

Foreign Affairs

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*“Every nation, if it is to survive as a nation, must study its own history and have a foreign policy”
- C.J. O'Donnell, *The Lordship of the World*, 1924, p. 145*

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Irish War Policy and Irish Independence

Politicians who tinker with the historic foundations of the state do so at their peril. Irish participation in warfare over the last decade indicates that we are moving towards generating a crisis on the legitimacy of the state.

The last UN sponsored mission in which Ireland participated, and for which there was widespread and proud support in Ireland, was its participation in the UNIFIL force in South Lebanon from the 1970s to the 1990s. This was meant to be an internationally policed "buffer zone" primarily to prevent guerrilla attacks on northern Israel. In fact it functioned more as a protection for the local population against incursions by the Israeli military or arbitrary action by Israel's surrogate militia, the "South Lebanese Army." Irish participation in UNIFIL was widely seen as an expression of an "independent foreign policy". When the Israeli army invading Lebanon in 1982 swept aside the UNIFIL force, killing several Irish soldiers in the process, the reaction in Irish popular opinion was outrage.

UNIFIL was probably the last independent Irish military mission. It was 'independent' in the sense that it was conceived of and agreed to independently of the concerns of the Western military alliance. It was the type of thing that was possible in the neutral space created by the Cold War. The position taken by the Haughey government in 1983 in relation to the British campaign in the Malvinas/Falklands - demanding a negotiated settlement between Britain and Argentina - was of a similar type.

The fall of the Soviet Union and the launching of the Gulf War against Iraq under the banner of creating a 'New World Order' changed all that. The provision of the Shannon Stopover for that adventure signalled the change of direction. UNIFIL came increasingly to be seen as an anachronism and the wind-down soon began.

In this issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, we list the various military missions in which Ireland is now involved. Despite UN resolutions and the rest, every one of them can be defined at some level as advancing Western imperial interests and several are directly under NATO command: Chad, Liberia, Afghanistan, Kosovo and so forth. Every one of these "missions" is regarded by Russia, China and a host of other non-Western powers as essentially hostile to them. The public in Ireland accepts these missions uneasily as actions by the Irish State determined by the obscure requirements of *realpolitik*. There is no enthusiasm or emotional support for them.

So, why are we involved in these campaigns? And why does being at war in such a set-up cause such funda-

mental disquiet in Irish popular opinion? Is there a sense that the foundations of the State are being tampered with, that there are moves underway to reposition the Irish state in relation to its neighbours, and that these moves are reflected in our new military alignments?

Independent foreign policy is one of the defining characteristics of the State. Non-involvement in military alignments has meant historically non-involvement in British militarism. This was a cornerstone of the separatist programme in Ireland. The Treaty of 1921 created a statelet whose major military 'assets' remained in British hands until 1938, and it also prohibited the statelet from developing a military capacity or foreign policy of any kind independent of British control. Both the supporters and opponents of the Treaty knew this and argued their alternative strategies on the basis of realistic approaches to changing that state of affairs. When De Valera came to power in 1932 he set about dismantling those restrictions and finally ended British military occupation in 1938. The treaty restrictions meant that Irish involvement in the Second World War could not have been other than as a subordinate element in British war making.

An independent foreign policy entailing freedom from entanglement in British military interests was one of the pillars on which Irish Independence was constructed. Irish military neutrality has no other meaning.

The cause of Irish military neutrality was put to the test in the 'Great War' of 1914-18. Prior to that war, Irish separatism had vigorously opposed British military imperialism. The Irish Parliamentary Party vociferously denounced campaigns such as the crushing of the Mahdi in Sudan and the war on the Boer Republics. But in the decade following the Boer War, the Irish Party broke with this history. Under the wing of the Liberal Imperialist elite in Britain it now promoted a strategy and world view, which would see a Home Rule Ireland bestriding the globe as an equal partner of Greater Britain in the running of its expanding world empire. At the start of the 'Great War' Redmond and his followers for the first time aligned the Irish interest with the British imperial one, and provided some of the central propaganda for the British cause.

In the General Election of 1918 - the first ever held on a democratic basis, i.e. with a general adult franchise - the Irish Parliamentary Party was swept away and replaced by the electorate with the Sinn Féin movement. Sinn Féin stood for establishing a Republic with an independent foreign policy and freed from any entanglement with British militarism. Its position on neutrality was central to its

programme, and subsequently became central to the state constructed on the basis of its 1918 election landslide.

The 'Great War' was meant to have been a short one. The British Liberal Imperialists who engineered it believed that the blockade by the British Navy combined with the mass armies of the two great conscriptionist "steamrollers", Tsarist Russia and Republican France, with which they had concluded a secret alliance, would crush Germany. A small British Expeditionary Force that had been organised in France without the knowledge of Parliament (or even of most of the Cabinet) helped block the German advance on Paris. That was supposed to be the end of it, but it was not how things developed.

The reason given by the Home Rule Party for becoming an actively militarist segment of the British state in its war effort was not that it was pledged to do so as a matter of routine – for it flew in the face of Irish political tradition - but that this War was unlike any other war fought by Britain. A force of pure evil, it was claimed, had arisen in the world, had equipped itself with a powerful Army, and was threatening the existence of civilisation. The British Empire, discarding all imperialist interest, had undertaken to defend civilisation. When it declared war on Germany, Home Rule Ireland rallied to the cause. It did more than that. It defined the cause and characterised the War as a crusade against a philosophy of evil which had its source in Prussia and which through Prussia had taken command of Germany. The leading Home Rule journalist and politician, Tom Kettle, preached this crusade in the major Liberal newspaper in London in early August 1914, when the established Liberal intellectuals were still unsure of how the War should be played.

Kettle's daring description of the War as a crusade against evil, which would result in perpetual peace when the source of that evil was rooted out, caught on, and spread like wildfire through Ireland and Britain. It served as reality

for the *Irish Independent*, the *Irish News*, the *Freeman's Journal*, and, of course, *The Irish Times*. When Britain declared war on the Turkish Empire late in 1914 and invaded Basra, the *Irish Independent* declared that a universal war of liberation had now been launched.

Britain had fought all its many wars before 1914 not only without conscription, but without the raising of mass armies. Its chief military instrument was the Navy, which made its shores impregnable and controlled the oceans of the world. It did not need a mass army at home, as states with land borders with each other did. Reliance on an Army raised by voluntary recruitment was elevated to the status of a central feature of liberty, and the imposition of military service as a national duty was declared to be "*militarism*".

Kitchener, a colonial General who was not privy to the secret plans of Lord Milner, Lord Grey and their circle for war on Germany, was appointed Secretary for War on the spur of the moment, and he declared that it was necessary to raise a mass army. The War might have taken a very different course but for the combination of Kitchener militarism and the zeal for a moral crusade with which Tom Kettle had infected the English Liberals.

On the face of it, Kitchener and Kettle were at the opposite extremes of the British spectrum. But, in practice, Kitchener's determination to have mass armies was much more in tune with Kettle's moral crusading than a carefully limited balance-of-power engagement would have been.

Mass armies were raised by voluntary recruitment in 1914-15, with the wholehearted participation of the Home Rule Party. But, after the initial outburst of idealist enthusiasm, it became volunteering under harassment of various kinds. And the harassment was officially sponsored. The advocates of conscription then argued that voluntary recruitment no longer deserved the name. It had become a systematically organised, though officially unacknowledged, system of compulsion which only diehard shirkers could resist. The honourable thing was to make military service a national duty.

The Home Rule Party opposed the Conscription Bill in Parliament, declaring that the voluntary system - the system of organised harassment - remained adequate to military requirements. The other parties, who by this time shared governmental responsibility for conducting the War, decided otherwise. The Home Rule Party had refused to join the governing Coalition of the other parties, formed in May 1915, but continued to give unconditional backbench, and recruiting-platform, support to the conduct of the War.

The Home Rule opposition to Conscription was expressed in terms of the old English Liberal position, after the Liberal Party had found that position not to be functional in the conduct of the War which it had declared with enthusiastic support from the Home Rulers. It continued to support the War unconditionally, even after it began to be conducted on the condition of Conscription in Britain in 1917.

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The political culture of the British state, in which the parties of the state participated, included periodic war-making as a normal part of it. Fundamentally they needed no other reason for supporting a war than the fact that the state was at war. The Messianic element injected into this War by Tom Kettle, and adopted as war propaganda, was perhaps believed in earnestly by the Gladstonian backbenches of the Liberal Party. Others - particularly the military stratum on which the conduct of the War depended - made no more than a decent pretence of believing it. And some of them did not even make that pretence, but said straight out that it was a matter of who was to be top dog in the world.

Britain had reasons for making war on Germany which nationalist Ireland did not. For Britain war was a normal activity and this particular war was engineered to see off a challenge to the world hegemony of the British Empire. For nationalist Ireland, willing participation in war as part of the British Empire required an exceptional, unique reason. That reason was the defence of civilisation against an evil Power that was hell-bent on destroying it.

The British parties conducting the War came to the conclusion in 1916 that conscription was necessary, but taking account of Home Rule opposition to it and of the Easter Rising, they did not apply the Act to Ireland. In the Spring of 1918 the Germans launched an offensive in France which came close to breaking the Anglo-French line. The Government, desperately short of manpower, decided to apply the Conscription Act to Ireland.

From the start of the war, Irish opinion rallied wholeheartedly behind the Redmondite imperial cause. The separatist movement was isolated and, being without a party, was contained within the Irish Volunteers. The trade union leader and disciple of Connolly, William O'Brien, sought with other separatists to organise an anti-conscription campaign in 1915, directed against what was called "economic conscription". This was pressure from employers on their workers to join up. O'Brien in his memoirs describes how he had to act with great discretion such was the opposition to his position within the labour movement at the time.

After 1916 all that changed. Ad hoc committees of separatists came together to fight by-elections for a cause increasingly identified as the Sinn Féin cause. From 1917 the seepage of support from Redmond's party to Sinn Féin increasingly included politicians and the local structures of the Irish Party itself. The farce of Britain's "Irish Convention" of 1917 and the subsequent moves by the British Government to link Home Rule with a partition settlement and a commitment to the war effort through the extension of conscription to Ireland brought things to a head and confronted the Irish Parliamentary Party with the logic of its imperial position.

Conscription was the cause which completed the seepage of political opinion in Ireland from Redmondite

Imperialism to separatism and neutrality. The mass movement against conscription was initiated by the Catholic Church. The Hierarchy had supported the Irish Imperial project. But the war to destruction insisted upon by the British Government and the British rejection of peace feelers from Germany and Austria and of the peace initiatives by Pope Benedict XV broke the Redmondite resolve of the Church. The Mansion House Conference of 21 April 1918 for the first time saw the labour movement and the Catholic hierarchy join with Sinn Féin and the separatist movement on a platform that identified Irish sovereignty with anti-conscriptionism and neutrality. The Conscription Pledge was signed at church gates throughout Ireland, and the message was reinforced by the general strike organised by the trade union movement against conscription on 23 April which was also widely supported by employers. The conscription crisis turned the separatist movement from being a segment of the Irish political movement into the mass movement for Irish Independence.

The Home Rule Party could not deny the mood in Ireland and took part in the vigorous, all-embracing Anti-Conscription Campaign. It was a movement that would probably have led to a second Insurrection if the Government had not backed down in the face of it. By taking part in this Campaign, the Home Rule Party discredited itself. It devalued what it had been doing ever since September 1914, when it became an active militarist Party in the British interest, maintaining that civilisation would collapse if the British Empire did not crush Germany.

The Home Rule Party was destroyed in the General Election a few months later. Its participation in the Anti-Conscription Campaign destroyed its credibility by giving the lie to the Messianic propaganda by which it had been recruiting cannon fodder for the British Army for four years. The *de facto* implication of Home Rule participation in the Anti-Conscription Campaign, alongside those who had launched an Insurrection two years earlier as allies of Germany, was that it had been preaching false propaganda for four years.

Nationalist Ireland, hustled into war by means of that millenarian propaganda, now disengaged itself from the British war effort in 1918. In that disengagement lay the formation of an independent Irish body politic which had independence as its object. The duped Home Rule movement seeped away into the independence movement, leaving the Home Rule leaders high and dry.

The independence movement was a negligible quantity in September 1914 when the split occurred. Its first object was to foster Irish neutrality in the War, and to deter recruiting. When this failed it was led by Connolly and Casement into alliance with Germany. It launched its military Insurrection in 1916 against Britain as a declared ally of Germany. The Independence movement regrouped after 1916. It contested several by-elections and won them, not least by linking the cause of the rebellion of 1916 with the issue of conscription and the immorality of Britain's

'Great War'. The Anti-Conscription League effectively became the election committees for these by-elections. By 1918 it achieved its first object: neutrality.

The effective meaning of Irish neutrality is comprehensive disengagement from British war-making and the directing of the state's foreign policy to goals required for the development of the state. Circumstance dictated that neutrality was the actual alternative to participation in war under British hegemony. The British demand in 1940 that Ireland should go to war was made under the circumstance that Britain, through the Treaty and the engineered 'Civil War' of 1922, had made it entirely impossible for Ireland to be a war-making state. The demand that Ireland should enter the War was in effect a demand that it should make itself available to Britain for war-making.

And that is how things remain. Irish Independence is rooted in neutrality, which is the alternative to participation in British militarism. The Irish Parliamentary Party abandoned that position in 1914 and within four years had been comprehensively destroyed. Britain remains the war-making power in this region of the world. Fianna Fáil militarists like Willie O'Dea have neither an Army capable of military action, nor the will to construct one. All they are capable of doing is restoring the British military hegemony in Ireland that was broken in the Anti-Conscription Campaign of 1918. Directing Irish foreign and military policy in such a direction is tinkering with a foundation stone of Irish Independence. It is an activity which can only have consequences for that Independence itself. □

Book review: The War That Won't Go Away

Jack Lane

"Human Smoke" by Nicholson Baker. (Simon and Schuster, 2008)

This is an unusual but very interesting book on WWII.

First, its faults - it is confined essentially to a US angle; the War with the Soviet Union might as well not have happened; it is written from a pacifist perspective; there is no narrative in the normal sense.

Also, it seems to have been written by accident. The author bought a load of left-over newspapers from the British Library and after storing them for years decided to read them and discovered that they gave a quite different view of WWII than what is now propounded. The book is a collection of contemporary items from the newspapers supplemented by later diaries, memoirs, etc.

As a reviewer in the Guardian put it, the question it really poses is: "But was the Second World War quite

what we think it was?" The book makes a strong case that it was not.

For example, it was not fought for the Jews. The idea of Britain declaring war on Germany over the Nazi treatment of the Jews after they came to power is about as realistic as expecting Britain to declare war on the US over its treatment of Blacks. And the Jews were never enslaved in Germany and I have not heard of routine lynching of Jews there over centuries.

He quotes Chamberlain, who declared war, writing to his sister "No doubt the Jews aren't a lovable people. I don't care about them myself; but that is not sufficient to explain the Pogrom" (30/7/1939). And Churchill in 1920 had written about the "sinister confederacy" of international Jewry that was Bolshevism. It was a "world-wide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilisation and for the reconstruction of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious, malevolent and impossible equality" (2/8/1920). No Nazi could have put it better.

Horror of horrors, Baker provides plenty evidence that paints Churchill just as Hitler did - a reckless warmonger. Baker even quotes Churchill's wife Clementine in evidence for this: "You are bloodthirsty" she told him - and she should know (6/3/41).

Baker makes a convincing case that Roosevelt was angling for war with Japan for years but knew he needed a suitable 'attack' on the US to change public opinion. He tried hard and finalised his plans by setting up the navy at Pearl Harbour as the bait. It worked.

Why can such things be said today about what was supposed to be the most glorious war ever against the greatest evil ever?

It comes back to Iraq. Here we have a war that was fought against the modern Hitler. He was the greatest threat to the world with his WMD, was he not? A monster if ever there was one. Remember his bombs on London were only 45 minutes away.

It was all a pack of lies. But one effect of the truth as it emerged was the breaking of the taboo of slogans and unthinking about the real Hitler. The 'mother of all battles' could turn out to be a metaphor for the battle that Britain and the West will have to fight to maintain the moral high ground they claim on WWII.

Logically enough this is being thought through more in the US than in Europe as they are actually fighting the current war. War does concentrate the mind wonderfully. The US may change the world more than they ever bargained for before that war is over.

In a nutshell, Baker believes that WWII was an unnecessary war. One does not need to be a pacifist to agree with him. □

Historic Confusion: The Department of the Taoiseach on the 'Great War'

By Dr. Pat Walsh

As far as foreign affairs are concerned, there can be no more significant thing that Ireland has ever done than help destroy the Ottoman Empire.

Wondering why Ireland went to war with the Ottoman Empire in November 1914, I chanced to look at the Taoiseach's website for answers.

I was struck by the presence of the poem *The Irish in Gallipoli* on it - in a section headed *Irish Soldiers in the Great War*. It is by Francis Ledwidge, one of the Irish attackers of Turkey at the Dardanelles in mid-1915. And the office of the Taoiseach has chosen it to illustrate why Irish soldiers generally participated in the Great War:

Where Aegean cliffs with bristling menace front
The threatening splendour of that isley sea
Lighted by Troy's last shadow, where the first
Hero kept watch and the last Mystery
Shook with dark thunder, hark the battle brunt!
A nation speaks, old Silences are burst.

Neither for lust of glory nor new throne
This thunder and this lightning of our wrath
Waken these frantic echoes, not for these
Our cross with England's mingle, to be blown
On Mammon's threshold; we but war when war
Serves Liberty and Justice, Love and Peace.

Who said that such an emprise could be vain?
Were they not one with Christ Who strove and died?
Let Ireland weep but not for sorrow. Weep
That by her sons a land is sanctified
For Christ Arisen, and angels once again
Come back like exile birds to guard their sleep.

