Valera's governing due to increasing economic difficulties.' (The previous year, he had portrayed the Irish Prime Minister as 'probably the most adroit politician in Europe', who was neither pro-German nor anti-British but only pro-de Valera. He was a martyr, fanatic and Machiavelli who 'will do business on his own terms or must be overcome by force.')

²⁵ Gray opposed selling the ships to Ireland. 'If they insist on isolation and make no contribution to the safety of sea-borne supplies it seems equitable that we should make no sacrifices for them and should devote all available supplies to nations opposing the Axis,' he wrote the State Department on 1 November. 'I think this is the only way to bring home the fact to the Irish people. While following this line with regard to arms and raw materials I think it is important to make gestures of good will especially through agencies like the Red Cross.'

De Valera had some political input in Washington by way of John W. McCormack of Boston, the Majority (Democratic) leader in the House of Representatives, whose resolution authorizing 'the Maritime Commission to sell two merchant ships to the government of the Republic of Éire' was adopted by the House on 19 November. The State Department intervened.

'So long as these two vessels are merely under charter to Ireland, they are still within our control and this gives us con-

siderable leverage in dealing with the Irish,' one State Department memorandum noted.²⁶ Another pointed out that the President could sell the vessels to Ireland under Lend-Lease legislation if he desired.²⁷

Gray continued his lobbying efforts against the sale, from Dublin. 'De Valera is blind, obstinate and resentful but he has had to yield to pressure before this,' he advised his superiors on 3 November, 'and will again.' (In the circumstances, 'blind' was an unfortunate adjective, since de Valera literally was almost blind.)

Finally, two ships were chartered, not sold to Ireland: the *Western Hematite* and *Western Nerris*, renamed the *Irish Pine* and *Irish Oak*. Consequently, they could be reclaimed any time the Americans desired. This represented another form of political pressure. It also meant that when America entered the war these vessels were subject to attack, for the tricolour was no more than a flag of convenience.

This is precisely what happened. The *Irish Pine* was torpedoed in October 1942, the *Irish Oak* disappeared the following May. Gray nagged the Irish government for not protesting to Germany over the attacks. He may have been right. On the other hand, there was no evidence that Germany was responsible. The German Foreign Office could have replied that the ships were the property of a belligerent, sailing in a war zone.²⁸

In the summer of 1941, American technicians began building bases in Northern Ireland. As Gray read his boss's mind, when the bases were ready American troops would take over from the British in the North as they had taken over from them in Iceland. After a conversation with the President in May 1941, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau wrote in his diary that Roosevelt was 'waiting to be pushed' into war.²⁹ With US troops in the North, de Valera could not deny America the ports according to Gray's reasoning. He kept 'important people' in Éire informed of 'unpleasant facts' regarding de Valera's policies because Aiken's censorship denied him an outlet in the press, he complained.

On 3 November, five weeks before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Gray told Sumner Welles:

It is obviously best to help him [de Valera] save face when he shows signs of coming in. This might be done through the Canadian High Commissioner who thus far had no show-

down with him ... I have suggested and both Maffy [sic] and Kearney [the Canadian] have agreed that we make no proposals, even tentative ones, without consulting with each other and work as far as possible as a team on this arms issue ...

However, time passed and de Valera showed no signs of 'coming in'. Gray grew concerned about a possible German descent upon Ireland and also the growth of 'a definite Nazi element', by which he meant apparently *Altírí na hAiseirí*. 'I am going to try to impress Maffey that the British intelligence must get to the bottom of it,' he told Welles in the same 3 November 1941 message.

Gray thought that Charles Bewley, pre-war Irish Minister at Berlin, who had left the foreign service and lived in Italy, was 'running the German end of the Nazi movement here.' No one had succeeded Bewley in the Berlin post because King George accredited Irish diplomats and he could hardly do that while he was at war with Germany. Thomas Kiernan was appointed but never took possession of the Legation. The *Chargé d'Affaires*, first William Warnock and then Con Cremin, kept the Irish flag flying in Berlin till the end of the war.

Gray believed that Bewley corresponded from the continent with Cecil Lavery, a barrister and member of *Fine Gael*, who was anti-British because his mother was snubbed at an official garden party thirty years earlier. It's an unlikely story, but unlikely stories are the stuff of wartime intrigue.

Gray's reports from the Dublin of the 'emergency' read as if written from the capital of a police state. 'Nothing of importance is discussed in the press except what is approved by the government,' he wrote in the 3 November 1941 report. 'No group dare talk freely in answer to fair questions. One has to make incessant personal contacts and draw out information. The diplomatic circle knows nothing of Ireland except what the government tells them.'

He told Norman Davis, the chairman of the American Red Cross, that a small minority of Irish-Americans, 'knowing little or nothing of existing conditions in Ireland and nursing the ancient grudge, have made the mistake of blindly opposing our government's aid for Britain policy without realizing that such

action was a threat not only to American security but to the independent existence of the motherland.'

The Irish government had not repudiated their activities because of political difficulties in Ireland, the Minister continued. Most Irish people hoped for Hitler's defeat, and de Valera himself after the invasion of Belgium 'had left no doubt as to his convictions.' But Éire's priority was national unity.

'The point I am making,' Gray added, 'is that Irish neutrality is inspired neither by cowardice nor, in the main, by hatred of England, but chiefly by a haunting dread of repeating the tragedy of 1922... They are willing to tighten their belts and do without, as long as we make no attempt to override their sovereignty.'³⁰

This kind of sympathetic understanding of the Irish question did not often emerge in Gray's despatches.

Gray could find some merit in de Valera and admired his abilities. He found none at all in Frank Aiken or his censors, with the exception of the official Film Censor, Dr Richard Hayes. The others were 'definitely antagonistic to American interests and they look upon all American films with suspicion and distaste,' he wrote.

When Gray told de Valera that his press censorship was directed against the Allies mainly, the Taoiseach replied that the Irish people were not neutral in feeling on any question affecting the partition of Ireland, or the war itself while 'the enemy remained upon their soil.'³¹ Gray was in no doubt that 'the enemy' was Britain, 'their soil' Northern Ireland.

The banning of 'A Yank in the RAF' led Martin Quigley, the representative in Dublin of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, to seek an interview with de Valera. Kathleen O'Connell, the Taoiseach's secretary, sent him to Aiken, whose 'position was most astounding', Quigley wrote in a memorandum for Gray.

'After telling me what is evidently his favourite illustration — how would we feel if the Japs had seized several of the Western states — a reference to 'partition', Mr Aiken surprised me by stating that the Film Censor had cut anything in 'A Yank etc.' that would cause a disturbance in a cinema. That is exactly our position. But Mr Aiken went on to say that when people went home and thought about the picture they did not like it and complained to him.'

Aiken told him that 'the core of the army and the Local Defence Forces and the government was comprised of '1916 men' and the government was unwilling to permit anything which might be criticized by the '1916 men'.' Aiken refused to discuss the merits of the film, but informed Quigley 'there was no hope the matter could be further resolved.'³²

Emergency Powers Order number 196 authorized 'the censorship of films, the public exhibition of such would be prejudicial, directly or indirectly, to the public safety or to the preservation of the state.' It operated to keep blatant war propaganda off the Irish screens and as a public demonstration of neutrality.

De Valera, Aiken, Boland (Minister for Justice) and J. P. Walshe, head of External Affairs, spent one morning viewing an inconsequential documentary called 'A Day in Soviet Russia' about collective farms and factories. It was made in the USSR and the German Minister raised a fuss. Walshe told Hempel he could bring in a comparable film, but the latter replied there was none available. The high-level viewing panel rejected the film 'in its entirety' — for political reasons obviously.

Aiken half-apologized to the Irish distributors. 'As a matter of fact, gentlemen, you got a raw deal,' he said. What he did not need to say was that in the summer of 1942, with the Germans deep inside Russia, a small neutral state without diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union did not intend to defend the public showing of what the German Minister called a propaganda film. Gray assumed that Hempel's protest led to the ban.³³

When three months later the censors banned 'Mrs Miniver' as Allied propaganda the outraged US film distributors accused Gray of not standing up to the Irish government. Their grievance against the censors was 'well founded,' Gray conceded. One American distributor thought the movie might have been called 'Mrs O'Miniver', since Greer Garson was 'an Irish girl and the Irish must be as proud of her as the British.' After reviewing the film, Aiken upheld the ban.³⁴ Gray commented:

My impression of Mr Frank Aiken is that he is anxious not to give the benefit of friendly doubt to American or other Allied films which might be considered as propaganda media, but, as you can see, while American policy respects Irish neutrality there is no ground on which this Mission may protest.

Gray noted the further difficulty of film censorship on moral

grounds. 'Ireland is a puritanical country with a clergy, many of whom have never been away from the island and whose reading and general culture is limited,' he told the State Department. 'It is honestly believed by these elements of the clergy that the Irish people must be protected from what in America seems innocent and amusing fun. When that is the view of important elements of the clergy and when the Irish censorship acts in accord with such views, there are no grounds on which appeal may be taken.'³⁵

Gray reported on Éire's defences in the spring of 1942, when his military attaché, Lieut-Colonel John Reynolds, prepared a study for the War Department. In September 1940, Gray had been given a non-military assessment of morale by John J. Horgan, the Cork solicitor and writer, who said the regular army was an effective force and well disciplined. The Volunteer Force — sometimes called 'de Valera's Volunteers' — and those who joined for the emergency, were being integrated into the National Army. 'No doubt certain elements in its ranks have strong political views ...,' Horgan wrote, 'but on the whole they would resist any attack on the country from whatever direction it comes.' If Britain fell, 'we cannot hope to make any effective resistance to an invasion and will have to accept a servitude such as we have never known.'

Gray was an eager student of tactics and strategy. His covering memorandum with Reynold's study ('Invasion and Defence of Ireland') suggested that the United States had the following military choices in Éire: seize strategic points in the South at the earliest possible moment by the most practicable means, or 'make the best of an admittedly unfavourable situation by making such concessions of armament for effective resistance' as the Irish required.

A German invasion would be accompanied by so much death and destruction as to overwhelm the defenders, Gray claimed. With Dublin, Cork, Limerick and the main centres of population bombed, German airborne troops would seize all communications centres and could not be dislodged 'by any means available to the Irish army.' To confuse the defenders, there would be many invasion points as the Germans consolidated their gains.

To hold off an invasion force, the Irish army would require a *preponderance* of air power and armour which only Britain and the United States could provide. The southern parts of Ireland he considered beyond the range of fighter planes in the North or in

mainland Britain. Emergency landing fields were needed fifty to sixty miles from Cork and Foynes. To meet a German invasion, the Irish would require a minimum of five tank divisions, five motorized divisions and air support commensurate with such ground forces. 'It is established that it would require three weeks for effective forces based on Britain to take the field in Ireland.'

Should the Irish government negotiate a defence pact with the British and Americans, to take effect in the event of a German invasion of Éire, it could continue its neutrality policy in the meantime. As Gray saw it, the Anglo-Americans would find it in their own self-interest 'to supply and equip the Irish army and to perfect carefully coordinated plans for common defence.' He saw no reason to anticipate a change in de Valera's neutrality policy. 'Most Irish want to keep out of war,' he explained. 'They doubt that even with the assistance of US, UN [United Nations] will be able to defeat the Axis powers.' Consequently the Irish government dreaded taking any action that 'might offend German sensibilities and provoke retaliatory bombing in the case of a German victory.'

The Irish government wanted to arm its defence forces but it was difficult to cooperate with de Valera's administration 'whose policy forbids the open interchange of those understandings and undertakings which are usual between governments undertaking defence operations in common.' The US High Command would have to decide the right course to follow in regard to Éire, Gray observed.

He foresaw no political objections in the United States, whatever course was adopted. Those Irish-Americans whose primary aim was to sabotage US aid for Britain had ceased their agitation after Pearl Harbour, he declared.

The effect of such activities has undoubtedly been to represent Ireland and its government as opposed to Britain rather than concerned with its own neutrality. This I know not to be the case as regards Ireland and its government, but the impression made upon American public opinion remains as a political factor. IRA activities, the public utterances of the Cardinal Primate and, finally, the protest of the Irish Prime Minister against American troops landing in Northern Ireland all tend to strengthen this view.

The American press has made clear that public opinion favoured

'the use of Irish strategic bases for the prosecution of the Battle of the Atlantic.' And a Gallup poll had indicated that 'opinion among Irish-born and the first generation American-born has changed radically since America entered the war,' Gray asserted.

Opinion in America would permit no sacrifices for Éire's 'safety and comfort', Gray thought, and that was as much a political fact in the United States as support of neutrality was a political fact in Ireland.

He recommended to the State Department that the United States supply whatever arms it could afford to the Irish army for morale-boosting purposes in case of a German invasion and to retain Ireland's good will; US commercial airlines should use the Foynes-Rineanna landing facilities; suitable emergency landing and refuelling fields should be 'established, maintained and defended' by the Irish Ministry for Defence for British and American fighter planes 'in Cork-Foynes region in event of Axis invasion', since the Allies were 'assuming ultimate responsibility for island defence'.³⁶

Gray sent copies of his memorandum and the military attaché's study of Irish defences to Oscar Traynor, the Minister for Defence, and General McKenna, the Chief-of-Staff.

Traynor and McKenna responded to Gray's memorandum within two days. Traynor's only comment was that he had shown the document to de Valera. McKenna forwarded his own comments to the US Minister, with a list of arms required for the defence of Ireland.

McKenna disagreed with some of Gray's conclusions. He did not think the Germans could land wherever they chose in the south and southwest without serious opposition. 'Nor do I agree that suitable emergency landing fields are as plentiful as you suggest,' he added. The Irish defence forces would make a maximum effort to deny harbour facilities and airfields and thereby make a successful German invasion practically impossible. (It sounds far-fetched, but that's what McKenna wrote. Up to then, no army had stopped a German invasion.)

'As our equipment position improves so also will our ability to deny these facilities,' McKenna observed. He required: one hundred and fifty 37 mm anti-tank guns; forty-eight 75 mm guns, one hundred and fifty 81 mm mortars, four hundred 60 mm mortars, one hundred 37 mm anti-aircraft mobile guns, two

thousand Thompson sub-machine guns, ten million rounds of .45 ammunition, thirty thousand rifles and twenty-five million rounds of .300 ammunition. For the defence of the gateway to Britain, it was not an extravagant request.³⁷

Nevertheless, General George C. Marshall, for the US Army, turned it down on 28 April 1942, and Admiral Ernest J. King concurred for the Navy on 4 May. Gray, from Dublin, informed the Secretary of State on 27 June: 'I am in entire agreement with General Marshall as to the impracticality of transferring any material to the Irish Free State at this time.'

Sumner Welles, on 15 April, told Gray that copies of his memorandum had gone to the President, the Army Chief-of-Staff, General Marshall, and the Navy Chief of Operations, Admiral King. 'You may be sure we are following all developments in Ireland very closely and that we greatly appreciate the excellent manner in which you are keeping us informed by your timely and helpful representations,' he wrote.

The US military attaché's report was flattering to the Irish army — 'excellent material' who would fight bravely and welcome Allied assistance, but were poorly equipped and could offer 'but a brief resistance to a German invasion...' Reynolds called Ireland a poor country where the bread ration had been reduced, coal was practically unobtainable, turf was unsatisfactory, and the people faced real privation.

'Under such conditions the ranks of the disaffected will swell and become receptive to the sort of propaganda spread by German agents,' the military attaché wrote. This outlook could affect the defence forces, for Irish army officers estimated that the 'disaffected elements in Éire' — meaning supporters of the IRA — made up five per cent of the population which, counting their families, was a 'quite formidable' Fifth Column.

There were 45,000 regular troops, and raw levies of the Local Defence Force optimistically estimated at 100,000 with little equipment. The army's two infantry divisions consisted of nine infantry battalions each, with a battalion of light artillery, as well as companies of signals, engineers, supply and transport, medical and military police. There were, in addition, two unassigned battalions and seven motor squadrons of cavalry — consisting of an armoured troop and two motor troops — and two armoured squadrons, the report continued.

The General Staff had prepared a 'spider web' defence of small mobile columns to 'hit and run and hit again', and a demolitions system which was probably ineffective because there was a shortage of explosives. An 'acute shortage of petrol and motor transport as well as tyres' made it 'impossible to move the mobile columns' in accordance with the defence plans of the General Staff. 'Bravely as it would resist, the Éire army would be brushed aside by the sort of invasion that fell on Crete,' Reynolds concluded.

Crete was the invasion model. British troops could drive down from the North to assist the defenders in two-and-a-half hours, if lucky. They could expect the bridges on the Belfast-Dublin road, at Newry, Dundalk and Drogheda, to be 'considerably impaired by Luftwaffe and the IRA, and the towns through which it passed would be in much confusion.' Every British officer with whom Reynolds had discussed a German landing in Ireland said there were not enough forces in the North to expel an invading force before it had established itself.

The Germans had transported 17,000 to 18,000 troops by air from Athens to Crete in April 1941, a distance of 172 miles. No sea forces were employed. 'At Crete they used a division of three regiments,' the military attaché pointed out. 'In Ireland they might use three divisions.' (General Kurt Student believed he could seize the airfields in Northern Ireland with two divisions, but this operation was to be coordinated with a landing in Southern England.) Supplying an invasion force after landing was an enormous problem, Reynolds noted. But the Germans had solved more difficult problems in Norway, North Africa and Russia, he pointed out.

The IRA would help the invaders and its members knew the country. 'As a Fifth Column they would be very useful.' An increasing number of Irish thought a Nazi victory was inevitable, although they preferred England to Germany. 'The Irish are very allergic to being bombed, which I believe to be the basis of their policy of neutrality,' Reynolds's study continued. 'The conquest of Ireland would involve such rich rewards that the Germans might well gamble on their audacity and ingenuity to overcome the very real hazards of the venture.'

However, Ireland was a country of stone houses, stone walls and villages, a lot of bogland, and, despite an extensive road network, unsuitable terrain for tanks. Because of the Atlantic swells,

landing troops in the west would be difficult and the east coast lacked suitable harbours. Cork and Limerick were good harbours. Reynolds estimated that an invasion of Ireland would require 216,000 troops — three paratroop divisions, eight infantry divisions transported by air, two armoured divisions transported by sea, and six seaborne infantry divisions — and for air cover 500 heavy bombers and 800 fighter planes.

In their initial thrust the Germans probably would seize Dublin, he speculated, to demoralize the government and disorganize the defenders. There were excellent troop landing fields around the capital — including the Phoenix Park. In the South, he picked out Cork, Fermoy and Ballincollig. (He did not mention Oranmore, near Galway City, where the British had an airfield during the first world war.)

The military attaché praised Major-General M. J. Costello's 1st Division, which would face an invader in the South. 'I formed a very favourable impression of the character and ability of the officers and excellent discipline and quality of the troops,' Reynolds wrote.³⁸

As far as the defence of Ireland was concerned, the government was left in no doubt, after this study of its military resources and requirements, that it would get no help from the United States while it continued its policy of neutrality. In case of an invasion, the defence of the island would be undertaken by the Anglo-Americans. The Irish army, however resolute, lacked the means of defending the country, and the Americans did not want to give them the minimum supplies required to do the job.

When McKenna tried to argue the merits of neutrality because of partition, Gray told him that 'the attitude of his government towards the landing of American troops in Northern Ireland had cost the Irish government whatever sympathy American majority opinion may have cherished for the Irish viewpoint and that the sooner that aspect of the situation was suppressed, the better for Irish security.'

The shortsightedness of this policy may be gauged from the fact that the most likely invasion target in Ireland, as General Kurt Student, commander of the attack on Crete, revealed after the war, was Northern Ireland; he proposed taking it with 32,000 men at Easter 1941 to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1916 Rising.³⁹ In that event an Irish army would be of far

greater value to the defenders, who at the time did not include the Americans, than their numbers or equipment might suggest. Nationalists in the North would take their cue from the Irish government regarding their attitude to the invader — whether to collaborate with him or resist him. And their attitude might determine the outcome.

Gray did encourage friendly relations between the US commander in Northern Ireland and the Irish Army General Staff as 'a political gesture for political ends'. But other than an invitation to watch military manoeuvres nothing came of this either.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE AMERICAN NOTE TO DE VALERA

On 12 February 1943, David Gray personally typed on flimsy paper a highly confidential letter to the State Department which Under-Secretary Sumner Welles could not decipher. An assistant copied it. 'I am writing the President the substance of this letter,' Gray informed Welles.

Gray, Sir John Maffey and John Kearney, the Canadian High Commissioner, were agreed that the best way to force de Valera's hand on neutrality was to send him an ultimatum on the ports. Kearney seemed less committed to the idea than Gray and Maffey who felt

that it would be much more difficult for Mr de Valera to refuse facilities now than say before North Africa. The Canadian High Commissioner agrees with this view. However both Maffey and I believe that de Valera would refuse after wriggling as long as possible. Making the request, however, and obtaining a definite refusal would clear matters for the British and Canadians as regards their long-range policy toward Éire and forestall the attempt which de Valera otherwise would undoubtedly make to represent to the world that he was all along abundantly helpful and friendly. Maffey has written his people and Kearney, the Canadian, is sending his program of which the enclosed is the brief. It is mostly made up of recommendations which you have already considered from this mission. Maffey expects to go to London in about a fortnight to press for an answer and some crystallization of policy which of course depends for its execution largely on the President, that is in the case that some action is deemed desirable ... I am distinctly sensible of changes in Irish sentiment within the past six or eight months which I believe would prevent serious opposition in case action had to be taken, assuming a suitable approach and preparation. [Emphasis added.]

In Gray's opinion a request for air, land and port facilities might be more easily acceded to if there was no 'direct, immediate intervention' — meaning invasion. However, invasion 'might easily follow', Gray warned. Because Allied prospects had changed, the Irish view of the war had changed. They were worried about their standing in the post-war world. The opposition and even some of de Valera's colleagues were 'less wedded to neutrality than he is', Gray wrote. Previously, de Valera had dealt with all foreign policy issues without reference to the Cabinet. Of late he consulted the Cabinet. 'He will strain a point to preserve unity on matters affecting neutrality,' said Gray.

Meanwhile, official US visitors to Dublin supported de Valera although he had protested

our use of Northern bases for cheap political ends. In my view this has to be the background of any true estimate of Éire today. I doubt whether Matthews grasped the fact that Dublin literally would freeze and starve if it were not for English coal and American petrol.¹

Gray thought the President might send a note to de Valera signed by Allied leaders of small countries overrun by the Nazis. 'Russia as a signatory might hurt rather than help,' he warned. A separate letter should go to Dublin from the Unionist government in Belfast.²

The State Department ignored the proposal. Replying on 13 March, Welles praised Gray's diligence and remarked that he would be interested in Canadian reaction to a note on the ports as well as Maffey's thoughts after visiting London.

Maffey met de Valera on 17 April and told Gray that the Taoiseach's reason for refusing to alter his foreign policy was that 'they would mock me if I changed after it appeared that you were going to win.' Said Gray: 'It is this egotistical vanity which apparently in the past inspired his refusal to accept the Treaty of 1922, negotiated and signed by his plenipotentiaries, his refusal to accept the majority decision of his own parliament which ratified it, and thus precipitated a wholly needless civil war.'

In discussing the matter, Gray and Maffey agreed that de Valera would not change his position under internal political pressure. But if the supply of raw materials for Éire dwindled to the point of shutting down 'the tariff-protected industries ... the

industrialist class would exert strong pressure for a change of policy.'

Following a conversation with W. T. Cosgrave in February, Gray predicted a general election before 1 June. Cosgrave believed 'he is about to stage a comeback'. However, Gray warned, a change of government would not help the Anglo-Americans, for Cosgrave, too, was committed to neutrality. Gray went on to berate de Valera's 'overblown reputation' for strong leadership:

A leader with inspiration and a world outlook would seize this chance [to join the war], but I fear that Mr de Valera has been over-rated as a statesman and is in effect no more than a parochial politician with an exceptional gift for exploiting the ancient hatreds and with little appreciation of the inevitable consequences of sowing dragon's teeth.³

De Valera lost his majority in the general election of 22 June 1943. He defended himself against Republican accusations that he was persecuting the IRA in order to cover up his failure to resolve the national question. 'We have now to work to get for the whole thirty-two counties the freedom we enjoy here', he said before the Dáil was dissolved, but in preparation for the impending election. Gray reported the statement to Washington on 24 May with the comment, 'Since this is a direct challenge to the governments of Britain and Northern Ireland... continued trouble seems to be assured.'

The Legation drew Washington's attention to a de Valera speech of 31 March which asserted that it was the first goal of Fianna Fáil to bring about the union of all Ireland. On 16 June, the Legation noted pro-American statements by James Dillon, and Senator Neal Blaney's view that 'anyone who thinks we can secure the Six Counties and obtain complete independence for Ireland by means other than physical force is living in a fool's paradise.' The Legation included an editorial from the *Irish Times* of 10 June, the day it reported Blaney's speech, denouncing Fianna Fáil for 'living in the past.' Said the *Irish Times*, 'Ireland needs men who will look towards the future.'

On 23 June, the Legation reported that 70 per cent of the electorate had voted, compared with 72 per cent in 1938. Fianna Fáil's first preference votes fell from 52 per cent to 42 per cent and in the 138-member Dáil the party was in a minority of four against all parties combined. Fine Gael's preferences fell from 33.3 per

cent to 23.1 per cent, forcing Cosgrave to the conclusion — reported by the Legation on 30 June — that de Valera would call another election 'in order to complete the break-up of Fine Gael.'

The beneficiaries were Labour — soon to split on the 'Communist issue' because Jim Larkin and his son, 'Young Jim', were elected as Labour candidates in Dublin, and William O'Brien's Irish Transport and General Workers' Union withdrew its members and formed the National Labour Party — and a small-farmers' party in the west, Clann na Talmhan.

Ireland was getting a bad press in the US and John McCormack, the Boston Congressman and Democratic leader, thought one of the reasons was the ignorance of the Roosevelt administration on Irish affairs. He suggested that a former leader writer for the *Boston Post* named Timothy McInerny, a major with the Eighth Air Force in Britain, should be recalled from active service to brief the President and the State Department on US-Irish relations. Cordell Hull said that would not be necessary; David Gray 'who had been in Ireland for more than three years was returning to Washington for consultation'.⁴

Gray had another purpose. He took to Washington the draft of a proposed note to de Valera, which he had prepared during the month of May, demanding Allied 'facilities' — meaning land and sea bases — in Éire. Before leaving Dublin he discussed partition with de Valera, or, more accurately, he lectured him on the issue. Partition, the US Minister declared, was 'impossible of settlement in any appreciable future, the reason being the British could not coerce Ulster which had supported the common war effort, nor could the US interfere since Northern Ireland had given us bases while Éire denied us bases and even protested our use of the bases in Northern Ireland.'

De Valera replied that he did not agree with Gray's view. He did not think a settlement was 'beyond the capacity of good statesmanship, especially since the precedent for the exchange of population has been established.' Gray assumed he was talking about the settlement between Turkey and Greece after the first world war.

Gray returned to the subject of partition time and again. While drafting his memorandum of demands on de Valera — to lease bases, expel Axis diplomats, state whether Éire was in or out of the British Commonwealth — with unsatisfactory

answers punishable by economic sanctions or other measures, he warned the State Department that partition 'will have an inevitable bearing on post-war Anglo-American relations.'⁵

On 9 July 1943, Gray left Washington for Chicago and the Midwest on the first leg of his tour to persuade Irish-American politicians and prelates that any mention of partition would endanger the war effort. With the blessings of the State Department, Gray planned 'to discuss the question [of] partition with notable American leaders of Irish descent.'

The Archbishop of Chicago 'appeared not as apprehensive as I was of Irish fishing in American political waters troubled by post-war upheaval', Gray noted. Archbishop Mooney of Detroit seemed more favourable. He had silenced Father Charles Coughlin, the 'radio priest', who had drawn the wrath of the Roosevelt administration as well as much of the public for his political demagoguery and anti-Semitism. His followers, most of them Irish immigrants or first-generation Irish-Americans, boycotted Jewish-owned shops and harassed Jews in sections of Boston and New York. Father Coughlin preached that the war was a British-Jewish conspiracy and Roosevelt was 'run by the Jews'. Attorney-General Francis Biddle told Archbishop Mooney to control Father Coughlin or the government would try him for sedition. His newspaper, *Social Justice*, was barred from the mails, and in mid-1942 the 'radio priest' retired to his Royal Oak, Michigan, parish and never again made a public political speech. It was an astonishing transformation and indicated that Archbishop Mooney was not a man to be trifled with. Now he was being asked to discipline other Irish-Americans.

According to Gray, the Archbishop commented on 'the possibilities for evil of the Coughlinites and the Curranites with whose efforts he is familiar.' Father Edward Lodge Curran, the head of the Catholic Truth Society, another troublesome priest with strong appeal to the Irish for his denunciations of British policy in Ireland and elsewhere, belonged, however, to the diocese of Brooklyn.

The Democratic boss of Erie County, NY — comprising the industrial city of Buffalo — told Gray that Irish-Americans 'were not satisfied with Éire's policy but were suspicious of England, and would go anti-British if the Anglo-Irish issue

could be revived.' This was precisely the kind of thing Gray wanted to prevent. He discovered that Joseph Kennedy in Boston, who had resigned as Ambassador to Britain and broken with the Roosevelt administration, 'shared the same view' as the Democratic boss of Buffalo. When Gray talked to Bishop Hurley of Florida he received similar counsel: many Irish-Americans would support an anti-British campaign.

In a memorandum for the State Department after he had finished his tour in August, Gray warned that 'if nothing is done to forestall his strategy' de Valera would demand 'that partition of Ireland be ended as a major political wrong comparable to the major crimes of the Axis.' De Valera's strategy would win support in America and block post-war cooperation between the United States and the British Commonwealth of Nations in maintaining the peace, he feared.

Partition was a geopolitical issue, Gray believed. The British Isles formed a unit for purposes of defence. (De Valera held the same view.) The United States must keep its lines of communication open with Western Europe — 'of which Éire is the geographical gateway,' Gray wrote.⁶

On the same day, Gray revised his draft note to de Valera. He offered the Irish 'a share' in the Allied victory in return for leasing bases to the United States. If de Valera rejected the offer, as Gray expected, he would be on record as refusing a generous US proposal. Gray also urged the State Department to issue a statement saying how well Éire had been treated by America and how little its government had done in return for America.

As a further inducement to the Irish government to consider the British Isles a unit 'for purposes of defence', Gray proposed that the United States should offer its 'good offices' to help resolve the partition question.

When Roosevelt and Churchill met at Hyde Park, NY, in mid-August, they agreed to confront de Valera as Gray proposed. Churchill took the draft note back to London and discussed it with the Cabinet. His colleagues, however, were considerably less enthusiastic than the Prime Minister and the President.

'They object to the draft which I prepared for two opposed reasons,' Gray told the Secretary of State, from Dublin in November. 'Though admitting that it was framed on the theory

of certain non-acceptance, they fear that taking de Valera publicly to task might have the unexpected effect of exciting sympathy for him in America and exciting a keener resentment against him in England which they deem undesirable at present for internal political reasons.⁷

He had referred to this British reluctance to tangle with de Valera five months earlier. They feared that he might accept an offer 'to share in our victory'. To accept his help in 1943, when they had managed without him from 1939, might have 'post-war implications'. Obviously they were thinking about partition. Although the Americans might find 'the ports useful for invasion assembly bases and airfields desirable for air cover', the British preferred to wait 'till the war ends before taking action' against de Valera. But Gray wanted de Valera on record turning down an American request for help during the war, in order to foil an anti-partition campaign in the United States after the war.⁸

Gray had the support of the President for his diplomatic intrigue but not of his nominal superior, the Secretary of State. 'The gallant old eagle,' as Churchill called Hull, was a Republican who thought it better for the United States to stay out of the Anglo-Irish quarrel, which, as he informed Roosevelt, was a dispute that went back many centuries.

When Roosevelt asked his Secretary of State's opinion of Gray's memorandum, Hull replied that air and sea bases in Éire would be useful, but de Valera had warned repeatedly that any attempt to seize them 'could only lead to bloodshed.' Hull told FDR:

In making these statements, Mr de Valera has no doubt had principally in mind possible approaches from the British government. Since our entry into the war, however, suggestions have been made that Ireland might be disposed to lease naval and air facilities to the US...

The Irish and British have fought one another for 700 years. They suspect and distrust one another. Each tries on suitable occasions to obtain the support of the American people and government against the other. We must be careful, therefore, to be sure that any action which we take in this regard has a sound military basis in the opinion of our own Chiefs-of-Staff. It seems to me that this is of fundamental

importance to make it impossible for anyone to maintain that we took sides with Britain against the Irish and 'pulled Britain's chestnuts out of the fire.'

The Secretary of State then proceeded, after this reasonable setting of the scene, to give his own view of how the matter should be tackled. Ireland, he wrote,

is at the backdoor of the United Kingdom. Happenings inside Ireland are therefore of more immediate and more direct interest to the United Kingdom than to the US.

Therefore, if it should be decided that the American government undertake a direct approach to the Irish government concerning the ports, the matter should be discussed with the British government in advance and the approval of the British government should be obtained before any action is taken vis-à-vis the Irish...⁹

Hull listed a series of questions for Admiral William Leahy, President Roosevelt's military adviser and a former Chief of Naval Operations — the equivalent of Chief-of-Staff in the army — who had a reputation as a hard strategic thinker. Leahy passed the questions to the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff. Hull wanted to know whether the bases would be useful to the war effort and if so, how? Would leasing Irish bases 'result in the saving of American lives and the lives of the nationals of those countries associated with us in the war?' He stressed that the President required 'answers to these questions from the purely military standpoint just as if there were no political considerations involved...'

The reply by the Joint Chiefs — dated 7 August 1943 — consisted of seven paragraphs. It went to the President on 9 August. The second paragraph stated: 'Air transport and air-ferry operations will not be materially improved by acquiring such bases. Air operations by very long range aircraft for the protection of shipping would not be appreciable [sic] extended in range,' but would provide added 'safety and flexibility'.

The next paragraph said: 'Air operations against European continent would not be appreciable facilitated by use of bases in Éire except that bases for fighter planes in south-west Éire would be of advantage to the theatre commander as bases to which he might move his fighter planes to oppose German air

attacks on Allied convoys if they should be routed south of Ireland.'

The fourth paragraph was the most threatening from the Irish point of view. 'However naval bases will be useful when it is considered safe enough to route convoys south of Ireland and when invasion operations start in Western Europe. They can be quickly established with floating equipment.'

The fifth paragraph likewise has a touch of menace. 'Fighter air bases and naval bases in Southern Éire will be strategically valuable to the United Nations when shipping is routed past Southern Ireland or when an invasion of Western Europe is undertaken.'

The sixth paragraph stated: 'A saving of American lives ... might result from availability of suitable landing fields in Éire, and would result from availability of air bases when it becomes feasible to route convoys south of Ireland.'

The final paragraph contained the military estimate: 'It is recommended that negotiations be conducted without committing the US at this time to a definite programme for establishment of air or naval bases in Southern Ireland.'

The President and his advisers could ignore the message, of course. Gray's proposal was a political, not a military initiative. Indeed, Roosevelt did ignore the answers of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, for he sent Churchill a revised version of Gray's draft note to de Valera, but without the military appreciation.

Still, the Joint Chiefs acted as a brake on any Irish adventure. General George C. Marshall, the Chief-of-Staff, frowned on military sideshows. The first principle of war is to know one's objective. Marshall's objective was an invasion of Western Europe. If he considered the Irish bases necessary for this objective, he would seize them. But that was not his opinion. However, if the political goals of the President in Ireland required the use of military force, Marshall would provide it. But he would not complicate his arrangement with the British by arguments about Irish bases which were not essential to the war effort at that stage, and which they considered within their sphere of influence if not within their jurisdiction.

Gray kept up the pressure from Dublin. He discussed the revised draft with Maffey and Kearney. 'Both these believe that there is more than a reasonable chance of de Valera accepting

the offer in question not because he wishes to but because he could not afford to refuse it,' he told Hull. 'I hope this may be so but I cannot subscribe to it as a possibility.'

Again he stressed the real purpose of the note:

I explained that the object of my recommendation was to prevent the Irish partition issue being injected into post-war American politics by de Valera and exploited by the subversive elements in America which tried to block Lend-Lease in order to oppose your plans for cooperation with the British Commonwealth and other nations. We know these forces are still active and organized. I said that it seemed wiser to spread the facts and our point of view on the record before the attack came and while war conditions existed.

Often sceptical of American political moves, Maffey asked Gray 'if we wanted a refusal rather than acceptance of the offer if it should be made?' To which Gray replied, according to his despatch, that 'while I had no authority to speak for you [Hull] or the President I believed the last thing you wished would be a quarrel; that in the long view it was obviously best that Éire should join us on a friendly basis and de Valera would be placed in a position where he would be controlled by conference conditions.'

But I said I could not believe that there was much chance that he would accept the offer and that it was most desirable that note should be drawn to make the record for the American public. I further said that as I knew de Valera responded to none of the courtesies of diplomatic usage nor to the usual methods of persuasion, but that a blunt and just statement of facts even though reciting unpleasant things carried most weight with him.

Maffey agreed. Warming to his theme, Gray declared: 'What will carry most weight with de Valera is that he will understand at once the strategy of the note and that it will forestall a successful appeal to American sympathy.' Maffey thought de Valera would reply that 'as long as the crime of partition lasted he could not be expected to cooperate with the British Commonwealth except on his own terms.'

Next, Gray announced a new US policy in regard to Ireland. 'It therefore seemed wise in order to forestall the necessity of a

reply to his reply, to state the American position as to the status of Northern Ireland at the outset and further to make it clear that any change in that status was a matter concerning the parties interest [sic] and not the American government.¹⁰

Accordingly, Gray amended his draft note to include a statement on the status of Northern Ireland, thus strengthening the suspicion that his real purpose was to bolster partition by making the United States its guarantor with Britain.

On 18 September, the State Department informed Gray that the draft note had been sent to Ambassador Winant in London who would hand it to the British for their approval. The message from the President to de Valera had been altered in accordance with the recommendations of the War and Navy Departments.

For your own background information at this stage, however, it may be added that the War and Navy Departments say that it is impossible to foresee at this time what military values bases in Ireland may have or whether, as the war develops, we should actually use such bases. They believe however that it would be of real assistance now to planning our war strategy to be able to count on the use of these bases if at any time they should be needed.

They have accordingly recommended that an approach be made in confidence to the Irish government for permission to use Irish bases in the event such bases should be needed but that this government should not make any commitments to establish such bases.

Winant informed Hull on 19 September that he had discussed the proposal with Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, who told him that although Churchill favoured the note to de Valera some members of his Cabinet did not. Those opposed had supported a united Ireland before the war. Now they felt it was a lucky thing the island was not united, else 'the whole of Ireland might have been kept neutral and that without any bases in Ireland the bombing of shipping and the German submarine campaign would have destroyed Britain.'

This view was held by First Sea Lord, C. V. Alexander, a longtime Labour Party figure who had served in Ramsay MacDonald's Cabinets, and by Clement Attlee, the Deputy Prime

Minister and Labour leader. The Cabinet had not endorsed the note.

Eden quietly reminded the Americans that Ireland, South as well as North, was a United Kingdom, not a US responsibility. Or as Winant put it: 'Mr Eden said that the wish of the American government to approach the Irish government directly was perhaps understandable and perhaps wise but that such an approach was contrary to the theory that Ireland is an integral part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Mr Eden expressed appreciation for our recognition of the controlling interest of the British government in any approach.'

The arguments of the Joint Chiefs did not convince Gray that his own original proposal was wrong. 'Does not this approach inevitably lead us into a position where we get neither the promise of the desired facilities nor the record of a refusal?' he asked Hull.¹¹ 'Furthermore, may not the extremely mild phrasing mislead him [de Valera] as to the American view of his policy which maintains Axis missions in what is essentially our defence zone and opposes our use of military facilities in Northern Ireland?'

Gray maintained that 'the extreme Nationalists to whom he defers' would ensure that de Valera 'will never yield facilities except to military force or to that degree of economic and political pressure which would disrupt this following.' What he meant is that the old Sinn Féin element which had prospered behind tariff walls would cheer him on until they suffered the consequences.

The US Minister went on to say that the Allies should not continue to ignore de Valera's unfriendly statements about American bases and troops in the North and the 'consistently unfriendly attitude of the government censorship.' While de Valera continued to get away with it, in the sense of not being denied supplies, the Dublin Cabinet would continue to support his policies 'for reasons of internal political expediency.' Gray added:

We believe that there is strong evidence that de Valera relies on the grievance of partition as his paramount issue in domestic politics; that he relies on it to gain sympathy in the US at the peace table; and that he counts on frictions between us and Britain to win support for Éire. There is reason to believe that the subversive American press will be fed from

Éire with a formidable anti-partition, anti-British propaganda as the war ends.

The beginning is already under way in certain Irish-American newspapers. Since no solution of partition is probable in an appreciable future unless Éire should join us in war and give the requisite guarantees for a common postwar defensive system with Britain, only ceaseless agitation, disorder and growing bitterness are in prospect.

A note of outrage crept into his despatch when he suggested that President Roosevelt should not send a personal letter to de Valera because of the latter's opinion of the American leader, as well as 'the view' of the Prime Minister's 'most influential Minister', Frank Aiken, on the President. (Whatever about Aiken, there is no evidence that de Valera thought ill of Roosevelt. Indeed, he had a high regard for him.)

The courtesy of a personal letter would not influence de Valera towards the sender, Gray insisted. It would serve to strengthen his position inside the Cabinet. A few days later, Gray raised the spectre of an 'Easter Rising'-style insurrection in the North organized by de Valera. No such conspiracy existed. Gray's over-heated imagination was at work.¹²

Hull replied calmly on 5 October. 'I believe we are all in full agreement on the purposes to be achieved by the proposed approach both as regards our more immediate military needs and in respect of our longer range relations with Ireland and Great Britain.' This appeared to be an endorsement of Gray's 'common post-war defensive system with Great Britain' proposal as well as his plan to keep partition off the 'peace table'.

In President Roosevelt's view, as well as that of his Secretary of State, Hull added, the approach to the Irish government 'must be based on sound military grounds approved by the US Chiefs-of-Staff.' The Joint Chiefs sought to weigh demands for supplies and shipping space 'very carefully in the scales of military advantage.' They could not say what value bases in Éire would have for the war effort. 'They insist upon the more limited approach with no commitment on our part at this stage.'

This approach, Hull argued, would make it 'as easy as possible for de Valera to accept our request and assist in the United Nations war effort.' In that case, the United States would have the Irish bases and be in a stronger position to seek 'the removal

of Axis representatives as a necessary security measure.'

If de Valera refused the US request, 'these other matters can then be laid on the record in an appropriate manner together with our proposed note and the Irish reply,' Hull conceded.

Any de Valera reply that did not grant the United States the bases would be considered a refusal. In planning its war strategy, the United States needed to know *now* 'that we can count on the use in Ireland [of these bases] whenever they may be needed.'

In line with Gray's suggestion, the message from the President would be addressed to the Irish government, not to de Valera personally. However, it might be sent in the President's name to de Valera as Prime Minister, Hull said. They were still awaiting an official British reply on the proposed note. 'Their preliminary reaction left some doubts that they will approve the project,' the Secretary of State warned.

On 8 October, Gray yielded. 'I realize the force of the objection of the military to accepting a commitment to protect Irish cities when they may not need Irish facilities. I am convinced that there is no chance of de Valera saying yes but, of course, you and the service chiefs would be responsible, not I in the case I were wrong. I am sure you and the President are right not to assume that responsibility.'

Gray remained hopeful that de Valera could be checkmated on partition. He told Hull:

Your suggestion that an evasive reply by de Valera would be regarded as a refusal for the record and that the note in question might be considered as an opening move in development of a line of action designed to inform the American public of the unfriendly attitude of the Irish government with a view to forestalling anti-British agitation on the partition question answers our criticism of the military approach note. I am now entirely in agreement with you that it is the best line to take.

Sir John Maffey says he has not been consulted with regard to the military approach version. The Canadian High Commissioner strongly approves of this latter version and prefers it to the former.

Gray continued to spur the State Department on the note to de Valera. He wrote on 14 October:

This appears to be the psychological moment for presenting the proposed Irish note ... the Anglo-Portuguese arrangement [Air base in Azores] has profoundly agitated public opinion. However, de Valera regards it as a betrayal of Éire by Portugal. He told Maffey, the British Representative 'he even [never?] thought Salazar would do this' as if the Portuguese Premier had let him down. De Valera will in all probability continue to adhere to strict neutrality.

Even the patient Hull was losing patience with the British as the weeks went by without a word on, let alone an endorsement of the Irish bases initiative. On 4 October, the State Department asked Winant when he thought the British might state their views? 'As you know the President is personally interested in this matter,' Hull wrote.

On 8 October, Winant telegraphed that the matter was raised at a War Cabinet meeting shortly after Churchill's return from the Quebec Conference, 'but that no decisive action had been taken.' He continued:

I asked that it be raised again after receiving your message and although the question was introduced for discussion no decision was reached.

I understand that it will be raised again this week ...

With Hull ill, Edward Stettinius was acting Secretary of State. He told Roosevelt on 11 October that a British decision was expected that week. None came. On 26 October, H. Freeman Matthews, a State Department official, sent a memo to Stettinius saying:

We have heard nothing from London and suggest that the attached draft telegram be sent to Winant as a reminder.

This stated:

If therefore the British really wish to kill this proposal, their long continued inaction is well calculated to accomplish this end. Have you any further information as to when a decision is likely to be readied.

Winant took the matter up with Lord Cranborne twice. He was told that Salazar's agreement to permit the Anglo-Americans to establish an air base in the Azores had 'stiffened de Valera rather than softened him.' Portugal was Britain's oldest ally, of course,

and a base in the Azores gave the Allies control of the mid-Atlantic. The war against the U-boats had taken a decisive turn against Germany in the summer of 1943 as American destroyers and aircraft carriers guarded the North Atlantic.

'1943 was the year when world leadership moved from Great Britain to the United States,' A. J. P. Taylor wrote. 'British strength was running out. American strength was growing on a massive scale.'¹³

In his account of his meetings with Lord Cranborne, Winant reported:

Cranborne himself did not seem unfriendly to the proposal although he said that any British policy would have to make certain of the security of the British Isles and ensure protection for those who had stood with the British in Northern Ireland. Twice this question was to be raised in the British Cabinet in the last fortnight but I understand it was not brought up. My first conversations on this subject were with Eden. His absence has handicapped me as Cranborne seemed reluctant to take it up directly with the Prime Minister and today asked me to raise it with Richard Law. There is some difference between the PM and Cranborne on some issue unknown to me that in my opinion is responsible for this.

I am taking the question up directly with the Prime Minister this weekend.¹⁴

Two days later, Winant cabled:

Last evening I talked with the Prime Minister about naval and air facilities in Ireland. He told me he would explain to his Cabinet that we had again raised the question but said he wanted to wait before formally placing it on the agenda until Eden's return which will be shortly. He will then take it up.

On 13 November, the State Department sent a reminder to Winant:

It has been almost two months since we asked the British for their views on our proposed approach to Ireland on the question of Irish naval and air bases. We have not yet succeeded in obtaining a definite statement of the British views.

Earlier in November, Gray had reported from Dublin that

Maffey had left for London 'presumably to confer' on the de Valera message. Within a week Gray was telling the State Department about his conversation with Maffey, who had returned to Dublin after being informed 'that no decision by his government had been taken on the question of the proposed note to Éire'.

Gray added: 'He understood that there was a divergence of views in the Cabinet and that the matter was with the Prime Minister for final decision.

'He had gained the impression that political considerations were responsible in part for the divergence in views. Some members of the government were so strongly anti-de Valera that they would not open the door to him even though assured that he would not come in and join us. They have in mind strong measures after the war. They feel that their constituents would not understand the reasons for offering de Valera an opportunity to gain credit by affording us facilities and that they would lose support.' He went on to comment:

They do not seem to appreciate that a generous offer refused by de Valera would go far towards eliminating him as a trouble-making influence after the war, nor will they believe that he has definitely nailed his flag to the mast of neutrality and will under no circumstances whatsoever join with us. This irrational obstinacy is his fundamental weakness and should be exploited by us and not ignored.

They do not understand the American situation and the desirability for weakening Irish extremist opposition to Anglo-American understanding while the war continues, instead of later. Nor will they accept the proposition that in the long view, it would be better for England as well as Éire that Éire should join the United Nations even at this late date.

Hull instructed Winant to assure the British that the United States was not trying to end partition. It was an Anglo-Irish problem and the United States did not want to become embroiled in it. It would be an issue in post-war US politics, however. De Valera's refusal to grant bases to the United States would be on record and enable the administration to resist 'certain vicious influences' which otherwise might damage Anglo-American relations.¹⁵

Gray said the British did not want to challenge de Valera

publicly because they feared it might excite sympathy for him in the United States. They thought it 'undesirable at present for internal political reasons' to attack him in England where his policies were resented keenly. 'They do not want their hands forced on Irish policy,' he told Hull. They suspected he might give the Americans the bases and that would have 'post-war implications' for Britain. The United States 'might find the ports useful for invasion assembly bases and air fields desirable for air cover,' Gray said, pressing his case. He warned:

...if we do not get de Valera on the record as jeopardizing our war effort though entirely dependent on the United Nations for security and supply while the war lasts, we should not be in a strong position.¹⁶

Cordell Hull replied: 'We were all impressed with the statement of the case...' ¹⁷

John Winant travelled with Churchill to the Cairo Conference and used the opportunity to raise again the question of the Irish bases. On 7 December, the last day of the conference, Churchill explained his Cabinet's reservations to Roosevelt, who commented that he 'quite understood the British government's reservations.'

These views were stated by Eden to Winant in London after the Cairo Conference. Eden outlined the past efforts of the United Kingdom government 'to induce Éire to abandon her neutrality.' In June 1940, 'Mr de Valera made it clear that until the question of partition was settled, there was no chance of Éire abandoning her neutrality. And he gave no undertaking that this would happen even then.' The British government did not believe that de Valera had altered his views. Eden continued:

In these circumstances it appears almost certain that Mr de Valera's reaction to the proposed US approach, whichever form it takes, would be unsatisfactory, but that, as before, he would avoid a direct negative and would seek to cloud the issue by reiterating his grievances in regard to partition.

Any reopening of the issue of partition in this form at the present time would, however, be extremely embarrassing to the United Kingdom government, in view of the very strong views which are widely held on this question, both in Great Britain and in Northern Ireland.

In the British government's view a formal approach to de Valera by the United States 'would be likely to give rise to acute difficulties.' If bases were needed immediately, 'these difficulties might have to be faced, but we gather ... that the United States government do not at present take this view.' His government suggested 'it would be wiser for the US government to postpone for the present the approach to Mr de Valera which they have in mind.'¹⁸

On 13 December, Gray sent Washington another revised draft of the proposed note to de Valera, dropping all mention of sea and air 'facilities' in the South. The 'minimum demand now was the closing of Axis missions in Dublin' — the German Legation and Japanese Consulate — allegedly because they were centres of espionage and a threat to the Allies, who were preparing to invade Western Europe. The important point, however, was that the United States would 'put de Valera on record in such a manner as would strengthen our defence against pressure group attempts to involve United States in the partition question, Gray stated in his covering letter. [Emphasis added.] The note was designed to disarm an anti-partition movement in the United States, not to stop Axis espionage in Éire. Gray had a second purpose:

It also avoids the presumed British objection to any proposal from which de Valera might derive a claim to a post-war position embarrassing to the British government.¹⁹

Maffey approved the principles of the draft. He would recommend it to his government, Gray said. Both envoys expected an 'unfavourable' reply from de Valera.

Eden, in his letter to Winant, noted that the draft 'differed materially' from the first version. 'The earlier draft constituted a public indictment of the Éire government's policy and a demand that they should sever their relations with the Axis and provide naval and air facilities for the United Nations.' [Eden had not read Gray's third draft at that point.]

'The second draft was limited to a confidential suggestion that the Éire government should assist the United States by the offer of a base facilities, which, however, might not be required', Eden's letter continued. 'While we are most sensible of the friendly motives which have inspired the US government in

proposing this approach, we feel bound to put before you certain serious difficulties which have emerged as the result of our further examination of the proposal.'

Gray's third version opened with a quotation from de Valera's speech in Cork on 14 December 1941: 'The policy of the state remains unchanged. We can only be a friendly neutral.' In fact, Irish neutrality operated 'in favour of the Axis powers and against the United Nations on whom your security and the maintenance of your national economy depend,' Gray wrote.

The main charges against the Éire government are contained in the following paragraphs:

Situated as you are in close proximity to Britain, divided only by an intangible boundary from Northern Ireland, where are situated important American bases, with continuous traffic to and from both countries, Axis agents enjoy almost unrestricted opportunity for bringing military information of vital importance from England and Northern Ireland into Éire and from there transmitting it by various routes and methods to Germany. No opportunity corresponding to this is open to the United Nations, for the Axis has no military dispositions which may be observed from Éire...

As you know from common report, United Nations military operations are in preparation in both Britain and Northern Ireland. It is vital that information from which may be deduced their nature and direction should not reach the enemy. Not only the success of the operations but the lives of thousands of United Nations soldiers are at stake.

To make its policy 'impartial and truly neutral', the Irish government must expel the German and Japanese representatives as 'an absolute minimum'. To accept this 'principle' would be to accept a new definition of neutrality. The premise that 'Axis agents enjoy almost unrestricted opportunity for bringing military information of vital importance from England and Northern Ireland into Éire and from there transmitting it by various routes and methods to Germany' was false. There were no Axis agents at large in Éire in December 1943. To prove that everything was possible in his fantastic world of espionage, Gray concocted an extraordinary document called 'Facts Supporting Charge that Axis Representations Menace Our Military Interests', which he sent by air courier to Washington.

This document portrayed the IRA, which had almost ceased to function at the time, as a German spy network, transmitting information obtained in Britain and the North to fishermen in the West of Ireland who passed it on to German U-boats somewhere in the Atlantic. Were these charges taken seriously by anyone in Washington? Ervin ('Spike') Marlin, the OSS man in Dublin, had already concluded that Éire was not a spy centre against the Allies.²⁰ (The OSS — Office of Strategic Services — was the forerunner of the CIA.)

Supporting evidence for Gray's charges arrived from Germany in the shape of two parachutists dropped on County Clare, equipped with radio sending sets and money. They were arrested immediately. Gray advised Washington that this 'was the psychological time' to present the note to de Valera. 'It is evident that the British are thinking along this line,' he wrote. He inserted a sentence in his draft about 'the two parachutists ... recently dropped on your territory by German planes.' In fact, their mission was to transmit weather information. Their prompt arrest would seem to justify de Valera's contention that there were no spies in Éire. Gray argued, however, that the incident 'justifies my fears ...'²¹

The British were not thinking along the line that the time had come for Gray's note. Indeed, on 21 December, Maffey was negotiating with de Valera for the removal of a transmitter from the German Legation. When de Valera resisted, Maffey invoked his promise that 'he would not allow Éire to be used as a base of attack on Britain.' The set was put in a bank vault.²²

Although Hull informed Gray on 30 December that the British believed de Valera 'would seek to cloud the issue by reiterating his grievances with regard to partition' and suggested that 'it would be wise for the US to postpone for the present the approach to Mr de Valera', matters moved quickly in the new year. The State Department asked the Joint Chiefs whether there was any military objection to Gray's third draft 'if it should be deemed desirable on grounds of general policy?' They had no objection.

On 27 January, Winant reported a long conversation with Lord Cranborne, the gist of which was that on his [Cranborne's] recommendation the British Cabinet probably would approve

the US *démarche*. They would send their own note to de Valera, saying 'the British government is in agreement with the position taken by us.' Because of secret general staff talks in Dublin between a British military mission headed by a General Wodehouse and Irish GHQ, with de Valera's 'approval and support' but without his official knowledge, the British government was concerned about the safety of its forces as 'de Valera's reaction to such an approach is uncertain...' The British government needed advance notice from the Americans to be prepared 'for exigencies that might arise in consequence of our issuing a statement in regard to de Valera's possible refusal to cooperate in protecting the movements of our troops,' Winant's cable stated.

On 3 February, Hull informed Winant: 'We agree entirely that the British government should support us in a note to be delivered simultaneously. We are, of course, willing to arrange timing of any publicity to meet requirements of security.' Minor changes in Gray's draft included insertion of a sentence on Roosevelt's appreciation for de Valera's Cork speech after Pearl Harbour, and substitution of 'Ireland' for 'Éire' throughout the text.

On 9 February, Eden told Winant, 'We are in agreement in principle with the proposed approach by the United States government to Éire...' The British would send a separate note a day or two later, saying they had been consulted by the Americans and warmly welcomed their initiative. 'We assume that there would be no question of publishing the approach when it was made, and consider, subject to any views which the US government may wish to express, that the question of publication at a later stage should be a matter for further consultation between the US government and ourselves.'