Francis Ledwidge was a soldier in the 10th Division of the

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British Army. He was an enthusiastic Home Ruler and had been a founder member of the Irish Volunteers in Slane, County Meath. When the Volunteers split over John Redmond's commitment to the British War on Germany at Woodenbridge, Ledwidge had gone against the Irish Party leader and with Eoin MacNeill. But a week later he enlisted in the British Army, in the 10th Division, to fight the Germans. He wrote the poem not in 1915, but in 1916, after the Easter Rising. It represents a justification, therefore, of Irish participation in the War, particularly against the Turks, when an assertion of dissent had been made against it.

Presumably the Ledwidge poem is on the Taoiseach's website because there was Irish participation in the Imperial assault on the Dardanelles and, as Ledwidge describes, an Irish blood sacrifice in that crusade. These days it is regarded as imperative that equal recognition be given to those who participated in the Great War of 1914-18 along with those who helped found the Irish State (and office of Taoiseach).

There seems to be no understanding of the perversity of this - that an attack on an ally of the 1916 rebels, conducted by the Empire which Ireland had to go to war with to gain independence, should be given pride of place by the senior office of the independent Irish State. But it is symptomatic of the confusion at the level of State in Ireland these days, that can have fatal results - even for the Taoiseach himself.

Have the compilers of the Taoiseach's website read *The Irish in Gallipoli* or thought about the meaning of the poem?

There is certainly no explanation of why this Crusader hymn, which talks of the mingling of the crosses of Ireland and England in war, and the sanctifying of (Muslim) land for Christ, appears on the Taoiseach's website. Strangely enough one line is different from a version in Major Bryan Cooper's *The Tenth (Irish) Division in Gallipoli* which instead of "we but war when war Serves Liberty and Justice, Love and Peace" has "we but war when war Serves Liberty and keeps a world at Peace"

Well, in the light of history, the line on the Taoiseach's website is certainly not as badly off the mark - because the war to end all wars was surely concluded by a peace to end all peace!

But why is the Taoiseach's website devoted to a glorification of the British Empire's attack on Turkey in 1915 - at least, without giving good reason for it.

The Taoiseach's Account

This is how the Taoiseach's website describes the events at the start of the Great War:

"The Home Rule Bill was given the Royal Assent on the 18th September 1914 but its operation was suspended for one year or for the duration of the war when it would be reviewed with a view

to securing the general consent of Ireland and the United Kingdom. On the 20th September, the leader of the Nationalist Party, John Redmond, who was widely expected to be the first Prime Minister of the new Irish Parliament, called on the Irish Volunteers to enlist. Irish soldiers in the British Expeditionary Force had already been in action in Flanders. The German advance through Belgium, the rumours of atrocities and refugees and the near capture of Paris had created an emotional atmosphere. The organisation split with those who followed Redmond being called the National Volunteers. About 12,000 of the 180,000 retained the Irish Volunteers title and set themselves the objective of gaining full independence for Ireland, by force if necessary. The peaceful achievement of Home Rule was again in doubt due to the failure of the Government to deal with the build-up of arms in Northern Ireland and the public refusal of a cavalry brigade in the Curragh to enforce Home Rule Act if so requested.

About 80,000 enlisted in Ireland in the first 12 months of the war, some half of whom came from Ulster. The First New Army of 100,000 soldiers, K1, contained the 10th (Irish) Division which was formed in late August, 1914. It had three brigades. One had regiments with bases in all four provinces. The second was based in Ulster and the third was based in the other three provinces. The 16th (Irish) Division of the Second New Army was formed in September, 1914. One brigade was from the province of Ulster. The 36th (Ulster) Division was authorised on the 28th October 1914. It was based on the formation and membership of the Ulster Volunteer Force to which a London based artillery unit was added. It contained men from all nine counties of Ulster. Redmond had sought to have all Irish regiments organised into a single fighting unit."

The 10th Division of Kitchener's New Army was made up of a large number of Irishmen from Redmond's Irish Volunteers, along with Englishmen and Punjabis, but it was not an Irish Division. This was because the Unionists who dominated the War Office did not want an Irish army. They wanted to disable Ireland's military expression, or continue to incorporate it within the confines of the Imperialist State, rather than enhance it. The War Office had given their blessing to an Ulster Division (the 36th), according to a part of Ireland a national recognition that had never sought national recognition. But to the Irish, who craved national recognition, the War Office would not concede any national recognition, despite their enthusiastic support for the Empire, and the pleadings of Mr. Redmond to Mr. Asquith.

No matter. Home Rule Ireland persisted and it recruited for the Empire's War on Germany despite the snub from Lord Kitchener, the Kerryman who detested Ireland - apart from that part of it which he could "take his hat off to" for providing him with cannon fodder for the front.

Unlike the 36th Ulster Division, the 10th Division of the British Army (which became largely manned by Irishmen, but was not 'Irish') was already in existence in August 1914 and took up training at the Curragh Camp in Kildare in the early part of 1915. The previous year British officers at the Curragh had staged a mutiny against the Liberal Government's Home Rule Bill. But now enthusiastic Home Rulers recruited Irishmen to serve in the same Army, under the same officers, for the purposes of ensuring that Home Rule would become a reality. In May 1915 they were moved to England where General Kitchener, now heading the War Office, inspected them before sending them off against a new enemy, the Turk.

Ireland's 'Military Tradition'?

The Taoiseach's website suggests that there was nothing unusual in the Irish participation in the Great War, and presumably, the assault on Turkey, given Ireland's "*strong military tradition*":

"Ireland has a strong military tradition. Even before the departure of the "Wild Geese" after the Treaty of Limerick, Irish soldiers had practised their profession abroad. The recent exhibition of prints by Albrecht Durer contained a watercolour of "Irish soldiers" from 1521. Throughout the 19th century, the British Army in Ireland provided a convenient outlet for young men interested in soldiering. The country was divided into catchment areas for local regiments which offered regular income, attractive uniforms and the opportunity to travel abroad. Others joined the British navy. Irish emigrants to the United States had won distinction on both sides in the Civil War."

Well that's one way of putting it - that the Irish liked a fight and the British Army was a convenient outlet for their natural pent up aggression!

But if Ireland had ever had a "strong military tradition" it was certainly broken in 1690 and never recovered. England connived in the departure of "Wild Geese" and subsequent Irish departures to the continent as a means of draining away any potential resistance to its pacification of the country. Subsequently, after a century of the Penal Laws, the British Army recruited a large part of its cannon-fodder in Ireland. But any military tradition that Ireland had was channelled by Britain into the external affairs of Empire building, as part of the expansion of the British State across the globe. Ireland itself remained a most unmilitary of societies and any expression of Irish militarism was greatly discouraged, by various means. By the end of the nineteenth century Ireland had become thoroughly pacified and there was only a "cabbage-patch rebellion" left in living memory. The Fenians had become the object of sentimental ballads and could be held up by the Irish Party politicians as icons, the product of times past.

Not only that - the political representatives of the Irish and their press were most hostile to militarism, as any reading of the papers around the time of the Boer War clearly demonstrates. Up until the Unionists introduced the gun back into Irish politics in 1910-12 Ireland had put its fate in the hands of peaceful parliamentary methods.

A Great War to Unite Us All?

The Taoiseach's website offers the following further explanation for Irish enlistment in 1914:

"The reasons for enlisting were as varied as the individuals. Some joined out of economic necessity. Others had the hope that the experience of serving side by side against a common enemy would forge friendships that would transcend the historic differences. Thomas Kettle, the former Nationalist MP for East Tyrone who served and was killed as a Lieutenant in the 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, believed that:

"Used with the wisdom which is sown in tears and blood, this tragedy of Europe may be and must be the prologue to the two reconciliations of which all statesmen have dreamed, the reconciliation of Protestant Ulster with Ireland, and the reconciliation of Ireland with Great Britain."

Of course, Irishmen always joined the British Army for economic reasons, to seek adventure or ward off starvation. But 1914 was different. The Irish were recruited as an expression of national existence, to a make-believe Irish army, by the future Irish Prime Minister, representing a Home Rule government in waiting. And it wasn't just the "sweepings" or the "corner boys" that joined up, but poets, professors and the solid middle classes as well.

There has recently been a book of essays published with the title *Ireland And The Great War: A War To Unite Us All?* edited by Adrian Gregory and Sonia Pasetta, two Oxford Fellows (Apparently Roy Foster suggested the title.) In the Introduction the contemporary significance of the Great War is discussed:

"As the Northern Ireland peace process gathered momentum the commemoration of the Great War, which had been frequently been symbolic of the massive gulf between and within each of the 'two Irelands,' became a forum for dialogue and reconciliation. In 1987 the IRA had perpetrated one of the most striking human and symbolic atrocities by bombing the war memorial at Enniskillen on Remembrance Day. Eleven years later the Queen and the President of the Republic joined together in unveiling a memorial to the joint martyrdom of the 16th and 36th Divisions at Messines in 1917. Catholic, nationalist and southern Ireland could apparently link hands with northern Protestant unionists over the grave of William Redmond. The spirit of 1914 could be reborn, the clock turned back."(p.6)

The most despicable of all reasons for Irish participation in the catastrophic killing fest that was the Great War was surely the desire for Irish unity to be attained under Home Rule by killing Germans and Turks in massive numbers. At least the Unionists have never stooped so low as to suggest such a thing and have retained a dignified silence on such a monstrous fantasy (the only unionist contributor to the essay collection, Philip Orr, markedly dissents from the view.) The proposal that 50,000 Irishmen should die - and with a proportionate killing rate - 50,000 Germans, Austrians, Turks etc., not to mention the effects on Europe and the wider World, to persuade Unionists of Nationalist good intentions under Home Rule, really should be confined to the desperate ranting of the lunatic.

But that is the basis on which some nationalist politicians and academics have recently tried to use the catastrophe of the Great War for political purposes: "The spirit of 1914 could be reborn, the clock turned back." Oh what a lovely War!

Bad History or Revised History?

Here is the Taoiseach's account of Ireland's Great War on Turkey:

"The stalemate on the Western Front prompted an alternative approach to defeating Germany. The capture of Constantinople, now Istanbul, would give a direct link to the Russian ally and a successful eastern front campaign could be undertaken. A British Navy attempt to sail up the Dardanelles on March 18 failed with the loss of several ships. Despite the advanced warning that this gave the Turks, the British and French attempted a land invasion on the 25th April. They went ashore at six locations but the Turkish defence held them close to the beaches. A second attempt was made on the 6th August at Suvla Bay but this also ground to a halt. The campaign was abandoned and last of the troops were withdrawn in January 1916. Churchill, who had proposed the

campaign, had to resign from the Cabinet. He subsequently lost his seat in the House of Commons and had to wait until the outbreak of the Second World War to return to a position of power.

The 1st Battalions of the Royal Dublin, Munster and Inniskilling Fusiliers took part in the landing on April 25th at Cape Helles which was a perfect defensive location with gun emplacements housed on steep slopes. The naval bombardment failed to neutralize the Turkish defences. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Royal Munster Fusiliers were the first to disembark from the S.S. River Clyde and of the first 200 men to leave the ship, 149 were killed and 30 wounded immediately. The Dublins had 25 officers and 987 other ranks but only, one officer and 374 other ranks made it ashore. There were 637 casualties in the first 36 hours.

The Allies decided to launch a fresh attack against the Turks and chose Suvla Bay, 25 miles north of Cape Helles. The first Irish volunteer unit to go into battle was the 10th (Irish) Division which contained the new service battalions of the Irish regiments. As a result of administrative incompetence, the Division's artillery had been sent to France and the men arrived without either maps or orders. The Division did not fight as a unit. There was a chronic water shortage and the soldiers ran out of ammunition and had to resort to throwing stones at the enemy. At least 3,411 serving with Irish battalions were killed or missing, 569 from the 1st Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers alone...

On September 29, 1915, the 2,454 strong 10th (Irish) Division set sail from Gallipoli for Salonika to fight on the Bulgarian front. On the 3rd October, the Royal Dublin and Munster Fusiliers were at the front line and were ordered to take the village of Jenikoj which is now in Macedonia. In the attack, they lost 385 men killed, wounded or missing. There is a granite Celtic cross to commemorate the 10th (Irish) Division near the village of Robrovo in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This complements the ones at Wijtschate in Flanders and Guillemont in France."

I wonder, in what election was it, that the proposer of the campaign, Winston Churchill "subsequently lost his seat in the House of Commons and had to wait until the outbreak of the Second World War to return to a position of power"? There was, in fact no election until the end of 1918 and Winston Churchill was a prominent Government Minister in the Coalition formed thereafter, having a large say in the Irish Treaty negotiations and its imposition, as Secretary of State for the Colonies. And in the Conservative Government after that he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the most important "positions of power," I had imagined. In fact, even in his "wilderness years" in the 1930s, Churchill was consulted about important affairs of state, as in his role to the Peel Commission on Palestine.

Churchill, in fact, only lost his job at the Admiralty in May 1915 when a Unionist coup forced Liberal Ministers out to make way for them with Churchill a handy candidate for demotion because of the botching at Gallipoli. He actually remained in the Government as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster until November 1915, when he resigned to do something more substantial at the front. And he remained an M.P. all the time! He returned to the Government in 1917 and became Minister for Munitions, and then, Air Minister.

How is it possible for someone to put the statement: Winston Churchill "subsequently lost his seat in the House of Commons and had to wait until the outbreak of the Second World War to return to a position of power" on the Taoiseach's website and for it to remain there for two years

without anyone noticing it? What does this say about the knowledge of history today in Ireland's ruling circles?

The other noticeable thing about the account is how it virtually stops with Gallipoli and says very little about the 10th Division's exploits in Greece, Egypt, Palestine and Mesopotamia afterwards. There is no discussion about the subsequent political repercussions of Ireland's contribution to the War on Turkey. One wonders is that bad history or just diplomatic history?

All in all the Taoiseach's website is not very enlightening on why Ireland made war on Turkey. It tells us little about the reasons why the Ottoman Empire was destroyed, resulting in massive ethnic cleansing across the Balkans and Near East. Or how the Irish in the British 10th Division helped undermine Greek neutrality, leading to a blockade of the country which killed thousands of civilians. Or how the regime change at Athens and the dragging of Greece into

the war resulted in the fatal Greek adventure in Anatolia that killed thousands and displaced millions. Or how the Irish helped capture Jerusalem for the Balfour Declaration and how this led to the Zionist State. Or how the Middle East was reordered, Iraq created, and made what it is today with the help of the 10th Division. Or how the Irish Free State, upon disestablishing the Irish Republic, was forced to end the war with Turkey in conjunction with the rest of the British Empire by ratifying the Treaty of Lausanne in 1924, even though it disassociated itself from Redmond's war of 1914.

Nationalist Ireland's indulgence in Remembrance has forced us to remember all these forgotten aspects of Ireland's greatest foreign adventure - its Great War on Turkey between 1914 and 1924. □

Sudan and the International Criminal Court

By David Morrison

The International Criminal Court (ICC) [1] was set up at an international conference in Rome in July 1998, which approved the Statute specifying how the Court was to function. Its jurisdiction commenced on 1 July 2002, after 60 states had signed and ratified what has become known as the Rome Statute. Today, 106 states have ratified it [2].

States that have not become party to the Statute include the US, Russia, China, Israel, Iraq, Sudan and Zimbabwe. The UK is a party to the Statute, as are all other EU states, apart from the Czech Republic.

Crimes the ICC can prosecute

The ICC may, in certain circumstances, prosecute individuals (not states) for (a) genocide, (b) war crimes, and/or (c) crimes against humanity, as defined in Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Statute [3].

The Statute also mentions "the crime of aggression", but the founding conference couldn't agree on a definition. Article 5 says:

"The Court shall exercise jurisdiction over the crime of aggression once a provision is adopted ... defining the crime and setting out the conditions under which the Court shall exercise jurisdiction with respect to this crime. Such a provision shall be consistent with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations."

It would be nice to see a future Tony Blair prosecuted by the ICC for the crime of aggression, but it isn't going to happen. Britain and the other permanent members of the Security Council, which are immune from sanction by the Security Council for aggression, are not going to make their leaders liable for prosecution for aggression at the ICC.

ICC jurisdiction

The ICC has jurisdiction in respect of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, committed in the territories of states that are party to the Statute, or by

nationals of states that are party to the Statute. However, the primary duty for prosecuting these crimes lies with the state in which they were committed – and the ICC only acquires jurisdiction to prosecute them if the state fails to prosecute them. In principle, the ICC can prosecute any individual responsible for these crimes, regardless of his/her civilian or military status or official position.

This means that, in theory, a national of a state that is not party to the Statute, for example, a US national, may be tried by the ICC for crimes committed in a state that is a party to the Statute. The US is particularly opposed to this, since it has civilian and military personnel in many states around the world, many of which are party to the Statute. It is US policy to prevent the ICC trying any US nationals.

To enforce this, in 2002 the US tried to persuade the Security Council to act to make UN peacekeepers, including US nationals, immune from ICC prosecution. On 30 June 2002, having failed to get the Security Council to do this, the US vetoed the renewal of the mandate of a UN peacekeeping operation in Bosnia. This became a priority issue for the US, when Bosnia ratified the Rome Statute on 11 April 2002. In vetoing the resolution the US ambassador to the UN, John Negroponte, made it clear that the US

"does not and will not accept the jurisdiction of the ICC over the peacekeepers that it contributes to operations established and authorized by the United Nations" [4].

A temporary solution was found by passing resolution 1422 [5] on 12 July 2002, which used the provisions in Article 16 of the Rome Statute empowering the Security Council to defer ICC investigations for a year, and then another year (see below). Paragraph 1 of the resolution stated:

"[The Security Council] Requests, consistent with the provisions of Article 16 of the Rome Statute, that the ICC, if a case arises involving current or former officials or personnel from a contributing State not a Party to the Rome Statute over acts or omissions relating to a United Nations established or authorized

operation, shall for a twelve-month period starting 1 July 2002 not commence or proceed with investigation or prosecution of any such case, unless the Security Council decides otherwise."

By this means, the possibility of ICC investigation of US nationals acting as UN peacekeepers was, in theory, put off for a year. In fact, the matter was never put to the test and the provisions of 1422 were never renewed.

In the meantime, the US set about making agreements with (or forced agreements upon?) states that are parties to the Statute, in which these states undertook not to surrender any US national to the ICC [6]. In theory, this was a general protection for US nationals, whereas, at best, resolution 1422 merely protected US nationals who were serving as UN peacekeepers. To date, the US has made over 100 of these agreements.

The US takes the view that the existence of these agreements exempts states parties to the Rome Statute from their duty to surrender individuals to the ICC. Article 98.2 states:

"The Court may not proceed with a request for surrender which would require the requested State to act inconsistently with its obligations under international agreements pursuant to which the consent of a sending State is required to surrender a person of that State to the Court, unless the Court can first obtain the cooperation of the sending State for the giving of consent for the surrender."

Hence, these agreements are referred to as Article 98 agreements.

ICC not an independent judicial body

Sudan is not a party to the Rome Statute, so how did the ICC acquire the jurisdiction to prosecute the Sudanese President, Omar Hassan al-Bashir (and, prior to that, two other Sudanese nationals)?

The answer lies in Article 13(b) of the Statute, which states that the ICC may exercise jurisdiction in respect of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity if:

"A situation in which one or more of such crimes appears to have been committed is referred to the Prosecutor by the Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations."

So, the ICC is not an independent judicial body, the jurisdiction of which states can choose to reject, as the US has done. On the contrary, its jurisdiction can be extended by the Security Council to apply to states that have chosen to reject its jurisdiction.

Of course, this cannot happen to veto-wielding members of the Security Council, who have chosen not to become a party to the Statute – since they can wield their veto to block any attempt by the Security Council to extend the ICC's jurisdiction to their territory. So, China, Russia and the US, which have chosen not to ratify the Statute, will never have ICC jurisdiction extended to their territories.

And neither will Israel, since the US can be relied upon to use its veto to block it.

A Court with universal jurisdiction is fair. A Court, the jurisdiction of which states can choose to accept, has a semblance of fairness. But a Court, like the ICC, the jurisdiction of which can be extended by the Security Council to some states that have chosen not to accept its jurisdiction, but not to others, is grossly unfair.

Security Council refers Darfur to ICC

On 31 March 2005, the Security Council passed Chapter VII resolution 1593 [7], sponsored by the UK, which extended the jurisdiction of the ICC into Sudan. In Paragraphs 1 and 2, it decided "*to refer the situation in Darfur since 1 July 2002 to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court*" and ordered the Government of Sudan to cooperate with the ICC, even though it isn't a party to the Rome Statute.

But Paragraph 5 emphasised

"the need to promote healing and reconciliation and encourages in this respect the creation of institutions, involving all sectors of Sudanese society, such as truth and/or reconciliation commissions, in order to complement judicial processes and thereby reinforce the efforts to restore long-lasting peace, with African Union and international support as necessary."

Institutions such as truth and/or reconciliation commissions involve drawing a line under the past and dispensing with formal judicial processes in respect of past activity that was unquestionably illegal. As such, their operation is incompatible with that of the ICC, which is duty bound to prosecute individuals in accordance with the Rome Statute, and cannot exempt individuals from prosecution, even if it was probable that prosecuting them would inhibit "healing and reconciliation", or lead to further loss of life.

Lord's Resistance Army

Here, it is worth recalling the ICC's involvement in the conflict in northern Uganda, where the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was in rebellion (see, for example, an account in *Time* on 10 November 2007 [8]). In this instance, the Ugandan government requested the ICC to intervene and in July 2005 the ICC issued warrants for 5 LRA leaders (Joseph Kony, Vincent Otti, Raska Lukwiya, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen) on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Not one of them has been arrested.

Later, when attempts to broker a political settlement got under way, the existence of these charges became stumbling blocks toward an agreement, the LRA leaders naturally insisting that the charges be dropped as a condition for entering into an agreement. The Ugandan government has asked the ICC to drop the charges so that an agreement can be made, but there is no provision in the Rome Statute to allow the ICC to drop them, understandably so.

This illustrates the incompatibility between the application of a formal judicial process and a political process in attempting to resolve a conflict.

China speaks

Resolution 1593 was passed by 11 votes (Argentina, Benin, Denmark, France, Greece, Japan, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Tanzania and the UK) to 0 with 4 abstentions (Algeria, Brazil, China and the US).

China's objections were pragmatic, namely, that it would interfere with efforts to reach a political settlement. After

the vote, the Chinese Ambassador to the UN, Wang Guangya, told the Security Council:

"We are not in favour of referring the question of Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC) without the consent of the Sudanese Government, because we are afraid that that would not only severely complicate efforts to secure an early settlement of the Darfur issue, but also have unforeseeable consequences for the north-south peace process in the Sudan." [9]

Now the Sudanese president has been charged by the ICC, many people are wishing that China's view had prevailed in the Security Council.

China's ambassador also said:

"We cannot accept any exercise of the ICC's jurisdiction against the will of non-State parties, and we would find it difficult to endorse any Security Council authorization of such an exercise of jurisdiction by the ICC."

However, China didn't use its veto to prevent the ICC's jurisdiction being extended into Sudanese territory against the wishes of Sudan (and neither did Russia, which voted for the resolution). Today, now that China is asserting itself in the world, things might be different.

US speaks

The US Deputy Ambassador, Anne Patterson, told the Security Council:

"The United States continues to fundamentally object to the view that the ICC should be able to exercise jurisdiction over the nationals, including government officials, of States not party to the Rome Statute. That strikes at the essence of the nature of sovereignty. Because of our concerns, we do not agree to a Security Council referral of the situation in Darfur to the ICC and abstained in the voting on today's resolution." [9]

That makes a case for vetoing the resolution, rather than abstaining as the US did. She continued:

"We decided not to oppose the resolution because of the need for the international community to work together in order to end the climate of impunity in the Sudan and because the resolution provides protection from investigation or prosecution for United States nationals and members of the armed forces of non-State parties."

This protection for nationals of states, including the US, that are not parties to the Rome Statute is provided in Paragraph 6 of the resolution, which says that they cannot be prosecuted by the ICC without the consent of the states of which they are nationals. Paragraph 6 says:

"[The Security Council] Decides that nationals, current or former officials or personnel from a contributing State outside Sudan which is not a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of that contributing State for all alleged acts or omissions arising out of or related to operations in Sudan established or authorized by the Council or the African Union, unless such exclusive jurisdiction has been expressly waived by that contributing State."

Later, Anne Patterson said:

"We believe that, in the future, absent consent of the State involved, any investigations or prosecutions of nationals of non-party States should come only pursuant to a decision by the Security Council."

This is significantly different to the position she stated earlier, namely, that the US is opposed to the ICC being 'able to exercise jurisdiction over the nationals, including government officials, of States not party to the Rome Statute'.

Of course, in the particular case of US nationals, the two positions are identical since the US is in a position to veto any attempt to refer a situation to the ICC, if it carries with it any possibility of US nationals being prosecuted. Once the protection for US nationals provided in Paragraph 6 was in place, the US didn't need to use its veto. At that point, the US was content to see the ICC exercise jurisdiction over the nationals of Sudan, even though Sudan is, like the US, not party to the Rome Statute. As ever, there's one rule for veto-wielding states, and another for the rest.

Darfur cases

As a result of resolution 1593, the ICC Prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, presented cases against Ahmad Harun (a minister in the Sudanese Government) and Ali Kushayb to the Pre-Trial Court of the ICC, accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. The Court issued warrants for their arrest on these charges on 17 April 2007. Neither has been arrested.

And on 14 July 2008, Luis Moreno-Ocampo accused President al-Bashir with genocide, as well as war crimes and crimes against humanity. It will be up to the Pre-Trial Court to decide whether to issue a warrant for his arrest for any or all of these crimes. Needless to say, even if a warrant is issued, it is extremely unlikely that President al-Bashir will ever be arrested and appear before the ICC. He will avoid arrest by refraining from travelling abroad.

Moreno-Ocampo had the option of making a 'sealed' request to the Pre-Trial Court for a 'sealed' arrest warrant, to be made public only when President al-Bashir travelled abroad, where he could possibly be arrested. That way there was some chance of President Bashir appearing before the ICC. Making the application in public has ensured that he will probably never appear before the ICC.

A prosecutor that chooses to act in a way that makes it extremely unlikely that his prosecution will succeed, instead of in a way that it has a chance of succeeding, is not in the business of prosecution. He's in the business of puffing himself up. The only rational explanation for Luis Moreno-Ocampo's behaviour is that he wanted to be the first prosecutor to accuse a sitting head of state of the 'crime of crimes', that is, genocide. Although in September 2004 the US officially described what happened in Darfur as 'genocide' [10], few people believe that genocide as defined in the Rome Statute took place in Darfur and that there is a chance of convicting anybody of genocide. But, first of all, the accused has to be brought to court, and that is very unlikely.

Will the Security Council intervene?

It remains to be seen if the Pre-Trial Court grants Luis Moreno-Ocampo's request for a warrant for the President al-Bashir's arrest, and, if so, on what charges. It also remains to be seen whether the attempt to bring this prosecution makes it more difficult to reach some kind of settlement with regard to Darfur, as has been done with southern Sudan.

Interesting questions will arise for Western diplomats, if a warrant is issued for the President's arrest, for example,

will they be prepared to deal politically with a person who is wanted by the ICC, or with any member of his government?

Even if a warrant is issued, it is still possible for the Security Council to put the whole thing on the long finger (though it cannot make the ICC drop the charges). Article 16 of the Rome Statute gives it the power to do so. It states:

"No investigation or prosecution may be commenced or proceeded with under this Statute for a period of 12 months after the Security Council, in a resolution adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, has requested the Court to that effect; that request may be renewed by the Council under the same conditions."

So, the Security Council could defer the prosecution for a year, and then another year, and so on. Admittedly, the Council will look a bit foolish doing that, since it referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC in the first place – and President al-Bashir would continue to be a wanted man. Strangely, it seems as if the US is in favour of constant interference by the Security Council in the process. Speaking to the Council when the reference to the ICC was made, Anne Patterson remarked:

"Consistent with our long-standing views about the appropriate role of the Security Council, we expect that, by having the

Security Council refer the situation in Darfur to the ICC, firm political oversight of the process will be exercised. The Council's action today plays an important role in that regard. We expect that the Council will continue to exercise such oversight as investigations and prosecutions pursuant to the referral proceed."

It remains to be seen if the Council exercise this "oversight" to the extent of deferring the prosecution indefinitely. □

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Voting rights for expatriates

Cathy Winch

If the French had had the opportunity to vote for the Lisbon Treaty, I could have taken part in the vote, in virtue of my French nationality, even though I don't live in France and have not lived there for many years. I was surprised to learn that the Irish who live abroad could not take part in the referendum, even if they were born in Ireland and have immediate family there.

Obviously the laws regarding nationality and right for expatriates to vote depend on each country's historical situation.

A country like France with a colonial past has laws to restrict access to nationality and those laws have hardened recently. Children born in France of immigrant parents now have to ask for French nationality, whereas in the past they were granted it automatically. I used to get my French identity card delivered without formalities, but now, since I was not born in France, I have to show my grand-mother's birth certificate when I need to renew my French identity card, and there could be questions regarding my grand-father's birth certificate, since he was born in the Territory of Belfort, which was not part of France at the time of his birth.

A country like Ireland without a colonial past, but on the contrary a past of emigration, will be more generous with the granting of nationality.

The situation is reversed when it comes to voting rights. French expatriates represent a small fraction of the total population, and have the right to vote. Irish expatriates are more numerous than the actual population and could have a determining influence on results; they do not have the right to vote.

French expatriates are well looked after by their government; they are always considered as being temporarily away, counted, listed and issued with special consular identity cards; they are considered as part of the *rayonnement* (shining influence) of France abroad. Sarkozy came to London to speak to the French as part of his campaign for the presidential election. Everything is done to facilitate voting from abroad.

If you have French nationality, you can be on an electoral list in France even if you do not have residence there. You have a choice of where to vote: you can choose to be on the list of the *commune* (town/village) of your birth, of your last domicile, or where any of your relations even at fourth remove figure or even once figured. The person voting for you by proxy can be anyone on that same electoral register, and they can have two proxy votes if one of the votes is from abroad.

Voting in the home elections means a lot to me, and I would not like to be in the situation of the Irish in Britain and denied the right to vote. Solutions such as two levels of nationality, one with and one without voting rights, perhaps depending on place of birth, would hardly be satisfactory.

Irish Aid and Development: On the Right Track?

By Colm Moylan

While many aspects of Ireland's foreign policy (or more accurately lack of an independent foreign policy) over recent years have become a cause of concern, one area in which the Irish people can take justifiable pride is our foreign aid programme. In 2008 Ireland's official development assistance (ODA) stands at €914 million, and the Government is committed to reaching the UN target of spending 0.7% of GNP on official development assistance in 2012, when spending on development in that year will be of the order of €1.4 billion. This, if achieved, will make Ireland, pro rata, one of the biggest donor countries in the world. However the current noises coming out of the Department of Finance about the need for budgetary restraint may well see the goalposts being moved in relation to this target in the near future. Ireland is also to be commended on the fact that it is one of the few developed countries where overseas development aid is untied i.e. aid is not connected to the recipient country buying goods and services from the donor country. Untying aid is seen as key element of an effective aid programme. According to OECD Secretary-General Donald Johnston in his speech to the 1999 WTO Seattle Conference:

"Untying aid, by restoring choice to impoverished recipient countries would increase the value of aid, remove a distortion to world commerce and enhance the dignity of the aid process that has been sullied by the mercantilist attitudes of some in the developed world."

However the Irish aid programme is not without its critics, the most vociferous of whom has been John O'Shea of the aid agency GOAL. In an opinion piece in *The Irish Times* earlier this year Mr. O'Shea asked

"So, with a new Taoiseach in Government Buildings and a new Minister at Iveagh House, can we hope there will be new thinking concerning the hundreds of millions of euro this country hands over to corrupt and brutal leaders in the Third World? ... Goal has been appealing to the Government over the past number of years to change its mindset on aid. We have consistently called on the Government to end the hugely wasteful and morally reprehensible practice of channeling hundreds of millions through corrupt governments. Instead, we want to see the Government adopting a single country and implementing a concentrated development effort. Using Irish project managers to consult with the people on the ground, the Government could set the benchmark for a new way of thinking about foreign aid."

This gives a flavour of Mr. O'Shea's analysis, which recurs in the media on a regular basis.

Responding in *The Irish Times* earlier this year to John O'Shea's criticisms of the Irish Aid Programme, the then Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern stated that

"His (O'Shea's) assertion that the Government is handing over blank cheques to corrupt states is wrong and wholly without foundation.... all of this aid is subject to the closest possible scrutiny by accountants, auditors and our officials on the ground in partner countries and at headquarters in Ireland..... As John O'Shea knows well, no partner government is free to spend one cent of Irish development assistance in whatever way they please. Irish development assistance monies routed via partner governments are ring-fenced for spending in particular social and health and educational areas. Though NGOs do marvellous work in the developing world, the development sector nationally and internationally - bar John O'Shea - accept that neither NGOs nor donors can ever replace governments. Building a strong education system is better than building a single school. Building a strong health system is better than building a single clinic. That can only be done by working with governments, and by ensuring that every last cent given for a particular social or educational project is spent in that project. The Government particularly believes that the governments and peoples of our partner countries are primarily responsible for their own development and should lead the development process, just as the Irish government did in the past here at home. This is the only sustainable position to take. It would be impossible and hugely irresponsible for any outside body to try and take over and provide basic social services in a developing country. We want the benefits of our support to be lasting and to reach as many as possible, particularly those most in need. That said, we do not follow this principle of partnership and equality blindly. In all of Irish Aid's partner countries, we work closely with and support key groups in society, such as trade unions and the independent media, in the critical role of holding their governments to account."

So far so good. Underlying O'Shea's criticism of the Irish aid programme is the concept that many (if not most) Third World states are in fact failed states and the West has the right (and more importantly, the obligation) to intervene in such states with or without the sanction of the governments involved. This of course is the same logic which has been used to justify Bush and Blair's interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq and which is trotted out at regular intervals in our media to demand intervention in what ever the latest liberal *cause célèbre* might be, such as Burma recently and Zimbabwe currently. And when this intervention is in the name of democracy, poverty alleviation, humanitarian assistance etc. who could possibly argue against it. However the fly in the ointment is the almost complete lack of objective in-depth analysis of the issues involved in Third World development by the Irish media. The only accessible discussion of aid policy which the public is likely to come across are Mr. O'Shea's letters and opinion pieces in the *Irish Times* and the Official responses to them.

However, as the level of Irish aid grows and it becomes increasingly tied in to a wider Development aid reform agenda which is being promoted in the West, there is a bigger debate to be had about western aid to the Third

World, a debate which needs to go beyond the simplistic rhetoric of failed states and the implementation of proper safeguards to protect the Irish taxpayers aid contribution to the third world. This debate needs to focus on the actual changes which are taking place in the methods of delivering aid and whether these changes will deliver what should be the key outcome of all aid programmes i.e. that developing countries develop to a sufficient degree to exit from aid dependency completely. If this is not the objective, then aid simply becomes charity and the Third World, like the poor, will always be with us. Viewed in this light, developmental aid alone cannot deliver the goods. Aid can only deliver lasting change within a framework of the overall development of the economies of the states concerned. The roles of the World Bank, the WTO, the IMF and globalization in retarding or assisting development, needs to be subject to rigorous analysis, and the relentless promotion of free market economics as the answer to all the world's ills needs to be challenged in any coherent aid strategy. Of course, the views of the developing countries themselves are the key voices which need to be heard in the design of development strategies. This has not necessarily been the case to date.

The OECD has taken the lead in developing proposals and mechanisms to improve developed countries aid programmes. In 2003, donors discussed how to make aid more effective at an OECD convened Intergovernmental Forum in Rome. This in turn led to the Paris Declaration of 2005, which defined a number of commitments on the part of donors and partner countries, and a set of indicators to measure progress towards 2010.