Gray worried that the Irish might have broken his code. Maffey told him the 'Irish government employs a very skilful cryptologist and that he has reason to believe they have broken his code messages from London...' The code-breaker was Dr Richard J. Hayes of the National Library. 'De Valera had a mathematical mind and said all codes could be broken,' Colonel Dan Bryan, head of Irish army Intelligence, told the author. Hayes broke Goertz's code but not the German code, Colonel Bryan said.²³ And there is no evidence that he broke the American code either.

On 15 February, Gray's draft went to President Roosevelt for

his approval. The following day there was a message from a still-worried Gray: 'I am apprehensive lest possible leak from London advise de Valera. He might make some bold statement which would embarrass our procedure. Unless there be some cogent reason for delay I advise action.'

On 17 February, Acting Secretary of State Stettinius cabled Gray that the President had given 'his final approval' and instructed him to 'request an appointment with Mr de Valera to hand this note to him personally.' The British had been informed that 'no publicity is contemplated at present.' The US government would consult with the British government after receipt of de Valera's reply.

At 10 o'clock on the night of 18 February, Gray was directed to tell de Valera to 'sever relations with the Axis powers on the grounds that the presence of their missions in Éire jeopardized our military security.' Next morning, the Minister told Washington the earliest appointment he could arrange with de Valera was for Monday, 21 February. He spent an uneasy weekend wondering how much de Valera knew of his mission.

Gray was ushered into de Valera's office in Government Buildings at 3.30 pm. He had decided to judge de Valera's reaction to the note, 'not merely to hand it to him and take my leave,' as he told the State Department. As a conversation opener, he mentioned Cardinal MacRory's Lenten pastoral letter in that day's newspapers. The Cardinal had said the Anglo-Americans should be grateful the Irish were not fighting on the side of the Axis because of partition. Such statements did not help conciliation between North and South, Gray went on, which Americans of goodwill wished would occur.

De Valera cut him short. He could understand the Minister's point of view, he said. The Minister in turn should try to understand the Cardinal's point of view and those 'Irish Nationalists who suffered under this injustice', meaning partition. Gray replied that he did try to understand their point of view but he could not see how it was helpful 'from a practical viewpoint'.

Using this as his cue, Gray added: 'It is certainly not going to make it easier for you to make the response which I hope you can make to this note.' He handed de Valera the message from Roosevelt and watched him closely as he read it. In a memorandum for the State Department, Gray described de Valera's

reaction to the document. (They were alone.)'

'I am under the impression that the Brown Code in which the note was transmitted to us had not been broken for he read and reread certain passages slowly, obviously seeing them for the first time,' Gray observed. (De Valera's near-blindness made the reading of state documents excruciatingly difficult.) 'He betrayed no anger as he often had done when confronted with an unacceptable proposal, but looked very sour and grim. When he reached the next to the last page the purport of the note became clear, he paused and said, 'Of course our answer will be no; as long as I am here it will be no.'"

De Valera resumed reading, then asked: 'Is this an ultimatum?'

'I have no reason to believe that it is more than a request to a friendly state,' Gray replied. 'As far as I can see there is no 'or else' implication in this communication.'

De Valera finished reading and repeated, 'As long as I am here Éire will not grant this request; we have done everything to prevent Axis espionage, going beyond what we might reasonably be expected to do and I am satisfied that there are no leaks from this country; for a year and a half you have been advertising the invasion of Europe, and what has got out about it has not been from Éire; the German Minister, I am satisfied, has behaved very correctly and decently and as a neutral we will not send him away.'

Gray said he had consistently reported to his government his belief in the good faith of the Irish government in preventing espionage. He had no means of ascertaining whether there was espionage in Éire. He could only assume there was from the experience of other neutral countries with Axis diplomatic missions.

'I said that in view of the known facts my government could not take the responsibility of not making the request in question,' Gray continued. 'I then asked him if he intended to make a formal reply through me or through his Minister in Washington? He said he would have to consider that but would make his formal reply shortly. I then took my leave.'

Gray went immediately to the office of the British Representative and recounted his conversation with de Valera. Maffey wondered if he should seek an interview right away or allow time to pass? Gray counselled immediate action and the

British Representative said he would ask his government for instructions to see de Valera 'at his convenience'. Both diplomats agreed that the matter of publicizing the notes 'should be very carefully considered by our governments with reference to Mr de Valera's formal reply,' Gray cabled Washington.²⁴

Next day, 22 February, Maffey delivered the British note:

The United Kingdom government desire to make it clear to the government of Éire for their part they warmly welcome the initiative which has been taken by the US government and that they fully support the request for the removal from Éire of German and Japanese diplomatic and consular representatives.

According to Maffey's statement to Gray, de Valera showed 'intense emotion' when he read the British note. He said the Americans and the British were engaged in a conspiracy to put pressure on weak neutral states. He considered retention of the Axis missions 'the symbol not only of neutrality but of sovereignty,' Maffey said.

'This bleak unconcern as to the war and its issues was characteristic also of his attitude when I gave him our note on Monday,' Gray reported to Washington. 'The Irish Cabinet was in session all forenoon today [23 February] presumably discussing a reply. Maffey received the same impression I did that the answer would be no...'

Gray cautioned the State Department:

Maffey and I agree that in view of political conditions here, in the event of the answer being no, great care should be taken to avoid the appearance of retaliatory action on our part. De Valera will want to represent himself as a martyr. I shall shortly recommend to you a token release of strategic materials for the Irish Sugar Company to be accompanied with notable publicity. I believe it would be advisable to take special pains to forestall any possible denunciation of Éire by the British Prime Minister at this time. We might lose more than we have gained by such action.²⁵

Although Kearney of Canada had been part of the original 'conspiracy' in February 1943, he knew nothing of the US note until it was delivered. This gave de Valera an opening that he

exploited skilfully. He asked the Canadian to urge withdrawal of the notes. Instead, Kearney recommended to Ottawa that they be classified 'secret'.

Kearney learned from de Valera that his Cabinet interpreted the US note as an ultimatum, the prelude to invasion, and informed Gray who alerted the State Department. 'You will be interested to learn that he had his Defence Council in session all Monday night [21 February] making plans to resist invasion with the arms we supplied him,' Gray wrote. 'This is characteristic de Valera political dramatics.'²⁶

Gray told Kearney he could give de Valera 'assurances that there was no intention to inaugurate a propaganda campaign against Éire nor in any predetermined future to publish our note, but that I could not recommend to you [the State Department] any restriction upon our freedom of action.' If de Valera dramatized the US note, 'American opinion would doubtless interpret his action as it did his publicized protest against our use of Northern Ireland bases.'²⁷

Gray's 'assurances' to Kearney followed a directive from Stettinius on 23 February, that 'no publicity is contemplated at present'. After receipt of de Valera's reply 'the whole matter will be studied further and submitted to the President.' The US would also 'consult with the British regarding any action.'

In a friendly message on 26 February, the Canadian government told de Valera that if consulted it would have counselled a less formal approach than that adopted by the Americans and the British. It could not ask to have the notes withdrawn. But Ottawa advised London there was no point 'in giving publicity to the question,' Cranborne told Winant on 28 February. The Canadians were reported upset because they had been ignored. Whatever their reason, their attitude helped de Valera. It meant that the Allies were divided on the question. John Dulanty, the Irish High Commissioner in London, sounded out the Australians and was rebuffed.²⁸

Brennan 'on his own initiative and without making an appointment' called on Jack Hickerson of the State Department to tell him he personally considered the US note 'as an ultimatum and ... if the Irish government should refuse our request Ireland would be invaded by American forces.' Hickerson said the note was *not* an ultimatum. Military force was not contemplated. Hickerson's note of their conversation states:

The principal sanction which we had in mind, in the event of a refusal, was the wrath of American mothers whose sons' lives would be placed in jeopardy.

Mr Hickerson added that the assurances which the President gave to Prime Minister de Valera in early 1942 still stand. The President's message to Prime Minister de Valera, transmitted through a note on February 26, 1942, included the following statement with reference to the landing of American forces in Northern Ireland: 'There was not, and is not now, the slightest thought or intention of invading Irish territory or threatening Irish security.'

It was agreed that Mr Brennan might inform his government to this effect. Mr Brennan stated that he felt greatly relieved to hear this and would telegraph his government today.²⁹

On 29 February, de Valera received an oral assurance from Gray that the Americans would not invade Éire. De Valera replied that 'this relieved his apprehension as to invasion and was duly appreciated.' But he did not take kindly to Hickerson's remarks, about 'the wrath of American mothers', saying

the intention to apply the sanctions of publicity on the score of American matters which was now part of the record was sinister and that he regarded it with gravity. [Gray] then said with emphasis that this was not an intention nor in any sense a part of the record but merely information transmitted orally to him of the friendly warning given Brennan by a State Department officer as to what would probably happen if, as a result of his refusal to send away the Axis Legations, it later developed that information had reached the enemy which resulted in a loss of American lives.

De Valera said the Irish government had done what it could to prevent espionage. It would continue these efforts but could guarantee nothing. Gray mentioned the 'grave moral responsibility' of the Irish government: 'If it should develop later that information sent out of Ireland should be the cause of some terrible disaster then the consequences suggested by Mr Hickerson would undoubtedly be visited on you.'

In his remarks, which were well prepared, Gray noted de Valera's 'responsibility' for a possible US 'disaster' three times.

De Valera said the purpose was 'to put the Irish people in the wrong before the American public, in the case of certain contingencies occurring.'³⁰ This, of course, was moral blackmail; the Irish could be blamed for a D-Day disaster, for example.

Gray also hinted at an anti-Éire press campaign in America. The State Department would not release the note 'but if you give it out and a storm breaks that is your affair,' Gray said. 'It is a matter of indifference to us.' He went on to mention 'some of the various benefits that we had done for him.' De Valera said he was preparing a written answer to the US note, 'rejecting our request.'³¹

De Valera's response, dated 6 March, was delivered to the State Department by Brennan the following morning. It said that a break in diplomatic relations was 'universally recognized as the first step towards war.' The Irish government could not close down the Axis missions 'without a complete betrayal of their democratic trust' because 'Irish neutrality represents the united will of the people and Parliament. It is the logical consequence of Irish history and of the forced partition of national territory.' [Emphasis added.].

Because partition, in fact, was the real reason for the note — as Gray's reports and the State Department's own post-war study³² made clear — de Valera here got to the heart of the matter. While pledging that his government would 'continue to safeguard the interests of the United States', it must 'in all circumstances protect the neutrality of the Irish state and the democratic way of life of the Irish people.'

Regarding the espionage charges, he said agents 'dropped here since the war began' had been arrested. One had remained at large for about eighteen months, 'but the police were aware of his presence here almost from the first moment of landing, and successful activities on his part were rendered impossible.'³³

The secret notes became public quickly. De Valera's biographers say the Taoiseach could not decide 'whether the leakage was a deliberate attempt to increase pressure on him or not.'³⁴ The first leakage occurred in Washington on 10 March and the State Department declined to discuss the matter. The London *Evening News* put the story on the front page. It said 'rumours of invasion' had spread in Dublin. The Irish army was

on stand-to alert. (In fact, the army moved into defensive positions, the LDF was mobilized and armed.) Gray tried to prove the leak came from Dublin.

The leak was probably deliberate, since it began in Washington and broke in London. It achieved the purpose of publicizing the notes. There were follow-up inspired stories of economic rather than military measures against Éire, which was 'almost completely dependent on British and American shipping, and any withdrawal of this assistance would place her in difficulties,' the diplomatic correspondent of the *Sunday Times* commented. He noted that de Valera had practically challenged the Americans 'to give instances of leakages of information when he said that no specific cases were cited.' De Valera's challenge went unanswered. The State Department did not attempt to back up its claims of espionage, and Gray's 'Facts' memorandum was not published.

De Valera rallied Nationalist Ireland behind him in a way not seen since 1918. It was perhaps the greatest triumph of his political career. In a speech at Cavan he warned that 'at any moment the war may come upon us and we may be called to defend our rights and our freedom with our lives.' Gray castigated the speech as a 'calculating attempt to arouse and unify the country ... against the alleged perils threatening it from without.'³⁵ Two great powers had made demands on a small state and the envoy of one had the gall to speak of 'alleged perils'.

The role of the United States remained shadowy and Churchill was given much of the blame for the crisis by the Irish because on the night of 13 March he halted travel and trade between the United Kingdom and Éire for 'military reasons'. The move was designed 'to isolate Great Britain from Southern Ireland, and also to isolate Southern Ireland from the outer world during the critical period which is now approaching,' he told the Commons two days later. It was a painful decision 'in view of the large number of Irishmen who are fighting so bravely in our armed forces and the many deeds of personal heroism by which they have kept alive the martial honour of the Irish race....'

He continued: 'If a catastrophe were to occur to the Allied armies which could be traced to the retention of the German and Japanese representatives in Dublin, a gulf would be opened

between Great Britain on the one hand and Southern Ireland on the other which even generations would not bridge.'³⁶

Churchill's act alarmed Gray in Dublin. It played into de Valera's hands, he warned the State Department. 'We must defend ourselves against de Valera's political strategy by playing to the man in the street and giving this Legation a popular standing as a friend of the Irish people. Otherwise we may find ourselves confronted by a serious situation in which all classes of political opinion will be united by a lunatic fanaticism and resolved to die rather than give an inch. You know better than I the consequences of such a situation on the Irish-American front.'³⁷

The American demand won general support in the United States. It was hailed by the press. 'If Nazi Germany stood where Britain stands,' the *New York Times* commented, 'Éire's neutrality would then have been worth no more and no less than that of Denmark, Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands was worth. Dublin would have shared the fate of Rotterdam...' A couple of thousand Irish-Americans rallied in New York and cheered de Valera. The *Irish Press* accused the wire services of deliberately not reporting the story. Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne publicly chastised Australia's Prime Minister, John Curtin, for supporting the Anglo-American démarche. He doubted that Curtin represented the opinion of his party or even of his Cabinet. 'Although he spoke for a small nation, de Valera would not be dictated to by the biggest nations of the world,' the Irish-born prelate declared.

Gray was given a Special Branch guard. 'They wish to make us believe that our action has aroused public indignation to the danger point,' he complained. He asked Gerald Boland — 'the best man in the Cabinet', he called him — to remove the armed escort and it was done.

What is one to make of a concocted espionage charge against a small state at the height of the second world war, not by a totalitarian power, as one might expect, but by the United States, which believed in 'self-determination ... as a very deep principle in human affairs' according to President Roosevelt?³⁸ Furthermore, this charge was fabricated because the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff would not say that Irish bases were essential to the war effort. The State Department's real purpose was to pre-

empt anti-partition agitation in America after the war, as the record abundantly proves. It would be said that the Irish refused to help America in its hour of need.

Indeed, the claim was made, four months after the 21 February 1944 note, by Hickerson of the State Department, replying to a query from Senator John A. Danaher of Connecticut on the US attitude to Irish partition. 'For the first time in history the American government recently made a request of the Irish — a request that they close existing centres of espionage and thus help safeguard the lives of American boys fighting a mortal enemy,' Hickerson wrote. The request was reasonable and 'in the best interests of the Irish people.' It was refused.³⁹

The letter to Danaher was cleared by the White House, Hickerson boasted to Gray in a personal letter on 11 February 1946, and had received Roosevelt's enthusiastic endorsement. 'We have heard nothing from Congress on this subject for a long time,' Hickerson concluded. Gray knew what he meant: the 1944 note had been worthwhile.

From his Florida retirement in the 1950s, Gray wrote an introduction to a Unionist booklet in which he claimed that Irish neutrality 'served only Hitler's objectives', 'barred the Allies from use of Éire's strategic ports,' and 'permitted Axis missions to be maintained with their spy apparatus and secret wireless within the periphery of Allied defence.' He claimed 'Dublin was a lighted city, serving as a beacon to guide German bombers proceeding north to attack Belfast.'⁴⁰ There is a lot of venom in these remarks and absolutely no truth — except for the statement on the ports. Neutrality served Irish objectives — not Hitler's, Churchill's or Roosevelt's objectives — and must be judged on that basis alone.

CHAPTER SIX

DE VALERA'S 'CONTINUOUS NEUTRALITY' AND THE COLD WAR

In January 1945, three months before Germany surrendered, Edward Stettinius, the new Secretary of State, laid down US policy on the partition of Ireland in a personal letter to David Gray:

Whatever the situation may have been in the past, Ireland's attitude in this war has made it clearly inadvisable from the standpoint of American interests for us to urge Britain in the slightest to meet Irish demands. We will therefore resist to the utmost any pressure from any direction to bring us into this picture. Ireland certainly has no right to expect any different attitude on our part.¹

Eleven days later, a State Department committee recommended that the administration should resist any approach, whether by Irish-American organizations or the Irish government, to intervene on the partition question.² Éire had denied 'facilities' to the United States in the war when the United Kingdom provided bases in Northern Ireland for American forces. It was in the US national interest to ignore partition. A united Ireland would be neutral in a future war and deny bases to the United States.

The State Department study of partition in July 1948 explained:

The continued neutrality of Ireland throughout the war and Mr de Valera's statement of a continuous neutrality policy in his 1946 St Patrick's Day broadcast had a distinct bearing on the prospects of a solution of the partition problem. The Department's Policy and Information Statements on Ireland in 1946 and 1947 pointed out that the defence of the Irish Channel was essential to British security and that, without a satisfactory undertaking from Ireland to insure British control of this lifeline, it was unlikely that any British govern-

ment could approve the ending of partition. As Northern Ireland was used as a base for United States troops in World War II, and as it is presumed that the end of partition would deprive the United States of these bases there in any future conflict in which it was allied with the United Kingdom, the British position concerning this aspect of the partition question has been received sympathetically in the Department of State.³

A footnote to the above stated that despite indications by Irish leaders that a united Ireland would not be neutral, 'United States policy, however, is based upon the Irish position in World War II.'⁴ De Valera complained in 1951 of State Department 'animosity' towards Ireland during the second world war.⁵ This animosity continued in the post-war years.

Most Americans considered de Valera's wartime policy pro-German. His condolences on Hitler's death received wide press coverage and condemnation which he did not understand. He told Brennan: 'So long as we retained our diplomatic relations with Germany, to have failed to call upon the German representative would have been an act of unpardonable discourtesy to the German nation and to Dr Hempel himself.'⁶ Even Irish-Americans found this explanation hard to accept.

The Hitler incident damaged Ireland, yet de Valera considered the criticism unfair. 'I was damned if I was going to treat him [Hempel] any different from other representatives on whom I had called in similar circumstances, especially as Hitler was dead and there was no possibility of my reinforcing an already lost cause,' he explained to the US Chargé d'Affaires in 1951.⁷

He had eulogized Roosevelt in the Dáil on 12 April 1945. 'Personally I regard his death as a loss to the world ...' Americans would interpret that as the simple truth. But Hitler? They would say his death benefited the world. One could not strike a balance between these two deaths. The *Irish Times* called de Valera's visit to the German Legation to pay a formal call of condolence 'one of the biggest political blunders of modern times.'⁸ It was not quite that, but the death camps made it impossible to excuse as a simple act of protocol.

David Gray remained in Dublin till the summer of 1947. The policy he conducted was made in Washington, of course, but he

had had a hand in shaping it. In his last two years he tried to get answers to two questions: Was Éire a member-state of the British Commonwealth? What did de Valera intend to do about partition? In July 1945, James Dillon helped or muddled him on the first question when he asked in the Dáil, is Éire a Republic? And de Valera brought in a bundle of dictionaries to prove that 'We are an independent Republic associated as a matter of external policy with the states of the British Commonwealth.' This was the 'external association' formula which de Valera designed to mollify the British and woo the Unionists, but it had done nothing to reduce their hostility to a united Ireland and it confused the Nationalists. Gray found no satisfactory answer to his second question, about partition, other than that de Valera exploited it for political gain.

The *Irish Times* commented: 'His attempted definition of the Republic in being was elusive as the definition of the square root of minus one.'⁹ *The Economist* doubted there was 'willingness in any British quarter to do anything at all about 'partition', by coercion or by any other means.' Reporting these views, Gray decided that de Valera's remark about the Republic 'was made in a mood of irritation.'¹⁰ Henceforth, de Valera's enemies taunted him with declaring a 'dictionary Republic.'

When James F. Byrnes took over as Truman's Secretary of State, Gray counselled him that the United States 'could not honorably advise England' to force the North into a united Ireland. De Valera was aware of America's wartime debt to Northern Ireland which had granted 'facilities' he had withheld, he added. The British government, if necessary, could deal with de Valera's claims on Ulster 'through the levy of imposts by Britain on Irish agricultural products in equal amounts to duties levied by Éire on British products.'¹¹

The economy, not partition, was the Irish government's chief worry in the post-war months. In June 1945, de Valera named Seán Lemass deputy Prime Minister, or Tánaiste, when Seán T. O'Kelly was elected President. And he appointed Frank Aiken Minister for Finance. Gray was aghast. His *bête noir* of Irish politics was now running the economy. He told Washington that he had talked with Aiken for two hours about economics, while they waited for Wendell Willkie's airplane to arrive in Dublin, and 'he told me he was a convinced Douglas planner

and that Social Credit was the solution for Ireland's difficulties.' Gray told the State Department that when he mentioned this to de Valera he laughed, touched his head and remarked, 'We don't pay any attention to Frank's ideas about finance.'¹²

De Valera's faith in Aiken's judgment always puzzled Gray. 'This special consideration of Aiken unquestionably against the advice of most of his colleagues bears out our repeatedly expressed opinion that Aiken, as representing the sentiment of the old revolutionary gunmen group, had more influence with de Valera than anyone else,' his despatch to the State Department went on. 'He is a bad debater, loses his temper and becomes confused by clever questioning.' In Gray's opinion, Aiken's appointment to the key Cabinet post indicated de Valera's 'anxiety and proclaims his decision to hold fast to the old leftist revolutionary elements.'¹³

During the war, Éire had shipped labour as well as cattle to Britain and accumulated £400 million sterling assets in London which were tightly controlled by the British government. With them Éire could purchase coal, petrol, machinery and farm fertilizers. Ireland was one of the world's few creditor nations but lacked the power to control its own finances. Its status in the Commonwealth remained 'where it has been since the constitution of 1937 — in the air,' a correspondent of *The Times* wrote in July 1945 on the eve of de Valera's 'dictionary Republic' statement.¹⁴

A Labour Party weekly, *The Irish People*, found that 'some 40,000 men and women, citizens of Dublin — the forgotten men — have wages below 35/- a week, many of them married with dependents, and have to pay a city rent, and have no resources such as country people may have; over and above those there are multitudes of unemployed and a mass of unfortunates on a pittance of Home Assistance.'

The 10/- weekly Old Age Pension was worth only 3/4½d purchasing power in 1914. In August 1945, the *People* added, 20/- was required to buy what could have been obtained in 1914 for 6/9d. In 1915, the Old Age Pension was 5/- for those aged seventy and over.

'So we are progressing — backwards,' commented the Labour Party journal.¹⁵

When Archbishops Spellman of New York, Mooney of Detroit

and Stritch of Chicago were designated Cardinals early in 1946 by Pius XII, Gray sent them congratulatory letters. He had dealt with them during the war, Mooney and Stritch on his US visit in the summer of 1943, Spellman when he visited Ireland in the spring of 1943.

'It would be God's blessing to this country if and when His Holiness designates a successor to the late Cardinal MacRory, he should select someone like you or Dr Mooney,' Gray told Spellman. To Stritch he wrote: 'If there were anything I could do to bring about a united Ireland, I should gladly do it; for I believe it inevitable but to be achieved only by mutual conciliation and mutual compromise.' Mooney was told: 'I am more than ever convinced that his [de Valera's] policy is designed to win political support rather than unify the country as I should like to see it unified.'

In these letters to the three American Archbishops, Gray accused de Valera of hypocrisy on the partition question. His remarks alarmed some officials at the State Department. In an internal memorandum dated 16 January 1946, one wrote: 'Mr Gray seems to believe that he can speak in a personal capacity on official subjects and still be American Minister to Ireland. He apparently does not appreciate that the fact that he makes such statements inevitably gives them an official character ...

'If Mr Gray is soon to be relieved of his post, we can probably skip it. However, if he is to stay on, we should consider the possible desirability of calling him to order. He indicates that he plans to write more of the same.'

Another official scribbled on the margin of this memorandum, 'I agree.' The memorandum went to Hickerson, who, if he did not actively encourage Gray's private letter-writing campaign, did nothing to discourage it.¹⁶ The matter appears to have stopped there.

De Valera welcomed the four American Cardinals-designate — they included Archbishop Glennon of St. Louis — to Ireland with a dinner at Killarney on 11 February 1946. Travelling in the party were James A. Farley and Father Robert Gannon, president of Fordham University. Gray reported that in his speech de Valera asked their assistance in 'freeing' the Six Counties. He recalled that he had gone to the United States for such help in the past 'and I still want their powerful aid and influence to see that it is not merely the twenty-six counties of this

country which will be free, but the whole thirty-two counties,' de Valera said to applause. Spellman replied, 'I am very happy that New York has given the gift of Mr de Valera to Ireland, because Ireland has given many gifts to New York.'¹⁷

Gray said de Valera's remarks threatened 'the integrity of Northern Ireland' and would raise 'a mischievous religious issue in the US' if the North decided to retaliate. In a personal memorandum to religious and political leaders, he concluded: 'My own view, which I hold strongly, is that if we are to quarrel with any country it must be for American reasons and in conformity with American interests — not for Polish, Italian, German, French or Irish reasons.'

De Valera's 1946 St Patrick's Day broadcast to America annoyed Gray — particularly the opening:

When a small nation engages in a modern war it runs risks far in excess of any incurred by a Great Power. Great Powers, if they lose, may hope somehow to survive, but if a small state is on the losing side it can be utterly annihilated. If, on the other hand, a small state is on the winning side, it has no means of insisting that the principles, for which it fought and risked everything, be put into effect.

Said Gray: 'This declaration would appear to deserve consideration by our General Staff and by our highest Naval authorities, as well as by yourself,' he told Stettinius. The State Department interpreted de Valera's speech as a declaration of permanent neutrality.

Furthermore, Gray saw it as an appeal by de Valera to the American people for support on the partition question — over the head of the Secretary of State. It was grounds for a diplomatic protest, he suggested. An official wrote 'skip it' on the margin of his despatch. He no longer had a powerful patron in the White House.

Sir Basil Brooke told Gray that if the British Labour government threw Northern Ireland 'to the wolves ... as an appeasement to de Valera' the Unionists would fight. 'No Briton is more loyal to the Crown and British interests but if they throw me out they will find I am just as ardent a rebel.' He did not think Bevin, Alexander and Morrison would 'take any chances about

control of the Irish Channel.'

Gray thought 'there would be bloodshed if coercion were enforced without such an arrangement with the South as would amount to federation with Britain, a thing which I believe will come in the course of the next twenty-five years but certainly not within fifteen.' He obviously thought that Éire would return to the United Kingdom.¹⁸

In a postscript to this private letter, Gray expressed the fear that de Valera might offer defence facilities to the United Nations, thus undercutting the British argument that the North was vital to their security. 'Consequently they could abandon Northern Ireland without endangering their security. Of course the difficulty is that the Protestant Orange majority is not so much interested in British security as in not being dominated by the Catholic South. It will take the promise of economic advantage, assurance of freedom from Catholic interference and some federal compromise which will enable them to fly the British flag to break this attitude down. This is a big order.'

Four days later, on 30 July 1946, Gray explained de Valera's 'somewhat serious internal political difficulties' in a cable to the State Department about Dr Con Ward, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Local Government, who was killing more pigs at his bacon factory than the law allowed and making cash sales off the books. On top of that he had been a dispensary doctor for thirteen years, drawing full pay — half of which he gave his *locum tenens* 'and put the rest in his own pocket.' A tribunal found against Ward and he resigned as a Parliamentary Secretary but not as a TD.

On 8 October 1946, Sir Basil Brooke told Stormont — replying to a motion by the West Belfast Republican Socialist, Harry Diamond — that if British government coercion created a united Ireland, 'I could see bloodshed and riot ...' Gray commented:

It is probable that if that should happen exactly that result would ensue. There seems no escape from the conclusions formulated by Mr de Valera in an early examination of the problem to wit that it must be settled by mutual conciliation and good will, a solution which, unfortunately, he has done nothing to promote. However desirable it may be that Partition should be ended we endorse again our policy of regarding

it as a problem which is none of our concern, and which must be settled by Irishmen.¹⁹

Ninety Labour MPs in the House of Commons formed the 'Friends of Ireland', organized public meetings in Glasgow and Liverpool to 'educate the English' on partition and to legislate the return of the Six Counties to the jurisdiction of Dáil Éireann, a State Department note explained.²⁰ Gray thought Irish Nationalists wanted to rouse world opinion against partition by creating 'pressure groups' of exiles in several countries.²¹ The men behind the movement in Ireland were Malachy Conlon, MP for South Armagh, Senator J. G. Lennon, Cahir Healy and James McSparran. De Valera did not initiate the campaign, Gray assured the State Department.

On 25 July 1946, the Dáil authorized the government to seek admission to the United Nations. On 2 August, de Valera complied. Iceland, Portugal, Sweden and Thailand applied for membership at the same time. Earlier in the year Albania, Mongolia, Afghanistan and Jordan sought admission. These applications came before the Security Council on 28 and 29 August. The cold war had begun, the UN was a battleground.

Britain sponsored Ireland, which also had the support of the United States, France, China, Mexico, the Netherlands and Brazil. Dr Oscar Lange, a well-known Marxist professor of economics who had spent the war years in North America, was Poland's UN delegate and Security Council president in August 1946. He supported Éire's application because 'the people of Poland have always throughout the whole history of the 19th and 20th centuries had a great sympathy and feeling of great and deep community with the people of Ireland.' A left-wing socialist in a Communist-dominated government, Lange endorsed no other applicant and his support of Ireland hardly sat well with the Soviet Union, which opposed the Irish application. Later evidence suggests that the British were not enthusiastic about granting Éire a seat at the UN either, to avoid making partition an international issue.

Apart from the cold war, which scarcely involved Ireland at that time, there seemed no reason why the Irish application should fail. De Valera's record as an opponent of great-power politics and defender of small nations at the League in the pre-

vious decade was known. Wartime neutrality should have provided proof of the state's peaceful policies — surely an asset not a liability. The United States barred Albania and Mongolia, and in retaliation Andrei Gromyko vetoed Éire and Portugal, neither of which had diplomatic relations with the USSR, and Jordan. Australia was prepared 'at the proper time to support Éire, Sweden, Transjordan and Afghanistan,' but in the meantime was engaged in a principled struggle at the UN by insisting that the General Assembly, not the Security Council, should have the right to admit members. For that reason Australia did not vote. Only Iceland, Sweden, Thailand and Afghanistan were admitted to the UN.

On 17 November 1947, when the Irish application came up again, Andrei Vishinsky told the General Assembly: 'We affirm that it is impossible to recognize as peace-loving such states as Ireland and Portugal which supported Fascism in its struggle against peace and peace-loving peoples, and against the United Nations, and which are even now maintaining particularly friendly relations with Franco Spain, the last offshoot of Fascism in Europe.'

Dr Herbert Evatt, Australian Minister for External Affairs and a founding father of the UN, who had failed in his attempt to abolish the veto, denounced Vishinsky's statement as 'utterly untrue'. It was not a condition of UN membership to have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, he pointed out. Britain's Hector MacNeill noted that 'my country has had varying relations with Ireland', but to call the Irish state 'Fascist' would be to deny that it had a representative government and held elections regularly.

The Irish application remained in cold war limbo till 14 December 1955, when the General Assembly broke the deadlock between the Soviet and US blocs by recommending to the Security Council the admission of eighteen states, including Ireland. Thus, by means of a package deal, the Republic of Ireland joined the United Nations where it charted a contradictory course by deciding not to associate with any power bloc while pledging 'to support wherever possible those powers principally responsible for the defence of the free world in their resistance to the spread of Communist power and influence,' as Liam Cosgrave, then Foreign Minister, told the Dáil in July 1956.²²

The origins of the cold war are endlessly debated. But if the alternative was a hot war then the cold war was certainly a lesser evil. The United States and the USSR had emerged from the second world war as the two dominant great powers. In 1939, there were five: Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Italy — seven when one adds the United States and the Soviet Union, which for different reasons played supporting roles on the world stage between the two great wars.

In May 1945, the armies of the United States and the Soviet Union met in Central Europe, which became the frontier between the East and West blocs. What Churchill called 'an iron curtain' — a term borrowed from Dr Goebbels — descended on the continent 'from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic ...,' as he declared in his best-known post-war speech, at Fulton, Missouri, on 5 March 1946. (In a diary entry on 14 March 1945, Goebbels wrote: 'Having let down their iron curtain the Soviets are now at work bringing the country [Finland] under their thumb.')

The United States, protected by the barriers of the Atlantic and the Pacific, sustained no damage and relatively light losses during the war, while its great industrial plant, unhindered by bombs, continued in full production beyond the war.

The United States also possessed the 'secret weapon' — the atom bomb — which had demonstrated its effectiveness at Hiroshima (140,000 dead) and Nagasaki (70,000 dead). It gave America instant global military superiority. Henry Stimson called the atom bomb the 'master card' in diplomacy. James F. Byrnes was certain it would permit the United States to dictate the peace terms.²³

The cold war began as the second world war ended, and the Pax Americana replaced the Pax Britannica in the Far East, the Middle East and Western Europe. Article 23 of the UN Charter recognizes five great powers as permanent members of the Security Council — China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States. Each permanent member has a veto over the decisions of the Security Council, except in questions of procedure such as invitations to non-members to participate. Yet the word 'veto' does not appear in the UN Charter. What does appear under Article 27:3 is this: 'Decisions of the Security Council ... shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the perman-

ent members...' That's the veto.

However, in 1945 the two great powers at the United Nations were the United States and the Soviet Union. France and China had been defeated in the war; they were great powers only by courtesy. Britain, saved from defeat by the military and industrial might of the United States and the destruction of the German army in Russia, was a great power in name only. It was perhaps inevitable that if the Soviet Union engaged in an anti-capitalist crusade, the United States would respond with an anti-Communist crusade. However it happened, ideology was a convenient mask for power politics.

In November 1945, the Catholic bishops of America read a secret report, warning of the threat of a Communist take-over in most of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the United States, according to the report, the Communists were boring from inside government, trade union and newspaper offices. They were in the universities and in Hollywood. They were in places of power, like the State Department. Much of the material in the secret report came from the FBI. It mentioned the name of Alger Hiss, a high State Department official, three times.²⁴

This was perhaps the beginning of the anti-Communist domestic crusade. 'The first loyalty of every American is vigilantly to weed out and counteract Communism and convert American Communists to Americanism,' Cardinal Spellman told the Jesuit journal *America* in June 1946. Being a diligent Red-hunter was one sure way to political advancement. Richard Nixon and Joseph McCarthy took this path. Congressional committees used professional informers to uncover 'Red plots'.

Anti-Communism became a useful weapon of the Truman administration when seeking to get its way with Congress. The British Labour government sought a low-interest loan of \$3.75 billion from the United States and Congress dallied for seven months before confirming it. Irish-Americans had a hand in the delay. One of the arguments against the loan was that it would be used to build Socialism in Britain. It was ratified in July 1946 after the administration said the money was required to defeat Communism. Henceforth, the way to prize money out of Congress was to claim it was needed to defeat Communism.

Even with an American loan, Britain could not meet its

imperial responsibilities. One of these was Greece, where a civil war raged. Another was Turkey, which, as usual, was at odds with Russia over the Dardanelles and a province seized during the Russian Revolution, which Stalin wanted back. On 27 February 1947, Attlee told Truman that Britain no longer could meet its commitments to Greece and Turkey. 'This was the time,' Truman wrote, 'to align the United States of America clearly on the side, and at the head, of the free world.' On 11 March, he announced the 'Truman doctrine' to Congress. America would 'support free peoples to maintain their institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose on them totalitarian regimes.'

The United States of America would send forces halfway across the world to resolve disputes that had their roots in history not in Communism. Congress would appropriate \$400 million in economic and military funds to July 1948 to stop Communism. 'At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life,' Truman declared. 'The choice is too often not a free one ... I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure.'²⁵

In France and Italy, powerful Communist parties whose strength was largely based in their wartime resistance to Fascism, seemed at the threshold of power. The United States would keep them from power, by force if necessary.

The Truman doctrine was linked to the 'containment' theory of George Kennan, a brilliant State Department policy planner who, in a long telegram from Moscow at the end of 1946, argued that 'the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies ... designed to confront the Russians with unalterable *counter-force* at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.'²⁶

The man who turned Kennan's 'containment' theory into a 'moral crusade against Communism' was Dean Acheson, Under-Secretary of State to General George C. Marshall. Kennan, the first head of the State Department's political planning section, agreed with the policy of supporting the Greek and Turkish governments. He did not agree with the

ideological rhetoric used to win the support of Congress. Acheson, ironically, became one of the chief targets of McCarthy and Nixon, who accused him of being a leftist, an appeaser of Soviet Communism, a friend and protector of Alger Hiss.

All wars end at the peace table. World War II was an exception, however. The Foreign Ministers of the victorious powers formed a council to draft peace treaties with the defeated Axis states and succeeded reasonably well in the cases of Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Finland. Germany and Austria defied settlement — until May 1955, when a peace accord was signed in Vienna. Germany remains partitioned between East and West because the Allies rejected the Soviet demand for \$10 billion in war reparations.

To keep France and Italy in the capitalist camp, Secretary of State George Marshall, in an address at Harvard on 5 June 1947, offered Europe massive aid for reconstruction. It would also keep US industry humming and stave off a threatened slump.

'The truth of the matter is that Europe's requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products — principally from America — are so much greater than her present ability to pay that she must have substantial additional help or face economic, social and political deterioration of a very grave character,' General Marshall declared.²⁷

Ernest Bevin, Britain's Foreign Secretary, called the Marshall Plan a 'lifeline to sinking men'. Georges Bidault, France's Foreign Minister, was equally enthusiastic. Both invited Molotov to Paris to discuss it. After a week of haggling he rejected the deal and the State Department could breathe easier. It was most unlikely that the administration, even if it wanted to, could convince Congress to vote aid for Russia in 1947.

Czechoslovakia accepted the offer, but Stalin decreed otherwise and the Communist-led coalition government in Prague changed its mind. 'We were told that accepting the Marshall Plan would be considered an inimical act against the Soviet Union and that it would have predictable political consequences,' Eugen Loebel, First Deputy Minister of Trade and later a Slansky trial defendant, explained to Acheson in 1949.²⁸ Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania — all ruled by Communist Parties — followed Molotov's example and turned down the aid. The Prague coalition fell

apart a few months later and, in February 1948, the Communists mobilized the trade union militia, staged a coup and turned Czechoslovakia into a Stalinist People's Democracy.

Ireland was odd-man-out in these developments, except for Marshall Aid, as a CIA analysis which went to President Truman in April 1949 explained:

... always somewhat distrustful of Great Powers' motives and possessed of a small country's normal reluctance to become involved in their conflicts, the Irish were never convinced that moral considerations played a great part in Allied war aims. Although these factors are still present in greater or less degree, the Irish attitude toward a war between the USSR and the West would for obvious reasons be different. The attitude of the Church has great influence in Ireland, and the Irish would be deeply stirred on religious grounds by an East-West war and in all probability would not remain neutral.²⁹

Of the factors mentioned by the CIA, the most important was distrust of the motives of Great Powers, particularly one Great Power — Britain. Nationalist Ireland hardly needed reminding by Churchill, when he took office as Prime Minister, that the aim of the war was victory: 'for without victory, there is no survival ... no survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for ...'³⁰ In this Irish view of international politics there was a strong element of anti-imperialism.

De Valera's speeches at the League of Nations in the 1930s expressed this theme. In urging small nations to avoid the conflicts of Great Powers he voiced sentiments which today are called 'non-aligned'. In 1935, he supported sanctions against Italy for invading Abyssinia. In 1936, when it was obvious that sanctions had failed, he warned: 'All the small states can do, if the statesmen of the greater states fail in their duty, is resolutely to determine that they will not become the tools of any great power, and that they will resist with whatever strength they may possess, every attempt to force them into a war against their will.'³¹ In the same year, he supported the League's policy of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War, although majority opinion in Ireland backed General Franco's 'Christian forces' and Deputy James Dillon said the issue was 'God or no God.'³²

The issue for Irish Catholics was *Communism*, which was equated with Antichrist. Through the 1930s, Irish Catholics were constantly warned of the evils of Communism. Three Papal Encyclical Letters — in 1932, 1933 and 1937 — addressed the subject. Father Denis Fahey, CSSp, in 'The Rulers of Russia' (1938), blamed the Jews for the Bolshevik Revolution. His message was sufficiently popular to sell three editions and six reprints of his pamphlet, which bore the *imprimatur* of the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. The persecution of Jews in Germany drew little comment in Ireland.

During the war, David Gray reported a meeting of the National Agricultural and Industrial Development Association 'at which speakers voiced opposition to growing alien economic influence in Éire.' He thought 'the increased number of Jews here since the outbreak of the war and their growing economic weight is undoubtedly the cause of this criticism.'³³ One of the speakers was Oliver J. Flanagan, a rising politician, who, in an early Dáil speech, declared, 'There is one thing that Germany did and that was to rout the Jews out of their country.'³⁴ Many Irish dismissed first reports of the death camps in Germany as war propaganda. 'The government has not permitted publication of conditions at Buchenwald and Belsen,' Gray complained to Washington.³⁵

A Legation report on Jews in Ireland — they numbered 5,211 in 1937 compared with 258 in 1871 — on 17 May 1949, discounted anti-Semitism. 'On the contrary the Irish have often compared their own position with that of the Jews.' When German planes bombed Dublin in January 1941 one of the hardest hit areas was the Jewish quarter of the South Circular Road. A synagogue was partly destroyed. 'It is generally conceded that the bombing of Dublin was effected by planes deflected from their intended targets in Britain,' the Legation stated. It mentioned Davitt's remark that 'Ireland has no share in this black record' of anti-Semitism and noted that Menachem Begin's Herut party, on 9 March 1949, conveyed 'to our Éireann friends our hope that Ireland, unnaturally divided by the same oppressor, will soon be reunited.'³⁶

De Valera's neutrality found less opposition perhaps because Germany had Catholic allies — Italy, Vichy France, Slovakia, Croatia, Franco Spain; and Portugal was neutral. There was no moral issue for the Irish until America entered the war. In

Gray's view, de Valera kept Ireland ignorant of 'Axis practices' before 1941 and used Irish-American pressure groups to attack Roosevelt's support for Britain. Gray thought the United States should tell the Irish the truth and thus weaken de Valera's authority, especially in America.

In the bleak summer and autumn of 1947, Irish workers were indeed discontented with their lot. Statistics showed that between 1938 and 1947 wages rose by 49 per cent and profits by 150 per cent. Real wages, that is earnings in terms of purchasing power, increased by one per cent only. 'The trade unions conclude, therefore, that a reduction in prices and an increase in wages is not only justifiable but would also be beneficial to the whole economy,' a statistical analysis noted. 'The resultant increase in real wages would place greater purchasing power in the hands of workers; this in turn would benefit industry, enabling it to increase still further its production, leading in time to a higher level of employment.'³⁷

The Irish National Teachers' Organization (INTO) had struck in April 1946 for an upward revision of pay scales. Many unions and the Labour Party, which was split, endorsed the strike. It generated a lot of sympathy in Dublin and some antagonism in rural Ireland, the Legation noted. At the Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis on 8 October 1946, de Valera appealed to the teachers to return to work. 'They can be assured of the same sympathetic attitude that we have displayed throughout the dispute,' he said. If they forced the government to grant a salary increase it would put the INTO in the position of levying a tax. A teacher told a Legation official that it was a fight to the finish, and if de Valera did not yield it would work to his 'political destruction' within two years. One of the demands was equal pay for women teachers.

The 'political destruction' remark drew this caution from Gray: 'We would not wish to subscribe to this forecast as Mr de Valera has a genius for making situations which give him an opportunity for exciting national anti-British sentiment and capitalizing it for political ends. However, it is unquestionably a very serious situation for him and his party and likely to develop unfavourably for Fianna Fáil interests.'³⁸

The strike ended in total defeat of the teachers. But it helped build Clann na Poblachta, which noted, for example, that

teachers received higher salaries in the North. The dispute cost the INTO £200,000.

Popular discontent grew in the autumn of 1947, fed by economic causes. The de Valera government was blamed for the rising cost of living, which grew more rapidly than in Britain, and the unions blamed profiteering shopkeepers for the surge in prices.

The Wages Standstill Order of 1941 froze pay but not prices. A year later the order was revised to permit wage adjustments to compensate for the rising cost of living. The largest union in the country, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU), was challenged by other unions. 'No longer able to control policy making, the ITGWU withdrew from the TUC and set up the Congress of Irish Unions with its affiliated National Labour Party,' the Legation told Washington. 'The main line is one of Nationalism directed at the Trade Union Congress, which has close ties with the British TUC. Except for this there is no difference in their general approaches to industrial relations.'³⁹

The Congress of Irish Unions gives a somewhat different account of its origin in its official history. This states that at the 1944 annual meeting of the Irish Trade Union Congress in Drogheda a declaration of the outgoing Executive 'not to participate in a World Congress of Trade Unions' was reversed when the British unions in Ireland secured a majority delegate vote for participation. The conference would be confined to delegates of the Allied nations. 'As a neutral nation we were precluded from participation in such a conference,' the official history claims.

'The reversal of the decision to the TUC left the Irish unions no alternative but to withdraw from the TUC and set up their own organization,' the account goes on. 'That decision was taken on 21st March, 1945, and was endorsed at a meeting on 25th April, when the Congress of Irish Unions was established.'

It adds: 'It is pretended that the setting up of the Congress of Irish Unions is an acceptance of partition. Actually the insistence on our right to unfettered and unhampered control of our own affairs in matters of independent organization is strictly consistent with our claim to status as a nation. The claim of British unions to operate in this country cannot be admitted. Alien control in any shape or form must be resisted.'⁴⁰

The founding father of the CIU — and of the National Labour Party — was William O'Brien, General Secretary of the ITGWU, whose feud with Jim Larkin, the union's founder, went back almost to the Easter Rising. Larkin was then in America and the ITGWU expanded because of its link with James Connolly. O'Brien was appointed General Treasurer — also because he was close to Connolly. Liberty Hall had been headquarters of both the union and the Irish Citizen Army, for which it was shelled during the rebellion. (Ironically, the ruling committee of the union was on the point of expelling the Citizen Army from Liberty Hall a couple of weeks before the Rising.)

Between then and 30 April 1923, when Larkin returned to Dublin, O'Brien was the most powerful figure in the ITGWU, which had a membership of about 100,000 and financial reserves of £109,297.⁴¹ Larkin was expelled and O'Brien became General Secretary of the union. Larkin founded the rival Workers' Union of Ireland and the war with O'Brien continued for another twenty-four years.

In January 1944, the ITGWU withdrew from the Labour Party because Larkin and his son, 'Young Jim', were elected to the Dáil. All but two of the ITGWU's seven deputies and two senators left the Labour Party. O'Brien charged that the Administrative Council had admitted to the party 'well known propagandists for the Communist Party and who have cooperated with the Larkinite element working to obtain control of the Labour Party — James Larkin Jr. being chairman and John Ireland being secretary of the Dublin City Executive of the party.' The Dublin Executive of the Labour Party had sponsored the candidacy of both Larkins, O'Brien claimed. The Legation took great interest in this feud and, on 22 January 1944, informed Washington of the split in Labour and the reasons for it. O'Brien and the ITGWU went on to found the National Labour Party and the Congress of Irish Unions.

Young Jim Larkin had been a member of the small Irish Communist Party which disbanded, except for its Northern section, after the German invasion of Russia, since it could not continue to support neutrality under the new circumstances. The General Secretary, Seán Murray, a native of Antrim, went to work in the Belfast shipyards as an ordinary member of the CP. *The Standard*, a Catholic weekly, ran a series of articles by Dr Alfred O'Rahilly of University College Cork on the threat of

Communism in Éire.

On 4 February 1947, the Legation informed the State Department of Larkin's death on 30 January. He had visited Russia and knew Lenin. 'In recent years he has suffered from the taint of Communism ... It would appear that his death might remove one obstacle in way of reuniting the ranks of Irish Labour. With a solid front the Labour Party could possibly become a potent political force ...' The Legation seemed to feel that Seán Lemass had a hand in the split.

The two Irish trades union congresses contended as to which body should represent Ireland at International Labour Organization conferences. O'Brien and Cathal O'Shannon, his associate of many years, represented the Congress of Irish Unions at Paris in November 1945. There were objections to their presence, but the Credentials Committee unanimously accepted them. O'Shannon told the Congress of Irish Unions at its convention in Galway the following August that O'Brien's 'personal character, his reputation in the trade union movement and Ireland's reputation stood this Congress and Ireland in very good stead in Paris.'⁴² The Irish government also helped. O'Brien was a delegate in 1946, when the ILO met in Seattle, USA. The following month, O'Shannon was named a worker-member of the Labour Court, and Leo Crawford succeeded him as Secretary of the CIU.

Bishop Cohalan of Waterford welcomed the delegates of the CIU in 1947, telling them 'Communists everywhere in the world are now endeavouring to capture the trade union movement by infiltration tactics, by placing their own nominees in the key positions. These Quislings do not, of course, proclaim their true allegiance and only by their fruits can you know them and these fruits are evil: class-war, strikes, readiness to attack those whom Russia attacks, as for instance Greece, the British Foreign Secretary, etc. We should be on our guard against fifth columnists of this kind ...'⁴³

Séamus O'Farrell, a fraternal delegate from the National Labour Party, said: 'We had a conference with these people [the Irish Labour Party] and we laid down our minimum terms for unity. We asked them to undertake to rid the movement of Communistic influences and to take such measures as would prevent the party branches from being used by Communists.

The Labour Party would not accept that.'⁴⁴

Paddy Bergin said that in the split his union, the Irish Engineering Industrial Union, had affiliated with the CIU, but he stayed with the Labour Party politically. 'I subscribe fully to the principles laid down here,' he said. 'We are a sovereign nation and we are entitled to look after our own affairs ... On the political side, the issue is again one of foreign domination. In this case we fear the domination of Russia; we fear the Russian ideology. Nobody can deny that in this Catholic country the Catholic hierarchy are all-powerful ... I am one of the persons accused of being Communist. I was unfortunate in being mixed up in one of the strikes in my town. I am not a Communist and, if necessary, I am prepared to fight and die against Communism. I want everyone here to believe that. It is no empty formula. It is my firm conviction. I believe that if we cannot get unity among ourselves we may be helping Communism. Communist tactics include disruption. In a divided Catholic trade union movement, the Communists have a chance of getting control and we may lose it. But how can we go on preaching to the workers, asking them to unite and vote Labour, if we ourselves cannot unite?'⁴⁵

John O'Leary, National Labour Party deputy for Wexford, a delegate of the ITGWU, said: 'The Labour Party is honeycombed with Communists ... Everyone knows it and knows their names, but Mr Norton will not admit it.' (William Norton was the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party.)

If the spectre of Communism haunted the Congress of Irish Unions, it also haunted some Irish officials. A memorandum by Norman Armour of the State Department, after a luncheon at Blair House (Washington) with an unnamed official of the Irish Department of External Affairs in October 1947, indicated that the latter was concerned about Communist propaganda in Ireland 'even though his country had hitherto been pretty much immune from the disease.'

The Irish official explained that by calling themselves 'Friends of Ireland', Communists in the United States and England were forming associations to further their activities. 'He mentioned Michael Quinn [sic] of the Transport Union in New York as one of those interested in this new movement and several 'Friends of Ireland' with Jewish names in England who

were participants at the British end,' Armour's memorandum stated. (Quinn, of course, was an error on someone's part for Michael J. Quill, founder and President of the Transport Workers Union of America.)

The same official said a Dublin theatre (the Gaiety) produced 'Winterset' with Burgess Meredith and Paulette Goddard. 'It was obvious that the theatre in question was in no position to produce such a play with that cast at their own expense and he felt sure the same interested groups must have been responsible for supplying the necessary funds.'

The Irish official concluded by saying that Anglo-Irish relations were better than they had been for years, and de Valera had had 'satisfactory talks with British officials while on his visit in London and also with Bevin while in Paris.'⁴⁶

The Legation made its own assessment of the Communist threat after a meeting with Jim Larkin Jr., who had succeeded his father as General Secretary of the Workers' Union of Ireland.

'According to Mr Larkin, there are no Communists in the Labour Party,' the survey of Irish Labour stated. 'It is extremely doubtful that he would advertise it if there were. He did admit that there was an extreme left-wing group because of the lack of progress towards achieving labour's aims.'

'This is reasonable, but in our opinion it is doubtful if there is much Russian-style Communism in Ireland. Socialism of the English model would be more popular.'

'The possibility that the economic pressure of a low-wage, high-profit level of industry might force the Irish workers into some form of Socialism or Communism is not too remote. The strength of the Catholic Church is still great, but certain members of the hierarchy have put themselves in the position of backing the vested interests. The two major strikes of 1946, the teachers' strike and the sugar strike, were settled in favour of management at the intervention of the clergy. This could well result in an anti-clerical attitude on the part of labour if labour feels that the Church is lined up on the side of the opposition.'⁴⁷

The Legation watched the rise of Clann na Poblachta and on 11 February 1947 forwarded an *Irish Times* (6 February) report of a speech by Seán MacBride at the Mansion House, in which he stated that 'if there is any reality to any attempt to end partition,

we must throw open the door here to elected representatives of Northern Ireland.' The party was considered Socialist by the Legation.

The Clann leader added: 'In the Constitution it is claimed that the Dáil is the Parliament of the whole country. Yet Mr de Valera's government refused to allow elected representatives of Northern Ireland to sit in Leinster House. We believe that a number of elected representatives in the Northern Ireland Parliament would enter the Dáil if they were allowed to do so.'

MacBride warned: 'We must face realities and we must realize that if we get a Republic in name it would mean nothing unless it ensured economic and social freedom for all the people of the country. We have to ensure that no section of the people will be exploited by another section.'

The initial appeal of Clann na Poblachta was to those Republicans who had not followed de Valera into Fianna Fáil, or elements of the latter disillusioned by the lack of progress on ending partition. Founded in July 1946, after the death on a hunger-and-thirst strike of Seán McCaughey in Portlaoise prison, Clann quickly became a public forum for all manner of social and political protests. Even members of Fianna Fáil thought it would have been an act of simple justice to free McCaughey, a Northern Republican serving a life sentence for kidnapping Stephen Hayes in June of 1941. MacBride drew some damaging admissions at the inquest on the treatment of McCaughey and his comrades who covered themselves with blankets because they refused to wear prison dress. 'Would you treat your dog like that?' MacBride asked the prison doctor and received the answer 'No'. MacBride appealed to de Valera 'on a personal basis' not to let McCaughey die. 'I said it would worsen matters in Ireland,' he told the author. At 3am on 11 May, the secretary of the Cabinet, Maurice Moynihan, telephoned MacBride to say McCaughey was dead. 'He said the Chief had told him to phone me. It may have been moral anxiety. I never understood why.'⁴⁸

Clann's political progress was slow. It received only 1,400 votes in an East Donegal by-election after the death of Neal Blaney, which the Fianna Fáil deputy's son and namesake won with more than 19,000 votes. The Legation's Robert M. Beaudry made this analysis of Clann: 'In the overall picture of Irish politics the Republican Party does not loom large; how-

ever, there is the possibility that it might become part of a bloc of malcontents made up of the Labour Party and several of the Farmers' groups. This could be of importance, inasmuch as there is no upper middle class in Éire which could be relied upon to support the government if such a movement became widespread.⁷⁴⁹

The US Legation might dismiss Clann na Poblachta as unimportant, but de Valera understood its potential as the first real challenge to his leadership from the Republican left. Clann attracted not only disgruntled Republicans, but liberals and diverse radicals. Fianna Fáil had been more than fifteen years in power and many people felt it was time for a change.

Fianna Fáil's electoral mandate ran till June 1949 and Seán Lemass said they would govern until then. By-election results in Tipperary and Dublin on 29 October 1947 changed de Valera's mind. Clann na Poblachta won both seats. MacBride won in Dublin with a 9,432-vote majority over the general secretary of Fianna Fáil, T. L. Mullins. Patrick Kinane, an Old IRA man, took Tipperary. But in Waterford on the same day, the Clann candidate came in last in a field of four.