Commitments from the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness include:

- * Developing countries will exercise effective leadership over their development policies, strategies, and to coordinate development actions;
- * Donor countries will base their overall support on receiving countries' national development strategies, institutions, and procedures;
- * Donor countries will work so that their actions are more harmonized, transparent, and collectively effective;
- * All countries will manage resources and improve decision-making for results;
- * Donor and developing countries pledge that they will be mutually accountable for development results.

In short, development aid must be channelled through the national development plans of the countries receiving the

aid. Developing countries exercising strong and effective leadership over their development policies and strategies is, the Paris Declaration says, its 'fundamental tenet'. This of course being in effect the opposite of Mr. O'Shea's proposals for the Irish Aid Programme.

The EU, OECD, multilateral financing institutions, UN agencies and several non-OECD countries including Russia, India and China, and aid recipient countries are signatories to the Declaration. A third forum will be convened in Accra in September 2008 where the OECD and other signatories will agree a text on making aid more effective. Meanwhile OECD countries are implementing the Paris Declaration in conjunction with the World Bank.

Taken at face value the Paris Declaration seems a reasonable set of proposals. It recognises the faults of the present system, promotes the principle of ownership of development strategies by developing countries, demands the untying of aid and calls for mutual accountability between donors and recipient countries. However there is disquiet in some quarters on a number of issues. Of course, while the principle of aid being channelled through the National Development plan of the recipient country concerned seems the right way forward, it also gives the developed countries huge leverage of the economic policies of the recipient countries. Can developing countries have any real choice on issues like the role of the state sector in the economy, limits to the free market, ownership of key infrastructure etc. in a system in which the World Bank plays such a key role? For instance, under the Paris Declaration, if the national procurement system of the recipient country is deemed not to meet the criteria developed by the World Bank, an open tender system will be used to undertake international procurement, something that developing countries have already rejected in the context of WTO negotiations.

Furthermore, the UN was initially excluded from the system being developed on foot of the Paris Declaration and the suspicion is that it was only brought in at a later stage to put a better gloss on role of the Bretton Woods institutions in the process. Critics say the UN lacks any leverage to promote its priorities, such as ILO labour standards, within the Paris Declaration process because it was not involved from the start and bemoan the fact that the World Bank continues to play a dominant role.

The key direction for Irish aid policy going forward will in many respects be set at the Accra conference in September — yet how many people even know that this is taking place, still less what is involved. But never mind, no doubt we will continue to have more diatribes from John O'Shea in the press to entertain us, as the media's contribution to covering the overseas aid issue. □

De Valera's Dilemma: Unity or Sovereignty

By Joe Keenan

(Editor's note: This article is an up to date, but not the final, version of a work in progress, much of which has appeared in *Irish Political Review* over the past four years.)

*The lawyers have sat in council, the men with the
keen, long faces,
And said, 'This man is a fool,' and others have said,
'He blasphemeth;'
And the wise have pitied the fool that hath striven to
give a life
In the world of time and space among the bulks of
actual things,
To a dream that was dreamed in the heart, and that
only the heart could hold.*
(Patrick Pearse, The Fool)

Pearse and the Nation

Not all societies develop into nations. Of those that do, not all manage to build a nation-state for themselves. Even then, few of the nation-states of this world are entirely happy with the state of affairs of their affairs of state.

Some have substantial minorities of their nation scattered about the territory of other states. Others hold substantial minorities of other nations within their territory.

Few nation-states are as independent as they would like to be of other regional and global powers. And some, naming no names, not looking anxiously eastward across the water, just want to dominate everything and everyone they have come across in the course of a 500 year rampage around the world.

Looking at the matter from a general point of view, it's not easy being a nation.

Looking at the matter more particularly, it hasn't been easy being the Irish nation.

One of the founding fathers of the independent Irish state, that glorious fool Patrick Pearse, described Ireland's 19th century as the period in which a mob became a nation. And, in The Sovereign People, written just before the weeks of insurrection and execution, he told the most advanced section of the Irish nation, those who had left mobbish conditions of life furthest behind them, what building a state entailed and would require of them:

"National independence involves national sovereignty. National sovereignty is twofold in its nature. It is both internal and external. It implies the sovereignty of the nation over all its parts, over all men and things within the nation; and it implies the sovereignty of the nation as against all other nations. Nationality is a spiritual fact; but nationhood includes physical freedom, and physical power in order to guarantee the maintenance of physical freedom, as well as the spiritual fact of nationality. This physical freedom is necessary to the healthy life, and may even be

necessary to the continued existence of the nation. Without it the nation droops, withers, ultimately perhaps dies; only a very steadfast nation, a nation of great spiritual and intellectual strength like Ireland, can live for more than a few generations in its absence, and without it even so stubborn a nation as Ireland would doubtless ultimately perish. Physical freedom, in brief, is necessary to sane and vigorous life; for physical freedom means precisely control of the conditions that are necessary to sane and vigorous life. It is obvious that these things are partly material, and that therefore national freedom involves control of the material things which are essential to the continued physical life and freedom of the nation. So that the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all the material possessions of the nation, the nation's soil and all its resources, all wealth and all wealth-producing processes within the nation. In other words, no private right to property is good as against the public right of the nation. But the nation is under a moral obligation so to exercise its public right as to secure strictly equal rights and liberties to every man and woman within the nation. The whole is entitled to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole, but this is to be pursued exactly for the end that each of the individuals composing the whole may enjoy happiness and prosperity, the maximum amount of happiness and prosperity consistent with the happiness and prosperity of all the rest.

"One may reduce all this to a few simple propositions:

1. The end of freedom is human happiness.
2. The end of national freedom is individual freedom; therefore, individual happiness.
3. National freedom implies national sovereignty.
4. National sovereignty implies control of all the moral and material resources of the nation."

It is not the business of a founding father to dwell on factors that complicate his foundation. A founding father is by way of being the state's first cause and as such should be innocent of complexity and consequence. Such as *they* can, indeed should, live like holy fools and quick and early pass on, leaving *Realpolitik* to their successors. Complexity and consequence are successor-business.

So Pearse only thought of the Northern Protestants as a minority section of the nation that the majority would have to be generous to and welcoming towards. That they were a nation in their own right was something he never had to think about or deal with. It can never really have occurred to him. Such thinking and dealing with that hulking actual bulk of a thing was left to the one true successor of the founding fathers, Eamon de Valera.

Fenians and War

It should be said here that the Fenian tradition in Irish politics never envisaged making war on Protestant Ulster. Those 'extremists' have always sought a peaceful resolution of that conflict. War was the 'moderate' path. The 'moderates' being the Hibernian Parliamentary Party of Redmond, Dillon and Devlin.

The remnants of the pre-national mob which were led by that moderate Party onto the killing fields of Flanders, Turkey and Mesopotamia had every intention of dealing militarily with "*Carsonia*". Upon their return from killing Germans and Turks and Arabs they fully intended to deal likewise with Protestants and Dissenters. But they did not return in any fit shape to complete the Redmondite project with an assault on the North.

When Michael Collins launched his war against the North, he was a creature of British policy and just kicking against the traces of his domestication. By that stage he was lost to the Fenian tradition.

De Valera, like Cathal Brugha, left the IRB after the Easter Rising, feeling that it had realised its purpose and had nothing more to offer the national cause. But in leaving the organisation he remained true to its tradition. At least, with regard to the North, he remained true to the Fenian tradition in Irish politics.

That is not to say de Valera was at all times open and honest and true to the last letter and the spirit of his every word. The situation he found himself in had neither time nor space for holy fools of founding fathers. But among these bulks of actual things he had enough of the original Fenian foolishness about him to avoid any Northern war.

Redmond and Partition

In March 1914 Redmond had swallowed Britain's then "*last word*" and accepted a form of Home Rule, out of which any of the six usual suspects could opt for a period of three years. From that point, the rate of Northern recruitment into the Irish Volunteers greatly exceeded that of the South. Little realising where Redmond would finally send them to do and die, those Northern Volunteers clearly joined up to fight Ulster exclusion. That is why the Redmondite leadership refused to distribute arms to them. At the start of the Great War, Redmond's Northern lieutenant, Joe Devlin, was forced to hand out 800 rifles but, cute hoor that he was, kept back the ammunition. Eamon Phoenix cites G.F.H. Berkeley, Belfast organiser of Redmond's National Volunteers, to this effect on page 18 of his Northern Nationalism, adding that the Home Rule leaders wanted the Northern section of their own movement to wither for fear of its reaction to Ulster exclusion. (Redmond was requiring them to fight the recalcitrant Prods when Home Rule had been achieved, but in the meantime was desperate to keep them in line and ready for the trenches.)

The apparent triumph of Redmondite Home Rulers in the first years of the Great War, sending hundreds of thousands of their supporters to die for King and Empire in France and Gallipoli (the triumphs of Suvla and Sudelbar), should not obscure the fact of their political eclipse in that same period in the west of the Fourth Green Field.

By June 1915 the National Volunteers were finished in County Tyrone, where a Conference at Omagh of senior clergy and nationalist politicians repudiated exclusion and later provided the post-1916 Sinn Féin leadership in the North.

Only days after Redmond accepted the three year exclusion of the Six Counties as Britain's "*final word*" on the

subject, Britain informed him that the period of exclusion had been doubled to six years. After the Rising, on 23rd June 1916, a Northern Nationalist Conference was held in St. Mary's Hall in Belfast and voted 475 to 265 in favour of a temporary exclusion of the Six Counties, which were to continue to be ruled from, with continuing representation in, Westminster. Both Redmond and Devlin had to threaten to resign to get that vote and what they got was a split between Antrim and Down which stood with Devlin, and Tyrone, Fermanagh and Derry which were all the more ready to move to Sinn Féin.

A month after that Conference, on 22nd July, Lloyd George finally informed Redmond that the six counties would be permanently excluded and would have their own parliament with the scale of Irish representation at Westminster being drastically reduced. The spent force that was Redmond pledged to fight that bill to the death.

Redmond died in March 1918. Politically he had been dead since June 1916, and it was his acceptance of Partition and West Ulster's rejection of his acceptance of Partition that killed him.

De Valera's Strategy on Northern Nationalism

De Valera learned the lesson of that and applied his learning in the negotiations with Joe Devlin in advance of the 1921 elections to the Northern Ireland Parliament and the Second Dáil, both of which were held under the auspices of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. The Irish Political Review issue of September 2004 published the correspondence between Collins and de Valera of January 1921 which examined various strategies for the coming electoral contest in the North. Collins was clear about the need for Sinn Féin to fight both the Unionists and Devlin's Redmondites. De Valera's view was made manifest in his negotiations with Devlin. As I wrote in that earlier article:

"In the event, following a meeting between de Valera and Joe Devlin in February 1921, Sinn Féin and the Hibernians fought the northern elections together, allied on the Sinn Féin programme of self-determination and abstentionism. De Valera did not make attendance at Dáil Éireann for successful candidates a condition of the Pact, and the Hibernians simply stayed at home waiting out their abstentionist pledges.

"Though Sinn Féin secured twice the vote of the Devlinites each party to the Pact won six seats (the Unionists won the remaining 40 of 52). Four of the Sinn Féiners (but none of the Hibernians) were elected on the first count. Those four were de Valera in Down, Collins in Armagh, Griffith in Fermanagh & Tyrone and MacNeill in Derry. The other Shinnners elected were Seán Milroy and John O'Mahony in Fermanagh & Tyrone."

Devlin later (in a letter to James Dillon, 22nd April 1921) stated that, but for the pact with de Valera, his nationalists would not have won a single seat outside Belfast. And that is exactly how de Valera wanted it. There was only one Northern representative in the second Dáil who owed his membership of the Dáil to his Northern constituency. That was John O'Mahony. All the rest, including the Northerner MacNeill, also represented Southern constituencies. The nationalists ignored the Dáil and the Dáil ignored them, just as it ignored Northern Sinn Féin. The leadership of the Home Rule Party was constantly harassed on Partition by

Northern representatives and members who were deeply imbedded in the structures of the party. The Sinn Féin leadership had outmanoeuvred its Northern component onto the sidelines and the outskirts of its political life where it was no more than an occasional nuisance (begging time and again to be consulted about its future, time and again being told to mind its own business). That is what de Valera achieved in 1921.

I believe it was not an accident but rather an element of the Partitionist strategy which he announced later that year, first to the British Prime Minister and then to the Dáil. Sinn Féin had the freedom, which the Home Rulers never had, to ignore Northern nationalism and deliver it into a Partition settlement. That was de Valera's design and achievement.

Rationalising the loss of the North

The Northern Ireland Parliament was opened by King George VI on 22nd June 1921. Soon after, on June 24th, Lloyd George wrote to de Valera inviting him, "*with Sir James Craig, the Premier of Northern Ireland*", to a conference in London "*to explore to the utmost the possibility of a settlement*".

De Valera accepted, in a letter dated 8th July 1921 (Craig refused the invitation). A truce was immediately declared to begin at noon on July 11th. Lloyd George and de Valera then met in London on 14th, 15th, 18th and 21st July.

On 20th July, Lloyd George sent de Valera a document containing "*the proposals of the British Government*" which included the following conditions in respect of partition:

"The form in which the settlement is to take effect will depend upon Ireland herself. It must allow for full recognition of the existing powers and privileges of the Parliament of Northern Ireland, which cannot be abrogated except by their own consent. For their part, the British Government entertain an earnest hope that the necessity of harmonious co-operation amongst Irishmen of all classes and creeds will be recognised throughout Ireland, and they will welcome the day when by those means unity is achieved. But no such common action can be secured by force...

"The British Government will therefore leave Irishmen themselves to determine by negotiations between themselves whether the new powers which the Pact defines shall be taken over by Ireland as a whole and administered by a single Irish body, or be taken over separately by Southern and Northern Ireland, with or without a joint authority to harmonise their common interests. They will willingly assist in the negotiation of such a settlement, if Irishmen should so desire."

De Valera's reply "*...on behalf of the ministry of Dáil Éireann*" was delivered to Downing Street on 10th August 1921. With regard to the Partition conditions this stated:

"As regards the question at issue between the political minority and the great majority of the Irish people, that must remain a question for the Irish people themselves to settle. We cannot admit the right of the British Government to mutilate our country, either in its own interest or at the call of any section of our population. We do not contemplate the use of force. If your Government stands aside, we can effect a complete reconciliation. We agree with you 'that no common action can be secured by force.' Our regret is that this wise and true principle which your Government prescribes to us for the settlement of our local problem it seems unwilling to apply consistently to the fundamental problem of the relations between our island and yours. The principle we rely on in the one case we are ready to apply in

the other, but should this principle not yield an immediate settlement we are willing that this question too be submitted to external arbitration."

Just over a week later, on 22nd August, those same proposals were debated in a secret session of the Dáil and the Ministry's judgement and its actions were endorsed unanimously.

The view of those engagements which de Valera wished to commend to posterity is certainly that reported in the bible of Fianna Fáil orthodoxy, Dorothy Macardle's The Irish Republic, which I have followed so far:

"De Valera returned with his colleagues to Ireland. The proposals, forwarded to him in Dublin, were discussed by the Republican Ministry at a full meeting. They were rejected, with varying degrees of disfavour. The majority were confident that Dáil Éireann, when it met in August would endorse the rejection unanimously. Even without the other restrictions proposed on Irish independence the British insistence on giving the Belfast Parliament power to partition Ireland was enough to render these proposals utterly unacceptable" (Corgi edition, 1968, page 445).

But, in fact, De Valera had not indicated to the British Government that its "*insistence on giving the Belfast Parliament power to partition Ireland was enough to render these proposals utterly unacceptable*". The truth of the matter was a good deal more ambivalent.

On 21st July, Lloyd George had written to the King, describing de Valera's attitude to partition as this was outlined in their talks. According to Lloyd George, de Valera was willing to accept...

"...the status of a dominion sans phrase on condition that Northern Ireland would agree to be represented within the all-Ireland parliament. Otherwise, de Valera insisted that the only alternative was for the twenty-six counties to be a republic" (quoted in T. Ryle Dwyer, *Eamon De Valera*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin 1980, 1988, page 43).

That he was prepared to use Irish acceptance of the fact of partition as a bargaining counter in a strategy to achieve Republican status for the remaining 26 counties was confirmed by de Valera in the secret Dáil session of 22nd August, during this exchange between himself and Deputy J.J. Walsh:

"Deputy J.J. Walsh asked if they understood that under no circumstances were they prepared to give any sanction to dual nationality in this country.

"An tUachtarán replied as far as dual nationality was concerned, they never recognised it, but that fact would not prevent the British government from establishing it. For his part, if the Republic were recognised, he would be in favour of giving each county power to vote itself out of the Republic if it so wished. Otherwise they would be compelled to use force.

"Deputy J.J. Walsh said he disagreed with that policy and he would move a motion later on."

In the event Walsh simply seconded a motion moved by Seán T. O'Kelly which entirely endorsed the actions of the President and Ministry.

The main ground of de Valera's acceptance of the inevitability of partition was a clear-headed assessment of the limits placed on Sinn Féin's negotiating position by the very

simple and brutal realities of the balance of power between Ireland and England. He had no illusions about England's willingness to use its overwhelming strength against the independence movement. In the same debate of 22nd August, de Valera brought deputies slap bang up against the reality of the British dreadnought:

"The new war, if it comes, would be on a different basis to the one past. It would be taken as a definite attempt at reconquest. There was not a government in the world that would not do something to prevent the falling away of portion of its territory. The governments of the world would realise that and would be very slow to step in. He did not believe he was too pessimistic when he said that England would be given as free a hand to deal with Ireland at the present time as she was given to deal with the Boers in the South African War. Unfortunately they were very far away from living in a world where moral forces counted. But the practical question is at the moment brute force and they should realise that the moment England thought she was in danger of losing Ireland, a thing she considered particularly precious to her, she would face the world's odium to crush Ireland to the earth.

"In the Southern States of America there were many who still held on to the cause of the South and they well remembered Sherman's march. But there was no use facing war again unless they in Ireland were prepared for a Sherman's march. They should not come to a decision without realising what the position was."

The only deputies who seriously addressed the dichotomy raised by their President between a Republican and a United Ireland were Walsh, Alex MacCabe of Sligo, and Michael Collivet of Limerick (who had commanded the Irish Volunteers in that city in 1916 and would later vote against the *"Treaty"*). The force of *"Otherwise they would be compelled to use force"* was not, as de Valera everywhere and really otherwise recognised, an option.

Seán Milroy, who represented Fermanagh and Tyrone in the second Dáil (the constituency didn't exist in the first Dáil and had been abandoned to Partition before the third Dáil poked its head up through the slough of post-Treaty despond) said that talk about the six counties was getting away from the *"real business"*.

Next day, when de Valera presented the Ministry's draft reply to the Dáil, J.J. Walsh said he *"was anxious to have the question of Ulster fully discussed, and asked for an opportunity to discuss it"*. The President *"said he would try and find an opportunity for it."* Somehow or other the opportunity just never arose.

The great majority of Dáil deputies clearly had as little interest as Milroy in getting away from the real business. The North was never the real business. And, given that the six counties were never going to buy into even the milk and water, British in all but name and nativity, kind of unity that the British were prepared to negotiate about with some pretence of seriousness, the North was never even the unreal business.

Opting for Sovereignty over Unity

I hope it is clear that I am not condemning de Valera in this article, at least not for realistically taking the side of thorough-going republicanism as against an anodyne unity under detailed British supervision. Where I blame him, is where he took his stand on an anti-partitionist rhetoric

which he knew to be false and used it to stoke up the subjectivity of his drive to build a republican free state. And also used it, with rare skill and imagination, to bludgeon Northern nationalists into a useless sentimentality that just got young republicans killed and imprisoned (by de Valera as much as by the Unionists). I blame him for that. I condemn him on those terms; terms on which, standing to one side of himself as his own better nature, he would have condemned himself.

So, Devlin's Hibernianism survived to thrive in the six counties because the pre-Treaty leadership of Sinn Féin was determined that it should do so. That leadership deliberately held back the growth of its own party organisation there, in order not to find itself bound by a strong Northern section of Sinn Féin to oppose partition. On the heights of the party organisation, to his fellow mountaineers, de Valera made it clear that he (correctly) favoured an independent over a united Ireland. He was determined to carry Sinn Féin with a partitionist settlement that guaranteed independence for the greater part of the national territory, and entirely willing to sacrifice the nationalists of the Fourth Green Field to that end. The most he was prepared to do for them was prepare Joe Devlin's Hibernian movement as a fit repository of their poor lost souls.

Then in 1925, as its President, de Valera split the all-Ireland Sinn Féin party in such a way as to leave him in undisputed control of the 26-county Fianna Fáil, Soldiers of a Free State Destiny.

Some remnant of an unrepentant Fenian in me can only see all this as de Valera's machinations and recoil at the ruthless hypocrisy of it all. Harsh words that change nothing among the bulks of actual things. For at the core of this policy his thinking was correct. Ireland could be free of England or it could be united. It couldn't be both. And then to de Valera's mind it couldn't be said that it couldn't be both without giving scandal and outraging the faithful.

Even today, given the advance of revisionism in the South and the failure of all political parties to oppose it, it is still the case that Ireland cannot be both united and free of England. The defeat of British state-sponsored revisionism is a precondition, though not the only one, for any moves towards a form of unity that doesn't involve going once again under the tutelage of Old Mother England.

At all events, this remained de Valera's policy throughout his career. He stated it most clearly on 7th February 1939 when he intervened in a Senate Debate initiated by Senators MacDermot and Alton who were looking for compromises to assuage the Unionists in a hope of reconciling them to a really nice form of unification. Then de Valera said:

"Suppose we were to get unity in the country, provided we were to give up the principles that are here in this first Article of the Constitution—the 'sovereign right of the nation to choose its own form of Government, to determine its relations with other nations, and to develop its life, political, economic, and cultural, in accordance with its own genius and traditions'—I would not sacrifice that right, because without that right you have not freedom at all. Although freedom for a part of this island is not the freedom we want—the freedom we would like to have, this freedom for a portion of it, freedom to develop and to keep the kernel of the Irish nation is something, and something that I would not sacrifice, if by sacrificing it we were to get a united Ireland and that united Ireland was not free to determine its own

form of Government, to determine its relations with other countries, and, amongst other things, to determine, for example, whether it would or would not be involved in war. Our people have the same right as any other people to determine these vital matters for themselves and they ought not to surrender them in advance to anybody or for any consideration. Certainly, as far as this Government is concerned, we are not going to surrender that right—for any consideration, even the consideration of a united Ireland."

The undated minutes of an *"interview between An Taoiseach and a northern Nationalist Deputation"* record de Valera arguing that *"the retention of the 26 county status was considered to be of such value that the loss of it could not be risked in any effort to reintegrate the country..."* (quoted in Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism*, p. 389). And such was de Valera's line even after he had indisputably won his Republic and a Fine Gael-led administration had at last proclaimed it.

To recap, even during the War of Independence the most influential sections of the leadership of Sinn Féin set about undermining their own party in the North. This was because they knew that political independence from England, just the barest possibility of establishing a Republic in Ireland, was incompatible with a serious campaign for unity, and they feared that a strong Northern wing of Sinn Féin would make the necessary, but utterly unmentionable, partitionist settlement unachievable. At the end of the *"Treaty"* negotiations and debate there was a war between former comrades over the issue of how republican the settlement was or could be made to be. The issue of a United Ireland was scarcely mentioned at all in those life and death struggles.

Abandoned to Hibernianism

The losing side in that conflict went on to form its own party with every intention of achieving a thorough-going Republic in the twenty-six counties. It only organized in the twenty-six counties, leaving Northern Nationalism in the Hibernian hands of the Irish Imperialist, Joe Devlin. Former Sinn Féin President and leader of Fianna Fáil, Eamon de Valera, had saved Northern Hibernianism from virtual extinction in 1921 and relied on it ever after to keep Northern nationalists safely oppressed and discontented on the right side of the Black Pig's Dyke, under the Unionist jackboot and out of his hair.

De Valera used the Northern issue as fuel in the fires he stoked up to achieve the reality if not the title of a Republic in the 26 counties. Further than that he had little or no interest. Serious Republican members of Fianna Fáil were treated as the best of them, Eamon Donnelly, was treated; driven to distraction and an early grave (he fell ill under the strain of trying to complain about the ill-treatment of Republican prisoners in English jails while in Ireland de Valera was using the English hangman on them). Northern Republicans, Fianna Fáil supporters to a man, were, like Cahir Healy, constantly rebuffed and driven to the worst forms of Hibernian defeatism. And so was the Republic built that Costello's Coalition Government belatedly declared in 1948.

Consequences

There was never any possibility that a Republic established in such a manner could forever evade the consequences of its means.

De Valera was entirely correct that freedom from English politics and English wars was incompatible with the compromises the strong Unionist minority, that unity would have saddled him with, were sure to demand and win (short of a Stormont-style regime of police oppression, gerrymander and discrimination).

Partition was the essential precondition of a Republic in the greater part of Ireland. De Valera knew that. And de Valera said that, in only slightly coded form, in the smoke-filled rooms of high political life. He never said it publicly. Publicly he always denied it. And publicly he always appeared to be working to undo partition while privately he did his best to shore it up. Tomorrow was no doubt to be another day when all manner of wrongs would be put right. But tomorrow never came. Or rather when tomorrow finally came, in August 1969, de Valera's Republic was not worthy of it. More than 50 years of hypocrisy and dissimulation had taken their toll of the State, the Party and their President.

The Fianna Fáil Government's failure at that time to intervene decisively on behalf of its national minority when the security forces of the United Kingdom in uniform and under orders went berserk to engage in a frenzied attack on them, when the loyal citizens of the United Kingdom among whom they had been living joined in that frenzy of murder and arson; that failure showed up in the starkest of colours the bankruptcy of the Republic's vaunted independence. This freer than the Free State, independent, Republic, for which the ultimate national aspiration had been sacrificed, found itself having to apologise to the aggressor for the belated and inadequate steps it had begun to take to make provision for its people in the North and then, when rebuked by the aggressor, had rushed to abandon. It went so far as to prosecute the ministers it had ordered to manage the attempt to defend its people in the North. Anyone who wants to call that craven behaviour 'freedom' will have great difficulty defining slavery.

The moral collapse of 1969 was an almost inevitable consequence of the immoral means by which the Republic had been built by de Valera's Party. It led to a 25-year war, in the face of which all the institutions of de Valera's Republic wilted. So far as much of its political and intellectual élite is concerned, it is now an open question whether the Irish Nation, at the end of all this, is capable of sustaining an independent form of political life. For more than a few politicians and professors here and now, the Irish State itself is up for grabs.

But wait a minute now. Let the hare sit. Let's stall the ball. It's only a matter of a few weeks since some rare old species of holy foolishness gripped the Irish electorate long enough for it to vote against what it was told was the heart and heft of its economic interest. The Lisbon Treaty/Constitution died (what we can only hope was) its final death in Ireland.

And who can say then what's to come? Whatever it is that's supposed to be lying with O'Leary in the grave, it's not the spirit of James Fintan Lalor. And it's not the spirit of Patrick Pearse.

There is foolishness yet among the bulks of actual things.

Rights and Wrongs in Zimbabwe

By Conor Lynch

Ireland and the British hate campaign

On July 11th 2008, an Anglo-American resolution was put before the United Nations Security Council calling for sanctions against Zimbabwe. It was vetoed by China and Russia. The Chinese said that it was out of order because Zimbabwe did not pose a threat to international peace. The Russians said that it was no time to impose sanctions since the Zimbabwean main parties, ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) had already begun negotiations in South Africa. More importantly, the MDC itself publicly opposed sanctions and said it wanted a solution based on negotiations.

The Russian-Chinese veto on Zimbabwe may be a turning point in the post-Cold War freedom of the West to do what it will with the world. It has certainly stopped it in its tracks.

Britain has reacted with genuine fury. It has said that it will pursue the sanctions route through "other agencies". On Sunday 13th July it has brought the matter before the European Union. What will Ireland's position be there? So far Ireland has unquestioningly and slavishly followed Britain's lead on Zimbabwe.

A kind of hysteria has pervaded both the written and the broadcast media and large sections of the general public. An otherwise sane and rational senior politician, Mary O'Rourke, has even indicated that Zimbabwe President, Robert Mugabe, should be shot. This idea has been generally greeted with approval. I am not aware of any of her colleagues dissenting from her views.

Supposing that all that has been said and written about Mugabe is true, it has to be admitted that he is still far from being the worst political leader in the world. (And all of it most definitely is not true. The spearhead of the anti-Mugabe propaganda has been the Guardian. Its main contributor on the matter has been Andrew Meldrum who has been publicly exposed sending false reports to that other liberal paper the London Independent.)

Mugabe is treated as the most evil man in the world today. Gordon Brown can denounce him as "having blood on his hands" and no one seems to see the irony – Iraq is instantly forgotten, along with all the rest of Britain's adventures. Nobody pauses to ask why. Mass hysteria can be an exhilarating and comforting thing. And nobody pauses to ask why now. The British campaign against Mugabe dates from shortly before the turn of this century. Before then they awarded him an honorary Knighthood. He was up there with Bob and Bono!

The reason for the demonisation of Mugabe, and its timing, lies in what Britain sees as its pivotal role in Southern Africa. Britain has tried to control events there since the end of colonialism. Its main base has been Uganda, though it increasingly controls Kenya. It disputes control of the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda with France and

Belgium, with growing success. Originally its man in Uganda was former British soldier, Idi Amin, but he got a bit out of control and was removed. His predecessor, Milton Obote, replaced him but was overthrown by a guerrilla war led by Yoweri Museveni, the current President, aided by the British. Since then Uganda has been a British client state.

In 1997 Britain facilitated the overthrow of President Mobutu of the Congo (then called Zaire). It supported a successful rebellion by Laurent Kabila with invading armies from Uganda and Rwanda. Kabila thanked his supporters for their help and asked them to leave. They refused. So he called for military support.

Mobutu was, like General Suharto in Indonesia, a tyrant put in place by the Americans in the 60s. They had assassinated the independence leader Patrice Lumumba, and in all probability the UN General Secretary who supported him, Dag Hammarskjöld. But Mobutu and Suharto liked the degree of independence they had and were reluctant to fit in with the new "free trade" dispensation that followed the end of the Cold War.

Zimbabwe, which has no borders with the Congo, sent in part of its army and defeated the armies from Uganda and Rwanda. They then left the Congo. This, in Britain's eyes, was Mugabe's unforgivable sin. Though Kabila was later assassinated, his son took power and has kept control of most of his fabulously mineral rich country. Zimbabwe's actions gave the Kabila governments time and space to consolidate and at least hold most of their ground against the successive, British sponsored, Ugandan and Rwandan invasions that continue to this day.

The nature of the Government of Zimbabwe, except insofar as it is related to the white ranchers, had nothing to do with it. And the white ranchers only began to be seriously undermined after the British made Mugabe their enemy. Shortly after independence there was what amounted to almost a civil war in Zimbabwe with the crushing of Mugabe's ZAPU opponents in Matebeleland. Thousands died. But Britain was not interested. It whipped up no frenzy of hate. It knighted the victor.

Independence

Outside of South Africa, Zimbabwe was the most heavily colonised by whites. Its colonisation continued into the 1970s. The best of the land was given to white settlers. By 1980 the white settlers numbered 1% of the population but controlled 70% of arable land.

The Africans resisted early settlements in the late 19th century but were eventually defeated and the area that is now Zimbabwe was given Home Rule as Southern Rhodesia in 1923. Home rule for whites, of course. (A bit like the Home Rule that existed in Ireland prior to the Act of Union in 1800 – also for settlers only and excluding the vast bulk of the population.)

In 1953 the British Government tried to use the relatively large white population of Southern Rhodesia (about 250,000) as a base for a larger white dominated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This incorporated Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, and Nyasaland, now Malawi. This led to resistance movements and independence for Zambia and Malawi. As this was occurring, Southern Rhodesia broke away from the Federation in 1963. It declared independence in 1965 and the Republic of Rhodesia in 1970. It was recognised by Apartheid South Africa and supported by the Portuguese dictatorship.

The UN declared sanctions and Britain went through the motions of putting some warships off the coast of the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. But the Rhodesian regime got what they wanted through South Africa. The British were not about to attack their "kith and kin".

On the ground a fierce guerrilla campaign was launched. Joshua Nkomo's movement, the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) launched its war from Zambia. After the Communist military coup in Portugal in 1974, its African colonies, Guinea, Angola and Mozambique were thoroughly decolonised. Mozambique became a launching base for the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) led by Robert Mugabe.

South Africa, aided by the US and Britain, organised an armed movement, Renamo, against the new left-wing government of Samora Machel in Mozambique. (Machel, like a lot of other African leaders, was killed in a "plane crash" near the South African border in 1986. His widow, Clara, is now married to Nelson Mandela.) Renamo was the first African movement to make extensive use of child soldiers.

(The use of child soldiers has long been a British Army practice – especially in Africa. The youngest admitted British soldier to die in the Great War was 13 year old John Condon from Waterford. But we will all have heard of Britons boasting about how they "lied about their age" to join the army over the years. Of course the army knew right well that they were lying. The BBC reported last year that the recruitment of 16 year olds is growing and that boys are sent to Iraq at 17.)

The guerrilla war in Rhodesia was costly in lives and very bitter. But it was succeeding. Pressure for an agreed settlement rather than military victory grew. From the British on the one hand, and from the increasingly battered and impoverished Mozambique Government on the other.

An "internal settlement" was agreed to by the white regime in 1979. Elections for the separate racial groupings were to be held. The pro-British Black Bishop, Abel Muzorewa, became Prime Minister. But the whites were left in control of the military, the police and the civil service.

This was rejected by the independence movements and a Conference was arranged in Lancaster House in London with all sides present. The result was a majority rule government with reserved places for the whites in parliament and no confiscation of white lands for at least ten years. On April 18th 1980 Zimbabwe became independent with Robert Mugabe as Prime Minister.

Land and Economics

A crucial part of the Lancaster House Agreement was that Britain would make modest contributions for the purchase of land by blacks from whites. This was carried out to some extent until the Blair Government discontinued it after coming to office in 1987. There have been complaints that farms were bought by Government supporters and that these were also the people that set up industries. The men who fought the war of independence surely get first call on resources afterwards. That is normal and sensible.

It is what happened in Ireland from the thirties onwards as the country tried to build an independent native economy. In a sense it is also what happened in England. Except that there the Government stole the lands of the English peasants (along with those of the Irish and Scottish clans) and gave ("granted") them to their supporters.

After 1987 there was no money coming from the former colonial power to help finance land purchase. So a movement grew up among the war veterans to squat white land. But most of it continued to remain in the hands of the whites and there was very little violence involved.

The mindset of the white farmers, (blacks did the actual work of farming), was illustrated some years ago by the journalist, Mary Holland. Visiting white friends in Zimbabwe, she discovered that one of the entertainment treats put on for guests was farm owners ordering their black workers to copulate in front of them.

The term "economic basket case" is generally applied by commentators to Zimbabwe. The greatest cause of that country's economic woes is the unmentioned Zimbabwe Democracy & Economic Recovery Act passed by the United States Congress in 2001 after the Zimbabwe intervention in the Congo and as a direct response to that successful intervention.

This Act forbids the United States to permit the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, or any other financial institution, to give credit or loans to Zimbabwe or to permit the cancellation of any of its debts. It has caused the absence of hard currency and difficulties in importing fuel, as oil is dealt in dollars – Zimbabwe is completely dependent for energy on imports. These are the causes of the hyperinflation that we hear so much about.

We are supposed to believe that sanctions are about the curtailment of freedom of movement for some thirteen leaders of ZANU-PF. They are, in fact, about squeezing the life out of the country.

The white ranches are regarded as necessary for feeding Zimbabwe. Most of their produce was exported – like in Ireland at the time of the Famine. The tobacco crop was particularly important. But Ireland, at the end of the 19th century, saw the Land Acts brought in by the British after a ferocious agrarian war. The farmers were lent the money to buy out the landlords and after a time developed a sound agricultural economy. (De Valera, feeling that the landlords had no right to the land in the first place, refused to pay back the loans which led to an economic war between Ireland and Britain through most of the 1930s. With war looming, Britain settled on terms very much to the Irish advantage.) Such plans, which would have provided land

for the Zimbabweans who actually worked the land, were scuppered by the Blair Government as it returned Britain to imperial mode.