James Dillon, still an Independent, told a Legation official 'in strictest confidence' on 20 November that he was trying to fuse Clann na Talmhan and Fine Gael and was confident he could break Fianna Fáil's monopoly on government. Labour would support him, also Clann na Poblachta 'in the negative sense that Seán MacBride's bitterness towards de Valera is intense.' He thought the new Republican Party could win 'up to twenty seats in the new Dáil', the Legation reported.

J. J. Horgan, the Cork solicitor and writer, told the Legation that MacBride's group would win, at most, ten to twelve seats, a judgment confirmed on 9 December by Erskine Childers who advised Vinton Chapin, the number two US diplomat, that Clann na Poblachta would return no more than a dozen members to the Dáil. MacBride himself informed the *Manchester Guardian* on 26 November that he expected an overall majority in the general elections, which were expected in January.

Childers also revealed that he had discussed with Lemass, in the event of a Fianna Fáil defeat, negotiations with Fine Gael to establish a new party which would assimilate both. If Lemass would not agree to lead such a party, Childers indicated in confi-

dence that he himself was prepared to do so, 'although his comparative youth in terms of Irish politics might mitigate against him,' Chapin reported. Interestingly, Childers did not mention de Valera. Perhaps he expected him to retire. The Taoiseach was then sixty-five.

On 14 December, Dillon told the Legation that his efforts to fuse Clann na Talmhan and Fine Gael had failed.

On 21 December, at a meeting in Oldcastle, Co Meath, de Valera announced that a general election would be held in February. On 12 January, the Government Information Bureau announced the dissolution of the Dáil and a general election on 4 February 1948. The number of seats in the new Dáil had been increased from 138 to 147. For an overall majority, Fianna Fáil needed to win seventy-four seats. De Valera made clear that Fianna Fáil would not join a coalition government or seek the help of any other party to stay in power. Compared with the energetic Clann na Poblachta, Fianna Fáil seemed old, tired and too long in office.

The Legation reported on 14 January: 'Another feature of the campaign, thus far, has been an attempt by Seán MacEntee [Minister for Local Government] to smear the rising Clann na Poblachta with a coat of Communistic red. This attempt will probably be unsuccessful in the main, but may cause hesitation among certain substantial sections of the community which might otherwise support the new organization.'

Clann called for improved social services, guaranteed employment, afforestation and better educational facilities, the Legation added. Clann's candidates were persons of 'recognised ability' in contrast to 'the innumerable party hacks who have been the backbone of the Fianna Fáil machine.' If successful, they would 'infuse new intellectual vigour into the Dáil in which it is, at the moment, conspicuously lacking.'

An *Observer* profile of Seán MacBride said 'he has done what two years ago would have seemed impossible: he has revived the interest of the Irish in party politics.' No-one had challenged de Valera for fifteen years 'and now MacBride had caught hold of the popular imagination, and his chances of a real victory in the February general election are heatedly discussed in every Dublin bar.' Aged forty-three — he was actually forty-four — 'smooth, not to say slick, in manner, an engaging and plausible talker', with Latin features, MacBride and his IRA colleagues

discovered in 1932 that de Valera the patriot had become de Valera the politician. By 1937 he had sat for his bar examinations and by 1946 was a successful and respectable lawyer, according to the *Observer* profile.

'His attitude to the Church, a most important factor in Irish politics, is not known,' the *Observer* continued. 'But he did once tell a visiting journalist that he was a practising Catholic, adding thoughtfully that it might be difficult to succeed if he were not.'

It added: 'His following is composed of extreme chauvinists, or 'incorrigible Celts', disgruntled IRA, a few ex-Communists, and some political adventurers. His success was probably due to the suffering of the working and middle classes now, as Irish prices steadily rise, and his anti-British line is always a good card to play in popular electioneering.'⁵⁰

On 27 January, the Legation reported that Clann na Poblachta was attracting the young people of Ireland, as well as teachers, lawyers, doctors, students 'and others who think de Valera's party has been in power long enough.' There was no fundamental difference in the politics of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, the report said.

'Fine Gael has lost its punch and will make a poor showing in this election,' the report continued. Its leaders hoped that Clann na Poblachta would cut into Fianna Fáil's majority sufficiently 'to force a coalition government'. However, de Valera had 'the organization, the money, and the support of the substantial citizens of Ireland ... a hard combination to beat.'

The Economist described MacBride as 'a barrister by profession with an impeccable revolutionary background.'⁵¹ *The Times* said 'Religion, nationalism and economics have through the centuries divided Ireland. Religion does not come into this election, except, as is natural among a solidly Catholic people, to damn everything that can faintly be labelled Communist, while nationalism is now running second to economics.' It called MacBride the 'matador to Mr de Valera's bull.'⁵²

In a letter to the *Irish Times*, published on 27 January, MacBride called for repeal of the External Relations Act. 'The British people would understand and respect us more' if this 'anomalous position' were ended, he wrote.

On the eve of the election, *The Times* commented that 'high prices have made shortages or put some commodities out of reach of the poor.' Britain remained the only outlet for Éire's

surplus population. The largest number of farm holdings was in the fifteen-thirty acres bracket. 'Whatever is attempted has to be done with an eye on the vote of the small farmer,' said *The Times*. 'The small farmer, like his fellow citizens, is passionately attached to the ideal of the 'Christian state', but his interests and theirs must be kept out of conflict.'

As election day approached, MacBride surmised that Clann was losing ground under the barrage of Fianna Fáil 'Red scare' attacks. MacEntee accused Seán Dunne, Roddy Connolly (son of James), George Pollock, Seán MacCool, Donal O'Donoghue, May Lavery, Fionán Breathnach, Dick Batterbury, Con Lehane, R. N. Tweedy 'of loyalty to the Communist cause', the Legation informed Washington. The first three were Labour candidates; the rest, with the exception of Tweedy, were Clann na Poblachta candidates. And MacEntee stressed MacBride's 'revolutionary radical' affiliation with the IRA.

To the surprise of most people and the dismay of its supporters, Clann na Poblachta won only ten seats. It had nominated ninety-three candidates, more than any other party except Fianna Fáil. It ran third in party votes and was runner-up in ten constituencies, which was a good showing for a new party. But expectations had been set far too high for any explanation to suffice. It had failed.

'Surprise element weakness of MacBride group with significant feature Labour increase representation 75% over last election,' the Legation's telegram to Washington read.⁵³ The *Manchester Guardian* wrote: 'It is too early to write off Mr MacBride.'

Fianna Fáil's majority was cut to sixty-eight seats, a loss of eight; Fine Gael increased its representation by four to thirty-one; Labour won fourteen seats, National Labour five, Independents and Independent Farmers fourteen, Clann na Talmhan five. Fianna Fáil had lost. Clann na Poblachta held the balance of power.

Before the new Dáil assembled on 18 February the combined opposition to Fianna Fáil agreed to form an 'inter-party government' with John A. Costello as Taoiseach. He was a former Fine Gael (or Cumann na nGaedheal) Attorney-General who had helped draft the Statute of Westminster, the Legation noted, and a strong supporter of the British Commonwealth.

'He is friendly disposed to the US and in general, should he

form government little change international policy,' Chapin's telegram informed the State Department.⁵⁴

There was one problem: the National Labour Party was the political arm of, and financed by the Congress of Irish Unions which wanted its deputies to support Fianna Fáil. The Central Council of the CIU instructed the deputies to vote for de Valera. They disobeyed. They said their constituents wanted Fianna Fáil out of office. James Everett, the party leader, was appointed Minister for Post and Telegraphs.

William McMullen, president of the ITGWU, to which the deputies belonged, reported to the CIU convention on what had transpired. The deputies had been reminded of their pledge, but Everett disputed this, saying he was tied to no party and had given no promise. Fianna Fáil had dealt harshly with rural workers, road workers and old age pensioners, and no one could get a labourer's cottage without a letter from the local Fianna Fáil Cumann, Everett declared. The matter was dropped.⁵⁵

In supporting Costello as Taoiseach, MacBride explained that while his party stood for a complete break with Britain and an end to partition, he realized that Clann na Poblachta did not have a mandate at this time for its programme. He would hold that programme in abeyance until it received such a mandate. MacBride became Minister for External Affairs, his colleague, Dr Noel Browne, Minister for Health, two influential posts in the new government. Browne was thirty-two, the youngest Cabinet Minister in Western Europe at the time.

The Tánaiste was the leader of the Labour Party, William Norton, who also held the portfolio of Social Welfare. The leader of Fine Gael, General Richard Mulcahy, was appointed Minister for Education. Patrick McGilligan and Dan Morrissey of Fine Gael became Ministers for Finance and Industry and Commerce respectively. The leader of Clann na Talmhan, Joseph Blowick, was named Minister for Lands, and James Dillon, an Independent, Minister for Agriculture.

It was, everyone agreed, a more talented Cabinet than its predecessor, but it lacked a leader of de Valera's calibre.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SEÁN MacBRIDE AND THE REPUBLIC OF
IRELAND ACT

'Little apprehension was expressed by the British press over the selection of Seán MacBride, leader of the Clann na Poblachta, to be Minister for External Affairs, despite MacBride's avowed desire to sever the last link with the British Commonwealth, since Clann na Poblachta's strength in the coalition is not sufficient to prevail against the more conservative policies of Fine Gael and others,' the US Embassy in London cabled Washington on 3 March 1948, reporting British press reaction to the new government in Dublin.

'The press has only favourable words for [John A.] Costello as an individual,' the telegram said. 'He has been described as safe and sane, a man of integrity, moderate, sincere, hard-working, and so on. These qualities, plus his reported statements in favour of the continuance of the de Valera policy of economic rapprochement with Britain, seem to the British press to augur well for the future of Britain's interests in this sphere. On the other hand, the press considers Costello to be lacking in the flair for leadership displayed by de Valera.'

For one thing, as a periodical pointed out, Costello had no 'national record' and his election as head of the government was, in the words of the unnamed journal, 'a break with the militant tradition in Irish politics which is very welcome and long overdue,' the Embassy reported.

Most of the British press considered the coalition unstable. The minority view was that it might last three years. 'But the desire to remove de Valera was the only interest of any real importance which the parties forming the coalition had in common, the [British] press feels, and it is difficult to see how the divergent interests now shakily tied together can endure the stresses of forming a common legislative programme,' the London Embassy telegram went on.

'There were few tears at the political passing of de Valera and

Fianna Fáil, many newspapers expressing the view that the previous government had become autocratic and stale during de Valera's sixteen years in office, and that a change of management might well be a wholesome thing. One periodical pointed out, however, that 'outside the cities of Dublin and Cork, where MacBride's party won ten seats, Fianna Fáil still holds an overall majority.'¹

De Valera was to have inaugurated Aer Lingus's trans-Atlantic service by flying to New York for St Patrick's Day 1948. But he was out of office and the coalition government cancelled the service as an austerity measure. De Valera went to America anyway, to preach against partition. Fred Boland, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, tried to stop him in a most roundabout way. He asked Rugby (Maffey) to get George Garrett, the American Minister, to persuade de Valera not to make the trip. According to Rugby, Boland feared that radical anti-partitionists in America might trap him 'into taking a false position that might easily be harmful to the success of the European Recovery Programme.'² Garrett did take the matter up with de Valera and was assured that he would do 'the right thing' in America. It seems extraordinary that a high civil servant would seek the help of the British and US governments to persuade the man who had headed his own government for sixteen years not to travel to America to talk about partition.

'The new Cabinet is friendly and I find that the members rate much higher than their predecessors when one considers their reputations for ability and their standing in the community,' Garret wrote Clark Clifford, President Truman's right-hand-man at the White House.³ He told Norman Armour, the Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs, on 8 March, that he had met MacBride and found him 'charming'. He went on to recount a story of a speech MacBride had delivered three days before the 4 February poll, in which he spoke of withdrawing from sterling. This scared many people who then decided to vote for Fine Gael. 'In the coalition MacBride was given the post of Minister of External Affairs but his party Clann na Poblachta is a dead duck,' Garrett remarked.

In a long despatch on 22 March, Garrett observed: 'MacBride, while seemingly prepared to submerge his more radical ideas — such as advocating repeal of External Affairs Act

— in view of his affiliation with the present coalition government — has nevertheless, as the Department is aware, attempted to link Irish-ERP (European Recovery Programme) co-operation to the question of partition. Costello has emulated de Valera and has publicly and privately inveighed against 'this last remaining problem' between Britain and Ireland.'

Unlike his predecessor, Garrett was prepared to examine the partition question on its merits. He was a stockbroker, not a career diplomat, with a common-sense view of politics. He noted in the 22 March telegram that the Unionist government had brought the question to 'intensity and bitterness' by banning 'a parade on St Patrick's Day in demonstration of national aspirations.' He thought most people wanted partition settled 'and the country united'. General Mulcahy, the Fine Gael leader, blamed the British government for its 'stupidity' in permitting Edmond Warnock, Stormont's Home Affairs Minister, to ban a Nationalist meeting.

'In their present attitude, therefore, certainly so far as the partition issue is concerned, Fine Gael leaders have divested themselves of their more traditional pro-Commonwealth policy,' Garrett commented. He thought a MacBride proposal for a customs union of all Ireland, in the course of a speech at University College, Cork, on 7 March, was 'unrealistic'. He believed that MacBride's primary purpose was to anticipate de Valera's anti-partition campaign in America.

Garrett recommended a more energetic American approach to the problem of partition, advice that was at variance with State Department policy. His thinking had evolved following many 'conversations held with a varied group of thoughtful people in this country which does not exclude the all powerful guiding force of the clergy.' Obviously thinking of Ireland as a base in the cold war, he added:

Ireland's geographic position could conceivably contribute strategically to defence measures of Western cooperation and to an economy in mobilizing all possible forces in support of a common cause, particularly in eliminating the effectiveness of controversial elements in America and the British Commonwealth which still are agitating an outworn and seemingly anomalous issue.

Then he got down to the question — what to do about partition?

'The time would seem to be propitious to suggest to Westminster to carry forward an enlightened policy such as has been manifested in India, Burma, Ceylon, and other parts of the Empire,' he wrote. 'It would also appear in England's best interests to take a look at its own front door with a view to collecting such good will as remains before the ultimate and presumably one-day inevitable solution of partition is resolved despite England's resistance to it.'

Garrett's despatch alarmed his superiors, and the Acting Secretary of State, Robert Lovett, sent him a memo saying partition was 'primarily the concern of Ireland and the United Kingdom and a matter in which this government does not intend to intrude.'⁴

'De Valera's recent tour of the United States has served to aggravate this situation ...,' Hickerson told Garrett in a letter dated 4 May. 'Under present conditions it is our policy not to take sides on this question. Indeed, the contrary would seem to be the case. Any interference on our part in the issue would, of course, be construed as an affront to the United Kingdom. The British were our allies in the late war when Ireland's neutrality operated to the advantage of Germany. We do not propose at this point to take up the battle for Ireland against a valuable friend and partner.'

If Dublin controlled the North the military facilities available to US forces during the war might be withheld, Hickerson went on, 'just as they have been denied, in territory under its jurisdiction, by that government in the past.' But while Britain controlled Northern Ireland, 'we have, according to the past record, every reason to count on the use of bases in the area in the event of need.'

Then Hickerson added: 'I am sure you will agree that this is a powerful argument for this government's favouring the continued control of Northern Ireland by the United Kingdom.' [Emphasis added.]

In a discussion on the ERP, MacBride had 'intimated that the Irish do not look with enthusiasm on any economic recovery programme which does not envisage Ireland as an economic entity,' Vinton Chapin, the Legation Counsellor, reported to Washington. He thought the coalition government might use 'this opportunity to press for a solution of the partition

question.' De Valera had created considerable interest in the topic during his American tour. 'The new government,' Chapin continued, 'seems definitely anxious to cooperate with the European nations and feels keenly aware of the danger to Irish security in the Russian march across Europe. The Irish are fundamentally opposed to Communism on religious as well as democratic grounds.'⁵

Garrett was instructed to tell MacBride that the ERP had nothing to do with partition, and Hickerson hoped that he would 'on appropriate occasions, impress our thinking on him and his colleagues.' Because of de Valera's American tour, Hickerson felt 'the Costello government has been required to demonstrate to the Irish electorate that it is equally zealous, and in consequence has been spurred to action which it otherwise might not have taken.'⁶

De Valera paid a courtesy call on Truman on 10 March, and in a memorandum for the President, in case the question came up, the State Department called partition 'the concern of the Irish and United Kingdom governments, and one in which this government should not intrude.' (This is almost word for word the language of Lovett's note to Garrett a month later.) The memorandum for the President was signed by George Marshall, Secretary of State.⁷ The advice was unneeded: De Valera did not mention partition — perhaps in deference to Fred Boland's sensitivity on the subject.

De Valera's tour annoyed the Unionists. Sir Basil Brooke called a press conference in London to counter his statements in America. 'Although Ulster and Éire cannot unite, they can be good neighbours — on this condition, that each recognizes the right of the other to shape its destiny in its own way without interference,' the Northern Prime Minister said. Hindus and Moslems in India, Jews and Arabs in Palestine were in conflict and 'on a smaller scale this is equally true of the differences between Northern Ireland and Éire.' Partition was not the cause of the conflict: 'It is merely a symptom.' Ulster's allegiance to the Crown was fixed.

The *New York Times* sent Herbert L. Matthews to Belfast following de Valera's statement in New York that partition was 'not a political or religious question but one of coercion.' De Valera stressed: 'We want to play our part in helping the world

but we cannot do so until Ireland is united.' Commented Matthews, who had covered wars in Abyssinia and Spain: 'There is not the ghost of a chance of ending the partition of Ireland for as far into the future as calculations can go.' A united Ireland 'has no reality.'⁸

What, if anything, de Valera achieved is questionable. The American League for an Undivided Ireland, which was founded in New York in November 1947 at an 'Irish Race Convention', collected 200,000 signatures for a petition asking Truman to help end the partition of Ireland. (This was the element Boland of External Affairs feared would press Dev for a strong statement.) The State Department advised the White House to ignore the petition and give it no publicity. There was no publicity.

William Smale, the US Consul-General in Belfast, suggested that Sir Basil Brooke should do an American tour to answer de Valera. The Dublin Legation forwarded to the State Department an article in *The Spectator* by Rawle Knox, declaring that de Valera 'found more to say about the iniquity of partition during his two months out of office than during the whole sixteen years he was in. He returned home with his sense of indignation unimpaired, and now has gone off to repeat his rampage in Australia ... The fundamental dispute therefore remains: the Nationalists maintain that Ireland is one country, racially and culturally; the Northern Unionists hold that the majority in Ulster is a race apart and therefore entitled to self-government.'⁹

De Valera's speeches in America, Australia and later Britain evidently set the agenda for the anti-partition campaign. Garrett reported a speech by James Dillon — 'a conservative member of government ... well-considered in Anglo-Irish Protestant sections of country ... who advocated Ireland's entry into the war on the Allied side ... who looks to Britain and US as the only safeguard to Ireland's survival as a free and Christian nation' — when unveiling a plaque to Joseph Devlin on 4 May, in which he restated 'the fundamental claim of this nation to have one sovereign government, free and independent for the thirty-two counties.' Partition was a weapon in the hands of international Communism, Dillon warned.

Lord Rugby congratulated Garrett on his warning to MacBride

about linking ERP with partition almost as soon as he had delivered it. The British Representative commented that partition 'would inevitably one day be resolved with sacrifices on both sides'; but that day was not necessarily near at hand. The unspoken comment was — in the meantime, let's not talk about it.

The incident angered Garrett. He told the State Department he did not write his despatches for the British government. Obviously, the Embassy in London had told the British. Hickerson drafted an instruction to Garrett, for the signature of the Acting Secretary of State, on 'the desirability' of keeping the London Embassy informed. Furthermore, it was not the intention of the State Department to rebuke MacBride or the Irish government, but simply to point out that the United States 'considers the linking of ERP to the partition problem, or to any other local political issue among the participating countries, potentially harmful.' MacBride's reference

was thought to be particularly unfortunate at a time when Congress was considering Marshall aid legislation and when the presidential campaign was getting underway here. The suggestion to Mr MacBride that he avoid connecting ERP with partition was certainly not designed to favour the British position, but on the contrary was meant to keep us strictly neutral on the issue of partition, a position we desire to maintain.¹⁰

The State Department may have been wary of MacBride because of his revolutionary background. Officials noted that he was the son of Maud Gonne, a heroine of the Irish struggle for independence, and of Major John MacBride who was executed in 1916. (John O'Leary, the Fenian, was his godfather, and Dublin Castle carried a report on his christening. Raised in France, he had served with the Dublin Brigade of the IRA in 1920–21, participated in street ambushes, and was a courier for Michael Collins during the Treaty negotiations. He was with the Republican Four Courts garrison in June 1922 and subsequently shared a cell with Rory O'Connor in Mountjoy prison. For a time in the 1920s he served as de Valera's political secretary. He remained with the IRA until 1937, when he resigned because he decided that the new constitution had established the state's sovereignty and that the national objective, a united fully independent Ireland, could be achieved by constitutional

means. He built a reputation at the bar defending members of the IRA. Clann na Poblachta's ideas owed much to the thinking of the turn-of-the-century IRB organizer, Bulmer Hobson.)

MacBride set only two conditions for joining the coalition government: that state funds should be allocated for reafforestation, and Hospital Sweepstakes money should be spent on hospitals and sanatoria. In this latter project he had the able assistance of Dr Noel Browne, who took his seat in the Dáil and became Minister for Health on the same day.

MacBride's conspiratorial upbringing made him suspicious of the close links between the Irish bureaucracy and the British, particularly those of the Department of Finance. The head of the department was J. J. McElligott, onetime editor of the *London Statist*. His chief lieutenants were T. K. Whitaker and Sarsfield Hogan. The reality was that Éire was tied to the British economy and sterling. They distrusted MacBride's unorthodox ideas on finance and did not want Marshall aid applied to 'land reclamation, drainage, afforestation, minerals development and other schemes of very doubtful economic value,' as a Whitaker memorandum put it, but 'used only for productive capital purposes and the redemption of debt.'¹¹

In May 1948, Éire was granted a \$10 million *loan* for the June-October quarter from Marshall aid funds. On 18 May, MacBride led a delegation of civil servants to Washington to argue for a *grant* because the government would not enter into any loan which it could not repay, as Ireland's dollar receipts were insufficient to service a loan. Also, it was not politically feasible for the Irish government to accept a loan while the Six Counties received ECA aid through London, largely as a grant.

Hickerson rejected MacBride's arguments. The Irish were 'asking the American taxpayers to assume an additional burden to the already heavy one we were prepared to bear in helping Europe recover,' he said. Partition was 'a problem for the Irish and British to work out between themselves and one in which we did not intend to become involved.' When MacBride responded that it was hard to understand why the United States would not 'want to help in curing this 'sore spot' in Europe,' Hickerson left him in no doubt that partition was in the US national interest. Hickerson's own memorandum states the issue plainly:

I then explained that frankly, as they knew, during the last war bases in Northern Ireland had been of great assistance in

the anti-submarine campaign and had undoubtedly saved many American and Allied lives. At present we and the British were working together on the closest possible terms and I felt sure that if we should be forced into war tomorrow, within 24 hours we would be in a position again to use the bases in Northern Ireland. If Ireland had taken over the Six Northern Counties, where would this leave us if Ireland remained neutral the way she had in the last war? I finished by expressing the hope that Ireland would one day be a member of the Brussels group.¹²

On St Patrick's Day 1948, Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg signed a mutual defence pact in Brussels, which would be the forerunner of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It was directed against the Soviet Union and backed by the United States, which planned to join the pact with Canada just as soon as the US Senate could be persuaded to give its consent. This was less easily arranged than one might think, for the memory of Washington's farewell address in which he had cautioned his successors 'to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world' was strong. Despite two world wars, isolationism had deep roots in the American Midwest. Perhaps the real architect of the Brussels Pact was Ernest Bevin, the Labour Foreign Secretary, who sought to maintain the illusion that Britain was still a great power and could play the old balance of power game.

Hickerson's remark about 'the Brussels group' is the first indication that the United States wanted Éire to abandon neutrality. The US position on Marshall aid for Ireland was set by Hickerson who, in a memorandum to Secretary of State Marshall, wrote: '... there are no over-riding international political considerations which would warrant preferential treatment toward the Irish,'¹³ who would get a loan, not a grant.

It was useless for MacBride to argue that since Irish exports to the United States were negligible there was no way of earning dollars to repay a loan. When he explained this to Paul Hoffman, administrator of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) which was responsible for Marshall aid funds, he was told his 'fine attitude' was appreciated; but his objections were brushed aside. MacBride could not know, of course, that Hickerson already had informed Hoffman of the line to follow.

Actually, the real reason for the rebuff was stated cynically by one State Department official to members of the Irish delegation: Ireland had no Communist Party, its tourist trade was booming and living conditions in Dublin were good.¹⁴

In briefing Marshall on his Irish visitors, Hickerson said MacBride advocated a complete break with Britain, but 'has assumed a somewhat more moderate attitude since taking office.' Fred Boland was 'a man of wide culture, friendly to the US and the British, and skilled in economic matters.' McElligott's 'economic philosophy is conservative and orthodox' and he would oppose 'breaking any link with the pound sterling.' (Seán Nunan, the Irish Minister at Washington, was a de Valera man and his views were well known.)

MacBride paid a courtesy call on Truman, then returned to Dublin to consult the Cabinet on the next step. McElligott recommended accepting the US loan because the \$10 million for the June-October quarter would help 'the sterling area pool which is at present under a great strain'. The British Treasury also urged acceptance of the loan.¹⁵ On such matters the views of the British Treasury usually prevailed at the Department of Finance. MacBride argued unsuccessfully with the Americans that in giving the British \$300 million as a grant and another \$100 million as a loan, while offering Éire only a \$10 million loan, 'the impression would be created that the United States were, in fact, intervening in favour of the continuance of partition', since this transaction would increase 'the disparity between the economies on both sides of the border'. He lost the argument in Washington and Dublin.

Sir Stafford Cripps's declaration at the Anglo-Irish trade talks, 17-21 June, that from the end of the month Ireland would get no more dollars from the sterling pool, came as 'a bombshell' to the Taoiseach, J. A. Costello.¹⁶ Cripps modified his position subsequently, as the final communique indicates:

The government of Éire will use its utmost endeavours to obtain the maximum amount of aid available under the European Recovery Programme with the object of ensuring as far as practicable that their recourse to the sterling area pool for hard currencies will not involve any drain on the pool.¹⁷

The Irish government accepted the US loan, and the ERP agreement was signed on 28 June. MacBride was responsible for

spending the Marshall aid dollars, not the Department of Finance, and he applied them to reafforestation, land reclamation and drainage, electrification, agricultural training and harbour development, as the white paper, 'Ireland's Long-Term Programme (1949-53)', sets forth. The white paper was largely a rewriting of Clann's own economic programme. Although the Department of Finance continued to carp, the Cabinet, in December 1948, sanctioned the use of Marshall aid funds for MacBride's development programme.¹⁸

De Valera seemed 'stunned and dismayed' by his election defeat, the Legation reported in June. His anti-partition campaign in America, Australia, New Zealand and Britain was described as 'a dramatic effort to advance the Irish cause' and presumably the political fortunes of Fianna Fáil, but 'there is evidence that the master politician may have overplayed his hand,' the US Legation reported.

While de Valera was on his world tour, Lemass led the opposition. The Legation's observer found his performance 'unimpressive' — which is unusual, since most people were impressed by Lemass. He was prone to anger and poorly prepared, the observer reported. During the debate on the Finance Bill on 1 June, 'he was badly rattled by Ministers McGilligan, Morrissey and MacBride'. His colleague Seán MacEntee was of little help. '[He] acts like a backbencher in the Dáil but is a regular Communist-baiter on a soap box at his frequent rallies,' the observer concluded.

A few days later, the same US observer reported on the Clann na Poblachta Ard Fheis. Dr Browne received a particularly warm reception 'for the energetic way he is tackling the problem of eliminating tuberculosis'. Some Republican elements had defected because of Clann's alliance with Fine Gael, but more liberals were joining the party.¹⁹

A month later, Clann expelled one of its founders, Peadar Cowan, because he voted in the Dáil against the US dollar loan, on which interest would have to be paid — the original objection to the loan raised by MacBride. Cowan had flouted party discipline.

Clement Attlee went to Ireland in August 1948, signed the Anglo-Irish trade agreement and walked the streets of Dublin to

talk to its citizens. They welcomed him most cordially. He travelled to the West and had a quiet picnic with Seán MacBride. Then he crossed the border and spent twenty-four hours in the company of Sir Basil Brooke. All of this was unprecedented and stirred rumours of an Anglo-Irish deal to end partition.

Ireland that summer was host to many Labour Ministers, including Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Jowitt, Lord Pakenham — a native son — and Philip Noel-Baker of the Commonwealth Office. George Isaacs, the Minister of Labour, visited the North to say that partition was none of Britain's business. Westminster could not dictate to either parliament in Ireland. The Dublin position was that Britain's 1920 Act created partition, which it could end by repealing the measure. 'In recent weeks the attitude of Prime Minister Costello has been one of calm assurance that progress was being made along this line' (to end partition), the Legation reported on 16 August.

On 18 August, the US Embassy in London said 'there have been widespread rumours this month that the British government is making a fresh approach to the Irish partition question with a view to finding a formula for the unification of Ireland'.²⁰ *The Observer* (15 August) said 'it is now generally taken for granted' that Attlee was engaged in discussions with the Éire and Northern Ireland governments to repeal the 1920 Act. Ireland would be reunited in some form as a member of the British Commonwealth and the Brussels Pact, a front-page report by 'a Political Correspondent' stated.

Appearing on the eve of Attlee's visit to Brooke, the story naturally created a stir — and drew an immediate denial from the Northern and British Prime Ministers. Sir Basil Brooke, in a special statement, asserted that there was no political significance to the meeting. 'Mr Attlee and his colleagues ... are fully aware of Ulster's attitude on the constitutional question,' he said. 'They know that we are irrevocably opposed to union with Éire. No overtures have been made to me or to the Northern Ireland government by Mr Attlee or the government of which he is head with a view to reopening the border question, and Mr Attlee's visit does not constitute such a new approach.'²¹

The two would meet next day 'not as Prime Ministers, not as politicians, but as private individuals and good friends,' Sir Basil added. Although this seemed to be stretching matters,

Attlee confirmed the Unionist leader's description of their meeting. 'There is no question of political talks,' he explained. 'I am here on holiday.' He blamed the press for the speculation that a new approach to partition was in the offing. In fact, of course, the head of the Irish government was responsible, since three weeks earlier he had declared in that most authoritative forum, Dáil Éireann, that there was indeed a new approach to the problem. Costello and Attlee talked in Dublin before the British Prime Minister journeyed west and north.

The Tory *Daily Telegraph*, probably primed by Unionist sources, wrote authoritatively on 16 August that 'the British government regards partition as a matter entirely between Éire and Northern Ireland' — as George Issacs had remarked. 'The revival of the question is deplored in Whitehall as liable to damage the recently much-improved relations between the three countries,' it added.²²

Nearly forty years later, MacBride recalled his travels in Connacht with the British Prime Minister. 'Attlee was very friendly with me and he would say how anxious he was to end partition,' he remembered. 'When Terence MacSwiney died he was a major in the British Army and he went to the funeral in uniform to the horror of the military police.'²³ His trip to Ireland was certainly a holiday. It also served as a personal fact-finding mission. Perhaps he decided that a British initiative on partition was premature at that time.

The number one objective of Clann na Poblachta going into the general election was to repeal the External Relations Act and declare an Irish Republic. Lacking a mandate, MacBride did not 'raise it as an issue in government — I left it aside'. Neither did he ask for the release of Republican prisoners still in Portlaoise. On the evening the government was formed, General Seán MacEoin, the new Minister for Justice, arrived at Roebuck House — MacBride's home — and said, 'I've spoken to Jack Costello and we've agreed to release them all and I came here to discuss the list'. They were freed next day.²⁴

'Immediately after the change of government, the Argentine appointed a Minister to open a diplomatic mission [in Dublin] addressed to the King,' MacBride recalled. 'I said we would like to see letters addressed to the Taoiseach or President. I had apprised the government of this. I said it would probably create

a row. The Department of External Affairs had opened letters to the King, ostensibly to see that they were properly addressed. The British objected strongly. I said it was time to end this nonsense. The Cabinet agreed. The Argentine Minister arrived with full pomp and ceremony with letters for the Taoiseach, who presented them to the President, and Seán T. [O'Kelly] gave a banquet that night to mark the historic occasion.

'Believe it or not the newspapers didn't notice the significance of this and the British didn't either. If Rugby noticed it he let it pass. That was the first step. No one realized it was different and that it marked a constitutional change. Seán T. made an eloquent speech. (He was full of self-importance.) So did Jack Costello. James Dillon and Paddy McGilligan said the External Relations Act will have to go.

'For months before the change of government negotiations had been going on with the British on a Nationality code and law. I sent for the files and to my horror found that we had been classified in the Act as Commonwealth citizens. If we left the Commonwealth, the status of Irish citizens not only in England but throughout the Commonwealth would be at stake. I brought it to the Cabinet and got the whole negotiations reopened. Irish citizens ended up with privileges additional to those of the Commonwealth. The Cabinet was in complete agreement on this. I had assumed the British would know we were going to repeal the External Relations Act. That was the number two reason.

'Thirdly, there was the British Commonwealth Conference being held and they wrote to Costello inviting us to attend. Costello gave me the letter and said, 'I don't think we should go.' I wrote that we do not regard ourselves as part of the Commonwealth, but would be willing to attend in an observer capacity provided we were given the opportunity to raise the question of the partition of the country. Rugby said this was not possible. I think it [the exchange] was verbal. Those were the three initial steps.

'Next, Costello was invited to address the Canadian Bar Association. He prepared a long speech. He was simple and childish in ways. He had some vanity concerning the links with Canadians as a result of his role in the Commonwealth Westminster Conference in 1931. He and McGilligan did good work there in loosening the Commonwealth from the links with

Britain. He spent a couple of weeks on his speech, which was submitted to the Cabinet. He referred to the anomaly of the External Relations Act. It was circulated to the Cabinet and discussed. No one paid the slightest attention to it except myself. It was approved.²⁵

On 20 July, MacBride said in the Dáil that 'the Crown and outworn forms that belong to British constitutional history are merely reminders of an unhappy past that we want to bury, and that have no realities for us and only serve as irritants'. On 6 August, the Tánaiste, William Norton, called the External Relations Act 'a fraud on the people'. He added that 'it would do our national self-respect good both at home and abroad if we were to proceed without delay to abolish the External Relations Act'.²⁶

Before Costello sailed for America to address the Canadian Bar Association in Ottawa, James A. Farley, the New York political leader who had guided Franklin D. Roosevelt to the White House, wrote from Dublin to President Truman, urging him to meet the Taoiseach on his way home.²⁷ He took this action perhaps because two days earlier, on 11 August, a State Department telegram, signed by Secretary Marshall, had informed the Legation in Dublin that 'owing to domestic considerations, the timing would not be propitious... At some other time should the Prime Minister be passing through the US we would however be glad to see him'. Although he was fighting an election in which he was underdog, which forced him to support causes he did not necessarily agree with, such as a Jewish state in Palestine, Truman took Marshall's advice on Ireland. He did not meet Costello or send a message welcoming him to America. This is all the more strange, since he had received de Valera, who was out of office, at the White House in March.

Before disembarking from the *Mauretania* in New York, the Taoiseach told the American press that 'the outstanding Irish political problem is to undo the wrong of partition, and secure restoration to a united Ireland of the six northeastern counties of Ulster'.²⁸

At a reception by Mayor William O'Dwyer, New York's Mayo-born Democratic politician, Costello said boldly that the 'conditions under which Ireland was partitioned originally have changed'. This statement, and one by the Minister for Defence, Dr Tom O'Higgins, on 5 September, that 'we are prepared to

play our part in any defensive measures necessary for the security of either one or both islands — if we are allowed to play that part as an undivided nation', drew the following comment from the Legation's Counsellor, Vinton Chapin:

The Irish (Éire) for their part are, to a certain measure, trying to capitalize on a political situation to achieve a desired end of their own choosing. Adverting at this point to Costello's recognition that sacrifices would have to be made by both sides this would appear to provide an opportunity for the stage to be prepared by some outside agency for the determination of this otherwise seemingly insoluble problem.²⁹

Chapin thought this might be done through direct negotiations between Belfast and Dublin, since both parties wished 'the continuation of a Western way of life'. Until an agreement was reached which took 'into account national aspirations and religious, economic and historic considerations, the controversy will continue'. The longer the breach lasted the more difficult it would be to resolve at a time when Western countries were attempting 'to establish understanding with the blessing of the United States'.³⁰

In North America, Costello declared that his government would make a pact with Britain and the United States for 'strategic purposes to maintain peace', but added the important qualification: 'We will not consider such an agreement as long as there is partition in Ireland'. (AP and United Press in New York reported Costello's statement.)

On 1 September, the Taoiseach addressed the Canadian Bar Association in Montreal on 'Ireland in International Affairs' and made a passing reference to the External Relations Act's 'infirmities'. The following night he attended a bar dinner with Louis St Laurent, the Minister for External Affairs. There were two toasts, 'the King' and 'the Heads of Other Sovereign States'. After the first toast, St Laurent asked Costello, the guest of honour, 'Doesn't that cover you?'

'I replied that the toast of 'the King' did not cover us and tried to explain the position, feeling bound to uphold the situation that the King was not Head of our State, though I personally was not convinced that this was at all clear,' Costello recalled in a memorandum written many years later.³¹ He also recalled

something similar that had happened at 10 Downing Street during the Anglo-Irish trade talks ten weeks earlier. Attlee at a luncheon 'proposed one toast and one toast only, namely, the King', Costello wrote. This was contrary to protocol. Costello should have toasted 'the King' and Attlee 'the President of Ireland', Costello maintained. (But Éire was in the Commonwealth as far as Britain was concerned, one must point out, and the King was head of the Commonwealth.)

'That this protocol was not followed by the British Prime Minister was significant as demonstrating the attitude of the British,' Costello wrote. 'Both these incidents are a striking confirmation of the views we held as to the confusion and difficulty created in our international relations by the External Relations Act 1936.'³²

On 4 September, Costello — whose visit was unofficial — was guest of honour at a dinner in Rideau Hall, the Governor-General's residence in Ottawa. The Governor-General was Field Marshal Lord Alexander, whose family home was Caledon Castle, County Tyrone. Nigel Nicolson's biography lists the official visitors at Rideau Hall during Alexander's tenure — Churchill, Truman, Eisenhower, Auriol of France, Prince Bernhard, Wavell, the Windsors, Mountbatten, Alanbrook, General Clark, Montgomery³³ — but not Costello. Perhaps a dinner for a 'constitutional rebel' may not have been worth recording. Apart from that, Costello was a distinguished lawyer as well as a Prime Minister. And from the point of view of history it may be that no dinner given by Alexander in Rideau Hall during his residence was as significant as that on 4 September 1948 for the head of the Irish government.

On the evidence as Costello weighed it, there appeared to have been a conspiracy afoot. 'I noticed that in front of the Governor General, as part of the table decoration, there were silver replicas of the artillery used at the Siege of Derry,' Costello wrote. 'My recollection is that the Governor General made some remarks about one of the replicas being of 'Roaring Meg' one of the cannons used at that Siege and which had been presented to him on some occasion when he was in Derry. I was rather surprised in view of our views on the partition of Ireland that these particular items would have been permitted to decorate a table at which I was the official guest. I decided to make no comment but considered the matter as being in very

bad taste. I felt that any protest by me would only disturb and embarrass the Prime Minister and that while the display was tactless it was not intended to be provocative.'

Because of the Bar Association incident over the toast, Costello had arranged through the Irish Minister at Ottawa, John J. Hearne, and the Chief of Protocol of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, for two toasts: 'the King' and 'the President of Ireland'. The Canadians agreed. 'In due course the Governor General gave the toast of the King which was honoured,' Costello stated in his memorandum. 'No other toast was proposed.'

Costello was convinced that the aged Prime Minister William L. Mackenzie King was told nothing about the undertaking on the toasts, for he had always been a friend of Ireland. He did not mention the incident to Costello, but inquired about the cannons on the table. What did they represent?

'I told him, briefly, that one of the cannons was of 'Roaring Meg', which had been used in the Siege of Derry, and Mr Hearne said something to the effect that they were models of cannons used against the Irish people. It was obvious that Mr Mackenzie King was very annoyed and passed the remark 'Will these people never learn'. That closed the incident. I did not make any mention of the failure to honour the toast of the President, as I intended to discuss the matter with Mr Hearne subsequently as to what action should be taken.'

Costello added that for a considerable time he believed the incident was the work of Alexander. Later he convinced himself that the Governor-General was not informed about it, although clearly the models of the artillery pieces were his property. Costello acquitted him of complicity in the affront to Irish national sovereignty. 'It seems to me to be inconceivable that Lord Alexander would deliberately take a step which would be an insult to this country [Ireland], and also that had he done so he would have forgotten about it.' (In March 1961, Alexander could not recall the incident for an *Irish Times* interviewer.) A charitable judgment surely. In March 1914, as a young Irish Guards officer, Alexander offered to resign his commission during the 'Curragh mutiny' rather than put down a Unionist rebellion in Ulster.³⁴ In 1952, Churchill named him Minister of Defence in a Tory government. Alexander was a Unionist, no doubt about that.

'While I was certainly annoyed at the lack of taste in having the replicas of the cannon as a table decoration at a dinner given in honour of the Head of the Irish government, and quite seriously perturbed by the failure to propose the toast of the President of Ireland, none of these incidents had any effect whatever in reference either to the so-called 'declaration of the Republic' or to the statement I made subsequently to the Press', Costello's memorandum stated.

Costello wrote his memorandum because of persistent charges, which continue, that he had lost his temper over the 'insults' at the Governor-General's dinner, held a hurried press conference and 'declared the Republic'. The decision to repeal the External Relations Act had been taken in Dublin by the Cabinet before he left, some of his Ministers later insisted. With the exception of Noel Browne,³⁵ all seemed aware of the Costello-Norton-MacBride determination to repeal the External Relations Act. However, there seems to have been no decision by the Cabinet to make the declaration in Ottawa during Costello's visit. What precipitated that, probably, was the contemptuous treatment accorded the Taoiseach at Alexander's dinner — and an eight-column headline next day in the *Sunday Independent*, 'External Relations Act to Go'.

Two sub-heads made the issue clear: 'Questions of National Honour/Status May be Declared To Be A Republic'. The text of the story sounded more like inspired commentary than hard news. No source was cited. Hector Legge, editor of the *Sunday Independent*, insisted that his accurate prediction of the declaration of a Republic was no more than 'journalistic intuition'.³⁶ The story was authoritative in tone. There were no qualifications. The reader was left in no doubt that the *Sunday Independent* knew exactly what was going to take place.

'Nought else would then remain but partition,' the *Sunday Independent* lead story asserted. 'And the time is too serious for the prejudices of old that are still fostered in the six sundered counties to be allowed to thwart the wishes of the great majority of the electorate.

'A unified Ireland there must be, not alone as an Irish right but as a necessity to all those nations that aspire to a decent way of life.'

Costello learned of the *Sunday Independent's* explosive story late on Sunday night, when an Ottawa journalist, Grattan

O'Leary, telephoned him for comment. 'This announcement caused me not merely surprise but great worry,' Costello wrote. 'It posed for me a very formidable problem. Before I arrived in Canada it had been arranged by Mr Hearne that I should attend a Press Conference in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons, Ottawa, on Tuesday 7th September 1948 at 10.30 am... I certainly did not anticipate that I would be asked anything as to the intentions of the government in reference to the repeal of the External Relations Act. It was obvious to me when such publicity had been given by the *Sunday Independent* and with apparent authority, that the very first question I would be put at the Press Conference would be as to whether these statements were true or not. It seemed to me to be quite obvious also that the basis of the publicity in the *Sunday Independent* was not 'intelligent anticipation' but was the result of a 'leak' from some person with inside knowledge. I have since been informed by the writer of the article that there was in fact no leak.'

On Monday, Seán MacBride suggested by telegram a 'no comment' to the press on any question dealing with repeal of the External Relations Act. Costello decided against that for two reasons. First, to deny the report would be a lie. Second, to make a 'no comment' would be 'an implied admission' that the story was correct. The 'wisest course to follow' was to tell the truth.

Asked at his press conference in the Canadian House of Commons gallery on Tuesday if he intended to introduce legislation to repeal the External Relations Act, Costello replied 'yes'. He also said repeal meant secession from the Commonwealth. No Irish reporter was present. The first official notification the Irish people received of their final break with the Crown and Commonwealth came via the wire services from Ottawa. That is what caused the stir, not the speech to the Canadian Bar Association which the press ignored. To say that the Republic was declared in Canada is hardly an exaggeration in these circumstances.

The Canadian government accepted the situation calmly. Mackenzie King hosted a dinner that night (7 September), attended by all members of his Cabinet at which 'the King' and 'the President of Ireland' were toasted. On 9 September, Costello lunched with King and Lester Pearson, then Under-Secretary, soon after Minister for External Affairs, and finally Prime Minister. He gave his reasons for repealing the Act. 'The

British Crown had not the same signification for Irish people as that institution had for citizens of countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand,' Costello said. He repeated his conviction that repeal would 'take the gun out of Irish politics [and] prevent a situation where Irishmen were fighting Irishmen; families disunited and governments forced to take repressive measures against their own fellow-countrymen.' King, who left office shortly after Costello's historic visit and died some nine months later, 'expressed his own view that the action which we proposed to take was justified.'³⁷

In his memorandum, Costello stated that his decision 'had nothing whatever to do with anything that had occurred since my arrival in Canada, but was due solely and only to the publication in the *Sunday Independent* which, through newspaper agencies, had received widespread publication and caused great interest in Canada.' Does this mean that Hector Legge's 'journalistic intuition' was responsible for the declaration of the Republic of Ireland? It did force Costello's hand.

Costello's memorandum does establish that he had no intention of making such a momentous political pronouncement in Canada. Was it a blunder then? It seems so. He did not understand the press of North America, which wants clear statements on important questions. (Earlier, the Taoiseach had to deny a statement attributed to him that Éire would join Canada in a war against Communism.)

On 11 September, Costello wrote Norton, who was acting head of government:

At the press conference I held in Ottawa I repeated what I said in New York — that the ending of partition was an essential pre-requisite to any arrangement we would make for *peace*. At no time did I mention help — even with the ending of partition — in case of war.

However these are the worries and trials attached to a trip like mine and in an atmosphere such as exists in part of Canada. The aim of a section if not all of the press is to build up the imperial connection.³⁸

Perhaps it was this view of the foreign press that led the government to introduce a bill the following summer, founding an Irish News Agency.

Dr Noel Browne caused a stir after Costello's death by saying

that the Taoiseach on his return home had summoned a Cabinet meeting at his private residence and offered to resign. 'He gave us to believe that in acting without Cabinet authority in making this pronouncement in Canada that the government intended to repeal the External Relations Act, he had acted without government authority and that he was wrong,' Dr Browne wrote. His resignation was rejected 'by all of us present'.³⁹

None of Dr Browne's former Cabinet colleagues supported his statement. Four — MacBride, James Dillon, Patrick McGilligan and Dan Morrissey — denied to Hector Legge that such a meeting had taken place.⁴⁰ Browne also claimed he was Acting Minister for External Affairs because MacBride was in Paris. MacBride responded that five Cabinet meetings were held in August 1948 and he had attended all of them. Therefore Browne could not have been acting for him.

'There was no such Cabinet meeting and Mr Costello did not offer his resignation then, or at any other time,' MacBride declared flatly. He was supported in much of this by Dr Patrick Lynch, who had been in Canada with Costello as economic adviser, as well as by his fellow-Ministers.

'On his return from Canada on the 1st October 1948, I went to greet Mr Costello on his arrival at Cobh,' MacBride wrote. 'He was in his usual good-humoured self; we discussed the Canadian government's reaction to the decision to repeal the External Relations Act, and events that had taken place during his absence. Mr Costello was in no way distressed, and there was no question of holding any emergency Cabinet meeting. The next Cabinet meeting was in fact held on the 11th October 1948.'⁴¹

Costello's Canadian declaration puzzled the US Legation in Dublin. In a memorandum on partition, dated 10 September, Vinton Chapin called the position 'obscure' and the timing 'injudicious', since the North refused to deal with Éire even under the External Relations Act. Perhaps the British had impressed both Dublin and Belfast that 'considerations far more significant than those which enter into the border question make a settlement of special importance,' meaning 'strategic considerations [such as] the possibility of the immediate use of the entire island, its ports, airfields, etc., for military operations in the event of hostilities...' He added: 'Under present world

conditions these considerations would be the primary interest to the United States.⁴²

Lord Rugby, who had served in Dublin for nine years and thought he understood Irish politics fairly well, was stunned by Costello's declaration. On 30 September, after a lunch with Seán MacBride, Rugby told Sir Eric Machtig, Under-Secretary of State at the Dominions Office, that the announcement about repealing the External Relations Act 'came as a complete surprise' to all members of the Cabinet in Dublin. (MacBride said he was surprised by Rugby's 'surprise'.) 'It is true that there was a firm intention to repeal the Act but the procedure had not been discussed,' Rugby said.

Rugby told MacBride that 'the sudden recent moves on the constitutional front in relation to the Commonwealth and the External Relations Act had been very surprising and disconcerting.' When the coalition took office they indicated 'no change'. MacBride agreed, but added that 'the constitutional effects of the repeal of the External Relations Act would, in fact, be negligible.' (MacBride often told British leaders that the Act was concerned solely with diplomatic accreditation.)

MacBride and Rugby got along well. Despite MacBride's IRA reputation, 'I have never seen any sign of anti-British virus in him,' Rugby wrote. In one despatch, Rugby described MacBride as 'a man of high culture and marked personality'. It was their first meeting and the British Representative added that 'his family background ... is in the tradition of Irish revolutionary leaders — a grandfather who commanded the 17th Lancers, a beautiful mother who turned 'rebel', a father who was executed under our martial law in 1916. His appearance is not robust ... but he must be far more wiry than he looks. He speaks with something of a foreign accent possibly due to his upbringing in France and he is a Quai d'Orsay type.'

Rugby wrote that MacBride told him in confidence that he strongly favoured repealing the External Relations Act. 'It was not he who had brought up the matter in Cabinet. It had been brought up, strangely enough, by Fine Gael who had such a grim time in the period of the Cosgrave government defending what they did not really believe in that they had decided this time not to find themselves in that position against a virulent opposition.'⁴³

The British Representative, on 7 October, informed the Commonwealth Relations Office that Costello has assured him that repeal of the External Relations Act would be a 'constructive move'. He further intimated that he had decided on repeal lest a private member beat him to it. 'I dreaded that', the Taoiseach said.

In a top-secret briefing for Prime Minister Attlee on 15 October, Rugby hardly assuaged the outrage of the British by putting the whole thing down to Irish domestic politics. De Valera would have annulled the Act if returned to power. 'Fine Gael, jealous of leaving that card in Mr de Valera's hand, hardly seemed to appreciate that by so doing they may be throwing away any chance there may have been of dove-tailing Éire into a sound family association with the Commonwealth,' he wrote. He added this assessment:

Mr Costello personally has conducted this business in a slapdash and amateur fashion. He and his fellow Ministers seem to be very conscious of this, and their apologetic tone is not surprising in view of the fact that Downing Street has been consistently helpful and friendly to them...

By way of justification, Mr MacBride has stated in various quarters that the absence of political crime and coercive measures in Éire is due to the government's decision to remove the irritant of the Crown. This claim has no foundation. The link of the Crown has never exacted popular resentment. It has been a pawn in the game of party politics and platform recrimination. Improvement in the sphere of public order in Éire began long before the present government took office. Before the war and during the war, seditious and subversive activities here were mainly due to foreign excitement and foreign money.

This last is demonstrably untrue, but perhaps diplomats, like politicians and others, sometimes believe what they want to believe. Rugby warned that there could be no guarantee this quiet would continue. 'The insidious propaganda of distorted history, and the exploiting of the partition issue for political purposes, can only too easily bring on the old symptoms and the old disease.'

During the Commonwealth conference in London in mid-

October, the 'old Dominions' — Canada, Australia and New Zealand — 'whose populations include a large number of people of Irish origin,' according to a British government statement afterwards, wanted to exchange views 'on matters of common interest arising out of the declared intention of the Éire government to repeal the External Relations Act.' MacBride and McGilligan represented Éire as 'observers' at the meeting in Chequers on 17 October.

The British were belligerent. With Attlee were Noel-Baker and Lord Jowitt, the Lord Chancellor, who opened the offensive by pointing out that if Éire broke with the Crown and Commonwealth, it would be treated as a foreign country, its citizens would be aliens in Britain, and it would lose its trade preferences in the United Kingdom market — its only market. MacBride had written Jowitt something on his own political development in reply to a letter from the Lord Chancellor. 'When I was very young my father was executed for his part in the 1916 Rising,' he told Jowitt. 'My mother was in jail and on hunger strike several times. I was at school in France, but I arrived here at the age of fourteen and I promptly found myself in jail; from that time until 1921 I was in jail or 'on the run' continuously.' MacBride's letter to Jowitt continued:

Then came the Treaty which, irrespective of its merits or demerits, was put up to Ireland by the then British government under threat of 'immediate and terrible war' if it were not signed and accepted. Civil War followed. I was again in jail or 'on the run' often. Brother was set against brother; families were divided; shootings and executions were the order of the day. The Civil War ended nominally in 1923, but in fact we have had a continuous incipient Civil War ever since until the last general elections.⁴⁴

MacBride was attempting to explain to a man whose legal talents he admired why the Irish felt compelled to break the link with the Crown. He had little success. He found unexpected allies in Dr Herbert Evatt, Australia's Minister for External Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, and Peter Fraser, New Zealand's Labour Prime Minister, who mumbled his words, had a cast in one eye and admired Maud Gonne and James Connolly with whom he had shared an anti-recruiting platform in his native Glasgow before emigrating.

'The British were amazed that I had all these contacts,' MacBride recalled with a chuckle. 'What surprised them and me most was Peter Fraser. It was because of Connolly and Mother.'⁴⁵

Fraser backed the Irish and rejected the veiled British threats of retaliation. He was supported by Evatt and Louis St Laurent of Canada. When MacBride raised the partition question, the British objected: the meeting was not called for that purpose. 'United Kingdom governments,' MacBride declared, 'had never found any occasion appropriate for discussing partition'. But a time would have to be found 'in the not too distant future' to discuss how best to end the injustice of partition, he told the meeting.⁴⁶

Evatt had wanted the British to 'consider whether any links could be developed or established in order to render the constitutional arrangements of the Commonwealth acceptable to all,' he told Attlee in the letter proposing the Chequers meeting. 'Consideration of the constitution of Éire and of their External Relations Act represents by no means the only way in which some link between Éire and the King could be maintained or established.'⁴⁷

The real worry of the 'old Dominions' as well as the British government was the attitude of independent India to the Commonwealth and Crown. The day after the Chequers meeting the London press gave the event big play — inspired by the Commonwealth Relations Office. Background briefings said Éire was warned by the Dominions to consider the consequences of a break with the Crown on its economic future and the status of its citizens, to say nothing of its privileged trade position within the Commonwealth. Since these warnings had come from Jowitt, not from Evatt, St Laurent or Fraser, the latter was outraged when he read the press reports.

Two days later, Norman Archer of the Commonwealth Relations Office, who was chiefly responsible for the press 'briefings' on the Chequers meeting, told the US Embassy that repeal of the External Relations Act would widen the gap between Éire and Ulster and make a solution of partition even more unlikely. However, the British government would continue its policy of 'not interfering with a view to arranging a settlement — least of all with a view to putting pressure on Ulster'. Partition was

primarily a matter for Dublin and Belfast to resolve. In the event of war the United Kingdom and the United States would have to get along with Ulster bases as in the last war. Despite 'intimations to the contrary' by Costello and MacBride, there was no reason to suppose that a united Ireland 'would dispose the Éire government to drop its penchant for neutrality and to ally itself with the Western European countries,' Archer confided to the Americans.

Despite Archer's air of confidence, the US Embassy official who reported to Washington, J. Stratton Anderson, thought the British government was worried lest India follow the Irish example and break with Crown and Commonwealth.⁴⁸

Since nothing was settled at Chequers, other meetings were held in Paris in mid-November. The Irish delegation consisted of MacBride, McGilligan, Cecil Lavery (the Attorney-General) and Fred Boland. Fraser warned the British against trying to manage the news again and it was agreed 'not to hold press conferences for this series of meetings.'