Role of the "International Community"

The latest round of sanctions may have been blocked by Russia and China at the United Nations. South Africa, Libya and Vietnam also voted against. But this does not affect the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States. Nor does it prevent Gordon Brown from trying to persuade the EU to step up sanctions. And, though some may wish to ignore the fact, Ireland has the same voting and veto powers in the EU as Britain.

Nonetheless it was a setback for the British Government. So also was their cack handed recent attempts to demonise the Chinese in the run up to the Olympics. China is what stands between Zimbabwe and possible total ruin. The African states, or most of them, are also standing by Zimbabwe. The South African Government had the following to say as it welcomed the failure of the UN resolution:

"We do so, in accordance with the Sharm-El Sheikh African Union (AU) Summit of Heads of State and Government decision to encourage President Robert Mugabe and the leader of the (opposition) MDC to honour their commitment to initiate dialogue with a view to promoting peace, stability, democracy and reconciliation of the Zimbabwean people... It is our considered view that imposing sanctions would indeed have impacted negatively on the current dialogue process among Zimbabwean political parties. In addition, both SADC (the Southern African Development Community) and the AU have not called for sanctions..."

At that same Sharm-El Sheikh summit, on July 1st, the Zimbabwean representative was interviewed by the BBC and this was broadcast on RTE. After some dramatic nonsense about security requiring the interview to be held in a toilet, the BBC man said that even the Kenyan President opposed Mugabe. The diplomat suggested that this was not a very good point, or had his interviewer forgotten the hundreds who had died in Kenya only weeks before following the dubious election of that self same Kenyan President? He didn't seem to know that the ability to "forget" is one of the first qualifications required of British journalists.

The "International Community" has very definite plans for this part of the world. In the Congo it wants unfettered access to the mineral wealth. When Simon Mann and his fellow mercenaries were arrested at Harare airport their "story" was that they were on their way to the Congo to guard diamond mines. So that was alright then! But mostly what is wanted is crops. For food and for biofuels. And produced by as near to slave labour as can be got, without, of course, the costly overheads in terms of food and shelter that actual slavery would entail.

Neighbouring Malawi illustrates the point. It came close to famine last year. Previously it kept a store of surplus food to tide it over bad times. At the urging of the World Bank it abolished this policy. The US then offered food aid in the form of genetically modified grain. It offered this all over the region. Mugabe raised opposition. He said that Africans in need should accept GM grain to eat but not the GM grain for sowing which would produce an infertile crop and force dependence on the GM companies forever. This didn't go

down too well with the American and European agribusinesses. (Similar global market policies caused the problems in Chad. There was no shortage of food – just of the money to buy it.)

It should be noted that the main British policy in the European Union is the destruction of the Common Agricultural Policy and the traditional rural life that goes with it. Food "mountains" had a purpose. Guaranteed supply at relatively fixed prices. A real no no for the free trade globalists! Here the British have been most successful. No more butter mountains or wine lakes. Surplus EU food used to be given to poor people, especially pensioners and the unemployed. I've sampled this food, especially butter and tinned meat, and very nice it was. But Blair's Government refused to distribute it in Britain. Though for a while charities and church groups managed to get their hands on the tinned meat.

The existence of large agricultural units in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and to a lesser extent in Kenya, are most attractive to agribusiness. Land reform is anathema to them. In Malawi there are many run down tobacco farms. But people are forbidden from using the land. The units must be kept together at all costs.

The MDC

Talks, or at least talks about talks, are now underway in South Africa, facilitated by South African President Mbeki, between Zanu-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change. Neither of these movements is really united. After the fighting in Matebeleland in the 1980s, there was a merger of sorts between ZANU and ZAPU to form Zanu-PF. In the recent violence much of the trouble was within Zanu-PF itself. But the MDC is even more divided.

Furthermore, the violence, not huge by most international standards, goes both ways, and has done for a long time. As long ago as 2000 the white Commercial Farmers' Union was writing in the Daily News about the MDC deploying hundreds of youths against war veterans and about attacks on Zanu-PF leaders. The supposedly non-existent opposition media in Zimbabwe is thriving and is an excellent source of information. Subtle it is not.

The leader of the MDC recognised by the "International Community" is Morgan Tsvangirai. Though 28 years old at independence he took no part in the war. After independence, he joined Zanu and rose quickly in its ranks. He was a leading figure in 1984 when the Government was suppressing what was left of Joshua Nkomo's movement. Now he denounces this as a crime. He was a leading trade unionist and became General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions in 1989.

Ten years later he led the National Constitutional Assembly, a loose body which still recognised that Zimbabwe's problems arose from the colonial period and deficiencies in the Lancaster House Agreement. From this base and his distancing of the trade unions from Zanu-PF, he participated in the formation of the MDC. The MDC achieved a considerable boost when it defeated Robert Mugabe's attempt to change the Constitution in a referendum in 2002. They also managed to get 57 members out of 120 elected to parliament.

But Tsvangirai led a faction of the movement which did not want to contest elections, but wanted its demands met before standing for Parliament. His recent refusal to stand in the run off for President can be seen in that context. He also became too close for comfort to the white farmers and to foreign governments for the liking of many in the MDC. But he was the public face and the Movement stood with him. At least it did so until he pulled out of the Presidential election without consulting most of the MDC leaders and in spite already winning the parliamentary elections.

Jonathan Moyo belongs to another MDC faction and is a fierce critic of the President. In the Zimbabwe Independent on 26th June he is reported as saying that he suspected Tsvangirai of being handled by outside forces and adding:

"This is the most unwise decision that Tsvangirai has ever made and it would signify his downfall. How can Tsvangirai withdraw four days before the election and yet people were beaten and killed all along when he made his decision to contest on May 21... The violence is actually more pronounced within Zanu-PF itself where the party members are disciplining each other... Sometimes the concerns of the British and the Americans are suspicious... Over 20,000 people were killed in Matebeleland and nothing happened, but when 86 people are killed, the very same people who ignored events in Matebeleland are the ones

who say the election will not be free and fair because of the violence."

Moyo and others are prepared to negotiate with a President that they feel they could have beaten in the election and they are bitter. But they will get nothing from the "International Community" except character assassination, if not the other kind.

Conclusion

The Russian-Chinese veto has stopped the dangerous British campaign against Zimbabwe in its tracks and opened a breathing space for that country to resolve its governmental crisis. With the "International Community" suddenly reminded of the limits of Western globalist ambitions, local powers have rallied to assist the transition process in Zimbabwe. There is a need – and opportunity - for a sane voice in Europe to emerge to support this process. Such a voice can only come from a state that understands the issues involved in the transition from colonialism, the reform of land ownership and the building of national economic independence. Perhaps Micheál Martin could take a step back from the position into which Ireland was stampeded by the self-styled "liberals" of the Irish media and provide an understanding voice for Zimbabwe. □

As others see us: France

How the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website describes Ireland's foreign policy.

Dublin's diplomacy has three aspects: links with the Anglo-Saxon world; an engagement with Europe; the United Nations.

Links with the Anglo-Saxon world are dominated by two partners: the United Kingdom and the United States.

Historical and geographical links between Ireland, which was under British domination from 1172 to 1921, and the United Kingdom, have led to close commercial relations, special dispositions in terms of nationality and bilateral involvement in the affairs of Northern Ireland.

The United Kingdom is Ireland's principal commercial partner (29%).

The Northern Ireland question constitutes one of the main components of the relationship between the two countries and a domain of very close collaboration since the implementation of the autonomy of Northern Ireland thanks to the Good Friday Agreement (10th April 1998) which was overwhelmingly approved by the Irish electorate on 22 May 1998. Since the elections of 7 March 2007, the winning parties have managed to form – on 8 May 2007 – a coalition government, as planned by the Saint Andrews Agreement (2006). Support for Northern Ireland will be essentially financial from now on.

On 14th May 2007, for the first time, an Irish Prime Minister was able to address the British Parliament in London. 400 000 Irish people live in the United Kingdom. Freedom of movement has existed between the two countries since 1922.

The link that unites Ireland and the United States is also based on history and economy: America was the land that welcomed the victims of the great famine of the middle of the 19th century; forty million American citizens claim Irish descent. Dublin and Washington also have close relations politically, economically and culturally. Second supplier of Ireland with more than 15% of the market, the United States is by far the biggest foreign investor

in the country (80% of Foreign Direct Investment) with around 600 firms and businesses who enjoy an extremely advantageous tax regime and produce manufactured goods destined for the European market. In addition, the United States has often been involved in the Northern Ireland process at the highest level.

Ireland's engagement with Europe goes back to 1973, date of entry into the European Community. In 2002, Ireland chose the Euro. The country's successful presidency of the European Union in 2004 confirmed and reinforced the European vocation of Ireland. Often close to the Commission, thanks to well thought out lobbying, Ireland has become a respected actor in the construction of Europe. The country has particularly close links with the new member states - especially those of comparable size for which it constitutes a model of development, and to whom it provides technical expertise, for example how to manage funds such as cohesion funds - and with the other neutral states of the EU. Ireland is the only EU country where a referendum to sign the Lisbon Treaty is compulsory.

As far as defence is concerned, Dublin combines neutrality with a will to participate in the PESD (= European plan for security and defense). Any outside engagement is subject to the triple lock rule (United Nations mandate, government decision and vote of Parliament). Ireland has –under those conditions– confirmed that it is sending troops to Chad, within the framework of operation EUFOR (European temporary military deployment), which it commands under General Patrick Nash.

At the level of the United Nations, the history of Ireland and the particularity of its position (neutrality) allow Ireland to express ambitious positions, with which numerous states identify. Ireland has for example committed itself in humanitarian and peace keeping operations in Kosovo and Sudan (Darfur). Its increased cooperation work will develop mainly in the area of East and South Africa, using the usual network support of non government organizations.

Tibet: Understanding China's Position

How the Dalai Lama has wasted his opportunities.

By Gwydion M. Williams

People in Ireland might naturally feel sympathy with the Tibetans, a small people with strong religious feelings controlled by powerful outsiders. But what about Tibetans rioters attacking ordinary Han and Hai (Chinese Muslims) in Lhasa on the 14th March? Western news services played it down, but a lot of foreigners witnessed it.

Attacking police and security forces is one thing, it happens all over the world. Much rarer and much nastier are attacks by a crowd on innocent individuals who have done nothing beyond being members of the wrong community. There were some nasty incidents of English attacks on randomly chosen Irish in 1974 after the death of 21 Britons in the IRA's Birmingham Pub Bombings. That time things were contained by a lot of English who knew it was wrong and stopped their fellow citizens misbehaving.

No such restraint was shown in the general rioting and racist attacks on Irish in London in the Gordon Riots of 1778. But real-life mobs are seldom mindless and can often be supporting decent causes along with all of the hatred and lawlessness. The Gordon rioters were also mostly supporters of the American War of Independence, and the immediate point of issue was a relaxation of laws against Catholics in the British Army, intended as a way to get more Redcoats to crush democracy in North America.

The Lhasa Riots were at least as vicious as the Gordon Riots. Passers-by were attacked if they were Han or Hai. Five young women were burnt alive when a clothes shop was set on fire, a fact publicised in the Chinese media, mentioned in passing by Britain's Channel 4 News on Thursday 27th March. Not mentioned at all by the BBC, or not that I have seen.

The attitude was classic racism. Han and Hui settled in Lhasa for much the same reason as Irish settled in London or Liverpool. Disputes between Beijing and the Dalai Lama have nothing to do with them. But though they are there legally, their right to be there is not accepted:

"The European traveller said he was hiding out with a Tibetan family but eventually got kicked out when he disagreed with their sentiment that all Chinese and Muslims should be removed from Tibet. A monk who was with the family asked him to leave, to avoid confrontation." (Christian Science Monitor, [A])

Is that notably different from those English who'd like all Muslims, Hindus and Afro-Caribbeans of any faith removed from what they call their 'small overcrowded island'?

But Han and Hui in Tibet are not foreigners. When Europeans encountered Tibet as a strange country north of India, they had no doubt it was part of the Chinese Empire. This was never the case with Vietnam or Korea, sometimes cited as comparisons. Besides, China's loose ties with those countries were cut by 19th century treaties. No Chinese government ever accepted that Tibet was separate. It remained part of the Chinese 'family' in the eyes of almost all

Chinese and also some Tibetans. The Panchen Lama generally headed a pro-unity faction at odds with the separatists around the Dalai Lama.

In the early 1950s, Mao re-unified China, which had been torn apart by warlords after the Empire was overthrown. He was willing to let Lhasa and the Tibetan Plateau have autonomy, within limits. Tibet's best interest was to make a deal with a government that had more soldiers than Tibet had people, and which was determined to assert China's dignity after a century of humiliation. Autonomy for Western Tibet was the best Tibet could hope for. But it would not have suited the CIA, so they fed the Tibetans impossible dreams of independence.

Law and Peace

International law does not recognise Tibet as a state separate from China. (The 'International Commission of Jurists' is self-appointed and does not count.) There was no democracy in Tibet, power was held by a mix of aristocrats and religious leaders. 95% of the population were serfs or slaves. The Dalai Lama failed to do anything about slavery and serfdom in the years he was ruler of Tibet. Even when he had Beijing's full backing and had the authority to make a change, he changed nothing important

Beijing is blamed for not allowing hostile demonstrations by Tibetans who want independence. Exactly the same line was taken by the authorities in Nepal and the Republic of India. [M] India has a lot of separatists of its own. India used armed force to take over Goa and Sikkim, and retains half of Muslim-majority Kashmir.

Beijing is told to negotiate. Beijing apparently wants to negotiate, but first the Dalai Lama must accept that Tibet was never independent. From 1959 till the early 1970s he asserted that Tibet was independent. Nowadays he says that he is not seeking independence. He has left himself the option of re-asserting the claim if autonomy does not suit him.

What happened on Friday 14th March 2008 makes it seem unlikely the Tibetans could competently rule themselves, if given a chance. China's thinly-populated western territories are home to overlapping ethnic minorities. Beijing's rule keeps the minorities mostly at peace with each other. If the Chinese People's Republic came apart, the most likely outcome would be the same sort of ethnic violence that we've seen in Former Yugoslavia, in Iraq after Saddam, in the Congo after Mobutu and in Kenya after a multi-party election.

'Tibet' was traditionally split into three distinct regions: U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. The current Tibet Autonomous Region is U-Tsang and western Kham. Call this 'Western Tibet'. Eastern Tibet is Amdo and eastern Kham, traditional provinces which have been absorbed into the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan, and Sichuan.

The Tibetan exiles claim a 'Greater Tibet' that would include Eastern Tibet. This region has been settled by people from more crowded parts of China, part of the same population movement that took other Chinese into Southeast Asia and all over the world. The region now includes many different peoples, with Tibetans as a minority. One might expect all-against-all ethnic violence if Beijing's grip were ever to weaken. There was one unconfirmed report of Hai attacking innocent Tibetans in response to what had happened in Lhasa. So far Beijing has kept a lid on things, emphasising those Tibetans who were against the violence and often took risks to help Han or Hai.

Western Tibet asserted independence in 1912, under the 13th Dalai Lama. This was in line with traditional politics, whereby the border territories would break away when the old dynasty was overthrown. But by 1912, Tibet had to deal with modern politics. By Western rules, Tibet was part of the new Chinese Republic. Britain tried to get a limited separation with the Simla Convention of 1914:

"Article 2. The Governments of Great Britain and China recognizing that Tibet is under the suzerainty of China, and recognizing also the autonomy of Outer Tibet, engage to respect the territorial integrity of the country, and to abstain from interference in the administration of Outer Tibet (including the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama), which shall remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa.

"The Government of China engages not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it." [T]

The 13th Dalai Lama had claimed independence in 1912. By 1914 he was willing to drop this and accept autonomy with a British guarantee. But this was too much for the Chinese Republic, which never signed or accepted the Simla Convention. The issue drags on into modern politics – the Simla Convention also defined a border than the Republic of India still asserts but that China rejects.

The current Dalai Lama owes his position to the Kuomintang Republic, which endorsed his enthronement in 1940. At that time the Lhasa government had got bogged down in factionalism. The 13th Dalai Lama had died in 1933, the 9th Panchen Lama (Tashi Lama) in 1937. Traditionally the two high lamas recognised and legitimised each other's 'incarnations', but this system had broken down. It was possible that two or more rival Dalai Lamas would emerge, as had happened before and as currently applied to some of the other 'reincarnations'. The solution was to 'find' incarnations of both lamas in China's Qinghai province, in an area still regarded as Amdo by Tibetans and a suitable source for new leaders. The new Dalai Lama went to Lhasa and the new Panchen Lama stayed in Qinghai, under control of the local warlord. I'm sure that a lot more happened than the mere payment of a large sum to the warlord, an event that the Dalai Lama and the Free Tibet crowd freely admit to.

(I am assuming the choice was political, though the official doctrine was that a child had been identified by the religious authorities as a dead man reincarnated. If you accept the claims for reincarnation-on-demand as real, and also support the idea of a 'Free Tibet', then it was a very silly place to pick.)

Many people believe in rebirth as a general possibility, part of Hindu and Buddhist teaching and also some tribal or traditional religions. But the Tibetan system is much more specific: a particular young boy is 'recognised' as being the same person as some high lama who has recently died. No other branch of Buddhism claims to produce miracles so neatly and predictably.

The actual history of the Dalai Lamas is also hard to reconcile with their grand claims. Little real power was exercised by the 6th to 12th Dalai Lamas. They mostly died young – 23 years old, 49, 46, 9, 21, 18 and 18.[W] Those who lived long came late to effective power, or refrained from using it. Mostly, someone else exercised power in their names.