In Paris as at Chequers, Lord Jowitt made the running against the Irish. At one point, after he had referred to the 'long memories' of the Irish, Lavery challenged him sharply. 'Long memories!' he said acidly. 'In my life I have seen Irish towns burning and that man's father' — and here he paused dramatically and pointed at MacBride — 'that man's father was shot by you.'⁴⁹

That was on 16 November. On 19 November, the ubiquitous Archer briefed the US Embassy on the Paris talks. He said the question of what would happen after the Republic of Ireland Bill was passed in the Dáil 'had not been thoroughly studied by the United Kingdom government'. He hoped the UK-Éire relationship would continue after repeal of the External Relations Act. The British government would not 'look for legalistic reasons to disturb this special relationship,' the Embassy cable added.

Archer asserted that 'neutrality was just too attractive' for Éire to abandon. 'He advises against trying to analyze matter in a logical, legal manner,' the Embassy cable went on. 'Costello and MacBride, he surmised, had decided on repeal [of External Relations Act] without thinking implications through, and remarked jocularly that their restless minds had too little to

occupy them. Archer felt also that they thought repeal was a good way to keep ahead of de Valera.⁵⁰

The Republic of Ireland Bill which would repeal the External Relations Act was introduced in the Dáil on 17 November 1948. De Valera described it as a name change for the state and gave it unenthusiastic support. MacEntee told a Fianna Fáil cumann that the decision to repeal the Act had been taken in response to Communist influences on the government. The statement stirred a storm. The Tánaiste (Norton) refused to share a 'unity' platform with MacEntee on 21 November. Con Lehane, a Clann na Poblachta deputy, would not chair the meeting. Seán T. O'Kelly said he could not attend and sent his regrets. Lehane shouldered his way through the crowd while MacEntee spoke. The audience grew restive and MacEntee sat down. The band struck up the national anthem to quiet the throng.

Next day, the Government Information Bureau denounced MacEntee's remarks about 'Communist influences'. Garrett commented: 'Perhaps the worst effect of this demonstration from an Irish point of view lies in the fact that it provides further ammunition for those persons who claim that the Irish are not competent to handle their own affairs and that they can never agree on important issues.'⁵¹

Rugby in his despatches castigated Costello and Fine Gael for their opportunistic conversion to Republicanism. He summarized the Taoiseach's defence of the Republic of Ireland Bill thus: first, it marked the culmination of the state's evolution to international status as an independent Republic; second, 'it was the logical outcome of the policy which Fine Gael had stood for in defending the Treaty even at the cost of civil war.' This statement was resented by Fianna Fáil, which had fought the civil war to obtain the Republic, Rugby commented; now it would seem 'the blood struggle had been unnecessary and vain' since the Republic had been the objective of the Treatyites all along.

'It will, however, be a natural manoeuvre on the part of all parties to sidestep this division by means of an all-out campaign against partition,' Rugby wrote. 'Each party must now endeavour to outdo its rivals in a passionate crusade for Irish unity. This is the significant consideration for the United Kingdom.'⁵²

Faced with the warnings of Evatt and Fraser on the future of the Commonwealth, the British Labour government ignored

the advice of its own bureaucracy and decided that there would be no change in Anglo-Irish relations, Attlee informed the Commons on 25 November. Churchill interpreted his statement as acquiescence 'in arrangements which leave the Southern Irish in full enjoyment of any advantage there may be in being connected with the British Empire and Commonwealth without having any reciprocal obligations towards it.' He made these further points:

The first is that on account of its geographical position near to Great Britain, and on account of the long, terrible and tragic history of the two countries, it seems clear that Ireland is in an entirely different position from any of the other parts of the world in — I must not say in the British Empire — perhaps I may be allowed to say in which we are still at present interested. No arrangements which may be made by the present government, or any other government, in regard to Ireland can afford any role or precedent for application elsewhere ... it is no precedent. ...

In the second place, it is quite clear, now that Southern Ireland has separated itself altogether from the Crown, that the maintenance of the position in Northern Ireland becomes all the more obligatory upon us. It is evident that a gulf has been opened, a ditch has been dug, between Northern and Southern Ireland which invests partition with greater permanence and reality than it ever had before.⁵³

Attlee gave Churchill the pledge he sought that the British government would not 'coerce the loyal people of Ulster out of their right to choose what shall be their relationship with the British Crown and Commonwealth.' The Prime Minister declared: 'There is no change whatever in the constitutional position of Northern Ireland.'

The *Manchester Guardian* called Attlee's statement, 'a landmark in the history of the Commonwealth', since 'it admits the principle of 'external association'.' It was adopted by Nehru in 1949, when India became a Republic within the British Commonwealth.

'The Éire government had intended to bring their [Republic of Ireland] Act into operation on 21 January 1949,' Attlee noted in a memorandum to the Cabinet, 'and they could now be

informed that the United Kingdom government do not desire to suggest that its commencement should be postponed beyond that date.'

In the new year, Sir Basil Brooke led a delegation to London to argue that the Government of Ireland Act 1920 visualized eventual reunification and since that was no longer the case new legislation was necessary at Westminster to endorse the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. Sir Basil wanted to change the name of Northern Ireland to Ulster, but a 'working party' drawn from all relevant departments and headed by the secretary of the Cabinet, Sir Norman Brook, opposed any change. The Cabinet Committee considered 'the Republic of Ireland' a logical development from 'Éire' and recommended its adoption, chiefly to avoid use of 'Ireland', except in the geographical sense. The Committee recommended permanent partition:

Now that Éire will shortly cease to owe any allegiance to the Crown, it has become a matter of first-class strategic importance to this country that the North should continue to form part of His Majesty's dominions. So far as can be foreseen, it will never be to Great Britain's advantage that Northern Ireland should form part of a territory outside His Majesty's jurisdiction. Indeed, it seems unlikely that Great Britain would ever be able to agree to this even if the people of Northern Ireland desired it.⁵⁴

From this grew the Ireland Act (1949). Dublin was not informed of these discussions or decisions despite a pledge to MacBride that 'they would keep in touch with one another and not introduce legislation without consultation.' The British drafted a Bill in anticipation of the declaration of the Republic of Ireland on 21 January 1949 — the thirtieth anniversary of the First Dáil. The Bill

affirms that in no event will Ulster cease to be part of the United Kingdom except at the request and with the consent of the Parliament of Ulster.⁵⁵

Sir Basil Brooke returned to Belfast and called a snap election. The US Legation reported that the Unionists were 'seriously perturbed that pressure might become strong enough, particularly in view of present developments in connection with the

Atlantic Pact, for Great Britain's Labour government to capitulate on this issue.' The Unionists wiped out Labour in Belfast, but the Nationalists improved their vote marginally — with the help of £20,000 raised by the all-party Anti-Partition Conference.⁵⁶

On 2 April 1949, Garrett wrote Clark Clifford to say that the Irish government expected a congratulatory message from President Truman when the Republic of Ireland Act came into force on 18 April.

On 7 April, Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State, informed the London Embassy that the Irish government wanted a congratulatory letter. 'Our inclination is to send such message,' Acheson's cable read. 'Ascertain earliest what British will do. Inform Department.'

On 13 April, an assistant to the Chief of Protocol told Clark Clifford: 'In confirmation of our telephone conversation, I am enclosing herewith a copy of a telegram which will be sent to Mr Garrett in Dublin.' The message, to be delivered to the President, Seán T. O'Kelly, on 18 April, could hardly have been more perfunctory: 'On the occasion of the entering into force of the Republic of Ireland Act, I send to you and to the Irish people, on behalf of the people of the United States of America, sincere good wishes for the continued welfare and prosperity of your country.' It was signed 'Harry S. Truman'.

At midnight on 18 April, a 21-gun salute, a solemn High Mass and *Te Deum* in the Pro-Cathedral, and an army parade marked the birth of a Republic for twenty-six of Ireland's thirty-two counties. MacBride, who more than any one else had brought it to pass, was in America to discuss partition with an unsympathetic Acheson.⁵⁷

In his cabled account of the event, Garrett said it was 'devoid of colour or demonstration of national fervour' because Fianna Fáil would not participate in the celebration and Dublin Corporation would not allocate funds for street decorations.

'Press gave event only inspired news interest treatment,' Garrett's report went on. 'Only *Irish Independent* had editorial. Most fulsome messages from King George, Attlee, other Dominions, Pope — followed by US, Italy and other Latin Europeans. Little public enthusiasm.'⁵⁸

The State Department's attitude in this whole affair goes far

to confirm the view held by many Irish-Americans that in its relations with Ireland the United States preferred to work through the British government.

The British later boasted that the Americans had sought their permission to send a congratulatory message when the Irish state became a Republic. MacBride asked a State Department official if this was so? He was told 'No'.

On Ireland, the State Department preferred to deal with the British government. While calling partition 'a problem for the Irish and British to work out between themselves and one in which we did not intend to become involved,' Hickerson went on to tell MacBride, in May 1948, that America's concern was the bases in Northern Ireland. For this reason the United States favoured 'the continued control of Northern Ireland by the United Kingdom,' as Hickerson had informed Garrett two weeks earlier.

Such a policy meant 'taking sides' against a united Ireland.⁵⁹

CHAPTER EIGHT

NATO AND THE PARTITION OF IRELAND

On 1 October 1948, Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett sent a secret policy statement on Éire to the Dublin Legation 'to ensure the collaboration of Ireland as an ally with the Western Powers in any future conflict'.¹ This was an anti-Soviet alliance, and no particular difficulties were anticipated since the Irish were anti-Communist. The State Department apparently intended to ignore the partition issue.

The Legation studied the directive and replied with a memorandum which noted how 'causes arising out of the last war continue to exert an influence on the official attitude of the United States government toward Ireland which tempers the basic cordiality which had earlier matured between the two countries.'

The memorandum questioned 'the wisdom of continuing a whipping boy attitude' towards Ireland and counselled that 'changed strategic conditions suggested a new orientation and new responsibilities.' Someone at State — Hickerson perhaps — underlined the word 'strategic' and scribbled a question in the margin, 'Do they?'

The Legation asked what was to be done if the Irish refused to join the Western alliance because of partition? The memorandum inquired, 'Is it correct to assume that this condition will be accepted, and that no measures are to be taken to find some formula for its modification?' The Legation suggested that the United States should make a direct approach to Dublin and offer the Irish 'an alternative to dealing exclusively with Britain'. The memorandum went on:

If properly presented and the moment well chosen, it is not inconceivable that the Irish might be prepared to accept certain undertakings with a Western Hemisphere nation in return for arms, money, etc. Some formula could be devised

looking to integration with the North for common defence, a development which would permit by-passing of the embarrassing situation which continues to exist *vis-à-vis* Great Britain ... The general premise can be taken that Irish government officials for the most part, the main influence of the clergy and such people as have views on the subject, are not disposed to support a policy of neutrality in terms of present day threats to peace. On the other hand, these same elements would not be prepared to accept the humiliation which they would consider as arising out of any capitulation to British terms. That is, that while Great Britain is not asked to 'coerce' the North at the same time Ireland is not prepared to accept any invitation from Britain until partition has been removed as a political issue.

The memorandum concluded with the recommendation: 'Therefore, in the interests of national unity, not only in Ireland itself but in its relations to countries having Irish minorities, any formula which is devised to enable the Irish to contribute to European security should be based on terms which will respect Irish national dignity. This can only be achieved, however, if the approach comes from the United States or Canada with an elimination of past prejudices and a marking off of what have been referred to as Irish wartime delinquencies.'²

The Legation thought that the Irish government would welcome a US gesture along the above lines. The reader of the memorandum at the State Department pencilled a line under 'capitulation to British terms', and asked 'What does this mean?' The meaning seems clear enough.

In November, a news report out of Washington quoted an unnamed official as saying that Éire would be invited to join the proposed Atlantic Pact.

'When I met MacBride last evening, he stated that he had no information other than report and the Irish position remained unchanged towards Western Union, Atlantic Pact or other arrangement,' Garrett informed the State Department on 11 November.

Regarding partition, the US Minister reported this comment by MacBride: 'There are many ways you can find outside use coercion or giving semblance intrusion if you really wanted accomplish this objective.'

Thus was the stage set for the invitation to Ireland to become a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization which was then in the planning stage in Washington.

In the spring of 1948, George Kennan was appointed head of the State Department's new Policy Planning Staff. Its function was to study international trends and pass judgment on diplomatic policies. In November 1948, Kennan analyzed the proposed Atlantic Pact. Although Berlin posed a military danger, Kennan decided there was no Soviet intention to conquer Western Europe other than by political means. 'In this programme, military force plays a major role only as a means of intimidation,' Kennan concluded.

He believed that the 'political war' between the Communist and Capitalist worlds would be decisive, not a shooting war which might happen by accident rather than design. 'A North Atlantic Pact will affect the political war only insofar as it operates to stiffen the self-confidence of the Western Europeans in the face of Soviet pressures. Such a stiffening is needed and desirable. But it goes hand in hand with the danger of a general preoccupation with military affairs, to the detriment of economic recovery and of the necessity for seeking a peaceful solution to Europe's difficulties.'

Kennan warned that such a pact could endanger the future usefulness of Article 51 of the UN charter which permits 'individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.' He also drew attention to the warning by the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff 'concerning the increasing discrepancy between our commitments and our military resources'.

His conclusions show that Kennan possessed one of the most prescient minds of his time. If most West European countries joined the pact, 'this would amount to a final militarization of the present dividing line through Europe.' It would 'create a situation in which no alteration, or obliteration, of the line could take place without having an accentuated military significance.' It would reduce 'the chances for Austrian and German settlements, and would make it impossible for any of the satellite countries even to contemplate anything in the nature of a

gradual withdrawal from Russian domination, since any move in that direction would take on the aspect of a provocative military move.' This, of course, is what happened in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

If such a pact stiffened the self-confidence of the West Europeans 'in the face of Soviet pressures', it would serve a purpose. Yet there was danger of creating anti-Russian military alliances until they circled the globe and took in every non-Communist country in Europe, Asia and Africa. The whole thing would be meaningless, like the Kellogg Pact of 1928 which outlawed war as an instrument of national policy, the analysis continued.

Clearly Kennan saw no danger of a Soviet strike to the West, the *raison d'être* of the North Atlantic security pact. It had 'a specific short-term value in so far as it may serve to increase the sense of security on the part of the members of the Brussels Pact and of other European countries.'³ Beyond that, there was not much to be said for it, apparently. Charles Bohlen, Kennan's colleague at the State Department, agreed. 'I share entirely the views expressed here which last spring and summer I had talked over at considerable length with Mr Kennan,' he wrote in a memorandum.⁴ Like Kennan, Bohlen had served in Moscow — from 1937 to 1939 as Secretary and Counsellor.

It was 'primarily a political pact, designed to produce a greater sense of self-confidence and security,' Bohlen told the Secretary of State. It would not 'achieve its purpose if it operates to cause division and confusion within any country invited to join...'⁵

Kennan's paper at first was submitted to Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett with a memorandum of dissent from Hickerson. Lovett discussed it with General George Marshall and later with Kennan. Indications are that both Lovett and Marshall concurred with Kennan's conclusions, although there is no written record of their views. The paper was returned to the Policy Planning Staff in February 1949. No action was taken on it. Although approved 'subject to certain modifications', according to an attached memo, it did not become US policy.⁶

Kennan's analysis went on to discuss the eventual withdrawal of US and Soviet forces 'from the heart of Europe, and accordingly toward the encouragement of the growth of a third force which can absorb and take over the territory between the two.' Kennan's blunt recommendation was

Unless we are prepared consciously to depart from this policy, to renounce hope of a peaceful solution of Europe's difficulties, and to plan our foreign policy deliberately on the assumption of a coming military conflict, we should not do things which tend to fix, and make unchangeable by peaceful means, the present line of East-West division.⁷

For America, the North Atlantic Pact meant permanent intervention in European affairs. This contradicted George Washington's message and that part of the Monroe Doctrine barring participation in European conflicts. True, the United States had intervened in two wars, but the first was seen as an aberration and in the second there was no choice, since the Japanese were the aggressors at Pearl Harbour and Germany then declared war on America to show solidarity with its Asian ally.

On 4 January 1949, the Irish Minister in Washington, Seán Nunan, was told by the State Department that the Irish government would be invited to join the North Atlantic Pact as an 'original signatory'. Three days later, an official invitation reached Dublin. The day before, on 6 January, the British Ambassador in Washington delivered a note from Ernest Bevin to the State Department, saying that if the Irish raised partition as a barrier to joining the pact, the United States should reply that the matter was 'beyond their competence' to discuss and had nothing to do with the proposed treaty.

'The Foreign Office would wish to concert policy with the US government in the event of any moves by the Irish government to make the ending of partition a bargain or *quid pro quo* in connection with Ireland's participation in the North Atlantic pact,' Bevin's note stated. It requested that Garrett be asked to keep Rugby 'informed of the reaction of the Irish government to his approach'.

Bevin knew well that partition was a barrier to any defence pact for the Irish. It was a barrier to de Valera who, a year earlier, had discussed the matter with Lord Rugby during the general election campaign. Dublin never faced up to 'the strategic difficulty' of a united Ireland, Rugby complained. 'He [de Valera] said that they would not do a deal on that basis or strike a bargain,' Rugby reported.

'I said there was no question of striking a bargain,' the British

Representative's account went on. 'Here and now he could say that he appreciated that there was a strategic difficulty for us and that if partition were ever done away with they would be prepared to make reasonable adjustments with us safeguarding our lifeline through the narrow sea channel... He said that as there would be difficulties about this it would be best to assume that when nothing remained to mar full friendship between our two islands the question of defence would solve itself.'

Later in the same conversation: 'He [de Valera] said that he could not see his people accepting any restrictions on their full sovereign rights in Irish territory. I said that I could not see our people taking chances with their jugular vein.'⁸

To end partition was to end an injustice, de Valera's argument with the British ran. 'There could not possibly be friendly relations between our two countries as long as partition existed with a Catholic Nationalist minority held down in the North, held down with England's help, in large areas in which Nationalists heavily predominated,' he told Rugby a few months earlier. 'Why did we not make the move which would heal this wound?'⁹

A few days after the coalition government was formed, Rugby met 'Seán MacBride, the new star in Éire's political firmament who, as the result of vigorous campaigning on the extreme Left in the recent General Election, collected a strange assortment of ten supporters in the Dáil.' They discussed a number of topics, including de Valera's political 'mystique' — which MacBride suggested that if de Valera's name had been Paddy Murphy 'it would have altered history'. They did not discuss partition or defence.¹⁰

Four months later, over what Rugby called 'a Friday picnic lunch' in MacBride's office, they discussed both subjects. MacBride had just returned from the United States where he noticed a lot of anti-British feeling in the press over Palestine. Irish-American delegations had tackled him on partition, 'indeed had spoken of nothing else'. MacBride's 'reasonable and balanced outlook' impressed Rugby, who noted in his despatch that 'it would not be the first time that a reputed fire-brand turned out to be a pillar of the State'. Rugby found he could make comments to MacBride about partition 'which would make Mr de Valera go pale and shake with emotion'.

Rugby wrote: 'For instance he felt that Éire must refuse to

join any Western Union so long as her hopes of unity within her proper borders remained frustrated. Could we [the British] not bring influence to bear on the North in our own and the general interest? I said that any such step on our part would excite a violent political storm and increase difficulties.'

MacBride told Rugby that he had discussed partition with Bevin in March [1948] in Paris and the Foreign Secretary had suggested a meeting with Sir Basil Brooke. 'He [MacBride] did not feel that any good could come from a move of that kind at present,' Rugby reported. 'Vested interest was strong in the North and banged the door.'

Rugby thought Éire could contribute towards a solution of partition by 'formal association with the Commonwealth and by accepting the implications of common defence of the narrow seas and the Atlantic approaches. The question of defence could not be left vague or merely dependent on a treaty. There would have to be the right of physical access to aerodromes, radar sites, etc. Special arrangements would have to be made for the continuance under British management of vital industries in the North such as Harland & Wolff, Shortt Brothers, etc. etc.'

Rugby's despatch went on: 'Mr MacBride said that to him these points would present no difficulty if once the constitutional status of Ireland as a whole found acceptance. (This is far more forthcoming than anything Mr de Valera had ever said.)'¹¹

Defence and safeguarding 'vital industries', the points stressed by Rugby, were recalled many years later for the author by MacBride, who remembered the emphasis placed by the British Representative on the importance of Belfast's shipyards to the United Kingdom. Here was the root of partition.

In its memorandum on the State Department's policy statement on Ireland, the Dublin Legation, in December 1948, had pointed out that Éire could not join any alliance that ignored partition. Nevertheless, on 10 January 1949, Garrett was instructed that 'should Irish government raise partition question in discussing Pact, you should make clear that we take their action in raising partition to mean they are not seriously interested in Atlantic Pact and will accordingly not consult them further.'

Garrett was told to keep Lord Rugby informed of the Irish government's reaction to the invitation to join the alliance.¹² In

other words, he was to act as a spy for the British in his dealings with the Irish so that Bevin's demands would be met. Rugby was told by *his* superiors to 'make sure that [Garrett] has acted on his instructions'.¹³

On 21 January, Garrett discussed the proposed alliance with MacBride who assured him that no Irish government 'whether under de Valera, Costello or other leader' could join the Atlantic Pact. 'If 26 Counties should enter into Atlantic Pact this would bring an immediate revolution in North with Nationalists accusing Dublin government of having sold them out,' MacBride responded, according to Garrett's rendering of their conversation.

I asked him if he had fully considered the consequences of refusing to lead Ireland into Pact and the possibility that adherence thereto might afford an opportunity for solution of partition rather than serving as a deterrent? I also asked whether influence and attitude of the Church against Communism might not be counted upon and whether Ireland was prepared to accept isolated position without prospect of any help or equipment from outside?

MacBride did not think Éire could avoid being involved in another world war. There was no Communist movement in the Twenty-six Counties, but if the government weakened its anti-partition stand it would provide 'the Republicans with an issue and opportunity for agitation the Communists could hardly overlook'.

MacBride rejected the view that the Catholic Church could change Irish attitudes on neutrality and the national question. As Garrett relayed it, MacBride said the Church 'has never been on the winning side against Nationalists'. De Valera had been excommunicated twice: during the Easter Rising and the Civil War. 'MacBride has also been excommunicated for participation in Black and Tan troubles and also during Civil War,' Garrett wrote.

The statements on excommunication are not historically accurate. The Fenians were excommunicated in the 1860s and the IRA was condemned by the Catholic hierarchy in 1922, 1931 and 1956. De Valera would come under the 1922 ban, presumably; MacBride under the 1922 and 1931 decrees. (Dr Daniel Cohalan, Bishop of Cork, on 20 December 1920, in a

letter to the *Cork Examiner* and *Freeman's Journal*, decreed that 'anyone who shall within these spaces of Cork, organize or take part in an ambush or kidnapping or otherwise be guilty of murder or attempted murder shall incur by the very fact the censure of excommunication.')

Garrett's despatch continued:

He repeated that on such issues politics always wins over Church. As another argument he referred to the sympathy which existed in this country during past war which in final analysis was the Nationalists' opportunity to fight Britain.

MacBride stated that if these factors did not exist and if he were free as Minister for External Affairs he would welcome opportunity of Atlantic Pact for a solution partition on an international basis but that under considerations which would follow in the trial of such action within both Twenty-six Counties and in North Ireland.

Let me repeat that this represents views of only one, albeit the responsible one, Minister of the government, and I have a feeling that he may find himself in a minority and that this country will join in Western Pact.¹⁴

The following night Garrett called on John Charles McQuaid, the redoubtable Catholic Archbishop of Dublin — Primate of Ireland according to ancient tradition, though not of all Ireland — to discuss in general terms, as he put it, Ireland's place in the defence of the West against atheistic Communism. He told MacBride he was going [to McQuaid] and received his approval. He gave the Archbishop a summary of MacBride's views. McQuaid made the 'flat statement that MacBride's views reflected only his own personal thinking'. There was no Communism in Ireland, McQuaid declared, and the 'humble people of this land were prepared to resist and fight any manifestations or encroachments' of an alien ideology.

'There were in his opinion only two avenues through which Communism could develop here,' Garrett reported to Washington. 'One was through spread of Socialist doctrine, the other through the issue of partition.' The Connolly Clubs in England were creating an interest in the Communist cause among the Irish and linking it with the struggle against partition.

Irish people had contributed 'their modest money' to defeat

the Communist Party in the Italian elections of 1948, the Archbishop pointed out. They also 'saw fit to express themselves in written messages as to why they felt impelled [to] donate whatever they could afford' to prevent a Communist victory in Italy.

Garrett's report of his conversation with the Archbishop went on:

He considers war inevitable stating that we should be lucky if 1950 passes without outbreak hostilities. He added his support to view that once it starts Ireland will be in it. He then added with considerable vigour there was no such thing as being neutral in this situation. 'Ireland cannot be and is no neutral,' he declared. 'It is a great mistake to wait for the day when much can be done in the meantime.'

This seemed a firm endorsement of the proposed North Atlantic Pact by the most powerful member of the Catholic hierarchy. And that, too, was Garrett's interpretation:

In my opinion it will be exceedingly difficult for MacBride to discount in this instance position and attitude which Archbishop McQuaid has defined to me. MacBride highly religious man not only holds Archbishop in great esteem but a personal bond of friendship has developed between them. It may be, however, that MacBride is prepared for some degree of cleavage on this issue as between Church and government. Otherwise he might not have been at such pains yesterday to refer me to comparatively recent periods in Ireland's history and more to point that when the Church had taken an opposing view 'politics' had always come out on top.¹⁵

MacBride's comment that joining the Atlantic Pact 'would bring an immediate revolution in North with Nationalists accusing Dublin government of having sold them out' sounds exaggerated, perhaps because of the word 'revolution', which may not have been used by the Minister for External Affairs but was Garrett's shorthand for whatever term he employed. Yet two weeks earlier, in a conversation with Lord Rugby, de Valera 'expressed his grave anxiety at the tension developing on the question of the Border'. He told the British Representative:

He was convinced that a physical force group would enter the field and that the consequences would be grave.

Rugby added: 'Whether deliberate or not, his own conduct, his inflammatory campaign and speeches, have certainly contributed to stir up the passions which might break out in violence.'¹⁶

Yet Rugby saw merit in de Valera's argument. 'Consideration is, I understand, being given in the United Kingdom to the question whether this issue [partition] can be carried to some form of impartial arbitration, or examination. Action on these lines would reduce the inflammation and would certainly enable the North to assert its claims at a favourable moment of history.' At the least, he thought that a meeting should be arranged between MacBride — 'the man of the future in Irish politics [who] has more influence over the younger and rising generation than any other Irish leader and this influence tends to increase' — and Sir Basil Brooke. Again he described MacBride's approach as 'sane and reasonable.'¹⁷

Even as Rugby was penning his despatch, the Stormont Premier was in London pressing for what was to become the Ireland Act of 1949, and Sir Norman Brook, the Cabinet Secretary, on 7 January — the day Rugby wrote of his talk with de Valera — was submitting his 'Working Party' report to Prime Minister Attlee, with the recommendation that 'it has become a matter of first-class strategic importance to this country that the North should continue to form part of His Majesty's dominions,' as noted in the previous chapter.

On 24 January 1949, three days after the MacBride-Garrett conversation, the IRA posted a manifesto throughout the country saying that 'while any sod of Irish territory remains occupied by the army of a foreign country, it cannot be truthfully stated that the Republic of Ireland has been restored and so it remains the duty of all Republicans to continue their efforts to rid Ireland of the last vestiges of foreign rule.' The *Irish Times* reported it briefly. It did not quote the above which the Consul-General in Belfast sent to Washington with the comment that the IRA in Dublin consisted of 'ten to twelve members and what little strength still exists in the organization may be found in the counties near the Northern Ireland border'.¹⁸

From his conversation with Seán MacBride, Garrett concluded that the Minister for External Affairs was 'swayed by his emotional personality and by his intensely Republican feelings'

which did not represent the views of the Irish Cabinet.¹⁹ A few nights later, Garrett learned that this opinion was not sound. James Dillon, the Minister for Agriculture, who had resigned as deputy leader of Fine Gael during the war because he was pro-American and opposed Irish neutrality, 'stated unequivocally that no Irish government could undertake any commitments as envisaged in the Pact except on basis united Ireland,' as Garrett reported to Washington on 26 January. This view, of course, agreed with the Legation's own estimate in its 7 December memorandum to the State Department.

Dillon's argument 'closely substantiated MacBride's position', Garrett reported. As long as the Six Counties were garrisoned by British troops there would be no change in that position. 'He stated he understood consequences interposing this conditional premise and referred to position in this connection of Irish government during last war. He discounts attitude of Church and expresses view that it will not attempt to use its influence when government considers its definitive decision this issue.' Garrett described Dillon as an 'independent' member of the coalition — and he put the word in quotes.²⁰

There is no evidence, however, that Garrett's information and comments influenced Jack Hickerson, the Department's European Affairs director, who would not deviate from Bevin's direction that partition had nothing to do with the Atlantic Pact. If the Irish linked the two, it meant they did not want to join the alliance. Obviously, Dillon would want Éire to join the Anglo-Americans against the Soviet Union except for partition.

On 29 January, Chapin told the State Department that Rugby had learned from MacBride that his government probably would be willing to accept a military commitment under the Atlantic Pact 'on condition Dublin controlled arms for the entire country'. Boland, Secretary of External Affairs, informed the US Minister that he had discussed with MacBride 'possibility of this [Irish] government responding to any invitation participate consultation conference which would permit Irish disclose its [sic] ideological position and declaration of recognition of relation to Atlantic community nations.' Such a conference would establish a committee to examine security, defence and other matters, with the participating nations 'free to accept such commitments as national policy permitted'.

Chapin's despatch added: 'Boland's feeling is that once

included in discussions Ireland could scarcely afford withdraw as otherwise opening up possible avenues for use Communist propaganda. Furthermore, as MacBride likely Irish representative in such case, Boland believes that with prestige which MacBride maintains in coalition government he could be counted on bringing associates along with him certainly to point making clear the government's position re Atlantic community and political ideology. While this limited participation would presumably disqualify Ireland from receiving arms, nevertheless if Ireland completely excluded from the start because of stand on partition, it will [Boland's opinion] drift into position of doctrinaire neutrality.'

This sounds like a Boland attempt to save the situation. As an avowed anti-Communist he would favour Irish participation in the Atlantic Pact, but he also knew that this was impossible because of partition. Chapin interpreted it as a 'device' to avoid outright rejection of the invitation to join the Pact.

The US *aide-mémoire* of 7 January 1949 stated that 'various governments in Western Europe', parties to the Brussels Treaty, had sought the 'association' of the United States 'in strengthening their capacity to resist aggression', and following talks were inviting Ireland, Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Portugal to join them in drafting the North Atlantic security treaty. 'The United States accepted the responsibility for extending such invitations at the appropriate time.' By the end of January, Dublin had not replied.

On 4 February, Acheson told the Legation: 'MacBride's condition Dublin control arms for entire country obviously unacceptable. We contemplate No repeat No Quote Consultation conference Unquote but on contrary final drafting by present exploratory group expanded to include diplomatic representatives of other North Atlantic governments wishing become original signatories of Pact. If and when invitation is extended Irish government then raise partition issue or if they accept without mentioning it they should be told purpose of Pact is security and not settlement of such problems.'

Dean Acheson, the new Secretary of State in succession to the ailing General Marshall, was a Harvard graduate, an Anglophile and the son of an Anglican bishop. He had little sympathy or patience with Irish Nationalism or its advocates. On 2

February, MacBride told Garrett that the United States should inform Prime Minister Attlee that a crisis could develop on Britain's western flank and that he would have 'another Palestine mess on his hands'. Garrett passed the word to Acheson.

'MacBride expressed opinion that Attlee anxious solve partition issue before situation gets hotter and that he has already been urged by Evatt do so and Fraser also ready follow suit,' Garrett cabled.

'Above interview was in response MacBride's particular request that I lunch with him today and I am reporting one-way conversation, except for my comment when he asked me to transmit this message, that I did not believe it would bear fruit but that I would do as asked. He also specifically requested that this message be directed only Secretary Acheson without other distribution.'²¹

On the same day, Garrett sent Acheson a personal letter saying 'It was no great secret that the Irish government would be opposed to signing while the question of partition remained unsolved. My conference with the Archbishop of Dublin, however, was quite revealing and disclosed that the Church thought Ireland should accept this invitation to join the Atlantic Pact. I saw MacBride again yesterday, and although I feel that the government adheres to its original position, I believe that when formal presentation has been made their reply will not close the door completely to further consideration.'²²

MacBride may have been right when he claimed that Evatt and Fraser wanted a resolution of partition but, unlike the Commonwealth link, it was not a major matter for them. MacBride also insisted that 'responsible elements' in the British Labour government opposed partition. The Irish always considered Labour more sympathetic to their point of view than the Tories; besides, there were anti-partitionists in the Cabinet. Acheson, however, was not the man to press the Irish case. He had no interest in it. He would not be used. 'I thoroughly approve the position that partition is a subject to be settled between Irishmen or between the Irish and British without United States intervention or mediation,' Acheson wrote Garrett.²³

When Senator Joseph O'Mahoney, Democrat of Wyoming, the son of a Fenian, told a State Department official that 'responsible elements' of the British Cabinet would welcome

US mediation of the partition issue and he thought Congress should 'take some steps', Hickerson wrote 'No!' on the margin of the memorandum of conversation in blue pencil. Acheson told Lewis Douglas, the American Ambassador in London, to ask the British 'whether there is any truth in the Senator's information'. Douglas replied: 'I have been told that Mr Attlee himself formulated the British policy on partition, and that there is no difference of opinion within the Cabinet.'²⁴

On the invitation to join the North Atlantic Pact as a founding member, the Irish government replied with an *aide-mémoire*, dated 8 February 1949, which used twelve paragraphs to say 'No but ...' The part of Ireland 'under the control of the Irish government, has remained, to a greater extent than any other European State, immune from the spread of Communism.' Ireland was 'earnestly desirous of playing her full part in protecting Christian civilization and the democratic way of life' and agreed with 'the general aim of the proposed Treaty'.

For strategic and political reasons, Ireland faced 'grave difficulties' because 'six of her north-eastern counties are occupied by British forces against the will of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people'. The continued partition of Ireland was resented by the Irish people; it was 'a violation of Ireland's territorial integrity' and 'a denial of the elementary democratic right of national self-determination'. The *aide-mémoire* continued:

In these circumstances, any military alliance with, or commitment involving military action jointly with, the State that is responsible for the unnatural division of Ireland, which occupies a portion of our country with its armed forces, and which supports undemocratic institutions in the north-eastern corner of Ireland, would be entirely repugnant and unacceptable to the Irish people. No Irish government, whatever its political views, could participate with Britain in a military alliance while this situation continues, without running counter to the national sentiment of the Irish people. If it did, it would run the risk of having to face, in the event of a crisis, the likelihood of civil conflict within its own jurisdiction.

The Irish government claimed that the strategic defence of a

small island required a single authority supported by 'a decisive majority of the Irish people'. The north-east was the industrial area of the country whose productive capacity should be under the central authority with 'the necessary degree of popular support'. The partition of the country made this impossible.

It cited the undemocratic practices of Northern Ireland and the use of coercion against those opposed to partition. 'In these circumstances, it would be impossible to find the necessary sympathy and support for a military alliance with the Power that is giving its sanction, tacit or active, to some of the very evils against which the proposed Pact is directed,' the *aide-mémoire* asserted.

Any detached or impartial survey of the strategic and political position must lead to the conclusion that a friendly and united Ireland on Britain's western approaches is not merely in the interest of Britain, but in the interest of all countries concerned with the security of the Atlantic area.

We feel, therefore, that the wisest and most realistic approach to the question of North Atlantic security lies, so far as Ireland is concerned, in ending a situation which threatens the peace of these islands and which may, at any moment, prove a source of grave embarrassment to both Britain and Ireland. Sooner or later, the question will have to be solved. The government of Ireland feels strongly that it is better to face the question in a realistic fashion now, rather than allow a situation to develop wherein a solution might be more difficult.²⁵

Dean Acheson told Garrett: 'I am disappointed in their reply and feel that they are pursuing a shortsighted policy. They surely cannot fail to see that the Atlantic Pact is purely a defensive protective alliance among Christian freedom loving peoples who are determined to protect that way of life. It seems a pity that the Irish will not join such a group outright, without using this occasion in an attempt to enlist US support to change a border situation created almost thirty years ago. This clearly is a matter in which we would not wish to become involved.'

Contrary to Acheson's comment, the Irish position was more than a matter of enlisting US support to end partition. It was stated best in the Irish *aide-mémoire*. Because of partition 'it would be impossible to find the necessary sympathy and

support for a military alliance with the Power that is giving its sanction, tacit or active, to some of the very evils against which the proposed Pact is directed.' This was de Valera's justification of neutrality and nothing had changed between 1939 and 1949 to invalidate it.

The State Department had been kept well apprised of Irish political opinion by the Legation staff in Dublin. Thus, Irish objections to joining the Atlantic Pact because of partition should not have come as a surprise.

Acheson was angered when the Irish Legation, on 14 February, released the *aide-mémoire* to the press. The State Department had not been consulted contrary to an agreement with Seán Nunan, he said. 'The action appears to be an attempt to counteract unfavourable reaction in US public opinion to Ireland's refusal to participate in the Pact.'²⁶

When Nunan delivered the *aide-mémoire* on 9 February to the State Department, Hickerson remarked that 'the attitude of the United States would remain unchanged and that we felt we could not intervene in a question between our two very good friends in as much as it was a question for them to settle between themselves', a formula he had originally coined. He used it again when Nunan remarked that 'this reply was not to be regarded as closing the door and that the Irish government desired US mediation on the problem of partition'.

Nunan repeated MacBride's view that 'there were certain members of the British government who desired to see this matter [partition] settled'. He asked the United States to investigate the claim. 'It was pointed out to Mr Nunan that we would be surprised if there were not many members of the British government who desired to see the matter settled and that we ourselves desired a peaceful settlement but that it remained an issue for settlement between the United Kingdom and Ireland,' Hickerson wrote in his 'memorandum of conversation'.²⁷

MacBride said long afterwards that Pakenham (Lord Longford), Noel-Baker and Attlee 'to a certain extent' wanted the partition question settled. Attlee, however, could do nothing, he said, unless he could persuade Churchill, then leader of the Opposition, to support him. He arranged a couple of meetings between MacBride and Churchill. 'One was a disaster,' MacBride said, 'a small dinner party. I think Stafford Cripps

was there.' After a long silence Churchill said to MacBride, 'I think your father was in South Africa when I was there.' To which MacBride replied, 'I think he was but you were not on the same side.' Churchill responded, 'No we were not on the same side. I can do nothing that would betray my friends in Ulster.' They had a friendlier meeting later, but Churchill still insisted that he could not let down his 'friends in Ulster'.²⁸

Acheson's letter to Garrett concluded: 'I am sure that you will in your relations with the Irish continue to impress them with the need for moderation and the fact that partition is a problem for settlement by the parties at issue.'

'In view of the attitude taken by the Irish government we do not contemplate saying anything more to them about the North Atlantic Pact.'

The reply to Garrett was not really 'personal'. It was drafted at the State Department and took almost four weeks to complete. There was one interesting change regarding a possible US role in solving partition. A draft dated 23 February said this: 'The Irish must appreciate that this government has taken a neutral attitude in the controversy [over partition] and although we appreciate the Irish desire to incorporate Northern Ireland within their frontiers we also appreciate the desire of Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom.' This comment, it seems not unfair to say, represented the true sentiment of Acheson and the State Department. The sentence was dropped and the following substituted: 'This clearly is a matter in which we would not wish to become involved.'²⁹

Ireland was being urged to become a founding member of an alliance to stop Soviet aggression, while in the Irish view aggression actually existed in their own country, and a friendly power like the United States would not entertain a request to mediate the dispute. The Counsellor of the American Embassy in Moscow was informing the State Department at the same time:

We are convinced Kremlin does not want serious risks hostilities at present junction and this limits its field possible retaliatory action to propaganda and hostile economic and political manoeuvres.

Example Iran, to which even tougher notes addressed, instructive display Moscow ability quietly back down when bluff called.³⁰

There is room for doubt as to the real purpose of the North Atlantic alliance. A memorandum from Garret G. Ackerson, a State Department official seconded to the National War College, put the matter like this for a colleague:

It is true, as Mr Bohlen stated yesterday . . . that the Russians do not at present contemplate armed action to obtain their purposes. It may, therefore, seem inconsistent to say that the primary objective of the Pact is to deter an aggressor from starting a war which we do not believe that he intends to start in the near future. However, we also recognise the possibility of the Russians either changing this policy on short notice or causing an outbreak of hostilities by some action which they did not realize would lead to war. It would, therefore, seem dangerous to say too generally that a war is not probable or even possible as this would undoubtedly result in a relaxation of the economic as well as military efforts which have been and are being made to counteract the penetration activities of the Russians in Western Europe.³¹

Apart from Bevin, the chief European proponent of the Atlantic Pact was Paul-Henri Spaak, Prime Minister of Belgium, a Socialist. He told the US Ambassador in Brussels on 12 February he was sorry 'Norway and Denmark have apparently posed so many questions and conditions.' Norway ought to make up its mind, he added, because 'all non-essential questions and conditions just confuse the main issue and give Russians chance interfere and intervene each country.'

'Spaak was indignant over Irish position,' the US Ambassador reported. He 'thought their contingent proposition was absurd and typical.'³²

On 11 March 1949, at the seventeenth meeting of the Washington Exploratory Talks on Security, Acheson referred to the *aide-mémoire* from the Irish government and 'assumed that all agreed that the question should not be pursued further with Ireland. E. N. Van Kleffens of the Netherlands wondered if it would be advisable to take note of the Irish memorandum by telling Dublin informally that the other governments concerned in the negotiations 'had regretfully come to the conclusion that in view of the present point of view of the Irish Free State [sic], Ireland's participation could not be successfully discussed.' In the Dutch view, 'the door might be left open for further

developments'. Acheson undertook 'to make a communication of this nature', according to the minutes.

The British were happy that the Irish decided not to join the Atlantic Pact, or as Patrick Gordon Walker, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, put it to an American diplomat in London, Éire's refusal was foreseen and the government did not consider it 'too tragic'.

In case of war with Russia, Éire would be under 'probably irresistible pressure to take part', partly from the Catholic Church and partly from the United States and other countries. Britain had less need of Éire in 1949 than in 1939-45 because 'far fewer Russian submarines would be operating in North Atlantic than there were German submarines there in last war'. The British government would not abandon partition — 'the result would be civil war in Northern Ireland' — and could not accept US mediation.³³

The British government was 'considerably worried' that the Irish government would take its case on partition to the United Nations. Gordon Walker told a US official that 'a two-thirds majority in General Assembly against partition is as likely as not'. In that case the British probably would take the matter to the International Court at The Hague, since it believed its legal case was air-tight.

'One unfortunate aspect of partition coming before UN would be embarrassing position in which Dominions of Australia and New Zealand, with their large Irish populations, would be placed. The same applies in a lesser degree to Canada. Irish-American population of United States could no doubt bring considerable pressure to bear on Washington; United States might even be forced into 'wobbly' position on partition question in UN.'

Apart from that, Gordon Walker saw the possibility of increasing violence in Ulster because of Costello's apparent intent to push the partition issue. There was no likelihood of the Éire government 'intervening physically in Ulster, although in event of fairly large-scale 'unofficial' clashes in Ulster or along border, Éire government might move armed forces up to border as 'precautionary' measure or to restore order.'

Gordon Walker thought the Costello government might fall within twelve months. 'It appears to be slowly losing popular

support,' he said. 'Furthermore, it cannot outbid de Valera. Discordant personalities and policies represented in present coalition cannot stay together indefinitely.'³⁴

In one year Ireland had 'broadened its base of interest in international affairs,' Vinton Chapin reported to Washington on 4 March 1949. He gave the credit to 'Mr Seán MacBride's attitude and influence as Minister for External Affairs'.

As a member of the OEEC [Organization for European Economic Co-operation], Ireland has participated in the Paris meetings of this organization wherein MacBride's special abilities and temperament have fitted him to perform useful services among the more important nations as a 'leg-man' who had no special interest in European power politics. This ability conforms to the Irish contention that it is a nation with a long tradition of resistance to religious and political oppression and therefore in a position to find friends among other small nations.

The recent establishment of diplomatic relations with India and the State of Israel (missions have not yet been established) are symptomatic of the administration's policy of strengthening its international position even, as in these two latter cases, with states not having a strong claim to these relations... The fact that foreign diplomatic representatives are for the first time to be accredited direct to the President of Ireland rather than to the King of England has been an additional factor.³⁵

Chapin concluded that the Irish government's declaration that Ireland's 'participation in the Atlantic Pact would be contingent upon the prior settlement of the partition question has placed the Irish people in the dilemma of how far this excuses the nation from actively participating in a plan to ensure that Europe does not become a Soviet stronghold'. Few Irish thought it possible to stay neutral in a war against Russia, 'but there are those who also question the motivating forces of United States foreign policy,' Chapin told the State Department.³⁶

George Garrett, on 14 March, in an informal confidential letter to Livingston Satterthwaite, chief of the British Commonwealth Affairs division of the State Department, expressed his disappointment at the outcome. He did not put all

blame on the Irish. Running through his long letter there is implied criticism of the State Department for its failure to take account of Irish feelings on partition.

After putting out feelers at the start of the year on instructions from Washington to ascertain the Irish government's attitude to the Atlantic Pact, 'it became more and more clear that it would insist on the statement of partition as a pre-requisite to joining any defence pact,' he wrote. While British troops remained on Irish soil, no Irish government could do otherwise, Garrett was told, no doubt by MacBride.

At no time were they urged to consider any other factors nor did I give them grounds for belief that the US government was in any way anxious for them to join the Pact [Garrett reported]. However, taking into account the geographical location of this country ... I could not help feeling — without having all military facts in hand — that this country must of necessity lie on the strategic line of defence. This feeling was based not so much on what Ireland could contribute in the way of manpower, military operations, etc., as that, by contrast, being comparatively unarmed, it might be vulnerable and become a source of embarrassment to England, and a real obstacle, should an aggressor gain a foothold here, to our lines of communication with Great Britain.

Garrett inferred that the sensible thing to do was to end partition and re-unite the island. The British government could seek a formal undertaking from Dublin 'to integrate its military facilities with those of Great Britain whenever, or as soon as, the border was eliminated to create a fully united or federated state...' He thought the Costello government, or one led by de Valera, would give undertakings to the North which would help 'to lay at rest' existing fears and prejudices. He noted de Valera's statement to the Dáil in 1942 that 'a permanent solution could be found only by conciliation and agreement'. Costello was willing to meet Brooke and his associates 'to talk it out over the drinks'.

The US Minister's letter went on: 'In any event, this situation as it has drifted through the years — only to have become more stubborn as a result of recent Irish action — and the factors that enter into it, all seem pretty small potatoes by contrast to the present conflict between the East and West.'

The only directive Garrett had on the subject from the State Department was the policy statement of October 1948 with a covering letter from Robert Lovett 'to insure the collaboration of Ireland as an ally with the Western Powers in any future conflict.' In pursuit of this and in view of Irish objections on the Atlantic Pact, Garrett speculated further 'on the problem with which this country is primarily concerned.' Following negotiations over the Atlantic Pact, 'we were finally and definitively told that whether Ireland came in or stayed out was a matter of indifference and that her geographical position had little significance in respect to matters of strategy or in terms of the overall concept of Western defence or security.'

The purpose of his letter, Garrett said, was 'to clear the fog'. He closed with the following judgments:

It is probably true that whatever advantage the Irish sought to use the Atlantic Pact as a lever for their own purposes was a miscalculation. MacBride has suggested that under appropriate circumstances and under given conditions the issue of partition might be made the subject for review by the United Nations. There have also been a few unfortunate remarks made by political figures; — made both within and outside the Dáil, that the situation justified resort to force. While of the two the latter alternative would be more deplorable, either action would start a train of consequences which could only be contrary to our best interests or those of England and less directly to those nations which are coming into association either under the Atlantic Pact or the Council of Europe.

In a handwritten note the following day, Garrett urged Satterthwaite to show the letter to Acheson.³⁷

Lewis Douglas, the Ambassador to Britain, reported to the Secretary of State that Senator O'Mahoney's claim that several high-ranking British officials would welcome US mediation of the partition issue was wrong. He wrote: 'In our conversations with British officials on this subject, they have made it clear that the United Kingdom government intends to support partition.' [Stress in original.]

Douglas said that only about two dozen Labour MPs were 'die-hard anti-partitionists' and there were no differences within the Cabinet on the subject. 'It is quite true of course that

the government would be only too happy to see the partition question solved, but, as far as I have been able to determine, the belief is generally held in the highest quarters that no solution should be accepted which is not based on Northern Ireland's free agreement. It is clear that the majority of the people in Northern Ireland are opposed to union with Éire under present circumstances.'³⁸

The letter as given here is described as a 'sanitized version' by the National Archives and about six lines are missing. The original was withdrawn from the file on 31 January 1978. One can only surmise what was in the censored part, but one might well conclude that although there was 'no difference of opinion in Cabinet,' as Douglas said, some Ministers may have had other views about partition and its solution. At any rate, it seems clear that no one wanted US mediation. It is also possible, in view of Sir Norman Brook's 'Working Party' recommendation of January, that the missing lines referred to Britain's intention to hold the North for strategic reasons, which may explain why it was 'sanitized' and censored in 1978. It is also marked, 'access restricted'.

The Americans insisted that there was no connection between the North Atlantic Pact and the partition of Ireland, since the first dealt with security and the second with a disputed border. Replying to a Dáil question by Sir John Esmonde of Fine Gael on 29 March 1949, MacBride made the connection.

Esmonde had asked whether Article 4 of the proposed Treaty implied the acceptance of partition? In his reply, MacBride quoted Article 2 of the Irish Constitution that 'the national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and its territorial seas.'

Article 4 of the draft North Atlantic Treaty spoke of 'the territorial integrity, political independence or security' of the parties to the Pact. 'The provisions of this article might well, under existing circumstances in regard to the six north-eastern counties, imply an acceptance that 'the territorial integrity' and 'political independence' referred to in the article, are the concern of Great Britain, unless it is clearly recognized that the national territory of this State consists of the whole island of Ireland, as provided by Article 2 of our Constitution,' MacBride stated.

On 31 March, Nunan was told by Hickerson at the State Department that the position of the Irish government, as stated in its *aide-mémoire* of 8 February, had been conveyed to the other governments concerned with the North Atlantic Pact and all said the proposed 'Treaty was 'not a suitable framework' to discuss partition. Hickerson then told Nunan that the situation outlined in the *aide-mémoire* was not 'connected in any way with membership in the North Atlantic Pact'.

On 4 April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington. There were twelve signatories: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the United States, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom. Greece and Turkey joined in 1952, West Germany in 1954, Spain in 1982. Partitioned Ireland remains free of great-power entanglements.

On 5 April, Jack Hickerson at the State Department sent Dean Acheson a briefing paper on his meetings with Ernest Bevin and, six days later, with Seán MacBride who was in America to address Irish-American groups in Boston, San Francisco and Chicago.

'It is recommended that you inquire of Bevin what the British position would be toward mediation of the partition problem and if he, as we suspect, reiterates the British view that they do not want us to mediate, you tell McBride [sic] when you see him that you have discussed the matter with Bevin, that the British government is opposed to our mediating, and that we have no intention of doing so.'

Nunan told Hickerson that MacBride wanted to discuss European affairs, possibly the OEEC, with the Secretary of State, which drew from the State Department official the comment — for Acheson's eyes only — 'The most notable actions of the Irish government, however, in the field of foreign affairs, have been the refusal to join the Atlantic Pact until partition is ended and the repeal of the External Relations Act of 1936 by which Ireland was associated with the British Commonwealth. The repeal becomes effective on April 18.'

In a background memorandum on MacBride, Hickerson described him as the leader of the small Republican Party which brought about the general election of 1948 'and won enough seats from de Valera's Fianna Fáil party to make possible the

establishment of the present coalition government.'

The memo continued: 'He was the son of noted Irish patriots and a leader in revolutionary activities before he was twenty. He became Chief of Staff of the illegal Irish Republican Army after the conclusion of the Irish civil war and continued these activities until World War 2 when he split with the more radical wing of the organization. He is considered one of the ablest lawyers, orators and political leaders in Ireland.'

MacBride saw Acheson alone and raised two points, according to the Secretary of State's memorandum. 'The first was the present state of Europe, the second the question of partition and Irish adherence to the Atlantic Pact.'

On the first, MacBride said that military alliances, while necessary, frightened people in Austria and Czechoslovakia 'where there was the belief that if war came whatever the result they would be destroyed'. Communism was an ideal. It had to be met 'with a more appealing ideal'.

MacBride then turned to partition. 'Ireland was strongly in favour of the Atlantic Pact and would have asked to join in signing it, but that no Irish government could have lasted two months which had done this as the partition question remain unsettled,' as the Secretary of State's memo put it. 'He said that his policy towards Great Britain had been one of eliminating sources of conflict. He thought that whereas a few years ago there had been a score of such sources there now remained only one — the partition question.'

If partition could be removed, Ireland would be a strong supporter of British and Western European policy. 'If it were not eliminated, it would be a constant irritant and might be an explosive,' MacBride went on.

The Atlantic Pact, he thought, furnished an opportunity for the United States to assist in solving this problem. To do so would be in the interest of the United States as well as of the Irish and British. Such an attitude would not be resented by the Labour government, he believed. Labour was over-cautious for fear of losing middle-class support. Americans may have been reluctant to intervene in the past because this might be regarded as 'anti-British'. It was no longer a valid reason.

'I said to the Minister that we here held, first that for us to become involved in the Irish partition question would be to bring us into a matter which was not an American concern,

which would be resented in England and which in my judgment would cause far more harm than it could possibly do good,' Acheson dictated.

After further discussion, MacBride asked whether Acheson still held that point of view? The answer was yes. 'We regarded partition as wholly unconnected with the Atlantic Pact and were not willing to become involved in discussions of partition.'³⁹ That was blunt enough. But Acheson did not say, as Hickerson had recommended, that the British government opposed US mediation.

MacBride told Garrett that Ernest Bevin, 'quoting the State Department as his authority, made the assertion that even if the issue of partition did not exist, the Irish government would not have associated itself with the other signatories to the Atlantic Pact.'

Bevin made the comment in the course of a heated conversation with MacBride, according to Garrett's memorandum to Acheson. Garrett also reported that MacBride wondered why his proposal on partition had not been considered by the State Department. No Irish government could be a party to such a plot. When he informed the Dáil that Ireland would not join the Pact, Fianna Fáil cried: 'Hear, Hear'.⁴⁰

MacBride recalled also that the Bevin comment was accurate. 'There was no one in the government who wanted to join NATO,' he told the author. 'I didn't have to fight for it in the Cabinet. Each member had his own set of reasons, I'm sure. Some objected because of partition, others because it was a military alliance. We had emerged from a war in which we had been successfully neutral and this was a bipartisan policy.'

Why would Fine Gael, which was not wedded to neutrality, especially in the context of a conflict with the Soviet Union, oppose NATO for reasons other than political expediency? (The 'expediency', of course, would have to do with out-bidding de Valera on the partition issue.) MacBride thought the reason might be its link with the Treaty of 1921. 'There was no question of trying to maintain the pretence that the Treaty was valid,' he explained. Would Clann na Poblachta have withdrawn from the government if Fine Gael had insisted on joining NATO? 'I'm sure we would have,' MacBride replied. 'It would be completely untenable to enter into a military alliance with Britain. But there

was no disagreement on it in the Cabinet.'

He explained the sequence of events. 'We got the invitation to join. I drafted headings for a reply. I probably discussed it with Jack Costello. I may have discussed it with James Dillon. There was no opposition at all. The Cabinet confirmed the headings. Then I drafted the reply, circulated it and it went through in ten minutes.'⁴¹

However, MacBride doubted that he could carry Fine Gael along on neutrality alone. 'My overall attitude was if a choice came of ending partition by joining NATO, I would say let's join NATO. We can always leave NATO. Anything destabilizing partition was worth doing. Fine Gael agreed with that.' He would not consider joining NATO today even if it ended partition, but it seemed worth it then, 'if partition could be shaken'.

To use the Atlantic Pact as a lever on partition was not a 'miscalculation', as Garrett claimed. 'It was a very useful operation to show we would have nothing to do with the Pact,' MacBride commented. 'To refuse to join NATO on that basis could not be ignored. It also put NATO out of bounds [for Ireland] for good and all.'

Did he believe partition could be settled in 1949? 'Yes. If one could shake the British government sufficiently on it. And I believe with proper organization one could get sufficient Irish-American pressure through Congress. John Fogarty (Democrat - Rhode Island) and Mike Mansfield (Democrat - Montana) did marvellous work.' John McCormack (Democrat - Massachusetts), the Speaker of the House of Representatives, was 'more conservative than the others and more attuned to the State Department', which under Acheson and Hickerson was very pro-British.