Claims for rebirth are apparently taken seriously. The 'reborn' child is supposed to recognise objects like a hairbrush or mirror belonging to the dead man, while ignoring similar objects that belonged to someone else. It would be an excellent test, if done honestly. The suspicion is that the selected child is first trained to claim those objects, before being 'tested'. Children don't usually remember anything that happened before they were 4, so the child himself might be sincere. But the parents would have to be in on the fraud, and they'd also have to be confident that the whole business of reincarnated lamas was a fraud. If it were real and you messed with it, you could expect terrible consequences in your next lifetime, or maybe sooner. So either the whole business is a cynical fraud or it is exactly what it claims to be: there is no middle ground.

Cynical frauds have their sincere front-men, of course. The current Dalai Lama was 'discovered' when he was only two. Interestingly, he had an elder brother who was already recognised as an important reincarnated Lama in East Tibet, territory that was ethnically mixed and could never plausibly be separate from China.

The Chinese Republic was also involved in the ceremonies when the current Dalai Lama was installed in Lhasa.[R] They had never ceased to say that Tibet was part of their country, though with some traditional autonomy. It was only after Mao and the Communists overthrew this right-wing and ineffective government that the idea of Tibetan independence was revived. This might have worked if China had remained weak and divided after 1949. The very opposite happened.

The Dollar Lama

How far is the Dalai Lama really well-meaning? He has caused splits even in the exile community, by taking a hard line against worshipers of a regional god called the Shugden. Pro-Shugden demonstrators came up with an interesting slogan: "Your smiles charm, your actions harm." [P]

The Dalai Lama has never been very consistent. He had a brief enthusiasm for Mao in the 1950s: he could see a lot of merit in Communism, just so long as it didn't involve raising his inferiors in Tibet to the level of his sort of people. He failed to free them from slavery or serfdom, which was tolerated in Western Tibet up until the 1959 uprising. A rising provoked by the destruction of the feudal order in Eastern Tibet.

From 1959 till the early 1970s, the Dalai Lama said that the whole of Tibet was a sovereign state that had been

invaded. From the early 1970s, when the USA made peace with Beijing, he shifted a little and began saying he was only seeking autonomy. This is not hugely convincing: it looks more like a way of hanging onto residual US support. The US will not tear up the rule-book for Tibet, even though it has recently done so for Kosovo.

"However much he may characterize his own position as seeking only greater autonomy for Tibet, monks [in Tibet] know he is unwilling to declare that Tibet is an inalienable part of China, an act China demands of him as a precondition to formal negotiations. Because the exile regime eschews a separation of politics and religion, many monks deem adherence to the Dalai Lama's stance of non-recognition of the Chinese government's legitimacy in Tibet to be a religious obligation." [K]

If he was trying to save Tibet from being invaded by modern values, he might have got a deal that offered cultural protection in return for accepting Tibet as part of China. Cultural autonomy might be possible, but too many Tibetans let themselves be used as minor players in the CIA's grand game against anyone who dares be different from the USA.

If China had stayed pro-Western, as it was in the 1940s, there would probably be communist guerrillas in Tibet and elsewhere in China (just as there are in the Republic of India). As things were, the CIA tried to organise its own rebels against the first efficient government China had had for more than a century:

"The CIA conducted a large scale covert action campaign against the communist Chinese in Tibet starting in 1956. This led to a disastrous bloody uprising in 1959, leaving tens of thousands of Tibetans dead, while the Dalai Lama and about 100,000 followers were forced to flee across the treacherous Himalayan passes to India and Nepal..." (Asia Times, [C])

It might have seemed a dead option from the 1970s. It was unexpectedly revived in the last few years.

"Since September 11, 2001, there has been a sea-change in US Intelligence attitudes, requirements and capabilities. Old operational plans have been dusted off and updated. Previous assets re-activated. Tibet and the perceived weakness of China's position there will probably have been fully reassessed." (Ibid, [C])

Some people in the Bush administration saw the 9/11 destruction of the Two Towers by Sunni Islamists as a pretext to act against the main centres of resistance to US power, regardless of whether there was a plausible link. Afghanistan's Taliban had undeniably sheltered al-Qaeda. They offered to expel them if the USA could prove its case under Taliban rules: that option was ignored. The US public's fear would be used as an excuse to move not just against the Taliban, but also secular Iraq. Once Iraq was secured – they thought it would be easy – they would next invade Shia Iran and anti-religious North Korea. Conquering Tibet on behalf of the Dalai Lama was also unofficially mentioned.

The wilder parts of the plan no longer make sense. The USA needs Chinese cooperation to limit the damage in the current long-running financial crisis. (Financial Times [D]) Since the 1980s, they have built a system whereby China makes an increasing amount of what the USA consumes.

The Chinese get dollars which they then cycle back as dollar bonds. The Chinese could crash the world economy without breaking any rules, just sell some of the bonds and say they were moving out of dollars. (They are doing so anyway, but slowly and with some allowance for US concerns.)

Anti-Globalisers?

The Tibetan protests have points in common with other anti-globalist protests – but none of those involved attacks on innocents. The Lhasa riot was different, but has its admirers:

"What is the point of revolt if it is almost certainly suicidal?

"This uprising has many uniquely Tibetan characteristics. At street level, a favourite item seized from Chinese shops was toilet-rolls - hardly the usual target of looters. Not that Tibetans, over millennia, have felt much need for the paper rolls, or even for the basics of the Chinese cuisine such as soy sauce. What the Tibetans did with the loo paper was to hurl it over power lines, instantly making Lhasa, and other Tibetan towns, Tibetan again. Right across the 25% of China that is ethnically and culturally Tibetan, the unrolled toilet paper looks like wind horses, the white silken khadag [or kata] scarf with which Tibetans greet and bless each other. As all Tibetans know, they carry their message on the wind: victory to the gods!

"That is what this revolt is about: making Tibet Tibetan once more. The white scarves also protected Tibetan shopkeepers from attack as the streets filled, for a short and costly moment of freedom, with Tibetans smashing the businesses of immigrant Chinese traders...

"China today pours money - overwhelmingly state money - into Tibet: into railways, highways, tourist infrastructure and a top-heavy administrative elite. Glass towers, shopping-malls, enormous brothels masquerading as discos, towering offices, now dominate urban Tibetan skylines which only twenty years ago were a sacred landscape of prayer flags, temples and meditation...

"Australia, as a close friend and now with a prime minister fluent in Chinese, is uniquely placed to remind the isolated and fearful party leaders that they can gain much by listening to the message of the rioters: give us a break. Australia could also teach China much about land management and care, about rural communities and government working as partners to repair long-term damage, and about discovering the hard way how to respect and reconcile with indigenous peoples." (Tibet: revolt with memories, by Gabriel Lafitte, [E])

Lafitte – an adviser to the Tibetan 'government-in-exile' – pays no attention to the innocents who were beaten and sometimes killed. His remarks about Australia's treatment of its indigenous peoples are ridiculous. Tibet's population has grown under Chinese rule and also got more prosperous.[U] Australia's indigenous people had been greatly reduced in numbers by the early 20th century, when policies were changed and they recovered a little.

Another much shrewder observer makes the comparison much more accurately:

"China reasserted its traditional dominance over Xinjiang and Tibet, today its largest - and least stable - provinces...

But without them, the country would be like America without all territory west of the Rockies: denied its continental majesty and status...

"Both Tibet and Xinjiang have the misfortune of possessing resources China wants and of being situated on the path to resources China needs: Tibet has vast amounts of timber, uranium and gold, and the two territories constitute China's geographic gateway for trade flow outward - and energy flow inward - with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan...

"They are getting roads, telephone lines, hospitals and jobs. School fees are being reduced or abolished to promote basic education and Chineseness. Unlike those Europeans who seek to define the EU as a Christian club, there are no Chinese inhibitions about incorporating Muslim territories. The new mythology of Chinese nationalism is based not on expunging minorities but granting them a common status in the paternalistic state: Uighurs and Tibetans, though not Han, are told they are Chinese...Tibetans and Uighurs will gradually become more prosperous than their neighbouring Mongols, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Afghans, Pakistanis, Indians, and Nepalis." ('Just like America, China is building a multi-ethnic empire in the west', by Parag Khanna [G])

Of course the white settlers in North America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa had no wish for a multi-ethnic empire. Non-whites were really not wanted, except as slaves in the US South. On the eve of the US civil war, most of the non-slave states did not let blacks vote in elections and did not view them as citizens. They were not allowed to volunteer for the war against the South until Confederate success made it unavoidable.

China looks after its minorities, but it will not let them separate. The land is much too precious. Not just minerals, the melting snows of Greater Tibet are just as valuable. Western Tibet is the source of the Indus and Brahmaputra, two of the three biggest rivers of the Indian subcontinent. Eastern Tibet is the source of two of China's three major rivers, the Yellow River and the Yangtze. Also the Mekong, which flows right down to the south of Indochina.[S]

Will You Walk Into My Website-Parlour

It used to be claimed that the internet would defeat state censorship. Without knowing much about the internet's inner workings, I was certain several years back that computers would be vastly easier to monitor and control than paper-and-ink. They can send spy software into other computers, or else copy their files and browse them at leisure. Rummage through millions of words for a few stray phrases. The typical PC is wide-open to spy software.

It is now generally agreed that the 'Great Firewall of China' has succeeded, and that the Chinese have a sophisticated understanding of the web's workings. So why is the BBC still inviting comments from inside the People's Republic? Are dissidents just 'grist to the mill'? Is there no concern about what happens to them?

True, there have always been some ways round the normal barriers. [H] 'Proxy Servers' may get round normal restrictions, but do they do so invisibly? Smart cyber-police might have set up 'honey-pots', sites of interest to dissidents that would lead back via the proxy to the original.

What technology can do, technology can also follow.

Anyone who encourages the protestors and cares about their fate must be stupid. Anyone who isn't stupid must not care. Regard them as 'expendable', since whatever they are after is not what the West is wanting.

I mentioned earlier that BBC Online had suddenly become accessible in China. The BBC's own staff miss the significance, but ordinary people have sometimes proved much smarter:

"For me it wouldn't really matter, but I do feel very disappointed for the Western media to have biased reporting on the Tibetan riot, so I really do understand why most western websites have been blocked. (Kai Hin Yung, Beijing)" [B]

The BBC keeps asking people to send their views, regardless of where they live. There is sometimes a warning, but nothing like strong enough. It should read something like:

Unless you are an expert on the technicalities of the Internet, it is absolutely certain that your government can read your postings if they wish to do so. Even if you are an expert, the Internet community includes both 'loyalists' for various causes and people who'll do anything for money.

Conclusion

The aim was to spoil China's big year, which has been done. But it's pointless to do this if China's basic strength remains intact. The more they cast a slur on the Beijing Olympics, the more they make enemies of just those Chinese who might have been persuaded to swallow Western values.

By the norms of international law, Tibet was never independent. If someone wanted to rewrite the rules for the whole world, that would be different. But when a regime is friendly to the USA, or subordinate to the USA, or just of no interest to the USA, there is always massive intrusion into the lives of residual tribalists and minority cultures. They don't really want to keep Tibet the way it was in 1950, however much they may pretend.

At the start of the Second World War, there was right-wing propaganda in Britain saying things like 'Britain would fight to the last Frenchman'. In the event Britain was serious about that war, though most of the work of actually defeating Nazi Germany was done by the Soviet Union, and a lot of the rest by the USA.

No one is going to fight for Tibet, though they will happily 'fight to the last Tibetan' as a way of sniping at China. The Neo-Cons may have schemed to rip away Tibet in the same way as they ripped Kosovo from Serbia, but that was after their planned success in Iraq and Iran and North Korea. Besides, China is a hundred times bigger than Serbia. China has nuclear weapons.

The Dalai could have used the 2008 Olympics to get the best possible deal for old-fashioned Tibetan values. This still could happen, there have been negotiations, but there have been negotiations before now without an outcome. The key point would be for the Dalai Lama to admit that Tibet was never independent in the sense that independence is defined under international law. He could save face by saying that 'international law' was framed by the big strong powers for their own benefit, which lots of us would agree with. But I've an unhappy feeling he is too old to change and

too stubborn to change. One wishes there were some good news for Tibet's better traditions, but really there isn't. □

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Dispatches from the North-West Frontier

(Some responses to Lt. Bury's weekly dispatches from the front lines in Afghanistan published by *The Irish Times*)

11th August 2008

Madam, - If Lt. Paddy Bury, who is described as an Irish soldier despite the little matter of him being a member of a British army regiment stationed in Afghanistan, feels such a desire to be an Irish soldier, why then did he not join the Irish Army?

Lt. Bury, who, it is stated, hails from Co. Wicklow, chose to join a foreign army, thereby forgoing the right and honour of being called an Irish soldier.

It appears that the revisionists have succeeded in convincing *The Irish Times* that an Irishman in British army uniform is in fact entitled to refer to himself as an Irish soldier. It is the duty of all Irish citizens to uphold the separatist ethos upon which this State was built, and uphold the value and dignity of Irish citizenship and not allow it to be peddled around the globe by British soldiers masquerading as members of the Irish defence forces.

In this matter *The Irish Times* has a responsibility also.

- Yours, etc,

TONY CORRIGAN

Templeogue

Dublin 6w.

Madam, - It is unfortunate that questions of revisionism versus republicanism, however relevant in themselves, have been allowed to disguise the real issue raised by Lt. Bury's articles. Lt. Bury's "diary" concerns the day-to-day life of Afghanistan's present Western occupiers, who, in the prevailing climate of neo-imperialism, are taking another crack at controlling a country that has defeated successive waves of conquerors over the centuries.

In the nature of things - Lt. Bury is himself an occupier - his diary is uncritical of the present occupation. Its publication by *The Irish Times* implies approval of a NATO campaign that was undertaken without UN approval and hence in violation of international law.

- Yours, etc,

RAYMOND DEANE

Dun Laoghaire

Co Dublin.

12th August 2008

A chara, - Derek Reid (August 8th) ends his eulogy on Irish involvement with the British army by suggesting that "our thoughts should be with the RIR and Irish Guards as they continue to aid the fight for democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan".

Well, not for this Irishman. My thoughts are with the ordinary people of Iraq and Afghanistan and not with their invaders and oppressors.

How any Irish person could support an invading army is beyond me. On the other hand, perhaps I should not be so incredulous. When one considers the manner in which our island's history is being rewritten, it might not be long before we see the Black and Tan Bravery Award ceremonies at Kilmainham. - Is mise,
E.F. FANNING,
Churchtown,
Dublin 14.

16th August

Madam, - E.F. Fanning's letter of August 12th has made me rather sad. I really thought this kind of attitude to Irishmen in British uniforms was now a thing of the past.

My son is currently serving on the front line in Afghanistan with the third parachute regiment. Not only is he trying to bring democracy to this country, but also fighting the global war on drugs. I am a very proud of my son, but I also worry daily until his safe return at the end of September. - Yours, etc,
SUSAN M. JONES, Killiney, Co Dublin.

Georgia and the ever expanding North Atlantic Alliance

By David Morrison

"The Americans promised that Nato wouldn't move beyond the boundaries of Germany after the Cold War but now half of central and eastern Europe are members, so what happened to their promises? It shows they cannot be trusted." [1]

Those are the words of the last President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, in an interview with The Daily Telegraph on 7 May 2008. Foolishly, Gorbachev gave the orders for the withdrawal of the Red Army from Eastern Europe without getting the West to sign up to this commitment not to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – and it has advanced eastwards since, and continues to advance ever farther away from the North Atlantic. Russia can be forgiven for thinking that it is being encircled. This critical fact is missing from the media coverage of the proposals to admit Georgia and Ukraine – and Russia's unhappiness about it.

NATO grows

NATO had 16 members at the end of the Cold War, 14 in Europe (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey & UK) and 2 in North America (US & Canada). Since then it has taken 10 states in Eastern Europe into full membership (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia & Slovenia) making 26 members in total.

But that isn't the whole story. A further 24 states (including Russia) are associated with NATO through the so-called Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. These are: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine & Uzbekistan.

50 states in all are now represented on the EAPC, including Finland, Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland, which stayed out of NATO during the Cold War, plus every former Soviet bloc state, plus every former Soviet republic, plus every former Yugoslav republic.

Today, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council almost circles the Northern Hemisphere from Alaska in the West to the borders of China in the East, encompassing such unlikely Euro-Atlantic states as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Small wonder then that NATO is rarely referred to these days by its full name – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

(NATO has extended its tentacles southwards as well through its so-called Mediterranean Dialogue which was launched in December 1994 [2]. This currently involves

seven non-NATO nations in the Mediterranean area: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.)

Defensive alliance

NATO was established in 1949 as a defensive alliance against the Soviet bloc. Under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, signed in Washington on 4 April 1949, parties to the Treaty are supposed to render collective assistance to any party that is subject to an armed attack. Article 5 states:

"The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area." [3]

Article 6 limits the location of an armed attack, against which a collective response is required under the Treaty – the armed attack must be "on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, ... on the territory of or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer" or "on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories ... or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer". So, for example, the capture of the Falkland Islands by Argentina didn't qualify for a collective NATO response in support of Britain.

Article 5 has been invoked only once in NATO's history – when New York and Washington were attacked by al-Qaeda on 9/11. The NATO Council met the next day and agreed that "if it is determined that this attack was directed from abroad against the United States, it shall be regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty" [4]. It was so determined a few weeks later and, on 2 October 2001, NATO invoked Article 5 for the one and only time in its history [5].

However, the US had already determined that NATO was not going to be involved as an organisation in its invasion of Afghanistan. That was going to be carried out by a "coalition of the willing" under the unfettered leadership of the US – there wasn't going to be a repeat of the US

experience in bombing Yugoslavia in 1999, when it was prevented from bombing the targets it wished by other NATO members.

(NATO as an organisation did contribute one military asset to the war effort: five NATO Airborne Warning & Control Systems (AWACS) aircraft were deployed to the US for "homeland" defence.)

No limit to area of operation

Logically, NATO should have disbanded itself, when the Soviet Union collapsed and any threat from the Soviet bloc had disappeared. Instead, NATO has expanded relentlessly eastwards and seems intent on continuing to do so. But it continues to operate under the North Atlantic Treaty drawn up in 1949, in a very different geopolitical environment.