'As far as policy-making, I was conscious I was dealing with a very hostile State Department and my only leverage was the Irish-American members of Congress,' MacBride said. 'Garrett was an exception. Without being pro-Irish he wasn't pro-British. He understood our position on partition fairly well, I think. But the State Department would follow the British line.'⁴²

In 1949, Ireland successfully avoided being drawn into a military alliance that would have limited its sovereignty at home

because of the inevitable demand to lease bases to the Americans, and its independence in foreign affairs. If partition was a good enough reason to stay out of the second world war, then it was sufficient reason to stay out of the cold war.

In the circumstances this was no mean achievement. Other small countries had failed to do as much. In February 1949, an American diplomat in Oslo reported on the state of play in the Atlantic Pact line-up. 'Denmark obviously not yet ready, Portugal held procrastinating, Éire extremely doubtful, only Iceland now likely accept.' (Iceland's Foreign Minister told the American Ambassador on 8 February that he was unsure his government could join because his people resented having foreign troops on their soil.)

Norway had been offered a non-aggression pact by the Soviet Union. 'Grounds for rejection will be that under the United Nations Charter no need exists for non-aggression agreement and although Norway has stated UN offered insufficient security it nevertheless believes in adherence to UN established principles,' the diplomat in Oslo reported.⁴³

Eventually all caved in. The pressures were too great. Sweden was not invited to join because of its traditional neutrality. 'Should that government desire to become a party to treaty its participation would undoubtedly be welcomed,' Hickerson told the Danish Chargé d'Affaires in Washington.⁴⁴

Ireland alone stood firm against the Atlantic Pact.

CHAPTER NINE

A CIA'S-EYE VIEW OF IRELAND AND A PADLOCK ON PARTITION

'Because hostile military forces established in Ireland would be in a position to dominate lines of communication vital to the security of the United Kingdom and to develop air and submarine bases for attacks against North American war capabilities, denial of Ireland to an enemy is an inescapable principle of United States security,' a CIA report informed President Truman on 1 April 1949.

As an ally of the United States in a war with the Soviet Union, 'Ireland would be a positive asset because it could provide sites for air and naval bases, sheltered by Britain's air defences, from which strategic bombing, anti-submarine, and convoy protection operations could be facilitated.'

The CIA, which had the cooperation of the State Department, the Army, Navy and Air Force in drafting the report, recommended:

Although Irish neutrality in such a war would probably be tolerable, it could become necessary to utilize Ireland for those purposes under conceivable circumstances of sustained aerial bombardment or hostile occupation of British ports. Actually, Ireland is already ideologically aligned with the West, is strongly Catholic and anti-Communist, and, in spite of military weakness and the partition issue would probably not remain neutral in an East-West war.

The CIA report acknowledged that de Valera's policy of war-time neutrality enjoyed national support. His defeat in 1948 was due to economic factors and his party remained the largest in the Dáil. 'Fianna Fáil is the party of Éamon de Valera,' the CIA commented. 'Its policies on international affairs are influenced by intense nationalism and by a disillusionment with Big Power policies which began to harden in 1935-36 when de Valera advocated a stronger League of Nations line with Italy than the

United Kingdom and France were prepared to follow. It is perhaps the most neutrality-minded of the parties.' Fianna Fáil's 'greatest political asset' was its leader, Éamon de Valera.

Fine Gael tended to be more conservative than Fianna Fáil, and until the repeal of the External Relations Act 'more sympathetic to the Commonwealth connection', but the domestic policies of the two parties 'are essentially identical'.

Clann na Poblachta 'had demonstrated no unconstitutional tendencies and has repudiated with apparently justified resentment charges that it harbours Communists', the CIA reported. Its domestic policy was 'somewhat socialistic', resembling a Continental, Catholic centrist party with its 'programme for the development of industry, agriculture and natural resources.'

Although it is an aggressive young party with an attractive programme and a glamorous leader, Clann na Poblachta's future is problematical. The Clann is in dire financial straits at the moment and, although MacBride is still firmly in control, is experiencing some internal dissension. This is attributable to the dissatisfaction of many Republicans, some of them only recently converted to constitutional ways, with the government's failure to make progress toward the ending of Partition. However, even should Clann na Poblachta lose support at the next election, MacBride himself is likely to remain a powerful force in Irish politics.

The Labour Party's programme was 'similar to Clann na Poblachta's although Labour is naturally more trade-union conscious than the Clann.' William Norton represented the conservative trade-union element, while James Larkin, Jr., occupied 'the most extreme left position possible in Irish politics.' The National Labour Party contained 'no extreme left-wing element'.

On the political role of the Catholic Church, the CIA offered this commentary:

In few other countries is the Church as strong; the influence of the parish priests and the prestige of the prelates are constant factors in Irish life. The Church has an especially important position in education since most schools are conducted by religious orders.

There is no Catholic party as such, but all parties could so

qualify. The Church does not engage directly in politics; and priests do not run for public office, although some of them belong to political parties. The government maintains cordial relations with the hierarchy, whose members are frequently consulted by men in public life and always represented on special committees such as that recently established to investigate emigration. Their good offices have sometimes been used in the settlement of important labour disputes.

The influence of the Church is apparent in the 1937 Constitution, which reflects many aspects of the social encyclicals: the family, the social welfare function of the State, and the right to own property are stressed; divorce is forbidden...

The Church has generally been a conservative force. The bishops have not hesitated to denounce political violence and oppose it with the powerful sanction of excommunication. Historically the hierarchy, while perhaps not basically anti-nationalistic, seldom encouraged the Nationalist revolt against 'lawfully constituted authority'. The parish priests, however, being closer to the people often tended to be more radical.

Communism had little appeal in Ireland. Its propagator in Dublin, Seán Nolan, had 'contacts in the US, Northern Ireland, and the United Kingdom'. He published a monthly magazine, *The Review*, with funds apparently 'from American or British sources'. The CIA concluded that 'Communism is an almost insignificant force, and internally at least offers no conceivable threat to the State'. However, the charge of Communism was 'an effective political weapon' which had been used against the Labour Party and Clann na Poblachta. Only one important trade union leader, John Swift of the bakers' union, who was also prominent in the Irish Trade Union Congress, 'is known to have definite Communist sympathies.'

The IRA after the formation of Fianna Fáil 'developed some extreme leftists', but little was known about the organization other than that 'it still exists, its numbers are reported to be small and its members in Ireland known and watched by the efficient police force, the Garda Síochána, and military intelligence... So long as partition exists, the IRA is a factor limiting internationalism.' The report went on:

Attitudes toward the IRA have been varied in Ireland. Today only a handful support its methods. But Ireland is a country of patriots. An intense Nationalist who views his country's liberation as accomplished and accepts its constitution and laws often cannot without some pang condemn those who feel the cause is still to be pursued by violence. In short, the IRA, although it has been generally condemned in Ireland for many years, has been — and is — understood.

Among other influential groups, the CIA listed the central labour organizations; the Irish Trade Union Congress and the Congress of Irish Unions, which was established 'with the encouragement' of Fianna Fáil. The CIU continued to support Fianna Fáil and was unable to control the National Labour Party, which it had sponsored and which was a partner in the coalition government. The Federation of Irish Manufacturers was concerned with the protection of Irish industries, and various organizations spoke for farmers and professionals. Muintir na Tíre, founded by priests, operated at the parish level among the rural population.

After explaining the history of partition and the passions it aroused, the CIA decided that 'in the event of war, eventual Irish participation is probable despite partition — but not without opposition and possibly some civil disorder.'

Ireland was in many respects 'an economic satellite of the United Kingdom,' the CIA reported. It had few natural resources and was 'primarily a peasant country'. Most farms were under thirty acres. Farm income was low and farmers lacked 'the capital for extensive improvements and effective fertilization'. Industry was small and inefficient by US standards. About 90 per cent of Irish exports went to Britain and half its imports came from there. Ireland would face a serious dollar problem, which included repayment of the Marshall aid loan, 'as long as sterling remains inconvertible'.

On the military situation, the CIA asserted: 'Ireland is incapable of offering effective resistance to an invading enemy without immediate and substantial assistance'. The state could raise and train 300,000 troops in the event of war, but it would take eighteen months to reach that figure. There were about 750,000 males of military age — 600,000 physically fit — and of these about 210,000 had some military training in World War II,

including 60,000 veterans of the regular forces.

'Ireland is potentially a valuable ally because of its strategic location athwart the chief seaways and airways to and from Western Europe', the CIA reported. 'Its terrain and topography lend themselves to rapid construction of airfields which would be invaluable as bases for strategic attacks as far east as the Ural Mountains. Defence of such bases from air attack ... would be greatly facilitated by the need for such planes to cross the anti-aircraft defences of Great Britain. Naval and naval air bases in Ireland would extend the range and effectiveness of anti-submarine and convoy protection operations in the southwestern approaches to the United Kingdom and in the Eastern Atlantic generally. Availability of such bases would therefore be of greatest value in the conduct of United States naval operations.'

Ireland's most important wartime contribution would be its territory, but 'its potential manpower is not inconsiderable'. Economically, it had little to offer. The CIA's most important strategic consideration was this:

The military inconvenience of Irish neutrality was amply demonstrated in World War II. Irish neutrality would probably again be tolerable under conditions of global warfare. However, and assuming these conditions, because hostile forces in Ireland would outflank the main defences of Great Britain, and because it could be used as a base for bombing North America, the denial of Ireland to an enemy is an unavoidable principle of United States security. [Emphasis added.]

Regarding the future, the CIA saw partition continuing. However, bases would be available in Northern Ireland even if the Republic of Ireland was neutral. 'The end of partition is conceivable only in connection with Ireland's adhering to an alliance such as the suggested North Atlantic Pact, in which case bases would presumably be available under the terms of the alliance.'

It said of de Valera that he had 'demonstrated a remarkable talent for assessing and moulding public opinion', and 'his personal integrity is unimpeachable'. Many of his important decisions had been controversial, and many appeared to be compromises; 'but he has never admitted either error or compromise with principle.' Although friendly to the United

States, he opposed 'Ireland's joining a defence pact while partition continues.' If the conflict came to be regarded as a 'Holy War', the CIA's judgment was that de Valera would not 'insist on neutrality'.

The CIA called Costello 'a conservative' and a skilful administrator who — like every other Irish political leader during the second world war — supported neutrality.

It called MacBride 'the outstanding personality of the present government', with 'an impeccable revolutionary pedigree' as the son of a 1916 hero and of Maud Gonne, 'a fabulous beauty and ... the inspiration of W. B. Yeats'. It was not clear when he left the IRA, 'nor is it certain that he has, although it is supposed he did so about 1939 when the IRA instituted its campaign of terrorism in England'.

Like Costello, a brilliant and successful barrister, he is noted for his forceful advocacy and remarkable talent for cross-examination. He is probably the best debater in the Dáil. He is definitely of Prime Ministerial calibre. He is charming, affable, and intelligent, an excellent diplomat. He has shown great interest in the Organization for European Economic Cooperation and in international cooperation generally and believes that Ireland would not remain neutral in event of war. He considers it politically impossible for Ireland to join a military alliance while Partition continues.

The CIA report called Seán Lemass 'de Valera's most respected and capable lieutenant'. He was the type of politician who remembered both his friends and his enemies. 'Personally, he is something of a *bon vivant*'. He was not a particularly effective Opposition spokesman 'and it is possible that his place in the party hierarchy is being usurped by Frank Aiken.'

Aiken, a renowned and brave IRA leader during the Anglo-Irish War and the Civil War, devoted to de Valera politically, a ruthless censor during the war, reportedly was 'extremely anti-British and anti-American'. He lacked Lemass's administrative skill and competence. 'He is generally ranked below Lemass and would probably make a poor Prime Minister, but he is strong enough with ex-members of the Irish Republican Army to be considered as a possible successor to de Valera,' the report stated.

Among potential younger leaders, the CIA tapped Liam Cos-

grave and Erskine Childers. Of James Dillon, the CIA remarked: 'He is pro-American and sees in the existence of partition a situation exploitable by Communists.' He would probably regard partition 'as sufficient justification for Ireland's abstaining from defensive alliances involving the United Kingdom'.¹

The CIA report to the President is a factual, sober document, based on many sources, including State Department despatches and Irish Army intelligence. Colonel Dan Bryan, former Director of Intelligence, said he saw the US Military Attaché in Dublin quite frequently in 1948-49. He had no recollection of a request to US intelligence agencies to examine the source of money received in Dublin by Seán Nolan from America.² Nolan, in fact, was a correspondent for the *Daily Worker* of New York. Did Colonel Bryan make the request? 'I have no recollection of it,' he replied, 'but I probably did'.³ As the Minister responsible for dealings with foreign countries, MacBride knew nothing about it. Certainly, such matters did not come up at Cabinet meetings. MacBride was aware that the British GOC in the North visited the Chief-of-Staff in Dublin, but his recollection was that he learned about it from Garrett and discussed it with Seán MacEoin, the Minister for Justice.

'I was much more worried that there was a weekly meeting between a senior official of the Department of Finance, Sarsfield Hogan, and his counterpart in the British Treasury,' MacBride recalled, 'and I think I did raise the propriety of that'.⁴

'My approach was the wartime approach,' Colonel Bryan explained. 'We wanted to demonstrate that we were active and that no espionage was taking place here. The Communists were getting money from an intelligence source and it was coming in dribbles and we were interested in finding out where it came from.'

'The government would generally be aware in a distant way [of what Intelligence was doing]. It was a continuation if you like of the wartime situation: Ireland could not be a base for intelligence organizations [directed] against Britain. An intelligence service could not operate on its own to the detriment of the government. A Director of Intelligence has to keep his nose very clean, particularly in Ireland. He certainly would not get very far except doing what would satisfy the government of the time.'

Intelligence would have no authority or discretion [to act] without knowing what the government thought of it.'

During the war, Colonel Bryan said he worked more with the Department of External Affairs than with the Department of Defence. He had daily contact with Joe Walshe, the Secretary. After the war there was little reason why he should go to External Affairs 'but I kept my contacts'. Of the 1948-49 period, he commented: 'One of MacBride's obsessions was espionage. It seemed to him there were spies everywhere.'⁵

MacBride, who had been the IRA's Director of Intelligence in the late 1920s, had some grounds for his suspicions. Shortly after taking office, he was informed by General Richard Mulcahy, the leader of Fine Gael, that there was a plot to assassinate him, according to information in the possession of the Special Branch. No one seemed to have any details and MacBride suspected British Intelligence was the source of the 'plot'. He talked to Patrick Carroll, the head of the Special Branch, and Michael Gill, his assistant. 'I regarded them as pretty bad eggs in the police,' MacBride said. He questioned them about the assassination plot. They said they were not at liberty to say who was in the plot.

'I'm to be assassinated and you're not at liberty to say who's doing it?' MacBride asked his two guardians.

'Oh, don't worry,' one of them replied. 'We'll take precautions. There will be cars outside. We will put a hut at your gate and someone in your house.'

MacBride said he laughed. 'I don't want that,' he told them. 'But I want to know the basis of your information.' It appeared to have come from the British or Belfast and they indicated it was an IRA plot.

'I don't believe a word of it,' MacBride replied. 'If you put a guard on my house I'll make a public statement.'

They gave up finally and left. Carroll returned later while MacBride was out and left a small-calibre revolver, a packet of bullets and a note. The bullets did not fit the .25 automatic, MacBride discovered. Months later, after much prodding, Rugby told him that 'our police did notify your police of a plot to assassinate you'. He would say no more than that. MacBride still has the pistol, the bullets and the note.

MacBride said he sent for Colonel Bryan at one point to ask for reports on British military dispositions 'within Ireland'.

Bryan said he did not have that information readily, but would get it. 'I don't believe he ever did,' said MacBride. 'It was a warning shot across their bows. I expressed surprise that he couldn't give me the information right away. I also learned that an official of the Department of Finance went to London every week to the Hyde Park Hotel to meet an official of the British Treasury. I think it continued.'⁶

Irish Army Intelligence also informed the US Military Attaché in Dublin that 'an IRA agent had been commissioned to purchase arms in the United States'. A few days later, according to a Legation despatch, 'this person applied for a temporary visitor's visa and said that the purpose of his visit was to collect funds for the erection of a memorial to an Irish patriot. He was informed that according to the regulations his application would have to be referred to the [State] Department. Less than a week later another person identified as a member of the IRA called and applied for a visitor's visa for the same purpose.'

The purpose indeed was to raise funds among Republican supporters in the United States for a statue to Seán Russell in Fairview Park, Dublin. The statue was put up. MacBride was not aware of this incident either. Ironically, the chief concern of the IRA at the time was to do 'everything possible to prevent being associated with Communism in the public mind', as a Legation report acknowledged.⁷

The Ireland Act of May 1949, with its guarantee to the Unionists of permanent power in Northern Ireland, came as a 'complete surprise' to the Irish government, MacBride told Garrett and a high State Department official. MacBride complained bitterly that the British had broken an understanding reached at the Paris meeting of 16 November 1948 that the British and Irish governments would keep each other informed on pending legislation involving both countries.

The guarantee to the Unionists was contained in this paragraph of the Ireland Bill:

It is hereby declared that Northern Ireland remains part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom and it is hereby affirmed that in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom without the consent of the parliament of Northern Ireland.

Fred Boland, who was present at the Dublin meeting with Garrett, Herbert Fales, assistant chief of the division for British Commonwealth Affairs of the State Department, and MacBride, remarked that it was 'well authenticated' in London that the proviso was put there to placate the Tories and bear out Gordon Walker's warnings of the 'dire consequences to Ireland if she severed the connection with the Crown,' as Garrett's memorandum, compiled a week later, stated.⁸

He quoted MacBride as saying that 'Bevin had told him in the presence of Noel-Baker that this provision [on the 'territorial integrity' of Northern Ireland] would never have been inserted if legal counsel had not insisted it was necessary. When MacBride later asked Noel-Baker why the lawyers had insisted on the insertion, Noel-Baker replied that Bevin was mistaken and the Northern Ireland provision had been inserted for purely political reasons.' MacBride had called on Prime Minister Attlee 'but found him uninformed on the provision of the Bill which provided that Northern Ireland 'or any part thereof' shall not be allowed to choose to join the South', as Garrett's memorandum phrased it.⁹

MacBride attached great importance to the clause 'that in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be part ... of the United Kingdom without the consent of the parliament of Northern Ireland'. [Emphasis added.] He told Garrett and Fales that 'any part thereof' meant that 'the counties containing a Nationalist majority could not free themselves from Belfast and join the south.' Again the language is Garrett's.

The US Minister told the Secretary of State that a MacBride statement on 21 May, denouncing the Ireland Bill, 'further serves to confirm his claim that an understanding on the basis of consultation had been reached at this period between the Irish and British governments,' referring to the mid-November 1948 Paris meetings. This convinced Garrett that the two governments 'were considering a deal in respect to the repeal of the Foreign [sic] Relations Act,' and MacBride confirmed it.

'Yes, we made a deal and we kept them informed throughout the entire period,' he told Garrett and Fales. 'In fact, the British government had a copy of Costello's speech which he delivered in the Dáil introducing the Republic of Ireland Act for a week prior to its delivery and Rugby was able to follow the speech from a written text, kept in his lap during the Dáil session.'

When MacBride asked the Americans if Fales had discussed the Northern Ireland territorial guarantee with the Commonwealth Relations Office 'and if they had given any reason why they felt it necessary to include it,' he was told that 'Fales had no discussion with British officials on this subject.'¹⁰

The historian, F. S. L. Lyons, described the guarantee to the Unionists as a pledge 'to lock and bolt the door against the anti-partition movement.'¹¹ The Irish government only learned of the Bill on 3 May, the day it reached the House of Commons. Dublin was deliberately kept in ignorance of what it contained, Costello told the Dáil.

Garrett reported to Washington that on 7 May the Irish government had served 'a very solemn and emphatic protest on the British government'. MacBride warned Attlee's Ministers they were 'lighting embers of undying hate between two peoples' and should they persist must bear responsibility for the consequences. Costello said it was a matter of immediate concern for the United States and the other signatories to the Atlantic Pact who now impliedly had a recognized obligation to maintain the partition of Ireland under the British government's guarantee of 'territorial integrity'. De Valera called the Ireland Bill 'a wanton slap in the face to the Irish people'.

On 10 May, the Dáil unanimously adopted a declaration proposed by Costello and de Valera 'solemnly re-asserting the indefeasible right of the Irish nation to the unity and integrity of the national territory ... repudiating the claim of the British Parliament to enact legislation affecting Ireland's territorial integrity in violation of those rights, and pledging the determination of the Irish people to continue the struggle against the unjust and unnatural partition of our country until it is brought to a successful conclusion...' The Dáil directed that the declaration should be transmitted to all governments and parliaments having diplomatic relations with the Republic.¹²

Garrett reported to the State Department that all political parties were united on the issue and determined 'to combat the British action by all means apparently including economic reprisals.'¹³

The Ireland Bill created indignation among Nationalists North and South. James Dillon in *The Times* of 11 May noted that

British follies in Ireland had impelled generations of Irish to invoke 'violence in lieu of argument to reach their ends'. What British governments denied to argument they conceded subsequently to violence, 'and on each such occasion some English and some Irish young men died before their time, when it would have been so much better if they had been allowed to live and work together for the many ideals that the English and the Irish hold in common'. He added:

If you do not understand Mr MacBride's words try to take it on faith, Derry, Antrim, Down, Armagh, Tyrone, and Fermanagh are six counties of Ireland, whether you look on them from London, Belfast, Dublin, or Washington. British troops are being used for the unworthy purpose of denying that they form part of the Irish nation.

There were no forces on the border 'except herds of sheep and cows and with the help of God I hope we shall all be able to keep it that way for ever, but, if we are to succeed in this aim, I pray God may enlighten those who control these matters in Great Britain to remember how and why Isaac Butt was swept away by the Land League and the Parnellite movement; how John Redmond was swept away by Easter Week; and remembering these things resolve that irresolution and reluctance to face facts shall not in our day drench with Irish and English blood the land where herds of sheep and cattle are the only forces massing now.'

On 2 June, the Ireland Bill received the royal assent and became law.

In May 1949, the State Department produced a memorandum titled 'Possibilities of Violence in Northern Ireland' because of the Ireland Act.

'The parallel between the Irish situation and the recent success of Israeli tactics in Palestine is spoken of in many quarters and has been mentioned to me by at least one member of the Irish Legation,' the chief of the British Commonwealth Affairs division of the State Department informed the Secretary of State in a covering letter with the memorandum. 'While Irish government officials profess to discourage violence in this matter on the grounds that it 'would not pay' although perhaps 'morally justified', I believe that there is a distinct possibility

that some elements, such as MacBride's Clann na Poblachta and IRA connections, may resort to violence.

'Until recently the agitation of this issue has been largely the concern of Irish politicians and our Legation in Dublin has reported general public apathy toward both the question of partition and the entering into force last month of the Republic of Ireland Act. Unless public feeling in Ireland is further inflamed by some untoward incident, it is to be hoped that the present excitement regarding the Ireland Bill before the House of Commons will eventually subside.'¹⁴

The memorandum from the Division of Research for Europe was drafted by Joseph H. Sweeney, an analyst with the State Department, who set out to answer two questions: 'Will the Ireland Bill occasion violence in Northern Ireland? What will be the consequences for the United States?'

The guarantee to Unionists was no more than a restatement of a phrase Attlee had used in answering a parliamentary question, and was the logical consequence of the measure of self-government which has long existed in Northern Ireland. 'By reassuring the Northern Ireland government the Conservative Party is prevented from using the Irish question as an election issue,' the memorandum stated.

Both the Irish and British governments were insecure. Costello's coalition held a two votes majority over de Valera, Attlee's Labour government was torn between a desire to minimize Conservative criticism and the need to hold the possibly decisive Irish vote in the forthcoming general election. 'Furthermore, it is doubtful if they take the Irish threat of violence seriously.'

The memorandum noted that on 9 May (actually, the date was 10 May) the Dáil had unanimously passed a resolution against the Ireland Bill. Attlee made all the decisions on Irish affairs for the British government, it said. The Irish had been led 'by intimations rather than evidence' to expect a modification of the border, perhaps even 'a full-scale solution' of partition. 'MacBride himself left for the US under the impression gained from lengthy talks with Bevin, that the British government was willing to reach some such modification of boundaries.' (MacBride says his talks with Bevin were at most 'peripheral' — he dealt with Noel-Baker on Ireland.) 'The Irish public is not aware that MacBride did not receive official

American encouragement,' the memorandum added.

Of MacBride himself, the appreciation stated that he was motivated 'by intense Nationalism and thus was well-fitted to lead the growing party of extreme opinion'. It went on to make these other points about the Clann na Poblachta leader:

He has spent the greater part of his life as a member of an illegal military organization, the IRA, and was for many years its Director of Intelligence. He must therefore appreciate the impossibility of winning a military campaign, but undoubtedly calculates that a guerrilla movement could last indefinitely.

He has confided to intimates that the precedent of Israel has not been lost upon Ireland, and he doubts that Britain would be able to mobilize domestic opinion behind a full-scale offensive to quell a border disturbance. Irish foreign policy has been active in preparing the ground for mobilizing foreign influence.

MacBride has suggested that the North Atlantic powers consider the problem of partition and that the United States take the initiative in this matter.

He is working on a scheme to have the Canadians raise the problem in Commonwealth councils.

He would not be averse to having the question raised in the UN.¹⁵

Following his April visit to the United States, where he addressed Irish-American audiences in New York, Boston and San Francisco and talked with the most influential Irish-American leaders, MacBride returned home showing 'more optimism about American aid than the situation seems to warrant,' the study went on. 'His suggestion in Dublin on 9 May that the United States take the initiative in moving the North Atlantic powers may be the beginning of an appeal to American public opinion to force official action.'

(MacBride put the matter directly to Herbert P. Fales of the State Department, in Dublin on 17 May, and was told that partition 'was not a subject for discussion within the terms of the Atlantic Pact, which was a co-operative effort to promote peace.')

¹⁶

The memorandum asserted that the British government 'is confident of US support' for its position that partition could 'be

changed only with the full consent of all parties concerned'. The analyst suggested two possibilities:

- (a) Civil disturbance along the Irish border, deliberately provoked by the IRA with the support of Irish public opinion in order to focus world attention on the partition question, is now likely, unless
- (b) The Labour government is persuaded to modify its position by considerations such as the desire to keep the Irish vote in Britain and apprehension at the prospect that extensive violence will produce adverse repercussions in the United States.¹⁷

'I do not feel that any departure from our consistent policy of non-intervention in this matter is called for at this time,' the chief of the division of British Commonwealth Affairs recommended. 'It might be well, however, to ask Embassy, London to have a further discussion of the Irish situation with Gordon Walker of the Commonwealth Relations office. It would be particularly interesting to know if there is any truth in reports which are mentioned in the attached memorandum that Bevin favours some readjustment of the boundaries of Northern Ireland.'¹⁸

Despite the warnings, no violent demonstrations greeted passage of the Ireland Act, North or South. There had been demonstrations to commemorate the 1916 Rising on Easter Sunday at Newry, where large numbers assembled at a cemetery despite a Stormont ban on parades, and at Carrickmore, County Tyrone, where the RUC used force to break up a Republican rally. 'Meeting at Londonderry unobstructed by police,' Consul William Smale reported from Belfast.¹⁹

On the surface at least, the Unionist government with the aid of the British government appeared to have come well out of the controversy over the Ireland Act. The Unionists were masters of their guaranteed territory and could pass laws at Stormont relating to their jurisdiction subject to 'the supreme authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom over all persons, matters and things in Northern Ireland.'²⁰ In practice, London did not interfere in the affairs of the Six Counties.

On 25 May 1949, the Irish Minister at Washington, Seán

Nunan, handed an *aide-mémoire* to the State Department, which rather ingeniously linked the Northern Bill with the North Atlantic Pact because of the territorial guarantees in both documents. The Irish government suggested that the legislation was designed 'to secure for the present partition of Ireland a new measure of international guarantee and recognition.' The *aide-mémoire* went on:

In these circumstances, the Irish government desire to make clear their attitude towards the provisions of the new British Bill relating to the six north-eastern counties of Ireland. The essence of democracy lies in the right of a nation to choose its own government and determine its own affairs democratically by the free vote of the people without outside interference. Basing themselves on that principle, the government of Ireland affirm that the territorial integrity and government of Ireland are matters to be determined democratically by the free votes of the Irish people without interference from outside. Britain's action in introducing, at this stage, unnecessary legislation concerning the territorial integrity of a portion of Ireland is a fresh challenge to this democratic right.

The Irish government warned that 'To thus close the door on democratic remedy and destroy the legitimate hopes of the population concerned can only have grave consequences.' It called the British Bill 'a fresh denial of Ireland's right to national self-determination'.

The Department's reply on 3 June — the day after the Ireland Bill became law, ironically — said the US government 'has not had occasion to study the British legislation in question but is unable to see any connection between it and the North Atlantic Treaty or that it in any way alters the status of the area in question.'

The US Legation thought that MacBride's interjection of the Ireland Bill into the North Atlantic Treaty issue 'was presumably designed as one further attempt to seek United States intercession' on settling the partition question. 'There can be little doubt that the impact of the Ireland Bill on the local political scene has caused nearly as rapid disintegration in the united front as the forces which brought the all-party alliance together,' the Legation analyst wrote of Costello's Coalition.

'Once the first violent reaction to the [Ireland] Bill had spent itself, the public began to question the manner in which the Coalition leaders primarily responsible, namely Costello and MacBride, had dealt with international affairs,' the Legation memorandum noted. 'Even some of the Coalition's more fervent supporters are saying that had de Valera been in power, the present confused and disturbing state of affairs would not now prevail. They feel that although de Valera had to approve the government's foreign policies owing to partition, as head of the government he would not have followed a dead end policy. There is reluctant admission that with all de Valera's faults he could not be accused of lack of vision and statesmanship. Consequently, de Valera has regained prestige which cuts across party lines to the extent that political observers believe that should a general election be held he would be returned with an overall majority.'

Despite Ireland's opposition to Communism, the government had rejected the invitation to join the Atlantic Pact. Despite the wishes of large segments of the population, including 'influential members of the Catholic hierarchy', the last link with the Commonwealth was severed. 'In other words, Irish foreign affairs have been conducted as if the nation were in a vacuum disregarding realistic factors governing present day international political relations, obligations and responsibilities,' the Legation memorandum went on. 'Ireland's membership in the Council of Europe is all but forgotten.'

The Legation memorandum said the main target of the reaction against the government for 'the mishandling of the international situation' and the Ireland Act was MacBride, since 'repeal of the External Relations Act was the Clann na Poblachta's principal objective'. He was blamed for the 'foolish' belief that Ireland could end partition by means of the Atlantic Pact.

The Legation believed that if the politicians had not stirred up the partition issue, most Irish people 'would have been satisfied to allow it to remain dormant'. Now that partition was an issue, 'responsible leaders are at a loss to decide to what measures they may resort short of violence'. Finally, the report pointed out:

it must be remembered in any analysis of the performance of

the Coalition government that it replaced a regime which had employed certain dictatorial practices. The absolute freedom at present enjoyed by the Irish people and press could not easily be restricted if Mr de Valera and his party returned to office. A gain in democratic government has been achieved and Mr de Valera and his party are fully aware of it.²¹

A Legation report on Irish doubts concerning US foreign policy, despite national uncertainty regarding international affairs, said: 'The nation remains militantly anti-Soviet not only because of the strength of the Roman Catholic Church, but also as the result of the traditional conservatism of the Irish people to whom Communism is anathema.' Vinton Chapin added: 'This unanimity of attitude causes Ireland to regard itself as a leading antagonist of Marxism and as such to welcome any move which may weaken the Soviet system or which may effectively combat the ideology of that system.'

It appeared that the Irish might be willing, conditionally, to cast their lot with the Western powers against the Soviet Union. 'Ireland fears the sinister methods of the Soviet Union but is also suspicious of United States and British aspiration to the extent that it does not want to become embroiled in a conflict between the two concepts of society as are represented therein.' The Irish tended to look at the East-West clash 'as one between two rival economic systems which, from the Irish point of view, are both basically materialistic and hence undesirable.' The Irish attitude was that the second world war had 'left Europe at the mercy of either Soviet despotism or the charity of American capitalism...'

Because the Irish believed they had a special mission in the Christian world, they did not 'acknowledge the high moral claims of the great powers'. This, in part, was why they were neutral in the war and it influenced 'certain aspects of public opinion with regard to the Atlantic Pact.' The report went on:

Persons of influence have been heard to postulate that before Ireland commits itself to a Western alliance she should insist on knowing whether the United States is primarily concerned with checking the expansion of 'godless' Marxism or whether she seeks for allies because she sees in the concentration of economic power in Western Europe and the expropriation of foreign capital a challenge to her own economic power.

Although government officials and prominent citizens occasionally expressed in Irish newspapers their appreciation of America's role 'in safeguarding Europe' against Communism, it was equally true that 'there is an undercurrent of distrust which perhaps represents Irish public opinion more faithfully'.

In the event of war, partition and the motives behind US foreign policy would both receive close scrutiny in determining Ireland's attitude. US policy was often judged by the effect it had on Ireland. There was a feeling of uncertainty as to whether 'wisdom and statesmanship are the guiding forces in United States policy'. Ireland's place was with the West; 'but a real fear exists that it may be some false move on the part of the United States in its responsibility to Western civilization which could bring on an armed conflict.'²²

While the Legation was compiling its report on how the Irish viewed US foreign policy, an account of a Dáil exchange on Communism in Ireland was also sent to Washington. MacBride was asked whether a statement he made in America that there were no Communists in the Republic was based on official information. He replied, 'No'.

'How are we to know when the Minister is talking officially?' Harry Colley, a Dublin Fianna Fáil deputy, asked. 'We have had several instances.'

'That is not the question which was asked,' MacBride replied. 'The question asked was whether the statement made by me was based on official information. I spoke officially, but I did not speak from official information.'

'A typical lawyer's reply,' interjected Seán Lemass.

'I beg your pardon,' responded MacBride. 'Now that you have asked for an explanation you will get it. I was asked at a press interview whether it was true that there was a strong Communist Party here. I said there was no Communist Party in this portion of Ireland. No doubt, as a result of some of the misrepresentations made by some of the Deputy's colleagues, false impressions got abroad in some other countries.'

'Is the Minister aware that very prominent clerics, including Father Paul Walsh, have made statements similar to those statements made by members on this side of the House, and does he doubt those statements?' asked John McCann, another Dublin deputy and also a prolific Abbey Theatre playwright.

'I am not aware that any prominent member of the Church has ever made allegations similar to those made by Deputy MacEntee,' the Minister replied.

'Is the Minister not aware that the Bishop of Cork stated publicly that there was a Communist cell in the City of Cork?' asked Deputy Pa McGrath of Fianna Fáil. 'That statement was publicly made by the Bishop of Cork and the Minister knows it.'

The following day, an Independent deputy, Patrick Cogan, asked the Minister for Justice, Seán MacEoin, if there were organizations in the Republic which appeared to have 'Communitistic tendencies'? And would he warn young people against joining such organizations?

MacEoin replied that there were some few organizations that 'appeared to be' Communistic, but their activities did not contravene the law and his information regarding them was 'of a confidential nature'. It would not be proper to name the organizations.²³

A US Legation report in September 1949 decided that both the Costello government and the de Valera opposition had over-reacted to the possibility of violence because of the Ireland Act. 'Political leaders vied with one another in shouting condemnation of the act and threats of reprisal,' a memorandum stated. 'This attitude aroused anti-British feeling in the masses and particularly among the young men. A few weeks later, however, both Mr Costello and Mr de Valera admitted that Ireland had no means of settling the question by force.'

The government was determined to suppress any elements advocating force, the memorandum continued, and was confident that its intelligence sources were well informed on such activities. In spite of that, the Legation believed, 'the possibility of some form of repetition of the 1916 Easter Monday Rebellion and events subsequent thereto cannot be overlooked.'

The Legation analyst reasoned thus: 'A combination of favourable circumstances and the willingness of a small group of fanatics to become martyrs to an apparently hopeless cause (or to a forlorn hope) can provide the spark which sets off a powder train.'

Partition only became a national issue when de Valera toured the world after his defeat in February 1948, the memorandum asserted. The government was forced to adopt similar tactics to

retain popular support, a theory that ignored the role of Clann na Poblachta in the election campaign and formation of the interparty government. 'The most rabid anti-partitionists are Northern Catholics living in the South who feel they will not be able to return to their home counties on equal terms with the Unionists so long as the border remains,' the memorandum explained.

Extreme Nationalists did not accept that partition would be solved through international pressure. 'The indifference with which the issue is observed by foreign countries has convinced them that the only solution rests in force. While aware of their insignificant military strength, they argue that the same tactics which drove out the British from the South will eventually succeed in the North. In any case, Nationalist tradition is to fight the British whether successful or not.'

Radical factions argued that the situation in 1949 mirrored that of 1916, when parliamentary methods also failed. According to this view the time was right 'to create new martyrs around which Irish Nationalism can rally as in 1916? The memorandum warned:

While the number of extremists in the Twenty-six Counties is probably not large, an issue like the Ireland Bill 1949 is enough to enflame the public mind to the point where their tactics would have a wide appeal. Under such circumstances acts of violence might be supported and even encouraged by those very leaders of the old guard who today are so much against it.

At this time the extremist movement would logically appear to have its strongest appeal to the Nationalist minority of the Six Counties. The extent of underground activity in Northern Ireland is not known but it is probably greater than in Southern Ireland. The local Anti-Partition Association is largely directed from the North and the membership and activities of the IRA beyond the border are believed to be greater and more widespread.

The Anti-Partition Association was founded at Dungannon on 14 November 1945, but it had achieved little until de Valera and the coalition government gave its activities impetus in the spring of 1948. Between then and the summer of 1949, the APA established branches in all thirty-two counties and in Britain. It held

public meetings in Dublin and Belfast with prominent Northern Nationalists on its platforms, the memorandum said.

At one such meeting in Dublin after the Ireland Bill became law, the Anti-Partitionists decided to print big posters. The first appeared on 23 July and read: 'English Soldiery Must Go from Ireland'. Political parties and leaders in the Republic did not associate themselves with this campaign, the Legation reported, and a staff reporter of the *Irish Press*, de Valera's paper, was warned that further participation in the APA's activities would cause her dismissal. Nationalist figures from the North had no such inhibitions. The Anti-Partition Fund for the Northern Ireland election had no connection with the APA and was supported by all parties in the Dáil, the Legation analyst explained.

The APA allegedly had a membership of 10,000. In England it had mounted a campaign to defeat all Labour Party candidates who supported the Ireland Bill.

The other forces likely to support the use of force against the Ireland Act included not only the IRA but also the Old IRA, in the opinion of the compiler of the memorandum for the State Department, who was assisted by the Military Attaché. Indeed, he drew little distinction between the two. 'The IRA played a determining role in Ireland's struggle for independence', the memorandum observed. 'All of the older Irish political leaders were enrolled in its ranks up to the establishment of the Free State. The survivors of that organization are known today as the Old IRA, a venerable group concerned with pensions, memorials and commemorations. A younger faction, often referred to as a 'rump' IRA, refused to surrender its secret character and today is known as the New IRA, but calls itself Óglagh Na N'Éireann [sic], or Army of Ireland. Early in its history, this group's terroristic policy shocked the government [most of whose members had belonged to the disbanded organization] into outlawing its activities and the Catholic Church into excommunicating its members.'

The report focused on MacBride as a former IRA leader who, according to some sources, maintained his links with the organization and was still 'its guiding spirit'. Regardless of that, 'it is generally conceded that the organization looks on Mr MacBride as the strongest proponent in the government of an aggressive policy towards Great Britain; they believe that if he should

become head of the government he would build up the defence forces for use against the North. His statement at the Second Annual Convention of the Clann na Poblachta Party at Galway last June calling for an energetic recruiting drive for the Local Defence Forces is interpreted as characteristic of his policy.'

The Legation memorandum ended with this comment on the IRA:

As in the case of all other Nationalist organizations the British Ireland Bill 1949, was cause for an intensification of the IRA programme. The IRA contends that the world at large will not take cognizance of partition until it develops into an armed conflict of international proportions. The cardinal point of its constitution is that partition must be abolished by force of arms if necessary.²⁴

Irish Nationalists saw the Ireland Act as a device to make partition permanent. The 1920 Government of Ireland Act, which partitioned Ireland, offered the possibility of reunification, chiefly through a Council of Ireland that never functioned. The 1949 Act closed all doors to peaceful change — unless the Unionists underwent a miraculous conversion to the political theory of Irish Nationalism. As in 1914, young Nationalists North and South began to examine, at least, the physical force alternative. As the Legation noted a number of times, one of the examples cited was the creation of Israel. The British left Palestine because they were forced out.

In 1949, the IRA was little more than a bogey to mobilize Unionist voters in the North. Except for a small minority, most Republicans of the 1930s and 1940s supported Clann na Poblachta. Although many grew disillusioned when MacBride joined the government, they were willing to give him a chance to end partition through dialogue and negotiation. Northern Nationalists were willing to wait until world opinion, meaning America, made the Unionists and the British see reason. They believed time was on their side. Conditions were better in the North than in the South. They were in no hurry, partition could not last.

By the summer of 1949, Northern Nationalists began to realize that the British had no intention of talking about partition let alone ending it. The optimism generated by Costello and MacBride had no foundation. Many believed that the British

government had deliberately ignored the opportunity of solving the problem peacefully, an opportunity that might not come again.

'If this thing is done to our country, I say for myself that then feelings will be back to what they were in 1919 to 1921,' de Valera said of the Ireland Bill when he heard of it. 'If these people are to tell us that our country can only be united by setting us an impossible task, we hope another way will be found that will not be impossible. We had hoped for something different than that.'²⁵

What did this mean? It could mean that, as in 1919 to 1921, the use of force in defence of right was inevitable. In those 'glorious years', as the romantics had it, the Irish fought for independence rather than pleaded for Home Rule. Some members of Fianna Fáil advocated force in the summer of 1949.²⁶

The IRA, as the Legation analyst noted, was the natural repository of the physical force tradition. But Fianna Fáil in the 1940s had done its work well, with some help from the IRA. The organization was practically wiped out in the South. If the membership of the IRB in 1912 could have been seated comfortably in a concert hall, the IRA in 1949 would have managed quite well in a school class-room. A call to arms against the Ireland Act would have mustered a platoon at best. There was little reality behind talk of force in the Northern Ireland of 1949.

Between 1949 and May 1951, the IRA was caught up in its own internal wrangles and purges, all having to do with its future course. From these emerged Tony Magan as Chief-of-Staff who 'wanted to create a new Army, untarnished by the dissent and scandals of the previous decade,' as J. Bowyer Bell put it, with 'no shadow of a gangster gunman, no taint of Communism, but a band of volunteers solely dedicated to reuniting Ireland by physical force.'²⁷ The recruits of the IRA in the 1950s came out of the anti-partition agitation against the Ireland Act. They were young idealists, much like the Irish Volunteers of 1914.

Despite the IRA's ties to Sinn Féin, the Volunteers of the 1950s were non-political. They wanted to end partition, abolish the border, unite Ireland. (Their predecessors in the 1940s, the

1930s and the 1920s wanted to establish 'the Republic'.) They were recruited more or less openly, they trained more or less openly, they attended summer camps in the Wicklow mountains. Like the 1914 Irish Volunteers, they saw themselves doing national work. And they enjoyed a degree of tolerance and support because of the anti-partition campaign and the Ireland Act.

In 1954, the raids on British Army barracks began. On 12 December 1956, a military campaign opened in the North. These activities grew out of the Ireland Act. They could not have occurred otherwise. The political climate made them possible. The Ireland Act made them inevitable.

There is the implication in some US diplomatic despatches and memoranda on the IRA that MacBride was somehow connected with the physical force organization while Minister for External Affairs. This is not so. For one thing, the reorganized IRA of the 1950s did not begin to take shape till after MacBride had left office in May 1951. For another, the IRA leadership denounced Clann na Poblachta as 'the third Free State party' — after Cumann na nGaedheal (Fine Gael) and Fianna Fáil.

It is doubtful that MacBride maintained even personal links with former IRA associates, most of whom, with one notable exception, joined Clann. (The exception was Patrick MacLogan, former Republican MP for South Armagh, who became President of Sinn Féin in 1950 and was a member of the IRA Executive.) For the IRA, Dáil Éireann was a 'partition assembly'.

After the passage of the Ireland Act, the anti-partition campaign shifted to the US Congress, where resolutions on Irish unity and self-determination were moved by Representatives John Fogarty (Rhode Island), Thomas Lane (Massachusetts), Enda Kelly (New York), Mike Mansfield (Montana) and Everett Dirksen, Republican senator from Illinois. There were also proposals for an American Joint Commission to aid Irish unity. All failed.

On 29 March 1950, the House of Representatives approved by a teller vote of ninety-nine to sixty-six an amendment to the Foreign Aid Bill moved by Fogarty, providing that ERP funds for Britain should be withheld as long as Ireland remained partitioned. There was consternation. The decision was reversed by

standing vote two days later.

On 28 April 1950, a sub-committee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee chaired by Mansfield held the first hearings on Ireland in Congress since December 1918. Among the half-dozen resolutions was one by Fogarty for a united Ireland. He cited as precedent the Gallagher resolution on Irish self-determination adopted on 4 March 1919 by the House.²⁸

There were demonstrations in New York on 7 April 1950 against the visit of Sir Basil Brooke. Mayor Bill O'Dwyer refused to participate in an official welcome. In a speech in New York on 18 June 1950, O'Dwyer urged UN intervention to end partition. In the same month, a Bill was introduced in Congress calling for a UN-supervised plebiscite of all Ireland on partition.

Sir Basil Brooke complained to the British government at this 'continued meddling' and urged that the British Ambassador in Washington take some action. A year later, the Foreign Office pointed out that 'Irish-Americanism was a waning force which could only benefit from controversy and was best left alone'. Diplomatic protests would be useless since the administration could not halt discussion in Congress. Brooke was told to take whatever action he wanted, but if he made a statement he should give no indication he had discussed it with the United Kingdom government. He made a statement on the eve of a House vote on a unification resolution. The resolution was defeated. Southern Democrats voted 'fairly solidly' against it. Since it had been favourably reported by the Foreign Affairs Committee, it was expected to pass. The British Embassy reported to the Foreign Office that a number of Congressmen used the opportunity to 'take a slap at the Catholics',²⁹ and changed their votes.

MacBride was invited to address a St Patrick's Day meeting in Philadelphia in 1951, and on 13 March called on Acheson. MacBride talked about 'the struggle against Communism' and partition. He also asked for US military assistance. Acheson listened. The Secretary's views on the Irish question were unchanged from 11 April 1949.³⁰

On the morning of 19 March, the US Attorney-General, J. Howard McGrath, telephoned Acheson to say he had talked to the President earlier to ask if he would see MacBride. The President replied that he would be glad to do so if the Secretary of

State approved. Acheson was not too pleased. The State Department tried to hold down calls of Foreign Ministers on the President, he said. 'He [MacBride] will probably say that he discussed the partition question with the President and this will get the British excited.' McGrath suggested that someone in the State Department could brief the Irish Ambassador, John J. Hearne, on what should be said after the visit. This was another example of Irish-American input on the partition question, for McGrath had arranged the meeting with Truman behind Acheson's back.

The Secretary of State was present and took a note of the proceedings. MacBride went over much the same ground that he had covered ten days earlier with Acheson. After talking about the appeal of Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points and the need for something similar in the post-war world, he discussed partition without mentioning it by name. 'He explained that Ireland wished very much to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,' according to Acheson's memorandum. 'It could not do so because of political difficulties which he was sure the President knew about. Mr MacBride felt that within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, it should be possible to devise a forum in which there could be friendly discussion and settlement of the only territorial matter outstanding in that part of the world.'

Truman replied that he hoped Ireland would join NATO. The matter MacBride spoke of was a difficulty between two countries with which the United States was equally friendly. He could not intervene in this matter. By intervening in 'family issues' outsiders 'always suffered and the issue was rarely settled'. MacBride remarked that the United States was not an outsider. 'The President appreciated this friendly statement but felt that in this matter we must continue to adhere to our present attitude,' Acheson's memorandum stated.

MacBride mentioned military assistance. In the event of a 'Communistic invasion' Ireland would be 'quite defenceless'. Britain had supplied no arms to Ireland for two or three years, and MacBride hoped the United States would help.

Truman replied that great strains were being placed on the United States 'to provide arms both for itself and for the most urgent need of allies who are more exposed than Ireland. He would continue to give the matter thought.'³¹ That ended their conversation. It was almost a duplicate of the talk with Acheson

ten days before. Other than putting his case to the highest elected official in America and his chief foreign policy adviser, MacBride achieved nothing.

George Garrett, the previous July, had written Truman with a proposal for 'a bilateral treaty of defence' between Ireland and the United States, which MacBride supported, according to the US Ambassador. (The Legation was upgraded to an Embassy in March 1950.) Garrett told the President:

You will understand, I am sure, how anxious I am to have this strategic island included in the defence scheme for Western Europe. It is unfortunate all around that political considerations make it impossible for any Irish government to accept membership in the North Atlantic Council until the question of partition has been resolved. Military aid, I feel convinced, would furnish the impetus that could lead to a bilateral treaty, which, although in the nature of a side-door entrance, would, nevertheless, bring Ireland into a defence picture against any aggression on the part of the USSR. This would also complete my job here, after which I would like to come home for an extended period, unless you feel that you might want to use me in a more important post.³²

Curiously, nothing was said about this proposed defence pact between the United States and Ireland at MacBride's Washington meetings in March 1951 with Acheson and Truman. According to Garrett's scenario, military aid would be the first step. Yet when MacBride asked for military aid, both Acheson and Truman made clear they had no arms for Ireland, and the Secretary of State suggested he try Britain.

Garrett noted in his letter that he had discussed the matter of military aid for Ireland with the Secretary of Defence, Louis Johnson, and the Army Chief-of-Staff, General Omar Bradley, in February 1950, because Ireland was 'wide open to an airborne invasion'. The military aid suggested consisted of 'early alarm systems, anti-aircraft guns and tanks'. The Minister for Defence, Dr Tom O'Higgins, discussed Ireland's defences with 'certain important British generals of Irish descent who served in World War II.' Britain's concern was the safety of its shipping, and Garrett indicated that the generals had drafted an arms list for the Irish defence forces to purchase in America.

Garrett wrote in the same letter that during his talks with the

Irish government on the Atlantic alliance, 'I followed instructions not to use pressure and awaited the possibility of bringing this matter up again should subsequent events provide an opportunity for doing so.'

Evidently the State Department — or the British government — did not want him to do anything about either arms for the Irish or the alliance, for Truman's reply was terse: 'As you know, the entire question of the defence of the North Atlantic community, including Ireland, is under constant study in the State and Defence Departments.' Garrett was told to discuss the matter with Acheson.³³ The President's reply was drafted by the State Department.

It seems perfectly clear from the discussions on the Atlantic Pact and the response to MacBride's request for arms that US policy on Ireland had to be cleared by the British government. Garrett's goal was to get the Republic to join NATO. This could be done, he believed, only through direct talks between the US and Irish governments, thus by-passing Britain, and arriving at some 'formula' on partition, as the Legation's commentary on the Ireland statement of October 1948 had proposed. Without such a formula, no Irish government could join NATO. The British, on the other hand, were quite happy with the Republic's decision to stay out of NATO, or as Gordon Walker made plain on 21 February 1949, 'the United Kingdom government is no more prepared abandon partition now than before' and would not consider 'US mediation'.³⁴

Garrett did not give up easily. He accompanied MacBride to America in March 1951, while the US Chargé d'Affaires in Dublin, Paul Meyer, kept the British Embassy informed on whom they saw and what they said. Indeed, Meyer tried to sow suspicion between the Taoiseach and his External Affairs Minister. In an informal conversation with Costello, Meyer drew his attention to what he considered a discrepancy in the Irish government's attitude to the Atlantic Pact — and immediately informed Geofroy Tory at the British Embassy. Tory wrote a memo for the Ambassador, Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, who sent it to London:

At one place he [MacBride] had said that if partition were removed his government would reconsider the position of the Irish Republic ... On another occasion he implied that, were

it not for partition, the Irish Republic would adhere to the Pact.

Meyer asked Costello if the second statement represented a change of policy? The British Embassy despatch added: 'According to Mr Meyer the Taoiseach 'blew his top' at this question and gave Mr Meyer a long lecture, the effect of which was that the policy of the Irish Republic was neutrality and nothing but neutrality.'³⁵

Meyer was only five months in Dublin. Sir Gilbert Laithwaite considered him 'sensible, friendly and devoid of illusions on the Irish situation...' The British Embassy staff, Laithwaite told London, agreed 'that he — and I am sure that this is true of almost all the personnel junior to him in the American Embassy — took a more realist view of the Irish Republic and its attitude and the reasons for that attitude than perhaps is true of the Ambassador [Garrett] himself.'

When Garrett returned to Dublin from America on 2 April he 'allowed himself to make statements which can be interpreted as accepting MacBride's view that partition is the only obstacle to Republican entry into the Atlantic Pact,' Sir Gilbert told the Commonwealth Relations Office, which continued to deal with Irish affairs despite the state's changed status.³⁶

Meyer was sent home and his British friends were discomfited because he was an important source of information. But there were others.

William H. Christiansen, the American Press Attaché, told the British Press Attaché, Geofroy Tory, over drinks, that according to his information 'Irish influence in America was steadily declining and that MacBride's ridiculous statement at the Washington television interview on March 18th 'that his country did not see any difference between Britain and Russia, so far as orderly democracy is concerned,' had brought it to a 'new low'. He could not understand the idiocy of such a statement. The American people knew very well that Great Britain had supported them in recent years far and away above other nations.'

Tory's memorandum of Christiansen's remarks went on:

The report of MacBride's interview with Truman had arrived at the Embassy on Friday night and from this it was abundantly clear that the former had received a very definite 'brush

off'. The President's somewhat effusive farewell message, made much of by the Department of External Affairs, was, he thought, an attempt at mitigation made, he wouldn't mind betting fifty dollars, at the suggestion of Garrett who did not relish returning to Ireland and [sic] a disgruntled MacBride.

The recent attempts of the Irish News Agency to obtain subscribers in the USA had not been successful. One paper he knew of, the *New York Times*, had gone so far as to ask the Agency not to bother them any more with their releases.

Ireland, the organ of the DEA [Department of External Affairs] was regarded merely as a joke by his Embassy.

The British Press Attaché's memo concluded: 'I also gathered from Christiansen — but naturally I could not press him on the point — that the reason for his Chargé d'Affaires' unexpected departure is due to his not seeing eye to eye with his Ambassador on the subject of Ireland. This is, of course, rather what we suspected to be the case.'³⁷

The British Ambassador sent his Press Attaché's memorandum to London next day with the comment: 'It is obviously not meant for general distribution and I am sure that Christiansen's confidence will be respected. We have, fortunately, been able to build up at all levels excellent relations with the personnel of the American Embassy here and we occasionally have very frank comments.'³⁸

The State Department treated Ireland as a British possession, or at least an appendage of Britain. As in 1939 during Colonel Costello's arms mission, so in 1951 when MacBride asked for military equipment the British had a veto over such sales. It made little difference to the Americans or the British who was in charge of Irish foreign policy — a de Valera, a MacBride, or a Frank Aiken — the answer was the same: no arms for Ireland without British approval.

For example, in 1953 the Foreign Office instructed the Washington Embassy to raise the following objections to a rumoured US arms sale to the Republic:

If the US were to supply arms to the Irish Republic, the Government of Northern Ireland might think that they ought to ask for additional United Kingdom forces.

The Government of the Irish Republic still seemed to

regard the pursuit of their claim to Ulster as more important than co-operation in the defence of the NATO area.

In these circumstances, therefore, the acquisition of arms by the Government of Southern Ireland, so far from contributing to the security of NATO, would have an unsettling effect on Northern Ireland. This might be different if there were any indications that the Irish Republic were prepared to modify their attitude towards neutrality and NATO. But, until that happened the more they were brought to realize the barrenness of their present policy the better.³⁹

Two months after his visit to the White House, MacBride's responsibility for Irish foreign policy ceased. The general election of 30 May 1951, which ended the first interparty government experiment, was precipitated on 10 April when MacBride demanded the resignation of his party colleague, Noel Browne, for creating 'a situation where it is made to appear that a conflict exists between the spiritual and temporal authorities'⁴⁰ over the proposed Mother and Child health service.

Browne replied with comments such as: 'Your reference to a conflict between the spiritual and temporal authorities will occasion a smile among the many people who remember the earlier version of your kaleidoscopic self'; 'Your cruel and authoritarian mind'; and his hope that the destiny of the country 'will never be fully placed in your hands, because it would, in my view, mean the destruction of all those ideals which are part and parcel of Christian democracy.'⁴¹

The dispute shattered Clann. The public supported Browne and his dissidents. MacBride's vote dropped from 8,648 to 2,853, while Browne's grew from 4,917 to 8,473. Clann na Poblachta's Dáil representation fell to two seats.

MacBride's motion of no confidence early in 1957, when Costello began to jail Republicans because of the Northern campaign, brought down the interparty government. MacBride lost his Dáil seat, Clann lost its purpose and its leader withdrew from politics.

CHAPTER TEN

THE NORTH EXPLODES

Seán MacBride's remark to Dean Acheson that the North was an 'explosive' became a reality in Derry on 5 October 1968. 'A series of incidents between civil rights demonstrators and police in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, started Saturday, 5 October, when violence broke out at demonstration organized by Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association to protest discrimination against Catholics and Nationalists,' the London Embassy informed the State Department. Thirty persons were injured, including Gerry Fitt, the Republican Labour MP for West Belfast.

'On Sunday the 6th, violence again occurred in Londonderry,' the telegram continued. 'Eight hundred Nationalist demonstrators baton charged by 200 police, ninety-six reported injured. According to press, six petrol bombs thrown at police, police training hut burned and shop windows broken. Four Labour MPs who were present charged police with brutality. William Craig NI Min. Home Affairs defended police and claimed Irish Revolutionary [sic] Army behind demonstrations.'

The Embassy comment at the end of the telegram to the State Department noted:

Demonstrators seem to have genuine grievances: reported 27 per cent unemployment in Londonderry, unequal voting rights based on property requirements and capital holding (one extra vote for each ten pounds in capital up to 60 pounds), firmly entrenched Conservative Party establishment, and gerrymandering. Incidents may bring to surface old resentments between Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists, but likelihood of widespread violence small. Press has perhaps over-emphasized significance of incidents.¹

Lord Gardiner, British government spokesman in the House of Lords, said on 7 October, in response to a question by Fenner Brockway, that maintenance of law and order in Northern Ireland was a matter for the Stormont parliament and that a British government inquiry into the disturbances in Derry would be unconstitutional. He added that Prime Minister Wilson had invited Terence O'Neill, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, to discuss the situation with him. 'Pressed to define HMG interpretation residual UK authority provided in Section 75 of Government of Ireland Act, Gardiner stated HMG considers UK parliament has ultimate authority revise act but HMG has no right review actions NI government,' the London Embassy reported. The telegram comment said that Wilson was involved in Rhodesia talks and the meeting with O'Neill had been indefinitely postponed. The British government 'has ways to intervene and influence situation short of formal inquiry, but no one likely make that decision at this stage. Liberals and left-wing Labourites long concerned about situation in Northern Ireland, but even critics concede O'Neill has made progress. HMG unlikely initiate action unless violence sustained or considerably worsens, which generally considered improbable.'²

The Consul-General in Belfast, Neil McManus, informed the London Embassy that 'participation few IRA or Communist types possible but not major factor' in Derry clashes between police and demonstrators. He believed social changes 'possible' after O'Neill-Wilson meeting. 'Present situation incongruous with Nationalist protestors seeking effective support London against Unionist champions of Crown who want London keep nose out of 'internal' Irish affair,' he concluded.³

On the afternoon of 9 October, about 2,000 Queen's University students in Belfast rallied at the campus and some 1,200 marched in orderly fashion to City Hall Square where they were confronted by a couple of hundred counter-demonstrators led by 'so-called Reverend Ian Paisley, Protestant extremist,' who heckled them. Police kept the two groups apart, the Consul-General reported.

McManus was briefed on the situation by the Prime Minister, Terence O'Neill, the Secretary to the Cabinet, Harold Black, his deputy, Kenneth Bloomfield, and the Prime Minister's private

secretary, James Y. Malley, on 10 October. The US Consul-General paid a call on Black at the Cabinet offices in Stormont Castle, and described the ensuing discussions as 'part colloquy and part 'bull session'.' The others dropped by in the course of an hour. 'The atmosphere was quite relaxed as Mr Black and Mr Malley took turns tending bar at the liquor cabinet in between discussions, radio news broadcasts and consultations,' McManus wrote.

'Mr Black stated that the newspaper accounts were essentially correct as to what had happened provided that allowance was made for some slight exaggeration depending upon the editorial policy and whether a paper was pro-Nationalist or pro-Unionist,' the Consul-General's memorandum stated. 'He felt that the worst of the violence was over for the time being, but the government is nervous and apprehensive lest the student activity escalate and be met by an equally determined public assembly of Protestant extremist followers of the so-called Reverend Ian Paisley.' (In fact, he was ordained to the Baptist Ministry by his father, Rev. Kyle Paisley, in 1946.)

McManus said the conversation made it clear that these officials were deeply engaged in looking after the mass media, 'especially key journalists on the various London papers, and TV reporters in order to present a balanced picture of conditions in Ulster.' O'Neill was relaxed and said he had just finished a two-hour interview with a journalist of the *Sunday Times*. The Prime Minister expressed his 'discomfort over the notoriety resulting from the demonstrations', but did not say what he planned to do.

Malley believed they should ban all demonstrations. Black did not completely agree because he did not think it could be done — 'politically or physically'. He preferred political meetings without parades and the conflicting groups kept apart to prevent violence. The government did not appear to have a plan or a timetable 'to pacify the Nationalists in Londonderry'. The demonstrations might accelerate tentative plans for development in Derry, which had been in 'the formative stage' for some time. 'In response to my question about the voting franchise, he said definitely there was no plan to tackle that problem in the present circumstances,' McManus informed the State Department. 'He [Black] expressed his conviction that the allegations of police brutality were exaggerated.'

In summary, it seemed that the government is acting vigorously to improve Ulster's image before the public in Great Britain and abroad and at the same time to move effectively to avoid violence here at home between opposing sides. The greatest concern is over the student element which could provoke a confrontation with shipyard workers, dock workers and others who would not hesitate to take on the students violently or any other way. The root problems in Derry, such as they are, will have to wait for attention.⁴

In an analysis of the Northern Ireland situation for the State Department the day after his meeting with O'Neill and the Cabinet staff, McManus said the problem went back to 1690. 'The recent demonstrations in Londonderry (population 55,000) and government reaction have been startling thanks to mass media. However, much of the reportage has been distorted by sensationalism and the demonstrations exaggerated as to their scope and intensity, especially by most English journalists who still don't seem to understand Ireland.'

The grievances in Derry were real with respect to voting (gerrymandering), allocation of housing and job opportunities, 'mostly with respect to patronage and government jobs,' the analysis goes on. 'Finally the pot has boiled over. If one recalls the murder, arson and mayhem throughout Ulster and Ireland in past decades, this latest deplorable dust-up in Derry is mild in contrast. Yet, such as the problem is, it is serious and is being treated seriously by all concerned.'

Craig, the Minister of Home Affairs, had 'embarrassed the government before by his ill-advised views and remarks,' McManus commented. (Interestingly, Craig in 1963 was largely responsible for O'Neill's elevation to the premiership in succession to Lord Brookeborough. Craig at the time was Chief Whip. O'Neill brought him into the Cabinet.) 'Minister Craig persistently says that the IRA is the moving force and is now readying itself for some violent acts,' the analysis continued. 'This could happen and he might then appear vindicated. Responsible opposition leaders disavow IRA affiliation or any important part for individual IRA members. Betty Sinclair, a known Communist, has been active, but Craig regards her as a negligible danger.'

Two major factors inhibit political change. Firstly, is the

Orange Order, a militantly anti-Catholic brotherhood, which exercises controlling influence over the Unionist Party — to the dismay of a minority of its members. Secondly, is the political ineptitude of all opponents of the Unionist Party. The Nationalists, Liberals, Labour, Independents, Republicans, etc., so far have been incapable of compromising their differences in order to defeat Unionist candidates within many constituencies. The Unionists, in spite of their differences, do hang together.

McManus said public opinion polls conducted by independent professionals indicated that 'general old antagonisms are mellowing slowly, but still exist.' The rate of improvement was up to conservative Unionists, the determination of progressive Unionists, and the political acumen of the opposition.⁵

By 22 October, everything appeared to have quieted down and McManus could write, 'Moderation continued to prevail in the public debate over housing, jobs and voting rights in the Londonderry area of Northern Ireland.' He ended the despatch with the comment: 'These latest developments tend to confirm the belief that the first and only fracas ('ruction' better Irish word) on October 5-6 might have been avoided with more astute management of the parade by the government ... Meanwhile Prime Minister O'Neill's emergency housing conference is expected to be held shortly in a business-like atmosphere. Prime Minister Wilson's suggested meeting with Captain O'Neill has not yet been scheduled for any fixed date. There seems to be no great hurry as long as things remain calm.'

When Wilson returned to London after his trip to Gibraltar for talks on Rhodesia he told the Commons, on 24 October, that he would meet O'Neill 'in a few days'. He would not appoint a commission to investigate the Northern Ireland situation and he would not comment on the proposition that it was 'intolerable' for Westminster to subsidize Northern Ireland and yet have no say on how it was administered, the US Embassy told the State Department. When Gerry Fitt asked House leader Fred Peart for an assurance that British troops would not be used to aid the Unionists, the Speaker ruled the question out of order.⁶

When the Belfast Republican-Labour MP tried to get a Commons debate on the situation in Northern Ireland he was

again refused. The Speaker would not state his reason or 'whether his decision was based on a belief that the matter was not truly urgent or on established practice that internal affairs in the area are outside the jurisdiction of Westminster,' the London Embassy reported. 'Observers generally assume that the latter was the case.'⁷ The matter did come up in the House of Lords when Donald Soper, former President of the Methodist Conference, attacked Paisley as 'not a Protestant in the accepted and traditional sense and he is certainly not a leader in that he has any great objective ideas to stimulate intelligent Christian opinion.' He called him a man 'with a loud voice and his doctorate is self-inflicted.' He was a dogmatist, without scholarship; a rabble-rouser with 'a raucous approach' who was 'duping a lot of simple people'. He added: 'I knew Mr Paisley and I have no use for him whatsoever.'⁸ (Paisley's doctorate in divinity was conferred *honoris causa* by the Bob Jones University of Greenville, South Carolina.)

The People's Democracy march from Belfast to Derry, a distance of seventy-five miles, over the New Year holiday erupted into violence at Maghera on the night of 2 January 1969, the American Consul-General informed the State Department the following day. The march was under police protection and the university students, numbering between 100 and 200 marchers, 'acted responsibly and persevered despite harassment from organized opposition of Paisleyite militant Protestants under the leadership of a vigilante leader named [Major] Ronald Bunting,' McManus wrote.

The worst violence occurred at Burntollet bridge some six miles outside Derry City when about 400 Paisleyites ambushed the marchers on 4 January, injured a number and scattered the rest. 'No deaths', McManus commented. 'Calm returned to area Sunday, but tension in community and between opposing extremist factions at danger point.' He noted that the PD students were not supported by the moderates in the civil rights movement. 'Vigorous police action against militant Protestants noticeably absent in Londonderry locale although RUC did best to protect marchers other places on route.'⁹

There was a strong reaction in the Republic. 'Virtually all Irish politicians' sympathized with O'Neill, the Dublin Embassy reported, and his policy of moderation. They hoped he

would implement major reforms. 'It is generally believed in Ireland (Twenty-six Counties) that if at least some of the reforms demanded by the civil rights agitators are not speedily granted, turmoil will increase in Northern Ireland.'¹⁰

On 16 January, the O'Neill government proposed the formation of a 'high-level and independent Commission' to inquire into the 'immediate causes and nature of the violence and civil disturbances in Northern Ireland on and since 5th October, 1968, and to assess the composition, conduct and aims of those bodies involved in the current agitation and in any incidents arising out of it.' It was also decided to provide legislation setting out 'the principles to be followed by the police in the direction they give to processions' among other matters, including penalties for organizing illegal parades.

The US Consul-General commented that the Stormont government had refused to set up an inquiry into the 5 October 1968 Derry confrontation, and the one being proposed may have been urged by James Callaghan, the British Home Secretary. 'The Commission will have powers to recommend, but it does not appear that its findings will be binding on the government,' McManus wrote.

The most important demand of the civil rights movement was 'one man one vote' and the idea of the commission might be to hold off dealing with that until after May 1969. 'Perhaps by holding all action in abeyance until the Commission renders its report, it will effectively have stymied the practical result of making this 'concession',' McManus's report continued. 'By so doing, the government will have preserved a few Unionist local councils, such as those in Enniskillen, Strabane and Londonderry, which would otherwise be voted out of office. It will have conciliated as well its backwoodsmen who are opposed to any further concessions to the civil rights movement.'

The Consul-General saw O'Neill's leadership threatened by right-wing Unionists. 'The government faces demands from two irreconcilable elements, the civil rights movement and the Unionist right wing,' he explained. 'There is some doubt whether it will be able to synthesize the demands of these two immiscible groups.'¹¹

Stormont decided that its problem was one of 'image' which could be changed by a public relations campaign stressing not

'what is wrong in Northern Ireland' but 'what is right in Ulster'. The Northern Ireland Information Service issued a long press release which sought to set at rest if not answer questions about various aspects of politics in the North under such headings as 'Election and Franchise' and 'Special Powers Act' because, as McManus pointed out, 'the fourth estate had invaded Ulster in force, particularly at the time of the Newry march'. Unionist representatives complained of 'unfair press and TV treatment' and Stratton Mills at Westminster demanded 'an independent investigation into complaints of unfair and unbalanced coverage of recent events by BBC and ITV.'¹²

'The government feels that the Ulster image is vital to the province's economic progress,' the Consul-General stated. 'Stormont has always placed a primary emphasis on attracting industry to this area. Its trump has been the stable and peaceful social and political environment as well as initial financial incentives. The government has voiced its apprehension that continued bad publicity will hurt the provinces's chances for economic growth.'

'There have already been two reports of British firms cancelling plans for expansion of existing facilities in Ulster. Another fear is that the tourist industry may be damaged if burning buses, and mobs rather than salmon streams and open skies become associated with Northern Ireland.'

The press release noted that since 1945, 250 new industries had established plants in the North, providing 70,000 to 80,000 new jobs. Most of the firms were British — Courtaulds, ICI, International Computers and Tabulators, etc. Thirty were American, including Du Pont, Monsanto, Goodyear, Bridgeport Brass, and 'their very presence is a weighty vote of confidence in Northern Ireland's stability.' Ten factories had been announced for Derry since 1966, with almost 600 new jobs; and Maydown, on the city's outskirts, 'is one of the finest industrial complexes in the United Kingdom.'

Flying in the face of the reasons for the civil rights agitation, the Stormont government asserted that 'Northern Ireland's record in housing is a good one — and getting better all the time.' The company vote in local elections would be abolished shortly by legislation. 'It had little significance in any case as the number of registered company nominees accounted for less than half one per cent of the total local electorate.' The system

was inherited from Britain and still operated in some Commonwealth countries. The Special Powers Act had been retained to deal with the IRA — 'an illegal organization practising the methods of guerrilla warfare and ranged on the side of political extremism.' To grapple with the menace of the IRA, both parts of Ireland 'have been compelled to obtain special powers of arrest and detention from their respective Parliaments, a point which is not always appreciated.' These Special Powers Acts

were introduced in Northern Ireland in the early 1920s, shortly after the Northern Ireland Parliament was established. They were brought in to control a very serious situation in which determined attempts were made by the Irish Republican Army to destroy the new state — efforts which cost the lives of 232 people, including two Members of the Northern Ireland Parliament, and in which nearly a thousand were wounded and more than £3 million worth of property destroyed.

These powers have been maintained purely and simply because of the periodic revival by the Irish Republican Army of its campaigns of violence against Northern Ireland. Most were revoked in August 1949 as the IRA threat diminished, but following bomb-throwing incidents in April 1950 some were re-enacted, the Stormont government statement went on. They were again revoked in 1951 but were re-activated in December 1956, when a determined province-wide campaign of violence was launched by the IRA. The campaign lasted five years, 'a number of policemen were killed and wounded and £1 million worth of damage caused.'¹³

On 24 January 1969, Brian Faulkner, Stormont Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Commerce, resigned. This created what the US Consul-General called 'the most serious leadership crisis which the Unionist Party and Prime Minister O'Neill has yet faced.' Two days later the Minister of Health and Social Services, William Morgan, quit. Faulkner controlled 'an important portion of the Unionist Party infrastructure and is favoured by the Orange Order,' McManus commented. 'He is an astute and capable man with strong public appeal, particularly in the rural-Protestant areas. He is the only Northern Ireland political figure capable of seriously challenging O'Neill. His very act of chal-

lenge will inevitably cause profound changes in the Unionist Party, whatever the ultimate outcome of the leadership battle.’¹⁴ (The O’Neill-Faulkner letters appeared to portray Faulkner as a political opportunist who had jumped ship in order to bring down the Prime Minister, a schemer who would use the crisis to grab his boss’s job.)¹⁵

In the general election that ensued, opinion in the Republic was strongly for O’Neill, the Dublin Embassy reported, but when the new Inspector-General of the RUC, Anthony Peacocke, said police had evidence that the IRA supported the civil rights campaign, press and public alike considered the statement ‘expedient political propaganda’. Although the IRA undoubtedly sought to take advantage of the civil rights turmoil, ‘most Irishmen feel that it is untrue and unfair to try to blame the civil rights ferment in Northern Ireland on the IRA, which is presently quiescent,’ the Embassy said.

‘As Northern Ireland moves in the direction of a better deal for its Catholic population the partition issue will seem even less urgent,’ the report concluded. ‘Irish concern over Northern Ireland will vary in proportion to the progress made in the area of civil rights. More and more Irish foresee the day when increasing economic interdependence and integration will cause the political boundary between Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland to become so irrelevant that it will eventually disappear of its own accord.’¹⁶

The State Department outlined its view of the civil rights agitation in a letter to Democratic Congressman James Hanley of Syracuse, NY, who had urged the Nixon administration ‘to speak out against religious hatred and discrimination practiced in Northern Ireland against Irish Catholics.’¹⁷ The official reply put the issue like this: ‘The controversy in Northern Ireland has arisen over questions of civil rights under the internal law of the United Kingdom and, through the delegation of power by the Government in London, the internal law of Northern Ireland itself. The United Kingdom is a friendly country which, unlike certain other countries with civil rights problems, has a basic structure of democratic institutions and political freedom.’

The reply noted that in the 24 February general election, ‘the majority of the electorate did not accept the counsels of those who favour a repressive policy’. In these circumstances, US

intervention 'would be as difficult to justify as intervention by a foreign government in a civil rights controversy in this country'.

The State Department letter concluded: 'We do not suggest that Northern Ireland's problems are over. People with extreme views have not disappeared. We can only hope that the wisdom of the majority of the people will prevail. For, in the end, nothing lasting can be achieved unless the people of Northern Ireland achieve it themselves.'¹⁸

McManus reported on 24 March that the Public Order Bill was the 'focus of the new series of demonstrations' and that there was 'good reason to be pessimistic about Northern Ireland's chances to heal its wounds in a peaceful environment.' He said People's Democracy was 'committed to revolutionary political objectives' and the civil rights movement provided it with 'a legitimate framework and a cause of agitation and discrediting the government'. He added: 'But civil rights is not their ultimate purpose. The government on the other hand by not moving ahead promptly and forcibly with its civil rights programme is providing the environment in which these militants are gaining and have gained increased power. It remains to be seen whether the moderates or militants will prevail.'

On 3 April, McManus noted that Kevin Agnew, a Republican, and Austin Currie, a Nationalist, had withdrawn from the mid-Ulster by-election, leaving the anti-Unionist interest to Bernadette Devlin of People's Democracy. 'But the unity of various non-Unionist elements in Ireland has always been fragile,' the Consul-General continued. 'It is doubtful that this unity, with the given lack of common purpose, can endure.' Miss Devlin, a student at Queen's University, was only twenty-two years of age.

On 17 April, McManus complained that the 'lack of dynamic leadership' shown by O'Neill since his narrow victory over his opponents in the Unionist Council seemed to indicate 'that he is not prone to take any new steps at this time and he might even be in the process of losing enthusiasm.' O'Neill's supporters in the Unionist Party appeared to be seeking a replacement who would end the bickering and the bitterness. Should one be found, O'Neill's 'limited policies of moderation and better community relations' would not be abandoned. 'It would seem to be no longer a matter of whether the Prime Minister will step down,

but more a matter of timing as to when a suitable replacement may be found,' McManus concluded.

Next day, he reported Bernadette Devlin's victory over Mrs Anna Forrest, widow of the former Unionist MP, in Mid-Ulster. 'The poll was a record 91.78 per cent, indicating the intense interest that this campaign had aroused in that constituency,' McManus remarked. 'Miss Devlin's margin of victory was 4,211 votes out of a total vote of 63,085.'

It is a paradox for the civil rights movement and a reflection of Ulster politics, that Miss Devlin who is one of the apostles of *non-sectarian* radical socialism and who has appealed to workers *qua* workers should be elected on an almost totally rural sectarian vote. Her election underlines the fact that there is generally universal suffrage in this province... The election of Miss Devlin may affect Ulster, but not threaten the customary Unionist control within Ulster. Miss Devlin is the youngest member of the House of Commons in over 200 years. She has already had a considerable build-up in the British press, which because of her youth (age 22), sex, evangelical fervour, and articulation have dubbed her as a sort of Joan of Arc.

McManus predicted that Miss Devlin's 'new and unique' position as an MP at Westminster helped by 'the receptivity of the British media ... will give her a wide public forum for the expression of her opposition to Unionists at Stormont.' He expected her to cooperate with Gerry Fitt 'in an effort to have the UK government prod the Northern Ireland government toward more and speedier reforms.'

When O'Neill resigned and Major James Chichester-Clark succeeded him at the end of April, the Civil Rights Association announced: 'Our campaign will go on regardless of which Tory leads the Unionist Party. There will be no truce, but we are concerned about the dangers of sectarian rioting so the present pause in marching will continue.'¹⁹ Paisleyites rallied at Armagh on 26 April to stop civil rights. 'The attitude of the extremists towards civil rights was expressed by a large banner 'CRA-IRA', the Consul-General noted. He found a reason for this attitude:

The Civil Rights Association has expressed an antipathy

towards Stormont which is irrelevant to their demands for basic reforms and suggests political motivations removed from legitimate grievances. Such opposition to Unionism was voiced by Miss Bernadette Devlin in her maiden speech at Westminster. The suspicion is growing among many people, firmly believed by the Protestant extremists, that at least part of the civil rights movement has as its aims the eventual destruction of the constitutional position of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom. This has led to exacerbation of sectarianism in the community.

The Consul-General listed the immediate goals of the movement as one-man one-vote, abolition of the Special Powers Act, withdrawal of the Public Order Bill, anti-discrimination legislation, a compulsory local authority housing points system, disbandment of the B-Specials, disarming of the RUC and a public inquiry into police activities in Derry. Both Protestant and Catholic extremists 'are opposed to moderate but real reforms and, generally, any really moderate Unionist government', McManus observed. The Paisleyites equated civil rights with Republicanism. They had 'a strong armed cadre' and 'could cause violence in the name of loyalism'. The Consul-General warned: 'Future civil rights activism may provoke an increasing reaction from this militant group.'²⁰

The new Prime Minister declared an amnesty for all civil rights demonstrators and counter-demonstrators from 5 October 1968. Paisley and Bunting were freed from prison after serving six weeks for attacking civil rights demonstrators, and charges were dropped against Austin Currie, Gerry Fitt, Ivan Cooper, Bernadette Devlin and the former Nationalist leader, Eddie McAteer, for marching in banned demonstrations.

On 27 June 1969, the State Department sent a telegram to its Embassies in London and Dublin and the Consul-General in Belfast on 'Washington interest in developments in Northern Ireland. . . . ' President Nixon had received a letter from one hundred members of Congress led by Tip O'Neill of Massachusetts and Philip Burton of California, rising figures in the Democratic Party, urging him to communicate their 'concern to Harold Wilson and Chichester-Clark about general civil rights problem'. The State Department instructed, 'In view indications enhanced interest coming events would appreciate early

information as available and comments.' The Consul-General replied:

The press and politicians on both sides here took due note in June of the reported letter from US Congressmen O'Neill and Burton, et al to President Nixon, and the telegram of support sent by Senator Edward Kennedy to the NI Civil Rights Association. Only casual notice was given to the O'Neill-Burton letter which was viewed here as a traditional and sincere effort but not likely to have much effect. Prime Minister Chichester-Clark deplored more in pain than anger Senator Kennedy's acceptance of 'a slanted view' and attempt to interfere in Northern Ireland's internal affairs. The Prime Minister did urge the Senator to use his 'great influence to encourage further industrial development' in Ulster and to learn more of the progress which is being achieved here, even if incomplete. There has not been any follow-up publicity or action here on these two moves by US legislators.

The Buffalo, NY-based American Congress for Irish Freedom headed by a lawyer, James J. Heaney, was 'sharply denounced' by Paddy Devlin, Labour MP at Stormont, for the Falls, Belfast, for urging US industrialists not to establish plants in the North. According to the ACIF, 'the North was a poor risk, its economy in shambles, factories exposed to vandalism, and the Special Powers Act a prevention to British investments in Ulster.' McManus wrote: 'Devlin said the pamphlet was obviously written by an Irish-American bigot, as if there were not enough in Ireland.' He advised the ACIF to creep 'back into its sectarian stinkhole'. The Consul-General commented: 'It doesn't pay to meddle in family fights'.

On other matters, McManus reported that the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva had issued a report in June 1969 'on the alleged injustices, discrimination, and police powers in Northern Ireland'. The report was branded as 'inaccurate, incomplete and tendentious' by Chichester-Clark. The US Consul-General commented that 'from available evidence the report does appear to be way off the mark and perhaps largely the work of Mr Seán MacBride, Secretary General of the ICJ and a former Minister of External Affairs in the Republic of Ireland'.²¹

He noted that Chichester-Clark was 'moving forward with

reforms' and had 'publicly rebuked' John Taylor, a junior Minister, for a public statement supporting the hardliners. 'Taylor retracted his remarks but probably has not changed his mind,' McManus reported. 'There continues a deliberate programme by the conservative Unionists to obtain control of local party structures and thereby resist change and eliminate reform-minded Unionists. This has been only partly successful and is not likely to affect the general orientation set by Terence O'Neill and carried on by Prime Minister Chichester-Clark. The real crunch between reformers and reactionaries is most likely to come in the autumn of 1969 when legislation is to be enacted for local government reform and enlargement of the franchise.'

He went on to report that people inside and outside the Unionist Party talked of 'the need to eliminate the official standing of the Orange Order within the Unionist Party'. Many favoured this but were reluctant 'to tamper with such a sacred cow as the Orange Order'. The link was not likely to be severed in the near future 'but may come some day', McManus predicted.²²

On 4 August 1969, McManus reported street riots in Belfast during the nights of 2 and 3 August, 'but they were confined small area this city half million people'. Order was restored and the rest of 'Province calm but apprehensive'. On Saturday night (2 August), 'sectarian ruction' involved a couple of hundred Protestants who besieged and stoned a 'Catholic multi-storey apartment building after Orange youth parade hit by bottles from said apartment,' the despatch continued. Police intervened. There were broken windows and threats. On Sunday night, several thousand Protestants battled police in the Shankill Road, erected barricades with vehicles and cars, 'indiscriminately broke into and looted stores ... and engaged in violent acts vandalism and arson.'

Church, government and opposition leaders and even some Paisleyites urged the people to stay off the streets; the Civil Rights Association cancelled a rally at City Hall. There were about 200 injured, including seventeen policemen. An American family was forced to abandon a burned shop and damaged flat and the 'Consulate [was] assisting them'. There were no deaths or serious injuries, McManus reported in an

apparent attempt to play down an outburst of fury that obviously took everyone by surprise. He discussed the situation with the Lord Mayor, who confirmed that the 'trouble not, repeat not, expected worsen and events deplored by most citizens'. However, they were the worst riots in Belfast since 1935. Saturday's outbreak considered 'sectarian in origin'. Sunday's looting and vandalism was the work of 'hoodlum 'loyalists'.'

McManus's next remarks take on a grim irony in the light of subsequent events:

Next critical date is August 12, traditional celebration by Protestant groups in Londonderry successful defence that city in 1668 [sic]. Civic leaders in Derry working hard avoid trouble that day. Prior latest Belfast disturbance about 3,000 youths all religions participated successful and peaceful ... outdoor concert on outskirts of Belfast afternoon August 2. Things are not all bad.²³

The Consul-General noted that on 8 August Chichester-Clark and his Minister of Home Affairs had met with the British Home Secretary, James Callaghan, in London. They may have discussed the use of British troops 'in extreme circumstances', he speculated, 'which would amount to an admission of failure and reversion of some power to Westminster'. They also probably discussed forthcoming marches, McManus added, which could lead to further disturbances. 'The first crucial date is August 12th,' he wrote, 'when the Orange-affiliated Apprentice Boys parade in Londonderry.'

Derry erupted on 12 August and in the nights following the violence spread to Armagh, Strabane, Dungiven, Enniskillen, Coalisland, Newry, Lurgan — and finally Belfast again. Stormont mobilized the 10,000-member B-Special Constabulary, a Unionist militia which Consul-General McManus said had a reputation 'for their sectarian anti-Catholic attitudes'. Chichester-Clark asked the British government for 'military assistance', and on 14-15 August British troops moved onto the streets of Derry and Belfast 'to prevent breakdown of law and order,' the Home Office in London declared.²⁴

'Violence and terror intensified in Belfast during night and morning August 14-15,' the Consul-General told Washington on 15 August. 'Four persons were shot dead and 105 reported

injured by gunfire, stones and arson mostly in Catholic residential areas ... Calm returned to Derry as British troops took over from police. Troops unexpectedly welcomed with cheers and smiles by besieged rioters in Bogside as latter viewed withdrawal of police as partial victory. Extent this honeymoon uncertain as possibility exists someone likely attack troops in due course.'

British troops arrived in Belfast at 6 pm on 15 August and 'were cheered in Catholic areas,' the Consul-General reported. Major Chichester-Clark continued to 'blame imbroglio on IRA and 'other' sinister plotters and apparently turning blind eye to any anti-Catholic extremists'. McManus added this afterthought, 'British troops may remain here in peace-keeping role for a long time.'

The Consul-General attended a press conference by Chichester-Clark, who still insisted publicly that the 'real cause' of the troubles was 'extreme Republican element and others'. He did not identify the 'others'. He blamed the Dublin government for 'inflaming' the situation; also for 'clumsiness and ineptitude', McManus said.²⁵

The Embassy in Dublin took note of a Government Information Bureau statement on 14 August reiterating 'view expressed by the Taoiseach that the use of British troops in the Six Counties was not acceptable'. The Irish Army had established five field hospitals along the border, with refugee camps at Finner in Donegal and Gormanstown in Meath 'to accommodate families leaving their homes in Northern Ireland'. Within a few days there were about 400 persons in the camps. On 15 August, the political correspondent of the *Irish Times* wrote that the 'decision to establish field hospitals near the border could be interpreted in both Britain and the North as a 'hint' that the Irish government might find itself in a situation where it might have to despatch troops to the North, thus creating an international incident which the UN could not ignore.' The US Embassy found the scenario 'an ominous and most unlikely possibility'.²⁶

However unlikely such a possibility, it would be both logical and justified in the circumstances. Why should not Irish troops intervene in Derry to save Nationalists from a threatened massacre? It would have changed the situation quite dramatic-

ally and in a manner 'the UN could not ignore'.

On 20 August, the London Embassy reported a six-hour meeting at 10 Downing Street between Harold Wilson and Chichester-Clark which resulted in a seven-point declaration of principles, leading off with a reaffirmation of the 1949 British pledge that the status of Northern Ireland would not be changed without the consent of Stormont. The other points were: Northern Ireland affairs were entirely within the domestic jurisdiction of the United Kingdom; the commitment of troops was a temporary matter since the British government was ultimately responsible for law and order; the Northern Ireland government would take into 'fullest account' the views of the United Kingdom government on equal rights for all citizens; the momentum of internal reform would be maintained; Northern Ireland citizens were entitled to the same equality of treatment as in the rest of the United Kingdom irrespective of politics or religion; both governments were determined to restore normality so that economic development could proceed 'at the fastest rate which is vital for social stability.'

Much of the discussion at Downing Street on 19 August was taken up with the B-Specials and how to control them. It was agreed to put them under the command of the British GOC, who would also have custody of their arms. The British government would have preferred to disband them then and there, but Chichester-Clark thought that would create trouble, according to James Callaghan.

The London Embassy commented on the Downing Street meeting and declaration as follows: 'UKG so far effectively increasing influence in North Ireland, which responds to demands of civil rights leaders and Catholic minority, while avoiding formal challenge to Stormont status and authority, which would antagonize Protestant majority and internationalize issue.'

The last referred to the Irish government's efforts to establish a peace-keeping force of British and Irish troops in the North. Dr P. J. Hillery, the Irish Foreign Minister, went to London on 15 August — the day British troops entered Belfast — to put his proposal. He received what he called 'a courteous brush-off' from Lord Chalfont, Minister of State at the Foreign Office. Hillery then appealed to the Security Council 'for despatch to

the area [Northern Ireland] of a UN peace-keeping force.' Max Jakobson of Finland, that month's president, permitted the question on the agenda.

On 20 August, Dublin Embassy reported: 'UN developments being followed with great interest here...' Hillery's Security Council appeal appeared tailored for home consumption. 'The initiative taken by the Republic of Ireland at the United Nations ultimately worked out to the satisfaction of both sides,' Callaghan wrote. 'If the UN's constitution had been strictly interpreted, Hillery could have been prevented from asking the Security Council to put his government's request for a United Nations force on the agenda, on the grounds that it was a domestic matter, and therefore outside the UN's jurisdiction. But Lord Caradon, who was our chief permanent representative at the UN, handled the matter very wisely.'

Britain agreed to a hearing. Hillery said British troops were unacceptable in Northern Ireland because of partition. A UN force would defuse the situation. The Zambian delegate, by pre-arrangement with Caradon perhaps, proposed that the debate be adjourned. That was the end of the matter: the Irish had lost the argument. The Irish delegation claimed later that a head count revealed that Ireland lacked the votes to carry a resolution at the Security Council.

'Hillery said afterwards that he knew there was no prospect of a UN peace-keeping force,' Callaghan explained. 'But Lord Caradon's approach avoided giving him a personal rebuff while adhering firmly to the British position, and [Taoiseach Jack] Lynch was able to show his fellow countrymen that he had taken the matter to the Security Council and done as much as he could.'²⁷

This suggests that Hillery's dash to the UN was diplomatic play-acting to fool the Irish. At least that is how the British government saw it.

It was not obvious at the time, but the events of 12-15 August 1969 marked a spontaneous unarmed Nationalist uprising against Unionist rule in Northern Ireland. The Stormont government was abolished two-and-a-half years later. August 1969 was the first of many Northern Ireland 'milestones'. It undermined the entire system. Reports from the London and Dublin Embassies and the Consul-General in Belfast kept the

State Department advised of developments in the North. The United States continued to follow a passive policy, nevertheless. When Congressman Joseph G. Minish, a New Jersey Democrat, wrote on 23 August 1969 to Secretary of State William P. Rogers to ask him to 'express to the Prime Ministers of Northern Ireland and Great Britain our grave concern over the oppression of the Catholic minority', he was told, 'Official intervention on our part in the affairs of Northern Ireland would be objected to in much the same manner as we would object to outside intervention in civil rights problems within the United States.'²⁸ This was an excuse. The State Department comments on such matters all the time. It would have clarified the issue.

Chichester-Clark's advisers were aware of the changed situation. The Prime Minister told the Young Unionists on 29 September that 'the choice to be quite blunt about it, is one between absolutely fair and just government in Northern Ireland, or no government at all. Unionists must recognize that as a reality.' The full text of his speech and one to the Stormont Commons the following day were despatched to Washington.

In the Stormont statement, Chichester-Clark made a direct appeal to Nationalists who had stood aside, refused allegiance and adopted 'a policy of public boycott' of the Northern Ireland state: 'Now we have a chance of a fresh start. It will only succeed if a basis of confidence is built up by experience at every level... Let us condemn alike Burntollet and Newry and the mentality represented in the events which took place there.'

Some days earlier, Phelim O'Neill, the Minister of Agriculture, drew no cheers from the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Derry when he said that the problem of Northern Ireland was fifty years of one-party government. 'One would normally expect that after fifty years that government would be magnanimous whereas, in fact, it has been the reverse,' he said. He warned his listeners: 'Industrial development has taken a terrible hammering. Capitalists from the rich countries in Western Europe and America will not invest large sums in a country which has become almost ridiculous in the eyes of the world.'²⁹

William Craig, the former Minister of Home Affairs, who was dismissed the previous December for challenging O'Neill's reform efforts, told the Young Unionist Association at an Ulster Day rally that 'firearms will have to be used by the forces of law

and order so that Northern Ireland could get back to normality.'

Craig declared: 'Whatever force is necessary, its got to be used. I know that it will leave a lot of people unhappy, but fire-arms will have to be used.' And he illustrated what he meant with a reference to the Derry riots of 12 August. 'I think that a volley of shots could have prevented the escalation which occurred in Londonderry,' he said.³⁰ A few days earlier in the Ulster Hall, on the 57th anniversary of the signing of the Covenant, Craig called reform 'largely irrelevant', saying it 'only gave credulity to the uprising — as Austin Currie has described it.'³¹

The US Consul commented: 'Some well informed sources are convinced extremists and ultra-conservatives, using whatever means and tactics deemed feasible, intend to do their utmost to modify proposed reform legislation and delay adoption of reform measures as long as possible. In a country exhibiting varying aspects, overtones and trappings of a tribal, puritanical and feudalistic society, with manor lord relationships and attitudes, for the long dominant conservative Unionist Party stalwarts and the Orange Order, this is the time of the crunch — and they are reacting, not surprisingly, with hostility and bitterness.'³²

Unionists reacted violently in October 1969 to the British government's reform programme, which they interpreted as a surrender to the Nationalists. Loyalists killed an RUC constable in Belfast, and Chichester-Clark at a news conference in Stormont Castle called the shooting 'an act of folly'. He said, 'Such folly is the real danger in Northern Ireland.'³³

'There is little doubt, in the opinion of well-informed sources,' commented the US Consul-General in Belfast, 'that a very small number of Protestant extremists are behind the violence and are influencing militant groups all too ready to believe they are being sold down the river, that the country has been betrayed and is now in great jeopardy — a case of the tail wagging the dog.'³⁴

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EPILOGUE: THE AMERICAN DIMENSION

Brian Faulkner, the last Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, took office in March 1971. Chichester-Clark resigned abruptly because the British Tory government of Edward Heath refused to send more troops to Belfast. Under Faulkner, matters went from bad to worse. On 22 June, the fiftieth anniversary of the Northern Ireland parliament, he appeared to blame the Nationalists for the failure of the Unionist state. 'If for decades past, representatives of the minority have not played a proportionate part in various aspects of our life, that has surely stemmed quite as much from lack of inclination as from the lack of opportunity,' he said.¹

A few weeks later, the 'representatives of the minority' walked out of Stormont for ever after British soldiers, on 9 July, killed two young men in Derry and the British government refused an SDLP request for an official inquiry.

On 9 August, with Heath's assent, Faulkner reverted to the time-honoured way of cowing the Nationalists — internment. The arrest of 337 young men in a dawn swoop was followed by well-authenticated reports of torture, physical and psychological. The numbers interned increased in the following months, as did rioting and violence. On 30 January 1972, paratroopers opened fire on a civil rights march in Derry and killed thirteen young men who, they said, were members of the IRA and had fired on the soldiers. The dead men were unarmed.

'Most public figures, including PM Lynch, have assigned principal responsibility to British troops,' the Dublin Embassy cabled the State Department. The Irish government would 'use its limited leverage in attempt to make the milestone a turning point.'² The leverage consisted of withdrawing Donal O'Sullivan, the Irish Ambassador at London, and despatching the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Patrick J. Hillery, to the United Nations, Washington and Ottawa, in a replay of his 1969

diplomatic exercise. Hillery was even less effective than in 1969, although he started well. At a press conference in Kennedy Airport he accused Britain of 'provoking war against a nation which, to a large extent, is unarmed.' He would 'seek help wherever I can get it' because Northern Ireland was 'a problem for the free world'. He would discuss with friendly governments how 'to end the reign of terror which Britain is perpetrating on our people'. He declared:

What has been done in Ireland by the British is an affront to justice in the world. If they can get away with it this time, we can have little hope for justice. We would hope that these friendly nations would turn Britain away from the lunatic policies she is pursuing.... We regard what has been done as an act of war.

His government 'wanted British troops out of Ireland', and a declaration from the British government not to 'maintain a state by force of arms in Ireland'. The problem could be solved if Britain agreed to withdraw from Nationalist areas — and talk. The IRA was 'a response to Britain's policy' of locking up adults, harassing children, denouncing opponents as 'terrorists', and carrying out 'an unwarranted savage attack' on forty per cent of the North's population to keep a bigoted regime in power. Nationalists gave total support to anyone they considered 'a resistance fighter'. The Irish government

would never invade the six north-eastern counties, because that's part of Ireland. From now on, our aim is to get the British out of Ireland. We had war declared on the minority population in the name of doing it on the IRA.

The Irish people are suddenly confronted with a brutal clarification of Britain's policies in our country.³

Next morning, Hillery went to the UN and talked to Kurt Waldheim's deputy, Chakravarthi Narasimhan. He then issued a statement to the press:

British forces in the North have been allowed to become an instrument of coercion at the service of a privileged group, the Northern Ireland Unionists. My government believe that it is imperative that they be withdrawn immediately from Derry and from other predominantly Catholic areas throughout the North and harassment of the non-Unionist population cease.⁴

The Security Council was in session at Addis Ababa, one of the few times it had met outside New York. Otherwise, one assumes, Hillery would have attempted, as in 1969, to put Ireland's case before it. He could have done so anyway, for provision is made under Article 28 of the Charter for all contingencies. Instead, Hillery flew to Washington. John D. J. Moore, the US Ambassador at Dublin, advised Secretary of State William P. Rogers to meet Hillery, which he did, although Lord Cromer, the British Ambassador, got to him first.

Moore's brother Dick worked for Nixon at the White House. The Moore brothers had grown up with the Irish question. Their grandfather had worked for Parnell and Davitt; their father was national secretary of the Friends of Irish Freedom, the mass organization Devoy launched in March 1916 to build support for the Easter rebellion.

Rogers told Hillery bluntly that he could not help him. Hillery replied that he was not seeking help. 'I would not expect him to agree with any statement of mine in relation to a nation with which his government has friendly relations,' Hillery told the press. When a correspondent asked Rogers about Ted Kennedy's proposal that the United States should act as mediator in Northern Ireland, he bridled. 'This is a situation that has to be solved by the people in the area,' he shouted. 'We don't want to suggest that the people of the United States can solve this. Suggestions that we can solve it in a diplomatic way are *outrageous*.' He would not make private suggestions to Britain. His only concession to Hillery was to say that President Nixon had expressed his deep concern at 'the recent tragic events in Northern Ireland'.⁵

Kennedy's resolution urged a British withdrawal. He was surprised by Rogers's 'ferocity'. Lord Cromer, on television, claimed that one of the thirteen dead men in Derry had some kind of weapon; four were wanted for other crimes. 'I thought this was an extraordinary statement, that it was legitimate to kill them because of that,' Kennedy said.⁶

The *New York Times* warned that the United States must not involve itself in 'the Northern Ireland catastrophe'. Irish-Americans were 'understandably outraged at the bloodshed in Ulster and would like someone to promise to do something about it. The Irish Republic is seeking support from 'friendly governments' to persuade Britain to accept a settlement on

Dublin's terms.'⁷

Hillery's mission was a failure. He had no diplomatic leverage. It was the last independent effort to put Britain in the dock on Northern Ireland before world opinion until Charles Haughey's White House speech of St Patrick's Day 1982, which announced a policy that was stillborn because soon thereafter he was out of office.

Benjamin Rosenthal, a New York Democrat who chaired a House Foreign Affairs sub-committee, summoned witnesses from the North to hearings at the end of February. 'Britain has suspended the *habeas corpus* for a half-million people,' Father Denis Faul said. 'They have highly sophisticated methods of torture. And when we are successful in the courts England changes the law.' Dr Conn McCluskey, Dungannon, accused the Unionist Party of misleading the Protestant people. 'They have driven them into a corner and caused this mess. We are looking to the reconciliation that must occur. This cannot go on for ever.'

Professor Kenneth McCallion of Fordham Law School thought the US could act through the UN. The General Assembly could impose sanctions on Britain which would lead to 'a probable rise in the level of criticism within Great Britain' and deter the Tory government 'from ignoring an Assembly resolution with impunity'.

Paul O'Dwyer said the Nationalist people had made 'the simple declaration' that Stormont must go. He urged the sub-committee to press the Kennedy-Carey Bill urging the British to withdraw from Northern Ireland.⁸

The rising fervour in America eased when on 24 March — in part responding to that passion — Prime Minister Heath declared that the British government was 'assuming full and direct responsibility for the administration of Northern Ireland, until a political solution to the problem of the province can be worked out in connection with all those concerned...' In the meantime, Stormont stood 'prorogued but would not be dissolved'.

The Irish government considered Heath's move a 'step forward', the Dublin Embassy reported, while Foreign Affairs saw it as a 'holding action' to ease the situation in the North. The

Irish Ambassador returned to London. Direct rule was 'a breakthrough, and close to what GOI requested,' the Embassy despatch added. 'No one here believes that Stormont will ever be reopened in previous form, with Protestants monopolizing power.'⁹

The Widgery report on Derry's 'Bloody Sunday' — that the 'army was fired on first and that troops did not lose discipline', as the London Embassy put it — revived some of the passion, particularly as the British press praised the findings.¹⁰ Then attention was diverted to William Whitelaw's search for a solution. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland talked to the UDA (Ulster Defence Association) and the Provisional IRA, whose representatives were flown to Britain by the RAF. (They demanded a British withdrawal by 1 January 1975.) On Friday, 21 July, car bombs exploded in Belfast, nine persons died and 130 were wounded, provoking 'horror and outrage', the American Consul reported.

Explosions, and TV press coverage of their results, sickened and outraged people of this province, claiming they had not given enough warning to avoid loss of life. No Northern Catholic voice was raised in support of Provisional actions, and criticism of British army actions has been strikingly muted...¹¹

Ten days later, the British army launched 'Operation Motorman' to seize the 'no-go' areas of Belfast and Derry. There was no resistance. When three car bombs exploded in the little Derry village of Claudy with devastating results — six dead, about thirty injured — the atrocity was attributed to the Provisionals, who denied it.

From Dublin, Moore reported the government view that the 'particularly repulsive atrocities' of the Provos had made 'Motorman' possible. Jack Lynch considered the 'Derry invasion rash but says some chance of political progress out of current 'very serious' situation. He grumbled about lack of advance notification from British, but made no statement which could harm current good Anglo-Irish relations.'

Almost everyone here, in short, seems to be hoping British will produce a new political gesture corresponding in magnitude to show of military force in Derry.¹²

Political gestures followed as predicted. First, a conference in Darlington (England) in September 1972 which the Unionist, Alliance and Northern Ireland Labour attended, but not Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party or the SDLP. Second, a discussion document ('Green Paper') setting conditions for a settlement: United Kingdom sovereignty and an 'Irish dimension' — co-operation with the Republic. (These conditions remained at the heart of every initiative down to the Hillsborough accord.)

There followed a government policy document ('White Paper'), border plebiscite, election of a 78-member Assembly, a power-sharing formula between the Unionists and the SDLP and the Sunningdale conference, all in 1973, embodying a Council of Ireland and discussion of what Brian Faulkner called 'co-operation against terrorism throughout the whole island of Ireland'. On New Year's Day, 1974, the power-sharing Executive took office. It fell five months later in what Faulkner called a Loyalist 'putsch'.

To encourage the Unionists, the Irish and British governments at Sunningdale had made 'solemn declarations' — to be registered at the UN — in which the former fully accepted 'the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in that status'; the British acknowledged that Northern Ireland 'is part of the United Kingdom', but if in the future 'the majority ... should indicate a wish to become part of a united Ireland, the British government would support that wish.'¹³

Labour returned to office in February 1974. When the self-styled Ulster Workers' Council cut off all effective services the London Embassy reported on 28 May:

... we understand that British army has repeatedly resisted very strongly suggestions that coercion should be attempted or that it would succeed if it were.

Earlier (22 April) the London Embassy, probably reflecting British official views, appeared to blame the Irish government for the failure of power-sharing:

In return for moving towards the creation of an all-Ireland institution, NI leaders (and HMG) thought they had a GOI commitment to take action in three areas: recognition of the status of NI (this has been more or less satisfactorily done),

border security and the punishment of fugitive offenders...

The underlining was done at the State Department. The despatch said that there was no doubt Faulkner and his followers had made 'the greatest sacrifices and taken the greatest political risks.' The 28 February general election results had shown that Sunningdale 'was not acceptable' to many Unionists. After the election, Faulkner's strength declined to the point 'where it is clearly possible his political position may collapse.'

The Labour government was also committed to 'some form of power-sharing and partnership', a White Paper published on 4 July 1974 noted. It would have an 'Irish dimension'. If it failed neither Britain's financial contribution, estimated at £430 million in 1974-5, 'nor the presence of the British army can be taken for granted.'¹⁴ The White Paper proposed elections for a Constitutional Convention.

Some 170 politicians, academics, businessmen, lawyers and writers assembled at Oxford eight days later, under the aegis of the British-Irish Association, to discuss the North. They agreed that the Loyalist strike that brought down Faulkner had demonstrated the power of the Protestant working class, which no longer was willing to render automatic allegiance to a middle-class Unionist leadership. They saw prospects 'for finding common ground between the Protestant and Catholic working classes, who increasingly are seen to have important shared interests, and themselves are beginning to be aware of this.'

The Irish Foreign Minister, Garret FitzGerald, 'did not appear to sway many Ulster Protestants' with his argument that the economic interests of North and South were closer than those of the North and Britain. Some Protestants 'would prefer Ulster's independence to any arrangement that might lead to their eventual incorporation in an Irish state', without examining what independence would entail 'which many observers believed would be disastrous', the London Embassy reported.

And while Protestants may believe that the IRA can sabotage by violence any political settlement made without it, some are beginning to recognize that however much they may want to remain in the United Kingdom, they have no comparable way of vetoing a British decision to withdraw. No matter how they

try to work it out, the future looks depressing to Northern Ireland Protestants.

Most conferees feared that if the British public grew alienated 'from Ireland's problems and their Irish responsibilities', there might be 'a British disengagement which in turn would lead to some form of civil war...'¹⁵

Ambassador Moore reported complaints by FitzGerald to Embassy officials and visiting members of Congress about 'American support for Irish terrorists' and his charge that Irish Northern Aid (Noraid) provided 'important assistance' to the Provisional campaign. Moore thought that a settlement in the North must contain 'the Sunningdale ingredients: real 'power-sharing' between Protestant and Catholic communities, civil rights reforms, and an 'Irish dimension', which he defined as 'closer co-operation with the Republic'. He continued:

Many Catholics and Protestants alike are coming to believe that Britain will eventually pull out completely, even if no visible political solution can be achieved. The press is full of parallels from earlier outposts of Empire. Most of the commentators overlook one thing: in terms of national interest, it made sense for Britain to leave most of its Empire. It would not seem to make much sense for any British government to abandon its back-yard to civil war... A Britain that utterly failed to cope in Ulster would lose confidence in its ability to cope anywhere.

The troubles could get worse. 'In that event the American public might demand some degree of involvement... If full-scale conflict comes we could certainly help the refugees, but that would be a very minor palliative. We would probably be asked to approve a UN peacekeeping force, but it would be a very poor substitute for the current British troops.'¹⁶

A high official of the Department of Foreign Affairs kept the Embassy informed of the state of Anglo-Irish relations and a despatch of 22 November 1974 noted that 'senior ForOffice contact' said 'working relations between Irish and British officials are better than ever at all levels, from PM down. Source has attended sixteen high-level (ForMin or PM) meetings with British in recent months. British have been consistently well-informed and close to Irish side on all basics, though obviously

not on many details. Source commented that it is a historic achievement when British and Irish can work together this well — perhaps the main bright spot in current NI situation.'

At Christmas 1974, preparatory to a Kissinger-FitzGerald meeting, Moore reported that 'while NI violence remains serious, GOI policy is pointed in the right direction. We believe that FitzGerald's description of problem will be sound. We should, however, discourage any hope that a UN peacekeeping force could be a reasonable substitute for British army... Despite a Christmas truce the NI problem remains bad ... a lasting political solution would have to involve genuine power-sharing between Catholic and Protestant communities, but this has been torpedoed by violence from Catholic extremists (the Provisional IRA) and by a majority of the Protestant politicians. Most observers expect a deadlock in the Constitutional Convention to be elected early in 1975. In the short-time, thus, the best thing that can be said is that the British army has kept the violence from becoming a full-scale civil war.'¹⁷

By 1975 the United States had a vested interest in the kind of settlement that would pacify if not resolve the Northern Ireland troubles. The State Department was kept well informed of all developments and their meaning by Ambassador Moore, whose expert knowledge of the Irish question served the United States well from April 1969 to June 1975. His reports suggest a gradual shift in US policy from the 'neutrality' of William P. Rogers to what would grow into much deeper involvement in the Carter and Reagan administrations. At a certain point, the State Department had an indirect role in bringing Unionists and Nationalists to conferences without revealing its hand. The Department encouraged the perception that the SDLP was the voice of Northern Ireland Catholics.¹⁸

This policy was directed against the IRA in the first instance. A political solution would not change the North's role as strategic guardian of Britain's 'western approaches'. Early on, the London Embassy noted the 'unreasonable' demand of the IRA for a British withdrawal — and the dilemma this posed for advocates of physical force:

The Provos, like earlier radical Republican para-military groups, are driven by the dream of a unified Ireland attained through the forcible expulsion of the British. Acceptance of

an extended cease fire without at least a British promise to withdraw from Northern Ireland, an impossible condition for HMG, represents the repudiation of this dream. Even if the PIRA leadership should decide to pursue the ultimate goal by political rather than violent means ... many of the militant PIRA activists would certainly reject such an approach and resume terrorist operations. This would split the PIRA just as the IRA itself broke into the Provisional and Official wings over the question of violence.¹⁹

The North became a minor issue at the end of the US presidential campaign in 1976, when an AOH-Irish National Caucus delegation met Jimmy Carter at Pittsburgh on 26 October, after Democratic leaders in New York under Governor Hugh Carey barred a meeting in that state. Yet the New York voters, many of them Irish-American, were the objects of the exercise. Polls showed the election was close and Carter needed to carry New York. He made a statement and answered questions:

The Democratic National Convention plan [on Ireland] was written jointly by our own staff and Mayor [Richard J.] Daley of Chicago to be sure that the world knows that the Democratic Party understands the special problems of Ireland and it is a mistake for our country's government to stand quiet on the struggle of the Irish for peace, for the respect of human rights, and for unifying Ireland.

This innocuous statement caused a political storm in Dublin, Belfast and London. FitzGerald protested in a telegram to Carter's headquarters and was told that the candidate had not supported violence but 'negotiations and peaceful means of finding a just solution which involves the two communities of Northern Ireland and protects human rights which have been threatened.'²⁰

Gerry Fitt said the statement had 'political overtones': a united Ireland 'must be by consent'. James Molyneux, Unionist leader at Westminster, asserted that 'the irresponsible opportunism of this peanut politician has undone much of what has been achieved in persuading Americans to stop supplying arms to the IRA.'²¹

Carter carried New York and by a narrow margin won the election. His Pittsburgh comments probably helped him. He acknowledged that debt the following 30 August, when he

signed a statement promising US investment in return for a settlement in the North. He did not abandon the official 'impartiality' of his predecessors, indeed he (or the State Department) said it would continue, but he emphasized that 'the US wholeheartedly supports peaceful means for finding a just solution that involves both parts of the community of Northern Ireland...' (Eight weeks later, this became for London and, naturally, Dublin 'a devolved government acceptable to both parts of the community' in the North.)²² Carter's pledge of 'additional job investment' was the seed which grew into the Hillsborough aid package more than eight years later.

The White House did not give high exposure to the statement. The reason probably had to do with growing tensions between Carter and the Congressional Democratic leadership represented by Speaker Tip O'Neill and Senator Ted Kennedy, who with Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Governor Carey had issued a statement on St Patrick's Day 1977 urging US aid for peace in Ireland and condemning American funding for the IRA. (They were dubbed 'the Four Horsemen' by Noraid supporters.) In 1981, the four broadened their ranks to include other Irish-American legislators and became the Friends of Ireland in Congress. Apart from their political influence, which was considerable, the Friends helped the Irish government isolate Noraid's supporters.

From then on it may be said that the framework of a Northern settlement was in place with the added incentive of US economic assistance. This framework was partition, Unionist-Nationalist 'partnership', United Kingdom sovereignty, an 'Irish dimension' — a role for Dublin — and American support. The problem was to convince the Unionists to substitute 'partnership' for Protestant ascendancy.

There was the further difficulty that Mrs Margaret Thatcher had described herself as a 'Unionist' before taking office in May 1979, and she was not a woman to go back on her word lightly. Carter attempted to move her towards a political solution of the Northern problem in May 1979, but the Unionists had said they would not share power 'with those who do not owe allegiance to the United Kingdom' — meaning the SDLP — and she would not budge.

'With some exceptions this [Protestant] majority — two-thirds

of the population — still seek dominant status in the province — thus refusing to enter into partnership with the 'Catholic' or 'Republican' minority community — and it rejects a united Ireland in any form', the US Consul in Belfast wrote in a thoughtful analysis of the situation in August 1978. 'At the same time, many of the majority are disillusioned that Britain has not put their interests higher.'

He said of Jack Lynch's government, which had returned to office with an overall majority of twenty in June 1977, that they were 'trying to determine what they need to do to attract the Northern Ireland majority into union, and thinking even whether the cost to the Republic is worth it.' For these reasons, the basis for a settlement was hard to find. There was 'considerable potential for a resurgence of violence from the majority side should its status seem endangered.'

Although many who opposed a united Ireland 'consider it inevitable', it could take generations or might never occur. 'Unless Britain imposes itself on the NI majority, and that majority takes it supinely, the best prospect for unity is time, patience, EEC erosion of borders, and seriousness from the South.' Direct rule was everyone's second choice. It required no initiatives. Over time, it might bring 'the NI communities closer in the search for common ground'. In the meantime, the Irish government wanted the British 'to do something constructive (i.e. move toward unity), and would like the United States to join their endeavour' after the British elections.²³

The Dublin Embassy reported Lynch government frustration over the Provisional IRA's campaign of violence, whose actions [they said] 'in the name of Ireland compel any decent Irishman to hang his head in shame'. If Irishmen learned to live and work together the border would 'wither away as an irrelevance', they believed. Fianna Fáil's 1975 policy call for a British declaration of intent to withdraw from the North was causing problems for Lynch. He wanted a British declaration urging the Irish to unite 'in reconciliation under agreed structures'. This was an important distinction, the Embassy said. 'For domestic political reasons, however, Lynch naturally plays down the difference and will undoubtedly continue to acknowledge the 1975 policy while interpreting it the way he wishes.'²⁴

The new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Humphrey Atkins, had been in Dublin demanding more co-operation in

security matters. The Irish government agreed that the IRA was a common threat. Only the combined efforts of Britain and the Republic could end that threat. Atkins 'pointedly observed that the Gárda is best placed to deal with the IRA's planning activities and training operations in the South'. Additional British troops, 'not all overt or visible', had been sent to the border.²⁵ A week after Lord Mountbatten and eighteen British soldiers were killed, Atkins went to Newry to reaffirm, as the Belfast Consul said, 'UKG determination to stop terrorism within the rule of law, with the police [RUC] in the van'. But to defeat terrorism, action by the Irish authorities was crucial, Atkins declared.²⁶

At question time in the Dáil the following month, Lynch refused to discuss Anglo-Irish security arrangements since both governments had agreed to keep them private. But he would tell the leaders of Fine Gael (FitzGerald) and Labour (Frank Cluskey) 'on a strictly confidential basis'. He denied abandoning the 1975 FF policy statement.²⁷

The combination of party criticism and British pressure on border security was Lynch's undoing. In November, he visited America to praise Carter's offer and to hope that the United States 'would use its influence with the United Kingdom to bring forward a political initiative for Northern Ireland,' as he told *US News and World Report*. He did not want US mediation, he informed *Time*, because 'the forum must be between the British and ourselves and the elected representatives of the North'. He did not favour British withdrawal before there was 'a system of administration established and accepted by both communities'; and 'even then [withdrawal] must be on a gradual scale.' A power-sharing Executive would isolate the Provisional IRA and ultimately the Protestants would opt for unity 'in the sense of having a say in the governing of their country.'²⁸

Did Lynch, in fact, want a united Ireland at all? 'The Irish government, for internal political reasons, has been evasive on this crucial point,' commented the *New York Times*. 'Mr Lynch can be reasonably pressed to dispel the suspicion.'

He got an opportunity at the National Press Club in Washington and his reply only made the matter more confusing — in fact, incomprehensible. He would agree to a united Ireland 'with suitable financial arrangements in a transition between the situation that now obtains in the North and South, and I mean,

and I say candidly, we could not afford at this time to make available that kind of subvention of two billion dollars per annum in the North. But with suitable financial arrangements, certainly we can take on the economic problems that face us at the present time, given a reasonable interim period.'

That Press Club luncheon was a disaster for Lynch. The custom is for members to send written questions to the top table where about a half-dozen are read out and the guest of honour replies. The author asked a question about the border security pact since it was clear that there was one. Lynch agreed that there was a pact, but its terms were secret because 'there is no point in telling your enemy what you are going to do to offset him or overcome him.' British military aircraft overflew the Republic, but British troops did not have the right of 'hot pursuit'.²⁹ Mrs Thatcher had asked Lynch for the latter at Mountbatten's funeral and he had refused.

In Washington, Lynch remarked, when asked about retirement, that he had worked with four successive British Prime Ministers and 'I still survive — I don't know how much longer'. The answer was one month. He resigned on 5 December and his successor was Charles Haughey, who told a Dáil questioner a couple of months later that he contemplated no change 'at present' in the border security pact, the Embassy told Washington.³⁰

When Atkins summoned yet another conference to discuss devolution, the State Department treated the matter like a breakthrough. The US would be 'most pleased' if the conference resulted in 'a peaceful and just society'.³¹ There was no provision for an 'Irish dimension' and Irish unity could not be discussed, so the SDLP would not attend. Gerry Fitt resigned — he had complained of 'an air of open hostility to him' in the party — because he thought the conference could open the way to power-sharing, the US Consul reported. John Hume, the new SDLP leader, was described as a politician of European stature by the *Guardian*, 'probably the only one that either community has produced'.³²

Meanwhile, the Carter administration was at odds with the British government over arms for the RUC. The Home Office had purchased 3,000 Magnum pistols and 500 automatic rifles from Sturm, Ruger and Company, an arms-manufacturing firm

in Connecticut, and when some Irish-Americans got word of it they protested. Jimmy Breslin devoted a column to it in the New York *Daily News* and Tip O'Neill stormed at the State Department's Munitions Control Division for granting the British an export licence. The sale was stopped. When Mrs Thatcher went to Washington in December 1979 she protested to Carter. He told her frankly there were 'political difficulties' about the sale — one of them being that Kennedy was running against him for President.

'Is it not an odd sort of friendship when Britain pledges support over Iran, but President Carter chooses not to act as a friend, due to tawdry political dealings in his own back-yard?' the *Belfast Telegraph* asked.

Kennedy lost the Democratic nomination and Carter lost the presidency, but a Republican administration had the sale of arms to the RUC 'still under review' eight years later.³³

William V. Shannon, a distinguished journalist one generation out of County Clare, was the Carter administration's Ambassador to Dublin. In the spring of 1980, he reported that Haughey's Northern Ireland 'policy' — the quotation marks are his — had 'shattered the consensus which generally existed on this issue among the governing Fianna Fáil and opposition Fine Gael and Labour parties' while Lynch was Taoiseach from 1977 to 1979.

'Lynch's increasingly conciliatory stand caused unease among 'hardline' Republicans in his own party, however, and he was obliged to insist publicly that he had not abandoned 'the Irish dimension', Shannon reported. (He had abandoned the Council of Ireland, saying he would not insist on it as a condition for a settlement.)

Haughey based his new policy on the proposition that Northern Ireland was an artificial entity that had failed. It should be replaced by a 'new free and open arrangement' under which the Irish people would manage the island's affairs 'without a British presence but with British goodwill'. FitzGerald argued that responsibility for a settlement in the North lay with the British government, which should impose an internal solution, but the North-South relationship must be by consent freely given. He dismissed Haughey's proposed diplomatic initiative on the North, via the EEC and the United States, as

'phony high-profile tub-thumping abroad.'³⁴

It is possible that Shannon warned the State Department to beware of Haughey's 'diplomatic initiative' because much of his despatch is censored. As author of the well-regarded *The American Irish*, Shannon, too, had an expert's feeling for Irish politics. As for Haughey, he fought so hard to be Taoiseach that when he made it he appears to have lost his political touch. He bungled the attempted transfer of Seán Donlon, the Ambassador at Washington and architect of the 'consensus policy' that Shannon spoke of; Donlon, with his colleague Michael Lillis, began the Friends of Ireland. A canon of the consensus policy was the isolation of all IRA sympathizers and supporters in America, including the Irish National Caucus — whose leader, Father Seán McManus, was denounced by Noraid, perhaps because both organizations drew from the same well of support — and Congressman Mario Biaggi's Ad Hoc Congressional Committee on Irish Affairs, few of whose members were of Irish background and almost all of whom had their own political reasons for backing a group which found little favour with the Speaker. After Neil Blaney visited America he advised Haughey to dump Donlon, who had irritated many Irish-Americans. *The Irish Press* urged all Irish support groups to work together, which was somewhat naive advice in the circumstances. While Biaggi was *persona non grata* to the Irish government and Embassy, he was an honoured guest at the White House dinner for Jack Lynch in November 1979 as an ally of Carter against Kennedy.

When Haughey became Taoiseach, Father McManus and Biaggi among others called for the dismissal of Donlon, who, at age forty-one, was almost at the pinnacle of a successful diplomatic career. To be transferred from Washington at the behest of his enemies would be particularly galling. He had been Ambassador only two years. In July 1980, while on holidays in Ireland, he learned that he was being moved to the UN. He flew from Dublin to Boston and spent the weekend at Cape Cod, where Tip O'Neill had a summer home.

The Four Horsemen rode to Donlon's rescue. His transfer was a signal from the Haughey government that 'we have made a decision to align ourselves with forces in America other than yourselves', they decided. Their efforts for a united Ireland were not appreciated. 'In fact, not tolerated. It makes them un-

certain of their future role'. Their spokesman, who was in touch with the author, hinted at a plot, hatched by Biaggi and the Caucus, it was intimated, though not put into words. One said:

Whatever the reason for this action in Ireland, the interpretation is different here. Whatever the intent or the motive, it is probably important for the Four Horsemen to be informed as to exactly what is going on. Otherwise, the US press will play up other influences.³⁵

They considered the Donlon issue an attack on them. They made clear that they would not work with Haughey if he transferred Donlon. Without them, there could be no new diplomatic offensive in America; Biaggi and his friends lacked the clout for that. If Haughey abandoned Donlon's consensus policy they would not support him. They had delivered an ultimatum. Donlon remained at his post. Haughey backed down.³⁶ Brian Lenihan, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, said there was no intention of removing Donlon. Haughey obviously mishandled the situation and ended up surrendering his right to decide who should be Ireland's Ambassador in Washington. 'As between Mr Biaggi and the Four Horsemen, there is no question whose advice he should take,' the *Irish Times* commented. 'However there is a fine line between advice and interference.'³⁷ Had O'Neill, Kennedy and Moynihan — Carey was out of the country while all this was going on — crossed that line? The answer probably is yes.

Ronald Reagan had no 'Irish policy' in his 1980 campaign. A statement, which one may be sure he did not write, said 'It is not for the United States to interfere in this process or prescribe solutions, but rather to urge the parties to come together to work for a solution and to join in condemnation of terrorism by either side.... Peace cannot come from the barrel of a terrorist's gun. Americans should question closely any appeal for funds ... extradition procedures should not be relaxed on the grounds that these are 'political' prisoners.'³⁸

This is a message about 'terrorism' and extradition procedures. When it was written, the US courts handled extradition cases. Five years later, the Reagan administration signed a Supplementary Extradition Treaty with Britain making the list of non-political offences so sweeping that it reduced the doc-

trine of the 'political offence exception' to a meaningless formula. The Treaty was delayed in the Foreign Relations Committee for a year, but following minor amendments was ratified by the full Senate on 17 July 1986. The purpose of this revision of the 1972 treaty was to extradite four fugitives, one of them an American. Reagan in a national radio address from Camp David said: 'Any rejection of this treaty would be an affront to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, one European leader who at great political risk stood shoulder-to-shoulder with us during our operations against Gadafy's terrorism.' He was talking of the bombing of Libya in April 1986.³⁹

Reagan saw the Northern Ireland problem as a conflict 'in the name of God' between 'two adversaries' who worshipped 'the same God'. He told Donal Foley of the *Irish Times* in October 1979, 'I would draw the line at interfering, at sticking our noses in where we are not wanted.'

'Given your ancestry what are your views on eventual Irish unity?' Foley asked.

'I have no views on Irish unity,' Reagan replied.

Foley noted that Carter and Kennedy had 'talked about underpinning any Irish settlement with American investment. Would you go along with that?'

'Anything that would help end the bloodshed, the United States should put itself on the line in whatever way it could.'

'With economic aid?'

'Yes.'⁴⁰

On 5 May 1981, Bobby Sands died in the prison hospital at Long Kesh outside Belfast after sixty-five days on hunger strike. The event was noted around the world, particularly in the United States. Nine other hunger strikers died that summer. Haughey's government was defeated in a general election. In July, Garret FitzGerald, in one of his first acts as head of the Fine Gael-Labour coalition, wrote a personal letter to Ronald Reagan asking him to intervene with Mrs Thatcher on 'Northern Ireland and the prisoners,' a White House official explained. The President was 'sympathetic and concerned [but] we don't feel that diplomatic intervention would be helpful.'⁴¹ The Friends of Ireland also asked Reagan 'to convince the British government to moderate their policy of inflexibility and intransigence.'⁴² (Reagan and Thatcher did talk privately about the North at the Ottawa economic summit on 20 July.)

Thatcher remained inflexible. In a letter to the Four Horsemen she placed responsibility for the deaths on 'those who are ordering these young men to commit suicide in the cause of subverting institutions in Ireland, North and South.'⁴³

David Gilliland of the Northern Ireland Office called the hunger strikes one of the great propaganda successes of all time. *TV Guide*, circulation eighteen million, termed them 'the biggest international news story of the day'. They gave Sinn Féin a political base among Northern Nationalists, and permitted FitzGerald to appear on US television as a reasonable man impatient to discuss a solution with Mrs Thatcher.

The Anglo-Irish agreement signed at Hillsborough on 15 November 1985 had the full support of the United States. Standing in front of a blazing fire in the White House Oval Office, the President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives pledged American assistance in the form of tangible aid under Article 10 of the accord. As simply as that, the United States may have become part of the Irish problem. The financial cost is small and largely symbolic, \$85 million a year initially.

The steps that led Mrs Thatcher to Hillsborough included the failure of James Prior's Northern Ireland Assembly plan in 1982, which the SDLP boycotted. During the Falklands War, Charles Haughey's minority government reaffirmed 'Ireland's traditional role of neutrality in relation to armed conflicts', opposed EEC sanctions against Argentina and played an important role at the UN with Latin-American and Third-World countries in attempting to resolve first the crisis and then the conflict. British opinion was outraged, even shocked, as the Republic for the first time in almost a quarter of a century conducted an independent foreign policy.

The June 1983 British general election was a personal triumph for Mrs Thatcher, also because of the Falklands victory. In Northern Ireland, however, Sinn Féin won 43.4 per cent of the Nationalist vote against the 56.6 per cent cast for the SDLP in fourteen of the region's seventeen constituencies. This bombshell was all the more startling for in April 1983 the leaders of Fine Gael, Labour, Fianna Fáil and the SDLP had established the New Ireland Forum in order to discover how 'lasting peace and stability could be achieved in a new Ireland through the democratic process and to report on possible new structures

and processes through which this objective might be achieved.' Sinn Féin was not invited. On 2 May 1984, the Forum issued proposals for a settlement of the Irish problem. An all-Ireland unitary state was the preferred solution, with alternatives of a federal/confederal state 'based on the existing identities, North and South,' and 'joint authority' (or joint sovereignty) in the North.

At a meeting in London on 18-19 November 1984, Mrs Thatcher informed FitzGerald and everyone else who cared to listen that each Forum solution was unacceptable. She dismissed them with the crushing comment, 'that's out ... that's out ... that's out.' Her remarks led to widespread criticism in the United States. The usually Anglophile *New York Times* and *Washington Post* joined with the Friends of Ireland in Congress in attacking her. President Reagan, through his Secretary of the Interior and former national security adviser, William Clark, publicly commended 'the Irish statesmen for their courageous and forthright efforts recently embodied in the report of the New Ireland Forum.'⁴⁴ Clark was of Irish descent and took a sympathetic interest in Irish affairs.

Mrs Thatcher was more conciliatory when she stopped off in Washington on her way home from talks in China on the future of Hong Kong at Christmas 1984. She went to Camp David by helicopter to meet Reagan, who had received a letter from the Friends of Ireland in Congress on the situation in the North. 'The destructive alienation and violence that plague the people of that land are also unfortunately becoming an increasing source of contention between the United States and Great Britain,' Messrs Kennedy, O'Neill and Moynihan wrote. They urged Reagan to 'give priority to the issue of Northern Ireland' in his discussions with Mrs Thatcher.⁴⁵ Certainly, something was settled at Camp David, or Mrs Thatcher read the signs correctly. When she talked to the press she stated emphatically that the impression 'that there are problems between the Taoiseach and myself — that is not so.'⁴⁶

Mrs Thatcher returned to Washington on 20 February to address a joint session of Congress. While denouncing the IRA and those Americans whose financial support 'buys the deaths of Irishmen, and 70 per cent of those killed by the IRA are Irishmen — and that money buys even the killing and wounding of American citizens visiting our country' (a reference to the

bombing of Harrods), the Prime Minister seemed optimistic about peace in Northern Ireland. Sovereignty was not in question, however. 'So long as a majority of the people of Northern Ireland wish to remain part of the United Kingdom their wishes will be respected,' she declared. 'If there ever were to be a majority in favour of change, then I believe that our parliament would respond accordingly.' That took care of partition. She appealed to Congress to support 'our joint efforts to find a way forward' and urged Americans to harbour no illusions about the IRA. 'They are the enemies of democracy and of freedom too. Do not just take my word for it. Ask the government of the Irish Republic.'⁴⁷

At a second press conference in the British Embassy, Mrs Thatcher proclaimed that relations between Britain and the Republic were 'excellent'.⁴⁸ Everything had changed in three months. One assumes that Ronald Reagan and the political climate in America had something to do with that.

The Taoiseach visited a number of cities in North America for twelve days in May 1985. He was apparently seeking a US seal of approval for whatever settlement emerged from the Anglo-Irish negotiations, whose chance of success he rated at 50-50. At the Kennedy Library, Boston, on 3 May, he spoke of 'this effort to reconstruct society in Northern Ireland so that Nationalists and Unionists can come together free of the scourge of terrorism and oppression.'⁴⁹ At Cape Cod that week-end, over drinks and dinner with Kennedy and O'Neill, the Taoiseach was assured of Congressional financial support for an Anglo-Irish agreement, according to his spokesman, Peter Prendergast. O'Neill spoke for the House, Kennedy for the Senate.

In Ottawa the Taoiseach addressed the Press Club and avoided undeclaring the Republic. He briefed the new Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney — another descendant of the famine Irish — on the talks and drew a promise of Canadian aid 'for a durable and peaceful arrangement based on tolerance and mutual respect.'⁵⁰ (Canada contributed \$10 million to the International Fund in June 1986.)

On 9 May, before the Foreign Policy Association in New York, the Taoiseach gave further hints of the pact to come when — departing from his script after quoting a paragraph of the

Forum Report on 'the right of Nationalists to ... their identity' and 'the right of Unionists to ... their identity, their ethos, and their way of life' — he explained, 'it's not a problem between Britain and Ireland basically ... the problem is one, the solution to which has to be found within Northern Ireland.' From this one could deduce that the proposed settlement would retain partition and British sovereignty in the North, abandon the goal of power-sharing and national unification in return for something called 'genuine reconciliation and dialogue.'

The British have another view. Nicholas Scott, the Minister of State who was deeply involved in the Hillsborough arrangement, described it on 22 January 1987 as a 'mechanism for advancing security co-operation with the Irish Republic'. This co-operation has to do with the maintenance of partition which is guaranteed in the 'no change in the status of Northern Ireland' clause of Article 1(b).

At the Fine Gael Ard Fheis of March 1980, FitzGerald had said that Britain would have to impose an internal solution in Northern Ireland. Hillsborough was designed to do this with the assent of the Republic and the United States. The consent of the people who live in Northern Ireland was neither sought nor given. However, a source close to the negotiations told the author that Hillsborough has started an 'irreversible process and changes the balance of power in the island.'

The agreement is not specific about anything, deliberately, of course, because of fears of 'betrayal' by both Unionists and Nationalists. The clause interpreted as giving the Republic a say in the North's affairs states: 'The United Kingdom government accept that the Irish government will put forward views and proposals on matters relating to Northern Ireland.' An Intergovernmental Conference was established 'in the interest of promoting peace and stability' in the North. This 'conference' speaks for the two governments and has working for it a joint secretariat of civil servants. Through the Intergovernmental Conference, the Republic will press its proposals on human rights, employment and police.

An unofficial referendum on the Hillsborough agreement took place on 23 January 1986 in a series of by-elections after the Unionists of all stripes had resigned their fifteen seats at Westminster. (John Hume and Gerry Adams, leaders of the SDLP

and Sinn Féin, respectively, held the other two seats.) Fourteen of the fifteen Unionists were re-elected. Four of these seats are Nationalist but are held by the Unionists because of the SDLP-Sinn Féin division of votes. Séamus Mallon, the SDLP deputy leader, won one of them back, Newry and Armagh.

The Unionists have made their point: they are solid against the Anglo-Irish pact. The SDLP asked the Nationalists to vote for the agreement and its percentage of the Nationalist poll in the four constituencies contested by Sinn Féin (Newry and Armagh, South Down, Mid-Ulster and Fermanagh-South Tyrone) *rose* to 64.63 from 53.84. Sinn Féin, which campaigned against the pact, saw its percentage of the Nationalist vote *fall* from 46.16 to 35.37. Undoubtedly, two-thirds of the Northern Nationalists voted to give a chance to 'reconciliation and dialogue', with the hope of peace at the end of the road. That requires Unionist consent, which was withheld.⁵² 'For in reason,' wrote Jonathan Swift in the fourth Drapier letter, 'all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery.'

As this chronicle points out, official US policy towards Ireland since 1916 has been 'non-interference' in the resolution of its national question vis-à-vis Great Britain; which means that objectively it supported the United Kingdom. During the second world war, Washington was interested in the Irish ports. It established bases in Northern Ireland. There is no reason to suppose that interest was waned. 'Critical to the ability of the United States to reinforce the European theatre will be the availability and sustainability of such bases as Iceland and the Azores along with its ability to protect and defend Atlantic, Caribbean and Mediterranean sea lines of communication (SLOCs),' according to a statement on the military posture of the United States prepared by the joint staff in support of the 1988-89 Defence Budget.

Ireland would be an asset in such a defence system. Now that both parts of Ireland are receiving modest grants of US foreign aid whose purpose is strategic not economic, there may be a discreet switch towards alignment with the Western alliance. A role in NATO may follow for the Republic. As part of the United Kingdom, the North is in NATO. The bases are there when needed.

On 2 July 1986, President Reagan signed the Irish aid package 'to promote the economic and social development of those areas of both parts of Ireland which have suffered most severely from the consequences of the instability of recent years...'⁵³ On 18 August 1986, Congress added an additional \$35 million a year for two years.

Unfortunately, US foreign aid is like the dole — it's hard to get off it and harder to break the habit of taking it. It makes the recipient dependent, which is the opposite of independent. And independence of great powers, whatever their objectives, has surely been the highest goal of Irish patriots. There is nothing noble about being a client state.

In summary: since 1916 Irish nationalism has sought the independence, sovereignty and unification of Ireland. Despite the creation of a *de facto* Catholic state in the South, these goals have not been abandoned until now. Sunningdale, while acknowledging the 'status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in that status,' language similar to Hillsborough, did provide for a Council of Ireland of the kind embodied in the 1920 partition act and the 1921 Treaty. It was quickly discarded, of course, as a sop to Unionism. The Intergovernmental Conference has no such unifying role.

The Irish state has followed an independent foreign policy since 1932 at least. The expression of this independent foreign policy from 1939 has been neutrality in great power conflicts. This is based on the concept de Valera expressed to Lord Rugby early in 1948, that the Irish people would not accept 'any restrictions on their full sovereign rights' such as partition represented.

This policy was pursued not only by de Valera during the war years when it was opposed by two great powers, Britain and the United States, but by Seán MacBride from 1948 to 1951, and by Frank Aiken at the United Nations in the late 1950s. It was briefly resurrected by Dr Hillery in February 1972 at Kennedy Airport, New York, when he said his government wanted a declaration from the British government not to 'maintain a state by force of arms in Ireland', a policy that was soon abandoned by the Lynch government.

Charles J. Haughey, during the Falklands (Malvinas) war,

adopted a similar stand at the United Nations. It won widespread support from the Third World. But he, too, wavered under pressure.

Foreign policy should advance the interests of the nation. Irish foreign policy should advance the interests of Ireland. These interests include promoting national sovereignty which means the end of partition; and safeguarding independence by defending neutrality. The Anglo-Irish agreement strengthens partition and weakens neutrality. Hillsborough may not be the end of the story, but it is a warning signal.⁵⁴

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2. Florence Gibson, *The Attitudes of the New York Irish Toward State and National Affairs 1848-1892* (New York, 1951), p. 48. The delegation sought the release of John Mitchel, William Smith O'Brien, Thomas Francis Meagher, John Martin and others.
3. John Mitchel, *Jail Journal* (Dublin, 1913), p. 374.
4. The 'New Departure' combined the agrarian struggle against landlordism with the national struggle, a revival of the Lalor-Mitchel programme of 1847-8, as Devoy pointed out. There was also an unwritten agreement with Parnell that the physical force and constitutional wings of Irish nationalism would agree on a minimum programme for self-government in Ireland and 'peasant proprietary to be reached by compulsory purchase'. (*Gaelic American*, 13 October 1906.) See T. W. Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution 1846-1882* (Oxford, 1981). Colonel (also General) John R. O'Neill was a regular in the US Army, an NCO until the civil war when he was commissioned, and he ended as commander of a battalion. He was mustered out of the army as a colonel. His general's commission came from the Fenian Senate in New York.
5. See K. R. M. Short, *The Dynamite Wars, Irish-American Bombers in Victorian Britain* (Dublin, 1979). On Cabinet memorandum see J. A. Cole, *Prince of Spies* (London, 1984), pp. 134-5.
6. John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* (New York, 1929), p. 212. For telegram see *Devoy's Post Bag* (Dublin, 1953), ii, p. 43.
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14. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1916*, Supplement, The World War (US Government Printing Office, 1929), pp. 870-1.
15. *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House* (Boston and New York, 1926), ed. Charles Seymour, ii, pp. 317-18. Wilson comment to Tumulty quoted in Charles Callan Tansill, *America and the Fight for Irish Freedom* (New York, 1957), p. 210. Also, Secretary of State Robert Lansing's account of resolu-

- tion's journey from the US Senate to the Foreign Office in letter to Tumulty is given on p. 210.
16. Zimmermann's cable is quoted in Barbara Tuchman, *The Zimmermann Telegram* (New York, 1971), pp. 141–42. The proposed alliance would take place only if the United States abandoned neutrality and entered the war on the Allied side.
 17. Cited in 'United States Policy on the Partition Question', Research Project No. 73, State Department, July 1948, p. 4, President Wilson to Secretary of State Lansing, 10 April 1917.
 18. *Recollections*, p. 463. Tansill, pp. 193–4. On Easter Monday night six Zeppelins bombed London and in the early hours of Tuesday German warships bombarded Lowestoft. This would suggest that Cohalan's recommendations were taken seriously by the High Command.
 19. *Ibid.*, p. 471.
 20. *First Dáil Minutes*, 10 April, 1919, p. 59.
 21. Address to Congress, 11 February 1918. Quoted Tansill, p. 250.
 22. Tansill, p. 319 for Wilson interview with Walsh and Dunne, p. 338 for telegram.
 23. The Earl of Longford and Thomas P. O'Neill, *Eamon de Valera A Biography* (Boston, 1971), pp. 95–6.
 24. Tansill, p. 342. Speech was delivered 29 June 1919. *De Valera*, p. 100.
 25. *De Valera*, p. 100.
 26. Tansill, pp. 362–8. Cohalan letter 22 February, replying to de Valera's 20 February.
 27. State Department study, 'US Policy on the Irish Partition Question.'
 28. Tansill, p. 319, Wilson in interview with Frank P. Walsh, 11 June 1919. Also, Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic* (Dublin, 1951), quoted p. 297, from *Evidence, Hearing on the Peace Treaty*, 30 August 1919.
 29. *Dáil Éireann, Minutes of Proceedings, 1919–1921*, pp. 151–3.
 30. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
 31. To Secretary of State from Dublin, 'The Irish Situation', 21 April 1920, from F. T. F. Dumont, Consul, with lists of 'outrages' and raids, including murder of Cork's Lord Mayor, Tomás MacCurtain, by masked gunmen, and jury verdict against Lloyd George and British government. He said no testimony adduced at hearing 'which would implicate the RIC in this murder in the eyes of any unprejudiced person', and cited Lord French's view that Lord Mayor was killed by 'extremists' — for which he adduced no evidence either.
 32. McCullough was the pre-1916 President of the Supreme Council of the IRB but resigned from the organization after the Rising. Duffy was the later General Eoin O'Duffy, Inspector-General of the National Army, Commissioner of the Garda Síochána and founder of the Blueshirts.
 33. *The Irish Bulletin*, the organ of Dáil Éireann, issue of 18 May 1920, said Republican government had issued proclamations against agrarian outrages in the areas where agitation was rife, denouncing such activities.
 34. 29 March 1920, 'The Government Home Rule Bill.'
 35. To Secretary of State, 28 September 1920.
 36. Quoted in Frank Pakenham, *Peace by Ordeal* (London, 1962), p. 60.
 37. *Evidence on Conditions in Ireland*, cited by Macardle, pp. 408–9.

- Pakenham, p. 51-2.
38. Quoted Pakenham, p. 51 from Macready's *Annals of an Active Life*, ii, p. 498.
 39. *The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott, 1911-1928* (London, 1970), ed. Trevor Wilson, p. 389.
 40. *De Valera*, pp. 124-5, 130-8.
 41. Quoted *Ibid.*, p. 153.
 42. Seán Cronin, *The McGarrity Papers* (Tralee, 1972), p. 107.
 43. *De Valera*, p. 154.
 44. Pakenham, pp. 296-7.
 45. Cronin, p. 108.
 46. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-9.
 47. Letter from Connie Neenan to Mary McGarrity Shore, 19 August 1978.
 48. Tansill, pp. 436-7.
 49. *Ibid.*, p. 438.
 50. Article 12, 'Articles of Agreement for a Treaty Between Great Britain and Ireland,' 6 December 1921.
 51. Cronin, pp. 127-8.
 52. 'United States Policy on the Partition Question', Research Project No. 73.
 53. Tansill, pp. 279-82. By addressing a public meeting on self-determination for Ireland at Madison Square Garden, New York, on 10 December 1918, Cardinal O'Connell legitimized the Sinn Féin cause for Irish-Americans.
 54. Quoted Thomas Jones, *Whitehall Diary*, iii, *Ireland 1918-1925* (London, 1971), ed. Keith Middlemas, p. 49. Andrew Bonar Law, leader of the Conservative Party, was a coalition partner of Lloyd George. Sir Auckland Geddes was UK Ambassador at Washington, 1920-24. Thomas Jones was Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet and Lloyd George's adviser on Irish affairs.

CHAPTER TWO

1. Quoted Jones, p. 177. 29 November 1921. Draft 'was to be given Sinn Féin ... before they left for Ireland.'
2. Quoted, *The Constitution of Northern Ireland, Problems and Prospects* (London, 1981), ed. Davit Watt, p. 15; 'The Influence of the Past,' by Nicholas Mansergh.
3. Jones, p. 155, first mention Boundary Commission; Pakenham, pp. 204-5 for Griffith.
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5. *Ibid.*
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8. State Department files, 28 December 1943. Arlene Pratt letter to Dr Stewart in reply to his letter on US recognition of Irish sovereignty, which had been raised by Eudore Boulanger of Quebec. Mr Massey was a State Department official.

9. State Department Study 1948, pp. 5–6. Frank B. Kellogg, later Secretary of State, was Ambassador in London when the matter first was raised.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
11. 9 June 1934.
12. 23 June 1924.
13. *De Valera*, pp. 285–6.
14. *Bunreacht na hÉireann (Constitution of Ireland)*, Articles 1–8.
15. Cudahy did not report de Valera remark on use of force until his despatch to Secretary of State, 15 October 1937, three months later.
16. *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs* (Cambridge, Mass, 1969), ed. Edgar B. Nixon, p. 1592. (17 January 1934, 10.45 am.)
17. *De Valera*, p. 310. Meeting took place 15–16 September 1937 in Paris.
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19. 24 January 1938.
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22. NA, 741.41 d/53.
23. *De Valera*, p. 318.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
25. State Department memorandum, 7 February 1938.
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27. *Irish Press*, 28 February 1938. De Valera was interviewed on 27 February.
28. Despatch Number 69, 16 March 1938. NA 741d.4d/64. This conversation took place on 15 March, it seems, but Cudahy dated it 13 March. On 14 March, de Valera informed the US Minister ‘the negotiations in London had utterly collapsed.’
29. 18 March 1938.
30. Despatch Number 94. NA 741.41d/72.
31. 6 April 1938.
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36. NA 741d.00/12. Despatch Number 150, 27 September 1938, from John MacVeagh.
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41. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1938.
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CHAPTER THREE

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2. *De Valera*, p. 348.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 349. Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (London, 1948), pp. 381–82.
4. Kennedy to Secretary of State, 27 September 1939.
5. Memorandum to State Department.
6. *De Valera*, p. 353.
7. Letitia Fairfield, *Trial of Peter Barnes and Others, the IRA Coventry Explosion of 1939* (London, 1953), p. 16. The S-Plan is an appendix. The IRA-Soviet pact is referred to in Clan-na-Gael memorandum by McGarrity, May 1930.
8. *Daily News* of New York, 13 February 1939, in State Department files with letter of complaint from a citizen asking if this were not a breach of some law?
9. Neenan to Mary McGarrity Shore, 19 August 1978.
10. Memorandum of conversation between Marquess of Lothian and Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles, 3 February 1940.
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17. David Gray to President Roosevelt, 16 May 1940.
18. The letter was written on 21 December and passed through prison censorship.
19. The body of Michael Devereux, a petrol salesman, was found buried with his car on the slopes of Slievenamon on 27 September 1941, after the Hayes affair broke. He had a bullet in the head — shot as a spy, perhaps on Hayes's orders. No charge, however, was made against Hayes.
20. 'Memorandum Regarding the Stephen Hayes Affair', from Gray to State Department, 24 November 1941. It carries the notation, 'original lost at sea'.
21. *Frank Ryan*, p. 248. Appendix 2 quotes German documents from Vessenmayer file.
22. Interviews in Dublin, Máire Comerford and Peter Mohan, 29 June 1978.
23. Interview in Dublin, Seán MacBride, 29 June 1978.
24. J. Edgar Hoover to Adolf A. Berle, 30 September 1943.
25. *Frank Ryan*, p. 185, pp. 198–202.
26. *The People*, newspaper series, November 1962. Freeing Ryan would be an IRA coup, Hayes explained, since it would suggest that the IRA had more influence than the Irish government.
27. Interview, 19 June 1978.
28. Under the IRA constitution, the convention elected an executive of twelve members who chose a seven-member Army Council which appointed a Chief-of-Staff.

29. See Uinseann MacEoin, *Survivors* (Dublin, 1980), p. 253. 'I avoided giving anything away,' he said. After Pearl Harbour he was interviewed many times, he told Mrs Mary Shore, Joe McGarrity's daughter, in a long letter. He does not say what their line of inquiry was, but it would have to do with the IRA. He had been to Ireland 'in 1932, 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939,' he told MacEoin. In the late 1920s, he was the Army Council representative to the Clan-na-Gael and was later the number two man in the Clan after McGarrity. There was a warrant for him in New York in connection with the Sweeps, which, of course, were illegal, and he was subject to arrest and possible trial if apprehended. He avoided arrest by not moving about openly for some years in New York, where he could be reached by a telephone call to a travel agency.
30. Office of War Information, Bureau of Intelligence, Report No. 40, 24 July 1942.
31. Parker W. Buhrman to Secretary of State, 11 September 1942.
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CHAPTER FOUR

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4. Robert Fisk, *In Time of War* (London, 1983), p. 170; Canning, p. 284.
5. *De Valera*, p. 367, letter to Chamberlain, 4 July 1940.
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9. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
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11. Quoted Fisk, p. 193.
12. *Irish Times*, 3 November 1984, 'The General Looks Back — and Forward'.
13. Mulcahy Papers, UCD, quoted Fisk, p. 219.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
15. 7 November 1940, copy in State Department files in NA.
16. *Frank Ryan*, pp. 206-15, interview with Helmut Clissmann.
17. Quoted Fisk, p. 188; Lash, p. 256.
18. Quoted, *Is Ireland Next?* (New York, 1942), p. 56. Authors are listed as James Roarty, Charles Hodges, Merlin Stonehouse and John F. Boylan.
19. Lash, p. 264.
20. Quoted Fisk, p. 264.
21. 2 April 1941, to Commanding General 1st Army Corps, in National Archives.
22. *The Wartime Journals of Charles A. Lindbergh* (New York, 1970), p. 495; Fisk, pp. 266-7, for flying cutlery story.
23. *Dáil Debates*, 17 July 1941.
24. *The Shamrock and the Swastika, German Espionage in Ireland in World War 2* (Palo Alto, California, 1977), p. 85.
25. *Foreign Relations of the US, Diplomatic Papers*, 1940, iii, pp. 169-70.
26. 18 November 1941.
27. 12 November 1941.
28. In the *Irish Times* supplement, 8 May 1985, F. H. Boland, the number two civil servant at the Department of External Affairs during the war, blamed the Department of Industry and Commerce for the purchase-charter 'miscalculation'. The article was titled, 'A Memoir from External Affairs'.
29. *Roosevelt and Churchill*, p. 324. The diary entry was for 16 May 1941.
30. 28 October 1941.
31. Gray to State Department, 6 November 1942.
32. Martin S. Quigley, Memorandum, 27 September 1943. Quigley now reveals that he was a US Intelligence agent in Dublin at that time. (*New York Times*, 21 September 1986.)
33. Thomas A. Hickok, Second Secretary, Dublin Legation, to State Department, 9 July 1942.

34. Gray to State Department, 29 October 1942.
35. Gray to State Department, 6 November 1942.
36. Gray memorandum, 21 March 1942, dated for despatch to Washington with defence study by military attaché.
37. Lieut-General McKenna memorandum, 19 March 1942.
38. Lieut-Colonel Reynolds, military attaché, 'Invasion and Defence of Ireland', 21 March 1942 — also dated for despatch to Washington.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Francis P. Matthews, a wartime visitor to Dublin, was an Irish-American. He was appointed Ambassador to Ireland in October 1951 by Harry Truman after serving as Secretary of the Navy.
2. 12 February 1943.
3. 5 February 1943.
4. Letter from Hull to Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, 15 May 1943, in reply to letter dated 8 May 1943 with copy of McCormack letter to Roosevelt.
5. 14 May 1943.
6. 16 August 1943.
7. 23 November 1943.
8. 23 June 1943.
9. Hull to President, 29 June 1943.
10. 13 September 1943.
11. *Ibid.*
12. 28 September 1943.
13. *English History 1914-1945* (London, 1970), p. 684.
14. 30 October 1943.
15. Gray to Secretary of State, 7 November 1943; Hull to Winant, 13 November 1943.
16. 23 November 1943.
17. 8 December 1943.
18. 22 December 1943.
19. 13 December 1943.
20. Colonel Dan Bryan, wartime Director of Intelligence, interview 8 August 1984; and Fisk, p. 457.
21. 21 December 1943.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Colonel Dan Bryan, interview, 8 August 1984.
24. 21 February 1944.
25. 23 February 1944.
26. 24 February 1944. The Irish army had standard British equipment, not American.
27. 25 February 1944.
28. *De Valera*, p. 405.
29. Hickerson memorandum, 28 February 1944.
30. Gray to Secretary of State, 1 March 1944.
31. *Ibid.*

32. 'United States Policy on the Irish Partition Question,' Number 73, July 1948, p. 12. 'American officials had in mind the fact ... that, if Ireland refused to make bases available during the war, this refusal on the record would strengthen the hand of the United States government in resisting 'certain vicious influences' which otherwise might be brought to bear on post-war Anglo-American relations.'
33. The German agent who 'remained at large' was Hermann Goertz. Joseph Lenihan landed in Meath on 18 July 1941, contacted his brother, a member of Fianna Fáil, was advised to surrender to the British in the North, and did so. He was taken to England for interrogation, where it was discovered that his only purpose was to get home. He was released — and disappeared. Not even his family knew his fate until his death in Manchester in December 1976, when police identified him from his papers. Gunther Schutz dropped into Wexford on 12 March 1941 and was arrested next day. He escaped from prison and was re-arrested. John Francis O'Reilly landed in Clare on 16 December 1943 and John Kenny three days later. These were the two parachutists who arrived a few days after Gray sent the final version of his draft note to Washington, fortuitously 'verifying' his charge of espionage.
34. *De Valera*, p. 407.
35. To Secretary of State, 6 March 1944.
36. Churchill, *Speeches*, vii, p. 6899.
37. 14 March 1944.
38. James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt, Soldier of Freedom* (New York, 1970), p. 481.
39. Hickerson to Danaher, 7 June 1944. It strengthened the message that it was written one day after the invasion of Normandy.
40. William A. Carson, *Ulster and the Irish Republic* (Belfast, nd), p. ii.

CHAPTER SIX

1. 6 January 1945, quoted 'US Policy on the Irish Partition Question', pp. 23-4.
2. *Ibid.*, 17 January 1945.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14, based on Policy and Information Statements of 1 May 1946, p. 5; 15 July 1946, p. 6; 28 March 1947, p. 8.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 14, fn. 2.
5. *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1951*, Europe Political and Economic Developments, vol. 4, Part 1, p. 526; Cloyce K. Huston to Secretary of State, Dublin, 28 June 1951.
6. Longford/O'Neill, p. 411, to Brennan.
7. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, p. 526.
8. *Irish Times*, 18 July 1945; *Economist*, 28 July 1945; *Dáil Debates*, 17 July 1945.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Gray to Secretary of State, 8 August 1945.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Gray to Secretary of State, 20 June 1945.
13. *Ibid.*

14. *The Times*, 'Éire Faces the Future', 16 July 1945.
15. 'Cost of Living', 1 September 1945.
16. Memo signed J. C. Pool. Remark on margin by Edward T. Wailes, Chief of Division of British Commonwealth Affairs.
17. *Irish Press*, 12 February 1946.
18. 'Confidential' letter from Gray to John D. Hickerson, Deputy Director of European Affairs, 26 July 1946. The meeting with Brooke occurred on 23 July 1946.
19. Gray to State Department, 15 October 1946.
20. 2 December 1946.
21. Gray, 4 November 1946.
22. *Irish Times* series on UN by author, 29, 30, 31 December 1981, and 1, 2 January 1982.
23. Gar Alperovitz, 'How the Bomb Started', *Washington Post*, 20 July 1985, quoting Truman; also, *Atomic Diplomacy* (Penguin Books, 1985), pp. 103-09, and p. 1.
24. The secret report was drafted after a year's investigation by the Rev. John F. Cronin, SS, and presented to the American bishops' conference on 12 November 1945. It was titled 'The Communist Problem'. See *Irish Times*, 13 March 1945.
25. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs* (New York, 1955), ii, p. 106, and address to Congress.
26. Quoted André Fontaine, *History of the Cold War* (New York, 1970), p. 331.
27. Quoted F. Roy Willis, *Europe in the Global Age* (New York, 1968), p. 195.
28. Eugen Loeb, *My Mind on Trial* (New York, 1976), p. 9. Rudolf Slansky, General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, was tried with thirteen high officials on charges of Zionism and spying for the West in 1952 and hanged with ten others.
29. CIA Report on Ireland, April 1949, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri, p. 27.
30. Churchill, *Speeches*, p. 6220. In Commons, 13 May 1940.
31. *De Valera*, p. 338, at League of Nations.
32. Quoted Patrick Keatinge, *The Formulation of Irish Foreign Policy* (Dublin, 1975), p. 137.
33. 20 February 1942.
34. Quoted Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years 1939-1945* (London, 1975), p. 137.
35. 23 April 1945.
36. Legation report by Vinton Chapin, 17 May 1949. It shows that theory of 'deflected' German planes was known early on. (See fn. 24, Chapter 4.)
37. *Ireland: Some Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work* (Dublin, 1949), compiled by Central Statistics Office.
38. 15 October 1946.
39. 13 January 1947, signed RMB for Robert M. Beaudry.
40. *A History of the Foundation of Cómhar Céard Éireann*, including reports of first annual meeting in Killarney on 25, 26 and 27 July 1945, and second annual meeting in Galway on 3, 4 and 5 July 1946 (Central Council, CIU), pp. 3-4.

41. *ITGWU Annual Report*, 1922, p. 446.
42. *Ibid.*, 1946, pp. 124-5.
43. *Ibid.*, 1947, pp. 38-9.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-8.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-2.
46. Norman Armour memorandum 24 October 1947. The Irish official may have been F. H. Boland, who was present.
47. 'Survey of Irish Labour Situation', 13 January 1947, by RMB.
48. Conversation with Seán MacBride at UN, June 1982, published *Irish Press*, 14 October 1982, de Valera centenary issue, 'The Question of the IRA'.
49. 11 February 1947.
50. 18 January 1948.
51. 24 January 1948.
52. 2 February 1948.
53. 7 February 1948.
54. 16 February 1948.
55. *CIU Fourth Annual Report (1948)*, pp. 15-16, at Tralee, 21, 22 and 23 July 1948.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. 'British Press Comment on the Political Situation in Éire,' from W. Stratton Anderson, Jr., Second Secretary, to Secretary of State.
2. Garret to Secretary of State, 5 March 1948.
3. 6 April 1948.
4. 12 April 1948.
5. 7 March 1948.
6. Hickerson to Garrett, 4 May 1948.
7. 9 March 1948.
8. In his New York speech, de Valera said one day he would announce in America that Ireland 'from sea to sea is now completely free'. *New York Times*, 11 March 1948.
9. 'Six and Twenty-Six', 30 April 1948.
10. Lovett to Garrett 26 April 1948.
11. Quoted Ronan Fanning, *The Irish Department of Finance 1922-58* (Dublin, 1983), pp. 418-19.
12. Hickerson 'Memorandum of Conversation', 20 May 1948.
13. Hickerson to Secretary of State, 20 May 1948.
14. Fanning, pp. 420-21. The Americans knew the Irish trade situation well. See background memos for Paul Nitze, 21 May 1948, which said Irish exports to US only 1 per cent of total; imports varied 16 to 22 per cent, double the pre-war figure.
15. Fanning, pp. 420-21.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 422. Sir Stafford Cripps was the Labour government's Chancellor of the Exchequer. This agreement produced James Dillon's famous promise 'to drown Great Britain in eggs during the next two years'.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, p. 437.

19. Dublin Legation to Secretary of State, 27 July 1948.
20. W. Stratton Anderson Jr., 18 August 1948, 'The Irish Partition Question'.
21. Issued 15 August 1948.
22. Anderson, 18 August 1948.
23. Conversation with Seán MacBride, Dublin, 1 August 1984.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. Quoted F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (New York, 1971), p. 558.
27. 13 August 1948.
28. 26 August 1948.
29. 'Review With Recommendations on Present Agitation of Partition Question', 10 September 1948.
30. *Ibid.*
31. The Costello memorandum is undated. There are ten typewritten pages.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Alexander* (London, 1973), p. 341.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.
35. *Irish Times*, 9 and 17 January 1976.
36. See Hector Legge letter, *Irish Times*, 7 January 1976.
37. Costello memorandum.
38. Published in *Irish Times*, 9 January 1976.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, 15 January 1976.
41. Letter to *Sunday Independent*, 20 January 1984. Dr Lynch letter to MacBride is dated 17 January 1984. In a letter to the *Sunday Independent*, 15 January 1984, Dr Browne claimed that 'recently available state papers show that the then Prime Minister, Jack Costello, had no such authority'.
42. 'Review With Recommendations on Present Agitation of Partition Question', 10 September 1948, by Vinton Chapin, Counsellor, US Legation, Dublin.
43. 30 September 1948, Cabinet Papers.
44. US National Archives. Letter is dated 4 October 1948.
45. Conversation with MacBride, 1 August 1984.
46. Cabinet Papers, 'Account of the Meeting with Éire Ministers at Chequers on Sunday, Oct. 17, 1948.'
47. *Ibid.*, 12 October 1948.
48. London Embassy to Secretary of State, 19 October 1948.
49. Conversation with MacBride, 29 June 1978, Dublin.
50. London Embassy to Secretary of State, 19 November 1948. Archer had been Rugby's Principal Secretary in Dublin.
51. Garrett to Secretary of State, 24 November 1948.
52. Cabinet Papers, 3 December 1948.
53. Churchill Speeches, vii, 'Commonwealth and Empire', pp. 7717-22.
54. Cabinet Papers, 7 January 1949, 'Ireland: Report of Working Party'. Memorandum by Prime Minister.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Unionists polled 234,202 votes to 101,445 for the Nationalists.
57. Dean Acheson, 'Memorandum of Conversation', 11 April 1948.
58. To Secretary of State, 19 April 1949.

59. Hickerson 'Memorandum of Conversation', 20 May 1948, and letter to Garrett, 4 May 1948.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. 'Policy Statement: Ireland' issued by Department of State, 1 October 1948. The author failed to locate this document despite diligent searches at the National Archives, Washington, and Suitland, Maryland. The Truman Library does not have it.
2. Memorandum on Policy Statement and Observations by four members of the Legation staff, including Vinton Chapin, 7 December 1948.
3. 23 November 1948, 'Considerations Affecting the Conclusion of a North Atlantic Security Pact.'
4. 10 February 1949, to the Secretary of State.
5. *Ibid.*
6. The memorandum is undated. It adds: 'The final US position on this is contained in the December 24 report on the Washington security talks...'
7. Kennan analysis, 'Considerations Affecting etc.'
8. 'Memorandum of Interview with Mr de Valera on 7th January 1948.'
9. 'Interview with de Valera on 17 October 1947.'
10. 'Interview with Seán MacBride, Minister for External Affairs', 23 February 1948.
11. 'Note on a Talk with Seán MacBride, Minister for External Affairs', 6 June 1948. The conversation was on 4 June.
12. Hickerson to Sir Frederick R. Hoyer-Millar, 12 January 1949, in reply to message containing Foreign Office (Bevin) request.
13. Hoyer-Millar to Hickerson, second letter on 6 January 1949.
14. 21 January 1949.
15. 22 January 1949.
16. 7 January 1949, to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.
17. *Ibid.*
18. 1 February 1949, William A. Smale to State Department.
19. 21 January 1949.
20. 26 January 1949.
21. 2 February 1949.
22. 2 February 1949 — personal letter to Dean Acheson.
23. 28 February 1949.
24. Acheson query 4 March. Douglas reply 15 March 1949.
25. 'Ireland's Position in Relation to the North Atlantic Treaty,' Dublin, 1949.
26. 28 February 1949, Acheson to Garrett.
27. 9 February 1949.
28. Conversation with Seán MacBride, 1 August 1984, in Dublin.
29. 28 February 1949.
30. 7 February 1949, Foy David Kohler, US Chargé D'Affaires, Moscow.
31. 18 February 1949.
32. 12 February 1949, in Brussels.
33. 25 February 1949, Douglas to Acheson. Gordon-Walker's 'informal' remarks, 21 February 1949.

34. *Ibid.*, Report by Walter Stratton-Anderson called 'substance' of remarks.
35. 4 March 1949.
36. *Ibid.*
37. Pencilled note is dated 15 March. Letter is dated 14 March.
38. 15 March 1949.
39. 11 April 1949, 'A Memorandum of Conversation', signed DA.
40. 24 May 1949. The meeting was in Dublin on 17 May. Present were MacBride, Garrett, Herbert P. Fales, Assistant Chief of British Commonwealth Affairs division, State Department, and Fred Boland. The document is titled, 'Exposition by Seán MacBride, Minister for External Affairs on Evolution of Irish Government Position in Relations with Great Britain over the issue of Partition and Related Subjects, More Particularly the Atlantic Pact.'
41. Conversation with Seán MacBride, 12 February 1986, in New York.
42. *Ibid.*, 1 August 1984, Dublin.
43. 24 February 1949. US Counsellor in Oslo received much of his information in conversation with the head of the Norwegian Foreign Office.
44. Hickerson 'Memorandum of Conversation', 3 January 1949.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Central Intelligence Agency, 'Ireland', 1 April 1949, based on information available to the CIA in March 1949. Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.
2. Document obtained under Freedom of Information Act by Gerald O'Reilly.
3. Interview with Colonel Dan Bryan, 8 August 1984, at his home in Dublin.
4. Conversation with Seán MacBride, 10 August 1984.
5. Interview, Colonel Bryan.
6. MacBride, 10 August 1984.
7. 16 September 1949, Legation to State Department, 'Possibility of Resort to Arms Over Partition of Ireland: Organizations Advocating the Use of Force.'
8. Memorandum of conversation, MacBride, F. H. Boland, 17 May 1949, Dublin. Memorandum is dated 24 May. Despatched to Washington 26 May. 'Subject: Exposition by Seán MacBride ... on Evolution of Irish Government Position in Relations With Great Britain over the Issue of Partition and Related Subjects, More Particularly the Atlantic Pact.'
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ireland Since the Famine*, p. 561.
12. *Dáil Debates*, 10 May 1949.
13. 24 May 1924.
14. 12 May 1949.
15. *Ibid.*
16. 'Exposition by Seán MacBride etc.' Garrett to Acheson, 14 May 1949.
17. 12 May 1949, 'Possibilities of Violence in Northern Ireland'.

18. 12 May 1949, Ranney covering letter with analysis.
19. 17 April 1949, to Secretary of State.
20. Government of Ireland Act (1920), Section 75.
21. 10 June 1949, 'Repercussions of British Ireland Bill, 1949, on Irish Political Situation.'
22. 21 June 1949, Memorandum 'Ireland's Doubts Concerning Motivation United States Foreign Policy — Political and Economic,' by Vinton Chapin.
23. 22 June 1949. Dáil Exchanges occurred on 14 June.
24. 16 September 1949, 'Possibility of Resort to Arms Over Partition of Ireland; Organizations Advocating Use of Force.'
25. Quoted John Bowman, *De Valera and the Ulster Question 1917-1973* (Oxford, 1982), p. 271, from *Irish Press*, 2 May 1949.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
27. *The Secret Army* (New York, 1971), p. 246.
28. 'Congressional Involvement in the Irish Question 1916-1979', Central Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 15 October 1979, p. 3, p. 6.
29. 6 October 1951, B. A. B. Burrows to Foreign Office.
30. 19 March 1951, Memo by L. D. Battle, Acheson's personal assistant.
31. 23 March 1951, 'Memorandum of Conversation'.
32. 10 July 1950, Garrett to President Truman, Harry S. Truman Library. Independence, Missouri.
33. 29 July 1950, Truman to Garrett, 'Papers of Harry S. Truman', Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.
34. See Chapter 8, conversations of Patrick Gordon Walker with US Embassy officials in London.
35. 3 April 1951.
36. To Sir Percivale Liesching, 3 April 1951.
37. 2 April 1951.
38. 3 April 1951.
39. Cabinet Papers, 1953, *Irish Times*, 4 January 1984.
40. *Irish Times*, 12 April 1951.
41. *Ibid.* For details on the 'Mother and Child' controversy, see J. H. Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923-1970* (Dublin, 1971), Chapters seven and eight. See Dr Noel Browne's autobiography, *Against the Tide* (Dublin, 1986).

CHAPTER TEN

1. 9 October 1968.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. 10 October 1968, 'Memorandum of Conversation Northern Ireland 'Civil Rights' Demonstrations.'
5. 11 October 1968, 'Civil Strife Abates in Northern Ireland — Status Report.'
6. 26 October 1968, Ambassador David Bruce to Secretary of State.

7. 4 December 1968.
8. *Ibid.*
9. 6 January 1968.
10. 7 January 1968.
11. 21 January 1969.
12. 23 January 1969.
13. 23 January 1969.
14. 27 January 1969.
15. 23 January 1969, Faulkner's resignation; O'Neill's reply; Faulkner's rebuttal; Prime Minister's reply.
16. 12 February 1969.
17. Congressman Hanley's letter is dated 6 March 1969.
18. 20 March 1969, from William B. Macomber Jr., Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.
19. 28 April 1969, reported by Consul-General on 5 May.
20. 5 May 1969, McManus to State Department.
21. 9 July 1969.
22. *Ibid.*
23. 4 August 1969.
24. 14 August 1969.
25. 18 August 1969.
26. 15 August 1969, Ambassador John D. Moore to Secretary of State.
27. James Callaghan, *A House Divided* (London, 1973), pp. 52-3.
28. 3 September 1969.
29. *Irish Times*, 29 September 1969.
30. Quoted by Cadeaux, US Consul, 'Northern Ireland — Two points of View', 7 October 1969.
31. *Irish Times*, 29 September 1969.
32. 7 October 1969.
33. 10 October 1969.
34. 14 October 1969.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Brian Faulkner, *Memoirs of a Statesman* (London, 1978), p. 104.
2. 31 January 1972.
3. *Irish Times*, 2 February 1972, 'Ireland seeking any available help may turn to East — Hillery'.
4. *Ibid.*, 3 February 1972, 'Hillery confers with UN Under-Secretary General'.
5. *Ibid.*, 4 February 1972, 'US staying neutral on question of Northern Ireland'.
6. *Ibid.*, 5 February 1972, 'Kennedy presses on with NI bid', talk with Irish journalists covering Hillery tour.
7. *New York Times*, 3 February 1972.
8. *Irish Times*, 28 February 1972, 'US sub-committee's NI hearing begins today'. Congressman Hugh Carey of Brooklyn, later Governor of New York, and then one of the 'Four Horsemen', Irish-American politicians

who supported the Irish government on the North.

9. 24 March 1972.
10. 20 April 1972.
11. Belfast, 24 July 1972.
12. 21 August 1972.
13. Quoted Faulkner, pp. 230–1. Chapter 17, 'Sunningdale', covers conference, pp. 226–38.
14. US Embassy London to Secretary of State, 8 July 1974.
15. 12 July 1974.
16. 30 October 1974. Some material requested subjected to heavy censorship. An entire section of this analysis is blacked out.
17. 27 December 1974. One section censored, presumably has to do with Kissinger meeting.
18. This became clear at the Airlie House, Virginia, 'Conference on Northern Ireland', early in January 1985, which was attended by leading State Department officials, as well as officials of the British and Irish Embassies, and representatives of all Irish and British political parties except Fianna Fáil, officially, and Sinn Féin. It became clearer also when the National Democratic Institute with funds of the National Endowment for Democracy — proponents of the 'Reagan Doctrine' — gave funds to the SDLP to help it establish a research centre.
19. 8 January 1975.
20. *Irish Times*, 28 October 1976, 'Carter cables Dublin on North', 10 November, 'What Carter said that day at Pittsburgh'. Author covered meeting.
21. Quoted *Irish Times*, 28 October 1976.
22. Queen's Speech, 2 November 1977.
23. 18 August 1978.
24. 17 July 1978.
25. US Embassy London, 6 July 1979.
26. Belfast, 12 September 1979.
27. US Embassy Dublin, 18 October 1979.
28. Quoted *Irish Times*, 5 November 1979, 'Lynch wants US to play stronger role in ending NI problem.'
29. *Ibid.*, 12 November 1979, 'Muddled message leaves much to the imagination.'
30. Dublin, 21 February 1980. Much of this despatch is censored.
31. Secretary of State to US Consul, Belfast, 29 October 1979.
32. Belfast, 23 November 1979.
33. When questioned about the status of the arms sale to the RUC, the standard State Department reply was, 'Still under review'.
34. 22 April 1980. Haughey addressed Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis on 16 February; FitzGerald addressed Fine Gael Ard Fheis on 29 March 1980.
35. *Irish Times*, 8 July, 'Donlon to be replaced as Washington envoy'; and 9 July 1980, 'Donlon report causes major upset in US.'
36. *Ibid.*, 'Kennedy glad envoy stays'.
37. *Ibid.*, 'After Donlon', editorial, 15 July 1980.
38. *Ibid.*, 9 June 1980, quoted in Letter from Washington, 'Ethnic groups put pressure on candidates.'

39. *New York Times*, 1 June 1986. Treaty initiative came from US not Britain.
40. *Irish Times*, 7 June 1980, 'Saturday Column' edited by Donal Foley. Embassy in Dublin despatched Cronin, Foley columns to State Department, 9 June 1980.
41. *Ibid.*, 15 July 1981, 'Government asks US to intervene in Maze crisis.'
42. *Ibid.*, 16 July 1981, 'Pressure grows for US action'.
43. *Ibid.*, 'Reagan and Thatcher talk about North'; Thatcher letter quoted by US Belfast Consul in despatch to Secretary of State, 28 July 1981.
44. Quoted *Ibid.*, 'Thatcher briefs Reagan on talks', 24 December 1984.
45. *Ibid.*, 22 December 1984, 'Reagan urged to raise NI with Thatcher'.
46. *Ibid.*, 24 December 1984, 'Thatcher briefs Reagan on talks'.
47. *Ibid.*, 21 February 1985, 'Principle of consent stressed by Thatcher'.
48. *Ibid.*, 22 February 1985, 'Links with Dublin hailed by Thatcher'.
49. *Ibid.*, 4 May 1985, 'FitzGerald seeks US aid — but only for joint solution'.
50. *Ibid.*, 9 May 1985, 'Mulroney lends support for peace in NI'.
51. *Ibid.*, 10 May 1985, 'North problem internal says Taoiseach'; *New Ireland Forum Report*, 2 May 1984, p. 23, quoted by FitzGerald; 17 May 1985, 'Full text of Taoiseach's speech'. Taoiseach in Dáil said he was quoted out of context in *Irish Times*, 10 May, which stated what he said in summary: 'It's not a problem between Britain and Ireland basically,' the Taoiseach, Dr FitzGerald, told the Foreign Policy Association here yesterday. 'The solution has to be found in Northern Ireland.' Government Information Service found recording of extemporaneous remarks and issued transcript.
52. I am indebted for these percentages to my friend Éamonn Timoney. In Newry-Armagh, Sinn Féin's percentage fell to 22.55 on 23 January 1986, versus 36.28 in June 1983, while the SDLP rose to 77.45% versus 63.72%. In South Down, Sinn Féin fell to 11.26% from 16.8%, while the SDLP rose to 88.74% from 83.2%. In Mid-Ulster, Sinn Féin fell to 51.81% from 57.20% and the SDLP rose to 48.19% from 42.08%. In Fermanagh-South Tyrone, Sinn Féin's 55.84% compared with 67.86% in 1983, while the SDLP's was 44.16% versus 32.14% at the general election. The total Nationalist vote in the general election in these four constituencies was 110,600 and 109,738 in the by-elections.
53. Article 10, Anglo-Irish Agreement.
54. Various statements by Tom King, who as British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in the Thatcher government played an important role in negotiating the accord, indicated that the Hillsborough agreement made partition permanent.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN TEXT

AOH	Ancient Order of Hibernians
APA	Anti-Partition Association
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIU	Congress of Irish Unions
CP	Communist Party
CRA	Civil Rights Association
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
ECA	Economic Co-operation Administration
EEC	European Economic Community
ERP	European Recovery Programme
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GOC	Government Officer Commanding
HMG	His/Her Majesty's Government
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists (Geneva)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
ITGWU	Irish Transport and General Workers' Union
LDF	Local Defence Force
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NY	New York
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Co-operation
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OWI	Office of War Information
PIRA	Provisional IRA
PM	Prime Minister
RAF	Royal Air Force
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party

TD	Teachta Dáil (Dáil deputy)
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UK	United Kingdom
UKG	United Kingdom Government
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

INDEX

- Ackerson, Garret G., 239
 Acheson, Dean, 115, 219, 234, 235, 245, 275, 278, 282; 'moral crusade against communism', 173-4; succeeds George Marshall as Secretary of State, 233; rejects Dublin's conditions in connection with NATO, 233; disappointed with Irish response to NATO, 236, 238; reaction to Irish release of rejection, 237, 239-40; meets MacBride (1949), 246-7; meets MacBride alone and with Truman (1951), 276-7
 Adams, Gerry, 324
 Agnew, Kevin, 292
 Aiken, Frank, 99, 111, 143, 326; sends M. J. Costello to US to buy arms (1949), 66; bid to make MacBride a colonel, 96; Williams's reprieve attempt, 98; arms mission to US (1941), 114; stormy meeting with Roosevelt, 115; role as censor, 118, 120, 122, 123; appointed Minister of Finance, 164, 165; CIA view of, 255
 Alexander, C.V., 141, 167
 Alexander, Field Marshall Lord, 205, 206, 207
 Altírí na hAiseirí, 121
America, 172
 American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, 26
 American Commission on Irish Independence, 23
American Irish, 318
 American League for an Undivided Ireland, 103, 194
 American Newspaper Guild, 91
 American Red Cross, 121
 Anglo-German Academic Bureau, 86
 Anglo-Irish agreement (1938), 52, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64; (1985) 321, 327
 Anglo-Irish negotiations (1938), 55, 56
 Annuities, *see* Land Annuities
 Anti-Partition Association, 270-1
 Archer, Norman, 214-5, 215-6
 Armour, Norman, 181-2, 190
 Asquith, H.H., 19
 Atkins, Humphrey, 314, 315, 316
 Atlantic Pact, *see* NATO
 Attlee, Clement, 205, 262; attitude to proposed Gray ultimatum on ports, 141; tells Truman Britain cannot meet commitments to Greece and Turkey, 173; goes to Ireland (1948), signs trade agreement, meets MacBride and Brookborough, 199-201; briefed on repeal of External Relations Act by Maffey, 212; Chequers and Paris 'Old Dominions' conferences, 213; gives Churchill pledge on constitutional position of NI, 217; receives 'Working Party' report on NI, 231; attitude on partition quoted, 235, 237; meets MacBride about Government of Ireland Act (1949), 259
Aud, 17, 18
 Barry, Kevin, 37
 Barry, Tom, 41, 87, 88, 89, 112
 Barnes, Peter, 75, 76, 81, 97
 Barton, Robert, 29, 40
 Batterbury, Dick, 187
 BBC, 289
 Beatty, Admiral, 62

- Beaudry, Robert M., 183
 Begin, Menachem, 176
 Behan, Brendan, 81
Belfast Telegraph, 317
 Bell, 84
 Bergin, Paddy, 181
 Berle, Adolf A., 85, 88, 100, 101
 Bernstorff, Count Johann von, 16, 19
 Better Government of Ireland Bill (1919), 34, 35
 Bevin, Ernest, 167, 264; presents plans for united Ireland to Churchill (1940), reported by Joseph Kennedy, 110; lauds Marshall Plan, 174; role in origin of NATO, 197; directs US not to discuss partition as NATO issue, 225, 232, 245; discusses partition with MacBride, 227, 262, and Government of Ireland Act (1949), 259
 Bewley, Charles, 121
 Biaggi, Mario, 318, 319
 Bidault, Georges, 174
 Biddle, Francis, 135
 Birkenhead, Lord, 44
 Black, Harold, 283, 284
 Black and Tans, 36, 37, 73, 97
 Blaney, Neal, 133, 183
 Blaney, Neil, Jnr., 183, 318
 Bloomfield, Kenneth, 283
 Blowick, Joseph, 188
 Blueshirts, 104
 Boer War, 41
 Boland, Fred, 190, 193, 194, 198, 215, 232, 259
 Boland, Gerald, 77, 123, 160
 Bohlen, Charles, 224, 239
 Bonar Law, Andrew, 43
 Borah, Senator William, 23
Boston Post, 134
 Boundary agreement (1925), 43, 53
 Boundary Commission, 45, 46
 Bowyer Bell, J., 273
 Bradley, General Omar, 277
 Breathnach, Fionán, 187
 Breen, Dan, 27
 Brennan, Michael, 81
 Brennan, Robert, 95, 100-1, 110, 118, 156, 157, 158, 163
 Breslin, Jimmy, 317
 British Commonwealth, 40, 49, 50, 52, 62, 134, 136, 140, 142, 164, 165, 187, 189, 191, 202, 205, 208, 213, 214, 215, 217, 251
 British Empire, 44, 56, 63, 74
 Brockway, Fenner, 283
 Brook, Sir Norman, 218, 231, 244
 Brooke, Sir Basil (Lord Brookborough), 194, 242, 285; warns of trouble if Labour Government forces an United Ireland, 167, 168; calls press conference to counter de Valera statements on US tour (1948), 193; meets Attlee (1948), 200-1; leads delegation to London with proposals to change name of NI to Ulster, 218; suggestions for meetings with MacBride, 227, 231
 Browne, Dr. Noel, 188, 196, 199, 207, 209-10, 281
 'Broy Harriers', 104
 Brugha, Cathal, 22, 27, 39, 40, 99
 Brugha, Nollaig, 89
 Bryan, Dan, 152, 256, 257, 258
 B-Special Constabulary, 297, 299
 Bullitt, William, 71
 Bunting, Major Ronald, 287, 294
 Burke, Liam, 86
 Burns, James MacGregor, 95
 Burton, Philip, 294-5
 Burntollet, 287
 Butt, Isaac, 261
 Byrnes, James F., 164, 171
 Cairo Conference, 148
 Callaghan, James, 288, 297, 299, 300
 Caradon, Lord, 300
 Carey, Hugh, 312, 313
 Carroll, Patrick, 257
 Carson, Sir Edward, 30, 33, 44
 Carter, Carolle J., 118
 Carter, Jimmy, 312, 313, 317, 320
 Casement, Roger, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 90
 Catholic Church, 33, 36, 40, 46, 53, 63, 108, 124, 168, 175, 182, 228, 230, 237, 251-2, 266, 267
 Catholic Truth Society, 135

- Censorship, 118, 120, 122, 123, 124, 142
- Chalfont, Lord, 299
- Chamberlain, Neville, 73, 75, 111; Anglo-Irish Agreement (1938), 58-9, 60, 64; refuses de Valera appeal for Barnes and McCormick reprieve, 76-7, 97
- Chapin, Vinton, 184-5, 187-8, 192-3, 204, 210, 232-3, 241, 267
- Chichester-Clark, Major James, 293, 294, 295, 297, 298, 299, 301, 302, 303
- Childers, Erskine, 29, 40
- Childers, Erskine, Jnr., 184-5, 256
- Christiansen, William H., 279-80
- Churchill, Winston, 97, 110, 112, 113, 139, 141, 145, 146, 147, 148, 171, 206, 217; attitude on ports, 60, 62, 111; on neutrality, 72; telegram to de Valera, 94; meetings with Roosevelt (1941), 94, (1943) 136-7; halts travel and trade between UK and Ireland, 159-60; meets Seán MacBride, 237-8
- Citizen Army, 90, 179
- Civil Rights Association, 293, 295
- Civil War, 42, 43, 44, 103, 104, 132, 213
- Clan-na-Gael, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 41, 73, 74, 75, 80, 82, 85, 86, 89, 91, 100-1, 102, 103
- Clann na Poblachta, 89, 177, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 247, 252, 262, 266, 270, 272, 274, 281
- Clann na Talmhan, 134, 184, 185, 187
- Clark, William, 322
- Clarke, Thomas J., 12, 15, 72
- Clarke, Mrs. Kathleen, 39
- Clements, R., 87
- Clissmann, Helmut, 86, 87
- Clifford, Clark, 190, 219
- Cluskey, Frank, 315
- Cohalan, Bishop Daniel, 228
- Cohalan, Bishop (Waterford), 180
- Cohalan, Judge Daniel F., 19, 20-21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 42
- Colley, Harry, 268
- Cold War, 169, 171, 249
- Collins, Michael, 22, 27, 32, 39, 40, 41, 45, 46, 62, 99, 107, 195
- Comerford, Maire, 82, 84
- Commission of Inquiry into Conditions in Ireland (1920), 37
- Conboy, Martin, 24
- Congress of Irish Unions (CIU), 178, 180, 181, 188, 253
- Conlon, Malachy, 169
- Connolly, James, 179, 213, 214
- Connolly, Roddy, 187
- Coolidge, Calvin, 47
- Cooper, Ivan, 294
- Cork Examiner*, 229
- Cosgrave, Liam, 170, 255-6
- Cosgrave, W. T., 22, 46, 50, 52, 63, 108, 133, 134
- Costello, John A., 189, 198, 201, 202, 242, 262, 266, 269; head of inter-party government, 187-8; attitude on partition, 191, 200, 204, 240; visit to Canada and Governor General's dinner, 203, 204-6; repeal of External Relations Act, 207-11, assessment by Lord Rugby, 212, 216; by CIA, 255; reaction to guarantee to Unionists (1949), 260; talks with Meyer on NATO, 278-9; jailing of Republicans and fall of inter-party government, 281
- Costello, M.J., 66-8, 69, 112, 129
- Coughlin, Father Charles, 91, 135
- Council of Ireland, 42, 47, 272, 317, 326
- Cowan, Peadar, 199
- Coyne, Martin, 89
- Craig, Sir James (Lord Craigavon), 38, 45, 56, 57, 65, 108, 111
- Craig, William, 282, 285, 301, 302
- Cranbourne, Lord, 94, 105, 145, 146, 151, 156
- Crawford, Leo, 180
- Cremin, Cornelius, 121
- Cripps, Sir Stafford, 198, 200, 237
- Cromer, Lord, 305
- Cumann na mBan, 27
- Cumann Poblachta na hÉireann, 89

- Cudahy, J, 12, 82; appointed Minister (1937), 54; confidential talks with de Valera: partition and defence, 55-7, 59 — neutrality, 61-2, 70 — return of ports, 62-4 — arms mission, 69; appeals to Roosevelt, 57-8; analyses Anglo-Irish agreement, 62; reports to Cordell Hull, 73; report on hunger strikes (1940), 77-8; Magazine Fort raid, 79-80
- Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore, 114
- Currie, Austin, 292, 294, 302
- Curtin, John, 160
- Curzon, Lord, 38
- Dáil Éireann, establishment, 22; charts course to independence, 23; deals with land agitation, 32; ratifies Treaty 45; IRA breaks with, 51; authorises application to UN, 169; assessment by Seán MacBride, 183; Republic of Ireland Bill introduced, 216; passes resolution on partition, 260; CIA on IRA view of, 274
- Daily News*, 317
- Daily Telegraph*, 65, 201
- Daily Worker*, New York, 256
- Daley, Richard J., 312
- Daly, Tom, 88
- Danaher, Senator John A., 161
- D'Arcy, Tony, 89
- Darlington Conference, 308
- Davis, Norman, 121
- Defence of Realm Act (1920), 31
- De Lacy, Larry, 18, 41, 84, 85
- Democratic Convention (1912), 20
- Denby, James Orr, 50-1, 52
- Derby, Lord, 38
- De Valera, 12, 27, 35, 41, 42, 43, 46, 51, 81, 82, 110, 112, 113, 114, 133, 147, 152, 160, 162, 169, 175, 177, 183, 185, 199, 241, 262, 266, 267, 269, 270; elected head of Dáil Éireann, 22; mission to US and Republic bond drive, 24; breaks with Colahan and Devoy, 25, *Westminster Gazette* interview, 25; launches American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, 26; meets Lord Derby, Sir James Craig and General Smuts, 38; invites Unionists to conference, 38; personal negotiations with Lloyd George, 39; why he did not lead Treaty delegation, 39; 'external association' explained to McGarrity, 39-40; comments on Stack, Mrs. Clarke and Mary MacSwiney, 40; leads Fianna Fáil into Dáil (1927), 48; takes office (1932) and retains land annuities, 49; exchanges with British Government on Commonwealth, 50; asks IRA to disband, 51; removes oath of allegiance, 52; 1937 Constitution, 52-3; relations with John Cudahy, 54 — on partition, 55, 56, 57, 59, 63 — on neutrality, 61-2, 70 — return of ports 62-4 — arms mission (1939), 69; Anglo-Irish negotiations (1938), 55; rebuffed by Roosevelt on partition issue, 58; return of ports, 59, 62; assessment by Churchill, 60-1; Irish neutrality and Anglo-Irish defence, 61; interview with *Evening Standard* on partition, 65; relations with Eduard Hempel, 72; declares neutrality on outbreak of war, 72-3; war on IRA, 74; cancels World's Fair visit to US, 75; talks to Maffey about reprieve for Barnes and McCormick, 76; St. Patrick's Day broadcast (1940), 77; interns IRA suspects, 78; view of IRA, 79, 80; queries State Dept. on bases, 93; telegram from Churchill, 94; relations with David Gray, 97-100, 106-9, 119-23, 122-3, 166, 167, 168; action on appeal for Kerins reprieve, 104-5; denounces invasion of Low Countries, 106; Dáil defence of neutrality, 115-18; background to Gray's proposed ultimatum on

- ports, 131-150; neutrality in relation to bases, 147-8, 150; asked by Maffey to have transmitters removed from German Legation, 151; rejects American and British notes on expulsion of Axis diplomats, 153-5, 158; fears of invasion, 156-7, 159; condolence on Hitler's death, 163; defines Republic in Dáil (1945), 164; attitude to Aiken, 165; defeat in 1948 general election, 187; anti-partition crusade in US, 190, 193, 194, 203; reaction to repeal of External Relations Act, 216; relations with Lord Rugby, 225-6, 230-1; CIA view of, 250-1, 254-5; joins Coalition in denouncing Government of Ireland Act, 260
- Devereux, Michael, 83
- Devoy, John, 12, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 72, 85, 99, 100, 113; organizer of Clan-na-Gael, 14; 'New Departure' policy, 14; attitude to dynamite tactics, 15; subsidises IRB, 15; overtures to Germany (1914), 16; comments on Casement, 17; Easter Rising, 17-18; disputes with de Valera, 24-6; split in Clan-na-Gael, 26; supports Treaty, 41-2
- Devlin, Bernadette, 292, 293, 294
- Devlin, Joseph, 194
- Devlin, Paddy, 295
- Diamond, Harry, 168
- Dillon, James, 175; pro-American stand, 98, 133, 232; proposals to join the Allies in the war, 117, 194; questions de Valera on status of Ireland (1945), 164; efforts to fuse Clann na Talmhan and Fine Gael, 184-5; becomes Minister for Agriculture, 188; advocates repeal of External Relations Act, 202; denies Browne statement on Costello 'resignation', 210; assessment by CIA, 256; letter to *The Times*, 260-1
- Dillon, Luke, 41
- Dirksen, Everett, 274
- Document No. 2, 43
- Documents Relevant to the Sinn Féin movement* (1921), 85
- Doheny, Michael, 14
- Dominion Status, 33, 39, 47
- Dominion Home Rule, 34
- Donlon, Seán, 318, 319
- Donovan, Jim, 87
- Douglas, Lewis, 235, 243, 244
- Duffy, George Gavan, 40
- Duffy, Owen P., (Eoin O'Duffy) 31
- Duggan, Éamonn, 40
- Dulanty, John, 59, 73, 156
- Dumont, F. T. F., reports on 'troubles' and rumours of rising, 26-7, 28; canvasses British and Sinn Féin views on settlement, 29-30; attitude of Irish to attacks on Crown forces, 31; stresses Church role in Irish politics and rise of labour, 32-3; 35-6; Irish attitude to Dominion status, 33-4; report on Black and Tans and terror, 36-7, 38
- Dunn, James C., 59
- Dunne, Edward F., 23
- Easter Rising 1916, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 65, 81, 91, 100, 269
- Eaton, Cyrus, 114
- Economic war, 52, 55
- Economist*, 164, 186
- Eden, Anthony, 76, 109, 152; belief that Ireland supported neutrality, 113; discussions with Winant on Gray proposals for ultimatum on ports, 141-2; 146, 148, 149, 152
- Enright, Major, 102
- Esmonde, Sir John, 244
- European Recovery Plan (ERP), 192, 193, 196, 197, 198, 199, 253
- Evatt, Dr. Herbert, 170, 213, 214, 216, 234
- Evening News*, 158
- Evening Standard*, 65
- Everett, James, 188
- Excommunication, 228
- 'External Association', 39, 40, 108, 164, 217

- External Relations Act, 62, 89, 113, 186, 190, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212, 213, 215, 216, 251, 259, 266
- 'Facts Supporting Charge that Axis Representations Menace our Military Interests', 150, 159
- Fagg, Victor, 90
- Fahey, Denis, CSSp, 176
- Fairfield, Letitia, 75
- Fales, Herbert P., 259, 260, 263
- Farley, James A. (Jim), 54, 92, 166, 203
- Faul, Father Denis, 306
- Faulkner, Brian, 290-1, 303, 308, 309
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, (FBI), 41, 75, 102, 172; memorandum on IRA (1943), 85-90
- Federation of Irish Manufacturers, 253
- Feeney, Brian, 91
- Fenian Brotherhood *see* Irish Republican Brotherhood
- Fenians, 14, 17, 18
- Fenit, 17
- Fianna Fáil, 48, 51, 83, 96, 98, 104, 133, 177, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 199, 216, 219, 245, 250, 253, 273, 314, 317
- Figgis, Darrell, 29
- Fillimore, President Millard, 13
- Fine Gael, 63, 121, 133, 134, 184, 185, 186, 187, 189, 190, 199, 211, 212, 216, 247, 248, 251, 317, 324
- Finucane, Paddy, 104
- Fischer, Fritz, 16, 18
- Fisk, Robert, 111
- Fitt, Gerry, 282, 286, 293, 294, 312, 316
- FitzGerald, Desmond, 109
- FitzGerald, Garret, 315, 321; attends Oxford Meeting (1974), 309; complains of US aid for IRA, 310; meets Kissinger (1974), 311; protests over Jimmy Carter's pre-election statement, 312; policy on NI, 317; appeals to Reagan on hunger strikers, 320; meets Mrs. Thatcher (1984), 322; visits US (1985), 323; Hillsborough Agreement (1985), 324
- Fitzpatrick, Michael, 88
- Flanagan, Oliver J, 176
- Fleming, Patrick, 89
- Flynn, Elizabeth Gurley, 91
- Fogarty, John, 248, 274
- Foley, Donal, 320
- Forged Casement Diaries, The*, 114
- Forrest, Mrs. Anna, 293
- 'Four Horsemen', 313, 318, 319, 321
- Foyne-Rineanna, 126
- Franco, General, 175
- Fraser, Peter, 213-4, 215, 216, 234
- French, Lord, 29, 33
- Freeman's Journal*, 229
- 'Friends of Ireland' (mentioned in State Dept. memorandum 1947), 181
- Friends of Ireland, (Seán Donlon), 318, 320, 322
- Friends of Ireland (UK), 169
- Friends of Irish Freedom, 19, 20, 25, 26, 41, 305
- Friends of Irish Neutrality, 114
- Gaelic American*, 16, 20, 22, 25, 41, 100, 101
- Gaelic League, 27
- Gaelic Athletic Association, 31
- Gallagher, Frank, 57, 83
- Gallagher, J. P., 84
- Gannon, Rev Robert I., 92, 166
- Gardiner, Lord, 283
- Garrett, George, 194, 216, 219, 222, 256, 280; asked to prevent de Valera going to US (1948), 190; estimate of inter-party government, 190-1; offers new US approach to partition, 191-2; tells MacBride Marshall aid does not involve partition 193; despatches shown to British, 194-5; Ireland and NATO, 225, 227-9, 231-2, 234, 236, 238, 247, 278-9; interviews Archbishop McQuaid, 229-30; assessment by MacBride, 248; Government of Ireland Act (1949),

- 258-60; arms proposal to Truman, 277-8; visits US with MacBride, 278
- Gathering Storm, The*, 62
- Gavin, Jim, 91
- Geddes, Sir Auckland, 43
- George VI, 75, 121, 219
- Gibbons, Cardinal of Baltimore, 43
- Gill, Michael, 257
- Gilliland, Davis, 321
- Gilmore, George, 51, 87, 88, 90, 96
- Ginnell, Lawrence, 29
- Gladstone, W. E., 14, 35
- Glennon, Archbishop of St. Louis, 166
- Goebbels, Joseph, 113, 171
- Goertz, Hermann, 83, 88, 152
- Gordon Walker, Patrick, 240-1, 259, 264, 278
- Government Information Bureau, 57
- Government of Ireland Act (1920), 42, 44, 45, 218, 272, 283; (1949) 218, 231, 258, 259, 262, 264, 266, 269, 272, 274
- Government of Ireland Bill (1949), 259, 260, 261, 265, 270, 273
- Gray, David, 112, 130, 133, 158, 159, 161, 162, 169, 176, 177; US Minister, 82; Hayes confession, 83; the Williams reprieve attempt, 97-8; Irish neutrality, 98, 122; censorship, 98, 122-4; de Valera and IRA, 99, 100; use of bases and troops in NI, 100, 129; meeting with de Valera (1940), 106-9; believes his mission is to get Ireland into war, 114; US arms sales, 110, 115; blames Irish-American extremists for alienating US majority opinion, 119; lobbies against sale of ships, 120; Ireland in 'emergency', 119, 121; view of Aiken, 122, 164-5; censorship, 122-4; covering memorandum on 'Invasion and Defence of Ireland', 124-7; ultimatum on ports and partition and neutrality issues, 131-2, 134-5, 136-7, 139-45, 146-8; 149-50; tour of Irish-American centres, 135-6; memorandum on Nazi spies and IRA, 150-1; fears code broken, 152-3, 159; delivers note to de Valera, 153-5; de Valera's fear of invasion, 156-7; reaction to halting Irish-UK travel, 160; in retirement writes introduction to Unionist booklet, 161; summary of policy, 163-4; accuses de Valera of hypocrisy on partition, 166; de Valera's St. Patrick's Day broadcast (1946), 167; reports on Basil Brooke and loyalty, 167-8
- Green, Joseph, 66-8
- Greenwood, Sir Hamar, 29, 33, 34, 38
- Grey, Lord, 18-19
- Griffin, Father Michael, 37
- Griffith, Arthur, 22, 27-8, 29, 30, 31, 33, 39
- Grogan, Larry, 89
- Guardian*, 316
- Guildhall banquet speech (1920), 37
- Gwynn, Denis, 46
- Hacha, President Emil, 40
- Hanley, James, 291
- Harcourt, Sir William, 15
- Harding, Warren, G., 26
- Haughey, C.J., 306; succeeds Lynch, 316; policy, 317; challenged by 'Four Horsemen' for removing Ambassador Donlon, 318-19; election defeat (1981), 320; his UN stand on Falklands War riles British, 321, 326
- Hayes, Dr. Richard, 122, 152
- Hayes, Stephen, 102; Chief-of-Staff of IRA, 73; hears Russell has died, 82; accused of being Government agent and kidnapped by IRA, 82; testifies against McCaughey, 82; 'confession' to IRA, 82-3; comment by Marie Comerford, 84; believed guilty by IRA, 84-5; FBI view of, 86, 88-9; 'Operation Kathleen', 88

- Healy, Cahir, 169
 Heaney, James, 295
 Hearne, John J., 206, 208, 276
 Heath, Edward, 303, 306
 Held, Stephen Carroll, 88
 Hempel, Eduard, 72, 84, 113, 123, 163
 Hickerson, Jack, 166, 221, 232, 235, 249; denies US invasion rumours, 156-7; reply to Senator Danaher on partition, 161; sees de Valera tour (1948) exacerbating partition issue, 192-3; advises Garrett to keep London informed, 195; rejects MacBride's argument for Marshall aid grant, 196; 197-8; stresses importance of NI bases to MacBride, 220; dissents from Keenan's paper on Atlantic Pact, 224; *aide-mémoire* from Ireland on partition and NATO, 237, 245; briefs Acheson on MacBride, 245, 247
 Hillery, Dr. P. J., 299-300, 303-6; 326
 Hillsborough, 321, 327
 Hiss, Alger, 172, 174
 Hitler, Adolph, 16, 40, 82, 112, 113, 114, 122, 163
 Hobson, Bulmer, 196
 Hoffman, Paul, 197
 Hogan, Sarsfield, 196, 256
 Hogan, Sean, 27
 Holohan, Hugh, 91
 Holohan, Patrick, 91
 Home Rule, 20, 56, 110, 273; Home Rule Bill (1885), 35; (1912), 33; Home Rule Act (1914), 35
 Hoover, J. Edgar, 85, 88, 100-1
 Horgan, John J., 124, 184
 House, Colonel Edward, 19
 House of Representatives, 15, 23, 74, 119, 274, 321
 Hull, Cordell, 73, 110, 140, 142, 148, 151; recalls Gray for briefing on Irish situation, 134; warns of dangers of US involvement in Anglo-Irish quarrel, 137, 147; attitude to use of Irish bases, 137-8, 141, 143, 144, 147; poses military questions for Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, 138; loses patience with British delays, 145
 Hume, John, 316, 324
 Hunger strikers (1920), 28; (1939), 77-8; (1981), 320
 Hurley, Bishop of Florida, 136
 Independent Television (ITV), 289
 International Commission of Jurists Report, 295
 Internment, 77, 78, 303
In Time of War, 111
 'Invasion and Defence of Ireland', 124
Ireland, 280
 Ireland Act *see* Government of Ireland Act
 Ireland, John, 179
 Irish army (in CIA report), 127-8
 Irish Brigade, 17
 Irish Engineering Industrial Union, 181
 Irish Free State, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 71; Constitution (1922), 49, 52, 53; (1937), 52, 53
 Irish Hospital Sweepstakes, 80, 90, 91, 103, 196
Irish Independent, 59, 63, 219
 Irish National Caucus, 318, 319
 Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 177, 178
 Irish National Union of Vintners, Grocers and Allied Traders' Association, 30
 Irish Northern Aid (Noraid), 310
Irish Oak, 120
Irish People, 165
Irish Pine, 120
Irish Press, 57, 61, 100, 160, 271, 318
Irish Press (Philadelphia), 41
Irish Republic, 74
 Irish Republic Bonds, 24-5
 Irish Republican Alliance, 74
 Irish Republican Army, 38, 73, 75, 77, 81, 82, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 107, 110, 125, 127, 195, 255, 257, 258, 262, 264, 270; McGarrity

- arms purchase, 41, 42; comment by Denby, 50-1; relations with de Valera, 51, 71, 80, 96-8, 99, 105, 133; German connection (1939), 72; 1938 conventions, 73, 85, 89, 90; action and propaganda campaign in England, (1939), 73-6; 'S-Plan', 73, 74; Coventry bombing, 75-6, 81, 89; internment, 77-8; Magazine Fort raid, 79; Hayes affair, 82-5; FBI memorandum on, 85-7, 88-9; effort to find new policy, 87; constitution (in FBI memorandum, 88; conventions (1936), 89; Office of War Information report, 90-2; assessment in Gray reports, 125, 151, and Reynolds report, 127, 128; condemnation by Catholic Church, 228; manifesto (1949), 231; American reports on IRA, 252-3, 261-2, 264, 270, 272, 273, 285; relationship with MacBride, 274; opinion of Dáil Éireann, 274; campaign in NI (1956), 290, 291, 298; Hillery blames existence on Britain, 304; fears of Protestants reported, 309; Provisional IRA, 311-12, 314, 315; denounced by Margaret Thatcher in Congress, 322-3
- Irish Republican Brotherhood, 16, 17, 29, 45, 71, 72, 90, 273; formation, 14; opposes dynamite tactics, 15; supported by Clan-na-Gael, 15-6; Easter Rising, 17-8; reorganised by Collins, 27, 40
- Irish Times*, 84, 133, 163, 164, 182, 186, 206, 231, 298, 319, 320
- Irish Trades Union Congress, 28, 35, 178, 252, 253
- Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, 29, 32, 35, 134, 178, 179, 188
- Irish Transport Workers' Union, 30
- Irish Volunteers, 16, 17, 27, 29, 85, 90
- Irish World*, 12, 20
- Isaacs, George, 200, 201
- Israel, 272
- Jail Journal, The*, 14
- Jakobson, Max, 300
- Johnson, Colonel, 68
- Johnson, Senator Hiram, 24
- Johnson, Louis, 277
- Jones, Tom, 44, 45
- Jowitt, Lord, 200, 213, 214, 215
- Kavanagh, Seán, 103
- Kearney, John, 121, 131, 139, 155-6
- Kearney, Pete, 88
- Keating, John J., 21
- Keating, Seán, 89
- Kelly, Enda, 274
- Kennan, George, 173, 223-5
- Kennedy, Edward, 295, 305, 313, 317, 318, 319, 320, 322, 323
- Kennedy, Joseph, 58, 59, 73, 92, 110, 136
- Kerins, Charles, 86, 103-4, 105
- Kiernan, Thomas, 121
- Killeen, Jim, 88
- Kinane, Patrick, 184
- King, Ernest J., 127
- Kissinger, Henry, 311
- Kleffens, E. N. Van, 239
- Knox, Rawle, 194
- Labour Party (Ireland), 134, 177, 179, 180, 181, 182, 184, 187, 251, 252, 317
- Laithwaite, Sir Gilbert, 278-9, 280
- Land annuities, 49, 52, 59, 63
- Land League, 15, 32, 261
- Lane, Thomas, 274
- Lange, Dr Oscar, 169
- Larkin, Jim, Senior, 32, 35, 36, 63, 134, 179, 180
- Larkin, Jim, Junior, 104, 134, 179, 182, 251
- Laverty, May, 187
- Lavery, Cecil, 121, 215
- Law, Richard, 146
- League of Nations, 22, 23, 24, 46, 57, 65, 106, 117, 169, 175, 250; Article X, 24
- Leahy, Admiral William, 138
- Legge, Hector, 207, 209, 210
- Lehane, Con, 187, 216

- Lemass, Seán, 47, 164, 184, 199, 255, 268
 Lend-Lease, 91, 93, 114, 120, 140
 Lenihan, Brian, 319
 Lennon, Senator J.G., 169
 Leyden, John, 119
 Lillis, Michael, 318
 Lindberg, Charles, 111
 Lindsay, Sir Ronald, 57, 66, 67, 68
 Local Defence Force, 123, 127, 272
 Lodge Curran, Father Edward, 135
 Lloyd George, David, 19, 20, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45-6
 Loeb, Eugen, 174
 Lord Longford, *see* Pakenham
 Lothian, Lord, 76
 Lovett, Robert, 192, 193, 221, 224, 243
 Lynch, Jack, 298, 300, 303, 307, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318
 Lynch, Liam, 99
 Lynch, Dr Patrick, 210
 Lynch, Tadhg, 85
 Lyons, F.S.L., 260

 McAteer, Eddie, 294
 McAteer, Hugh, 86
 MacBride, Major John, 195, 211, 213, 238
 MacBride, Maud Gonne, 195, 211, 213, 214, 255
 MacBride, Seán, 82, 88, 90, 99, 104, 190, 191, 199, 218, 222, 227, 231, 256, 257, 261, 262, 263, 265, 266, 271, 272, 278, 279, 282, 295, 326; asked by de Valera to join Volunteer Force, 51; presses de Valera to declare Republic, 52, 96; proves internment unconstitutional, 78; Hayes affair, 84-5; recommends political action to IRA, 87; leaves IRA (1937), 89; leads campaign for Williams reprieve, 97; rise of Clann na Poblachta, 182-3; elected to Dáil, 184; *Observer* profile, 185-6; 1948 election, 187; Minister for External Affairs, 188, 189; Marshal aid programme, 192-3, 197-9; reaction of State Department to, 195-6; conditions for joining coalition, 196; meets Attlee, 200-1; release of Republican prisoners, 201; repeal of External Relations Act, 201-2, 207-8, 219-220; denies Browne claim Costello resigned, 210; assessment by Lord Rugby, 211-12, 226; Chequers and Paris meetings of 'Old Dominions' (1948), 213-16; partition issue and NATO, 228-30, 232, 233, 234, 237, 243, 244, 247, 248, 276; meeting with Acheson (1949), 245-7; CIA view of, 251, 255; denounces Government of Ireland Act (1949), 258-60; Dáil question about Communism, 268-9; relations with IRA, 274; meetings with Acheson and Truman (1951), 275-7; end of political career, 281
 McCallion, Professor Kenneth, 306
 McCann, John, 268
 MacCarthy, Joseph, 172, 174
 McCaughey, Seán, 82, 84, 183
 McCauley, Leo T., 101
 McCluskey, Dr Conn, 306
 McCool, Seán, 90, 187
 McCormack, John W., 119, 134, 248
 McCormick, James, 75, 76, 81, 97
 McCullough, Denis, 31
 MacDermott, James, 101
 MacDermott, Séamus, 101
 MacDermott, Seán, 72
 MacDonald, J. Ramsay, 49
 MacDonald, Malcolm, 54, 64, 109-10, 111
 McElligott, J.J., 196, 198
 McEntee, Seán, 108, 185, 187, 199, 216
 McEoin, Seán, 201, 256, 269
 McGarrity, Joe, 24, 72, 85, 90, 96; Easter Rising, 18; accused of sabotage in US, 21; relations with de Valera, 24-6, 39-40; split in Clan-na-Gael, 26; seizes IRB membership lists, 41; sends Thompson guns to Ireland, 41;

- reaction to Treaty, 41–3; supports bombing campaign in England, 74–5, 89; attitude to Germany, 87; Neenan comment on, 102–3
- McGilligan, Patrick, 188, 199, 202, 210, 213, 215
- McGlade, Charles, 84
- McGranery, James J., 74, 102
- McGrath, Howard, 275–6
- McGrath, Pa., 269
- McGrath, Patrick, 77
- Machtig, Sir Eric, 211
- McInerny, Timothy, 134
- McKenna, Colonel Dan, 81, 126
- Mackenzie King, L., 206, 208–9
- McLaughlin, James F., 101
- MacLogan, Patrick, 274
- MacMahon, James, 29
- McManus, Neil; briefed by Terence O'Neill, 283–4; reports to State Department on NI situation (1968–69); 285–6, 288, 289, 290–1, 292, 293, 294, 296, 300, 302, 307; International Commission of Jurists report, 295; attends Chester-Clark press conference, 298
- McManus, Father Seán, 318
- McMullan, William, 188
- McNeela, Jack, 89
- MacNeill, Eoin, 22, 45, 46
- MacNeill, Hector, 170
- MacNeill, Major-General Hugo, 66
- McQuaid, Archbishop John Charles, 229–230
- Macready, General Sir Nevil, 29, 33, 34, 37, 38
- MacRory, Cardinal, 99–100, 108, 153, 166
- McSparran, James, 169
- MacSwiney, Mary, 39, 59
- MacSwiney, Terence, 37, 201
- MacWhite, Michael, 57
- Maffey, Sir John (Lord Rugby), 76, 94, 99, 111, 114, 121, 145, 190, 202, 212, 257, 259; appointed Representative (1939), 72–3; guarded after Magazine Fort raid, 81; supports Gray note with ultimatum on ports, 131; discussions with Gray re note, 132, 139–40, 149; goes to London, 147; negotiates with de Valera for removal of transmitter from German Legation, 151; hears Gray's account of meeting with de Valera, 154–5; delivers British note on closure of Axis mission, 155; congratulates Gray on warning to MacBride about Marshall aid, 194–5; stunned by Costello declaration of Republic, 211; opinion of MacBride, 211, 226–7; briefs London on situation, 212, 216; discusses defence with de Valera, 225–6, and partition 230–1
- Magan, Tony, 75, 273
- Magazine Fort raid, 79–80, 81
- Malley, James Y., 284
- Mallon, Séamus, 325
- Maloney, Dr William J., 114
- Manchester Guardian*, 34, 35, 38, 184, 187, 217
- Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, 160
- Mansfield, Mike, 248, 274, 275
- Marlin, Ervin ('Spike'), 151
- Markiewicz, Countess, 22
- Marshall aid, *see* ERP
- Marshall, George C., 95, 127, 139, 173, 174, 193, 203, 224, 233
- Martial law, 27, 37, 38
- Matthews, Herbert L., 193, 194
- Matthews, H. Freeman, 145
- Mellows, Liam, 12, 22
- Meyer, Paul, 278–9
- Midleton, Lord, 38, 39
- Mills, Stratton, 289
- Minish, Joseph G., 301
- Mitchell, John, 13, 14, 16
- Moffat, Pierrepont, 59
- Mohan, Peter, 84
- Molyneux, James, 312
- Molotov, 174
- Montague, Hugh, 41
- Montgomery (Monty), 112
- Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit, 135, 165

- Moore, Dick, 305
 Moore, John D.J., 305, 307, 310, 311
 Morgan, William, 290
 Morgenthau, Henry, 120
Morning Post, 46
 Morrissey, Dan, 188, 199, 210
 Morrison, Herbert, 167
 Moss, Warner, 93
 Mother and Child health scheme, 281
 Mountbatten, Lord Louis, 315, 316
 Moylan, Seán, 99
 Moynihan, Daniel Patrick, 313, 319, 322
 Moynihan, Maurice, 183
 Mulcahy, Richard, 27, 112, 188, 191, 257
 Mulroney, Brian, 323
 Muintir na Tire, 253
 Munich pact, 65
 Murphy, Charles, 20
 Murphy, Michael, 101
 Murray, Seán, 179
 Myers, Francis J., 74

 Narasimihan, Chakravarthi, 304
Nation, 37, 114
 National Labour Party, 134, 178, 179, 180, 187, 188, 251, 253
 National Union of Dockers, 30
 Nationalists (NI), 46, 55, 61, 63, 72, 77, 78, 99, 112, 153, 219, 230, 260-1, 270, 271, 272, 282-302, 303, 313, 325
 Nationalists (Southern Ireland), 53, 260
 NATO, 12, 197, 222-3, 223-49, 254, 260, 263, 265, 266, 276, 277-8, 281, 325
 Neenan, Cornelius, 74, 75, 90, 91, 101, 102, 103
 Nehru, Pandit, 217
 New Ireland Forum, 321, 322
New York American, 31
New York Times, 22, 42, 47, 77, 160, 193, 280, 305, 315, 322
 Nicolson, Nigel, 205
 Nixon, Richard, 172, 174, 294, 295, 305

 Noel-Baker, Philip, 200, 213, 237, 259, 262
 Nolan, Seán, 252, 256
 Noraid, 310, 313, 318
 NI Civil Rights Association, 282
 Norton, William, 63, 181, 188, 203, 207, 209, 216, 251
 Nunan, Seán, 198, 225, 237, 245, 264-5

 Oath of Allegiance, 39, 40, 49, 52, 89, 96
 O'Brien, Dennis (Dinny), 103-4
 O'Brien, William, 32, 134, 179, 180
Observer, 185-6, 200
 Ó Buachalla, Donal, 52
 Ó Cadhain, Máirtín, 89
 O'Connell, Cardinal, 43, 114
 O'Connell, Daniel, 13
 O'Connell, Kathleen, 122
 O'Connor, Rory, 195
 O'Connor, Tommy, 41
 O'Donnell, Peadar, 84, 85, 88, 90
 O'Donoghue, Donal, 88, 187
 O'Donovan, Jim, 73
 O'Dwyer, Paul, 103, 114, 306
 O'Dwyer, William, 103, 203, 275
 O'Dwyer, Seamus, 180
 Offences Against the State Act (1939), 74
 Office of War Information report (1942), 90-2
 O'Flaherty, Liam, 91, 114
 O'Flaherty, Peadar, 87
 O'Higgins, Kevin, 48
 O'Higgins, Dr. Tom, 203, 277
 O'Kelly, Seán T., 96, 107, 108, 164, 202, 216, 219
 O'Leary, Grattan, 207-8
 O'Leary, Jeremiah, 19, 21, 101
 O'Leary, John, 181
 O'Leary, John (the Fenian), 195
 O'Mahony, John, 14
 O'Mahoney, Senator Joseph, 234, 243
 O'Mahony, Seán, 45
 O'Neill, Colonel John, 14
 O'Neill, Maurice, 103
 O'Neill, Phelim, 301

- O'Neill, Terence, 47, 283, 284, 285, 287, 288, 290-1, 292, 293
 O'Neill, Tip, 294-5, 313, 317, 318-19, 322, 323
 'Operation Kathleen', 88
 O'Rahilly, Dr Alfred, 179
 O'Rahilly, The, 89
 Orange Order, 168, 286, 290, 296, 302
 Organisation for European Economic Co-Operation (OEEC), 241, 255
 O'Shannon, Cathal, 180
 O'Sullivan, Donal, 303
- Paisley, Rev. Ian, 47, 283, 284, 287, 294
 Paisley, Rev. Kyle, 284
 Pakenham, Frank, 200, 237
 Palmer, A. Mitchell, 36
 Papen, Captain Franz von, 16
 Parnell, Charles Stewart, 12, 15, 35, 42
 Partition Bill, 30
 Peace Conference (1919), 22, 23
 Peacocke, Anthony, 291
 Pearson, Lester, 208
 Peart, Fred, 286
People, 84
 People's Democracy, 287, 292
 Plunkett, Count George, 22, 87, 88, 89
 Pogue, Forrest C., 95
 'Possibilities of Violence in Northern Ireland', 261
 Prevention of Violence Bill (1939), 73
 Price, Michael, 88, 90
 Prior, James, 321
 Provisional IRA, *see* IRA
- Quigley, Martin, 122, 123
 Quill, Michael J., 91, 182
 ('Quinn'), 181
- Reagan, Ronald, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 326
Recollections (John Devoy), 21
 Redmond, John E., 20, 71, 72, 105, 261
- Republic of Ireland Bill (1948), 216
 Republic of Ireland Act (1949), 217, 219, 259, 262
Review, The, 252
 Reynolds, Lieut-Colonel John, 124, 127-9
 Rice, Charles, 103
 Richardson, Lieut-General Sir George, 44
 Richards, James, *see* McCormick
 Robinson, Séamus, 27
 Robinson, Monsignor Pascal, 80, 81, 107-8
 Rogers, William P., 301, 305
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 12, 54, 60, 66, 74, 82, 98, 106, 109, 113, 116, 117, 120, 127, 134, 135, 137, 160, 161; advises de Valera on Irish Republic bonds, 25; partition issue, 56, 57, 58, 71; Barnes and McCormick executions, 76; NI bases, 93, 94-5; ignores de Valera protest, 96; refuses Churchill's appeal on ports, 111; launches Lend-Lease, 114; stormy meeting with Aiken, 115; offers two merchant ships, 118; correspondence with Gray on ports ultimatum proposal, 131, 136, 138, 139, 141, 143, 145, 148, 152-3; assurance on invasion to de Valera, 157; eulogy from de Valera, 163
 Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), 27, 29, 32, 36-7
 Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), 86, 291
 Russell, Seán, 74, 99, 102; in US at outbreak of war, 72, 73; arrested by FBI in Detroit, 75; death aboard a U-boat (1940), 81; activities detailed in FBI memorandum on IRA, 85-90
 Ryan, Frank, 81, 82, 86, 87, 88, 113
- Salazar, President, 145
 Sands, Bobby, 320
 Saor Éire, 88
 Satterthwaite, Livingston, 241, 243
 Scott, C.P., 38

- Scott, Nicholas, 324
 Shannon, William V., 317, 318
 Shore, Mary, 74, 90, 101
 Sinn Féin, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 44, 45, 51, 85, 90, 321, 322, 325
 Sinclair, Betty, 285
 Smale, William, 194
 Smidy, Timothy A., 47-8
 Smith, Governor Al, 36
 Smith, Hugh, 77
 Smith, J., 86
 Smuts, General Jan, 38
 Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), 308, 311, 316, 321, 324
Social Justice, 135
 Soper, Donald, 287
 Spaak, Paul-Henri, 239
 Spanish Civil War, 81, 89
Spectator, 194
 Special Criminal Court, 74
 Special Powers Act, 289, 290, 295
 Spellman, Archbishop (later Cardinal), 165, 166, 172
 Spring, Dan, 104
 Stack, Austin, 39, 40, 99
 Stack, Mrs. A., 104
Standard, 179
 State Department, 47, 59, 74, 115, 134, 165, 168, 169, 256, 260, 271; dissatisfaction with consular split of Ireland, 48-9; 1948 study of partition issue, 49, 53-4; Denby report to, 51; reports to, on partition issue, 55, 57, 191, 193, 194, 220, 221, 238, 242; Costello arms mission, 66, 68; Hayes affair, 83; receives FBI report on IRA, 85, 88, 90; US bases in NI, 93, 96; attempts to connect Brennan and IRA, 100; use of Irish ports, 109, 220; ships supplied to Ireland, 118, 119-20; Gray report on de Valera, 119; on censorship, 124; on arms to Ireland, 126; Gray and ultimatum on ports, 131, 132, 141, 144, 145, 146, 147, 151, 153; approves Gray tour to discuss partition with Irish-Americans, 135, 136; espionage charges, 153-4, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161; alarmed at Gray accusation of de Valera 'hypocrisy', 166; interprets de Valera 1946 St. Patrick's Day broadcast as declaration of permanent neutrality, 167; Marshall Plan, 174; reaction to MacBride, 195; suggests that Garrett keeps London Embassy informed, 195; advises Truman not to meet Costello, 203; attitude to repeal of External Relations Act, 219-220; Keenan appointed head of new Policy Planning Staff, 223; NATO, 223, 227, 237, 243, 247; MacBride's comments on State Department 'hostility', 248; produces memorandum 'Possibilities of Violence in Northern Ireland', 261-2; *aide-mémoire* linking Government of Ireland Act and NATO, 265; MacBride-Truman meeting (1951), 275-8; attitude to Ireland, 280-1; NI situation (1968), 282-6, 294, 301, 309, 311, 318; outlines its view of civil rights agitation, 291-2
Statist, 196
 Stephens, James, 14, 90
 Sterling, Frederick A., 48
 Stettinius, Edward, 145, 153, 162, 167
 Stimson, Henry, 171
 St. Laurent, Louis, 204, 214
 Stockl, Baron, 14
 Stormont (NI), 47, 264, 288, 289, 294, 300, 306
 Stratton, Anderson J., 215
 Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago, 166
 Student, General Kurt, 128, 129
 Sullivan, Alexander, 15
Sunday Independent, 207, 208, 209
Sunday Times, 159, 284
 Sunningdale conference, 308, 309, 310, 326
 Sweeney, Joseph H., 262
 Swift, John, 252

- Taylor, A.J.P., 146
 Taylor, John, 296
 Taylor, Sir John, 29
 Taylor, Myron, 98
 Thatcher, Margaret, 313, 316, 317, 320, 321, 322, 323
 Thomas, Senator Elbert D., 93
 Thomas, J.H., 49, 50
Time, 315
Times, 49, 64, 165, 186, 187, 260
 Tone, T. Wolfe, 11
 Tory, Geofroy, 278, 279
 Tracy, Seán, 27
 Trades Union Congress (TUC), 178
 Transport Workers' Union of America, 114
 Traynor, Oscar, 99, 126
 Truman, Harry S., 173, 193, 194, 198, 203, 219, 250, 275-6, 277-8, 279, 280
 Tumulty, Joe, 19
TV Guide, 321
 Tweedy, R.N., 187
 Twomey, Moss, 52, 82, 84, 88, 89, 90, 96, 99
 Ulster Defence Association, 307
 Unionists (NI), 28, 34, 35, 38, 44, 45, 46, 47, 54, 56, 57, 72, 78, 110, 164, 191, 193, 201, 218, 219, 258, 260, 262, 264, 270, 272, 286, 288, 293, 301, 304, 308, 309, 311, 313, 324, 325
 Unionists (Southern Ireland), 39
 United Irishmen, 11
 United Nations, 125, 147, 148, 150, 168, 169, 170, 171, 300, 308
 US Consul (Dublin), *see* Dumont
US News and World Report, 315
 US Consul-General (Belfast), 92
 US Vice-Consul (Belfast), 30-1
 Veessenmayer, Dr Edmund, 84, 85
 Versailles, Treaty of, 24
 Vishinsky, Andrei, 170
 Volunteer Force (1934), 51, 124
 Walsh, Frank P., 23
 Walsh, Father Paul, 268
 Walshe, Joseph P., 65, 78, 79, 123, 257
 Ward, Dr. Con, 168
 Warnock, Edmund, 191
 Warnock, William, 121
Washington Post, 322
Watchword of Labour, 35
 Welles, Sumner, 59, 76, 93, 95, 118, 119, 120, 127, 131, 132
 West Cork Flying Column, 41
Westminster Gazette, 25, 113
 Whitaker, T. K., 196
 White, Harry, 86
 Whitelaw, William, 307
 Widgery Report, 307
 Williams, Tommy, 97, 98
 Willkie, Wendell, 116, 164
 Wilson, Harold, 283, 286, 294, 299
 Wilson, Woodrow, 12, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 108
 Winant, John G., 141, 142, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 151-2
 Wodehouse, General, 152
 Workers' Union of Ireland, 179, 182
 Young Irelanders, 14
 Zimmermann, Arthur, 19, 21

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