Furthermore, since 1990, NATO has taken military action without any of its members being attacked for example, in bombing Yugoslavia in 1999. (The latter was manifestly contrary to the UN Charter since it constituted the use of armed force, which wasn't in self-defence and wasn't authorised by the UN Security Council).

Also, NATO increasingly operates "out of area", that is, outside the Euro/North American territory of its members specified in Article 6 of the Treaty. The Treaty doesn't forbid such action, but it wasn't envisaged in 1949 when the Treaty was drawn up. Today, there is no limit on NATO's area of operation in the world, justified by the need to "fight terrorism". As the NATO website page entitled NATO and the fight against terrorism puts it:

"NATO's immediate response to September 11 was further strengthened by a decision, at the Reykjavik meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in May 2002, that the Alliance will operate when and where necessary to fight terrorism. This landmark declaration effectively ended the debate on what is and what is not NATO's area of operations and paved the way for the Alliance's future engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq." [6]

In not much more than a decade, a defensive North Atlantic alliance whose *raison d'être* disappeared at the end of the Cold War has evolved into an aggressive alliance, ready to engage in military action to "fight terrorism" abroad in the name of security at home.

Gordon Brown told British soldiers in Afghanistan recently:

"... you know that you are on the front line of the fight against the Taliban, and you know that what you are doing here prevents terrorism coming to the streets of Britain" [7]

The truth is the other way up – the best way of preventing "terrorism coming to the streets of Britain" is for Britain to stop interfering in the Muslim world. And the same is true for other NATO states that have volunteered to "fight terrorism" in Afghanistan and Iraq. By being led by the nose into Afghanistan and Iraq by Britain and America, NATO members are not only sacrificing blood and treasure, they are making their homelands less secure.

Yes to Georgia (and Ukraine)

On 3 April 2008, at a meeting of heads of state in

Bucharest, NATO decided in principle to allow Ukraine and Georgia to become full members. The declaration issued from the meeting stated:

"NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO. Both nations have made valuable contributions to Alliance operations." [8]

But NATO didn't specify a timetable. Indeed, neither state was allowed to embark on the next step towards membership, which is the drawing up of a Membership Action Plan (MAP). On this, the declaration from the Bucharest summit said:

"MAP is the next step for Ukraine and Georgia on their direct way to membership. Today we make clear that we support these countries' applications for MAP. Therefore we will now begin a period of intensive engagement with both at a high political level to address the questions still outstanding pertaining to their MAP applications."

Germany, France and other states successfully resisted intense pressure from the US (with the support of the UK) to draw up MAPs for Ukraine and Georgia right away. A decision may be taken at NATO foreign ministers meeting in December 2008. As the Bucharest declaration states:

"We have asked Foreign Ministers to make a first assessment of progress [re outstanding questions about their MAP applications] at their December 2008 meeting. Foreign Ministers have the authority to decide on the MAP applications of Ukraine and Georgia."

This doesn't guarantee that MAP applications will be granted in December. Even if they were, it could take a few years before either became full members of NATO.

(Albania and Croatia were invited to begin accession talks for full membership at the Bucharest summit. Albania has been at the MAP stage since 1999 and Croatia since 2002. A third state, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which has also been at the MAP stage since 1999, was not invited to begin accession talks – because of the ongoing dispute with Greece about its name. It was agreed at Bucharest that an invitation would be extended "as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue has been reached".)

After Georgia's attack on South Ossetia on 8 August 2008, and Russia's response, NATO foreign ministers met in Brussels on 19 August 2008 to consider the situation in Georgia. The statement issued afterwards "reaffirmed" the decision taken in Bucharest in relation to Georgia's membership, leaving it up to the foreign ministers meeting in December to progress the matter [9]. As of this meeting then, the conflict between Russia and Georgia had neither accelerated, nor decelerated, Georgia's progress towards NATO membership.

Yes to US missile defence

To add to Russia's annoyance, the Bucharest meeting also gave NATO approval to US plans to deploy a missile defence system in Europe (with radars based in the Czech Republic and interceptor missiles in Poland) ostensibly to counter threats from Iran. The Bucharest declaration states:

"We recognise the substantial contribution to the protection of Allies from long-range ballistic missiles to be provided by the planned deployment of European-based United States missile defence assets." [8]

There are grave doubts about whether this system will be effective if it is deployed (as there are about the systems already deployed on the West coast of the US, ostensibly to counter threats from North Korea). The new, two-stage interceptor for the European system has not yet been built, let alone tested. Russia's worries about the system are, not so much about the effectiveness of the initial very limited system, but about future versions which might be used, and be effective, against Russian missiles, thereby reducing Russia's first strike capability and disturbing the nuclear balance between Russia and the US.

Reputable defence analysts are of the opinion that Russian fears in this regard cannot be dismissed out of hand (see, for example, *European Missile Defense: The Technological Basis of Russian Concerns* by George N Lewis and Theodore A Postol in *Arms Control Today*, October 2007 [10]).

The deployment of these missile defence systems would have been in breach of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty the US signed with the Soviet Union in 1972. So in June 2002 the US unilaterally withdrew from the Treaty.

The Treaty barred the US and the Soviet Union from deploying nationwide defences against strategic ballistic missiles. The reasoning behind this, as stated in the preamble to the Treaty, was the belief on both sides that "effective measures to limit anti-ballistic missile systems would be a substantial factor in curbing the race in strategic offensive arms and would lead to a decrease in the risk of outbreak of war involving nuclear weapons" [11]

Russia recognises South Ossetia and Abkhazia

On 26 August 2008, Russia recognised South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states. Under Soviet rule, both were autonomous areas within the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia. The Georgian state, established when the Soviet Union broke up in 1990, tried but failed to establish control over them by military means. Georgia's military action on 8 August 2008 was a further attempt to take control of South Ossetia.

Up to now, South Ossetia and Abkhazia have been universally recognised, including by Russia, as part of the territory of the Georgian state, even though they have remained outside its control. As the US/UK have been quick to point out, as late as 15 April 2008, Russia voted for Security Council resolution 1808, which reaffirmed "the commitment of all [UN] Member States to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders" [12].

However, there is little doubt that the people who live in these areas now do not want to be part of Georgia and that they are delighted that Russia has recognised the areas as independent from Georgia. It is also true that considerable numbers of Georgians who used to live in these areas in

Soviet times have either left because of the conflict or been expelled.

It is, of course, highly unlikely that South Ossetia and Abkhazia will be recognised by any state other than Russia. They have no chance of being accepted into membership of the UN – if necessary, Western vetoes on the Security Council will see to that, just as the Russian veto will, if necessary, ensure that Kosovo won't become a member.

However, it can be guaranteed that, from now on, Russian military power will ensure that the Georgian state has no control on the ground in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and any attempt to exert control will be countered with the same overwhelming military force as the Georgian attack of 8 August 2008.

Kosovo parallel

The parallel with Kosovo is obvious (though Russia is insisting that it isn't, otherwise it would have difficulty mounting an argument against recognising Kosovo as an independent state). The agreement which brought the NATO attack on Yugoslavia to an end was enshrined in Security Council resolution 1244 [13] passed with one abstention (China) on 10 June 1999. This resolution, and the agreement itself, was founded on the principle that the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia would be preserved, in other words, that the final settlement would not include an independent Kosovo.

(Yugoslavia then consisted of two republics, Serbia – which included Kosovo – and Montenegro. The latter has since opted for independence and Yugoslavia is now Serbia.)

Resolution 1244 reaffirmed "the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" and set down (in Annex 1 of the resolution) as one of the principles of the agreement:

"A political process towards the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing for a substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other countries of the region, and the demilitarization of the KLA."

By recognising Kosovo as an independent state earlier this year, the US/UK and others have abrogated the principle on which the agreement was founded. And Russia has good grounds for feeling aggrieved since it played a major role in persuading Yugoslavia to accept the agreement based on that principle, without which there wouldn't have been an agreement.

When the US/UK criticise Russia recognising South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states thereby infringing the territorial integrity of Georgia, it's a matter of the pot calling the kettle black.

Western reaction

The US reaction to Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states has been remarkably muted. The President didn't even interrupt his holiday to make a statement to camera, let alone rush back to Wash-

ington for crisis meetings. He merely issued a written statement, which criticised the decision, saying it was inconsistent with Security Council resolutions that Russia had voted for and with the 6-point ceasefire agreement brokered by Sarkozy – and saying that the territorial integrity and borders of Georgia must be respected [14].

But there was no talk of sanctions of any kind against Russia. There seems to be a general acceptance in Washington that there is nothing much the US can do about Russia's actions. Early on in the conflict, vice-President Cheney insisted that there would be "serious consequences" for Russia because of its actions, but they have yet to be specified.

As for the would-be presidents, John McCain initially got carried away and proclaimed that "we're all Georgians now" but realism has since asserted itself. Barack Obama has been realistic throughout.

There has been no official criticism of President Saakashvili's actions on 8 August that led to US impotence in the region being made manifest. And the official US position remains that Georgia (and the Ukraine) should be allowed to join NATO. The same is true of the would-be presidents.

Nobody could accuse the British foreign secretary, David Miliband, of being realistic. As this is written, he is in Ukraine building an alliance against Russian aggression. One can but hope that Germany and France will keep him under control.

He would do well to listen to Nick Brown, his colleague in Government, on Georgia joining NATO. Here's what he wrote in the *The Guardian* on 19 August 2008, in response to Conservative leader, David Cameron, who initially demanded that Georgia be admitted to NATO right away, and rushed to Tbilisi in solidarity:

"Cameron urges Nato to admit Georgia. Nato is a mutual defence pact. This position will have gone down very well in Tbilisi, but do we really mean to commit ourselves to all-out war against the Russian Federation if something like this happens again? I don't favour that approach, and I don't know anyone who does [Does he not know David Miliband?]. There is a bigger point here. If western hawks really are advocating Nato membership for every small country that borders the Russian Federation, even a government far more charitably disposed towards Nato than the present Russian one is going to see the move as a direct challenge. Constantly reprimanding the Russians isn't the right way to deal with this problem. It makes us look pompous and ineffective." [15] □

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From Athol Books Catalogue

"Notes On Eire"

Espionage Reports to Winston Churchill—2nd. Extended Edition

Author: Bowen, Elizabeth

Editor: Clifford, Brendan and Lane, Jack

Publisher: Aubane Historical Society

Published: 2008

Contents: The story of this book starts in 1993, when extracts from Elizabeth Bowen's works were included in "A North Cork Anthology", with the qualification that, though her family had property connections in the areas, she could not be regarded as a North Cork, or even an Irish, writer. This caused outrage in the Dublin media and some vicious attacks on Jack Lane and Brendan Clifford, the compilers of the Anthology. There was even doubt cast on the fact that Ms. Bowen spied against Ireland in the Second World War.

The upshot of that controversy was that the Aubane Historical Society traced several of Ms. Bowen's secret reports, which are published here in full for the first time.

For those who would see Ms. Bowen's spying as needing no defence, on the supposition that the Allied war on

Germany was absolutely justified, and that Neutrals had no case, this book provides an extensive survey of international affairs in the decades before the War, including de Valera's role in the League of Nations. There are also sections on Irish and European Fascism.

The book is rounded out by reproducing the polemic about Bowen which took place between the Aubane Historical Society and luminaries of the "Irish Times" and the "Sunday Business Post". The controversy about how to describe Ms. Bowen goes to the heart of what Ireland and Irish culture is, and this book is as good a starting point as any for those who seek the middle path between the Scylla of bigoted nationalism and the Charybdis of West British globalism.

The second edition provides a further review of aspects of World War 2—the British betrayal of Poland, the American provocation of Japan, the British insistence on delaying the Second Front, and the Nuremberg Trials—in response to an indictment of Irish neutrality by Professor B. Girvin and Dr. G. Roberts. 152 pp.

Current Irish Military Missions Abroad

Irish military forces are currently taking part in ten operations overseas under the auspices of NATO, the EU and the UN. All of the operations have been authorised by UN Security Council resolutions.

The Defence Forces website [1] emphasises that before forces are deployed a "triple lock" mechanism applies:

"The conditions, under which the Defence Forces may participate on overseas peace support operations have been made very clear by the Government. In this regard, the conditions, which have been referred to as the "triple lock", must be satisfied, i.e.

- * the operation must be authorized/mandated by the United Nations;
- * it must be approved by the Government; and
- * it must be approved by way of a resolution of Dáil Éireann, where the size of a Defence Forces contribution is more than twelve personnel.

UN authorisation is a key factor that informs the Government's decision in the event of a request for Defence Forces participation."

About 1,000 Irish troops are currently serving overseas in the following operations. The number of Irish personnel deployed in each operation is given in parentheses.

EUFOR BiH – EU Force Bosnia Herzegovina (40)

EUFOR BiH was established by Security Council resolution 1575 passed in November 2004 [2]. It is concerned with the implementation of the 1995 Dayton Agreement. It consists of around 7,000 personnel, provided by 22 EU member states and 11 non-EU states. Ireland has had forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina since May 1997.

EUFOR Chad/CAR – EU Force Chad/Central African Republic (450)

EUFOR Chad/CAR was mandated by Security Council resolution 1778 passed in September 2007 to operate in eastern Chad and work in conjunction with the civilian UN mission in the region "to contribute to protecting civilians in danger, particularly refugees and displaced persons" and "to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel".

Initial deployment began in February 2008. 3,700 troops (mostly French, but from 14 EU states in all) are scheduled to be deployed eventually, up to 450 from Ireland. Irish Lieutenant General Pat Nash is in overall command at Operational HQ in Paris. The commander on the ground is French Brigadier General Jean-Philippe Ganacia.

KFOR – Kosovo Force (276)

KFOR was established by Security Council resolution 1244 in June 1999 after the NATO aggression against Yugoslavia, which forced it to cede Kosovo. The NATO-led KFOR mission began with 50,000 troops from 36

NATO and non-NATO states, including Ireland. Today, it has around 16,000 troops, Ireland contributing 276.

ISAF - International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan) (7)

Ireland has deployed 7 personnel with ISAF since July 2002. ISAF began life as a small peacekeeping force based in and around Kabul, authorised by Security Council resolution 1376 passed in December 2001, after the US invasion of Afghanistan. At the same time, tens of thousands of US troops under a separate US command were attempting to annihilate the Taliban in southern and eastern Afghanistan under Operation Enduring Freedom. In the intervening years, ISAF's role has been changed dramatically by various Security Council resolutions (the latest being 1707 passed in September 2006) and it has now largely assumed the role of attempting to annihilate the Taliban, formerly prosecuted by the US under Operation Enduring Freedom.

ISAF is now under the command of NATO-Partnership for Peace. The Defence Forces website describes its role euphemistically as "NATO-PfP led Peace Support Operations".

MINURSO - United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (3)

The deployment of MINURSO in September 1991 arose from a dispute over the former Spanish Sahara. It was established by Security Council resolution 690 passed in April 1991 to monitor a ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario movement. Ireland has contributed personnel to MINURSO from the outset.

MONUC - United Nations Observer Mission in Congo (3)

In July 1999, the Democratic Republic of Congo and five regional states signed the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the Security Council passed resolution 1279, which established MONUC to monitor the ceasefire and obtain the release of prisoners. It originally consisted of 500 military observers but in early 2000 the Security Council authorised an expansion to 5,537 military personnel, including the 500 observers. MONUC now has 16,700 troops.

UNIFIL - United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (167)

After Israel invaded Lebanon in March 1978, UNIFIL was established on a temporary basis by Security Council resolution 425. Its mission was to supervise the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon – which eventually happened 22 years later. During that period, Ireland contributed an infantry battalion (about 540 personnel) to UNIFIL. A total of 47 Irish troops were killed while serving with UNIFIL.

Ireland's contribution ended after the Israeli withdrawal in 2000. Following the Israeli assault on Lebanon in 2006 and the passing of Security Council resolution 1701, the

size of UNIFIL was greatly increased and Ireland has contributed forces from October 2006. Today, there are 167 Irish troops in Lebanon as part of a joint Irish-Finnish Battalion.

UNMIK - United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (4)

UNMIK was established to administer Kosovo by Security Council resolution 1244 in June 1999 after the NATO aggression against Yugoslavia, which forced it to cede Kosovo. UNMIK was mainly civilian, but it has a small military liaison component to which Ireland contributes 4 personnel.

UNOCI - United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (2)

This is a UN peacekeeping force established in April 2004 by Security Council resolution 1528. The force is 6,640 military strong including 200 military observers. The two Irish personnel are part of the observer group.

UNTS - United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (14)

Established in 1948, UNTS is the oldest ongoing United Nations peacekeeping operation. It operates in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel - the parties to the Truce Agreements that followed the fighting in Palestine in 1948. Ireland has had troops with UNTS since 1958. □

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[1] www.military.ie/overseas/index.htm

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Zimbabwe: What Mandela actually said

A special birthday dinner was held on 25th June 2008 in London to celebrate Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday. Speeches at the dinner – attended by Nelson Mandela - included tributes from British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and former US President Bill Clinton. Other guests among the 520 who attended included Sir Richard Branson and other leading industrialists. Mr Mandela gave a brief address to the assembled Western dignitaries. The speech was hailed in the media as Mandela attacking the leadership in Zimbabwe. The following is what he actually said, which included comments on Palestine and Israel, Darfur and Iraq, taken from his website, www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/news/article/nelson_mandela_speaks_out:

"Friends, thank you for joining us here this evening, and your support for our causes.

"It is a great privilege having been able to travel here in our 90th year and be in the presence of so many good friends.

"Thank you for the continuing support in the fight against the terrible scourge of HIV and AIDS. You understand that it is in your hands to make a difference.

"The world remains beset by so much human suffering, poverty and deprivation. It is in your hands to make of our world a better one for all, especially the poor, vulnerable and marginalised.

"We look back at much human progress, but we sadly note so much failing as well. In our time we spoke out on the situation in Palestine and Israel, and that conflict continues unabated. We warned against the invasion of Iraq, and observe the terrible suffering in that country.

"We watch with sadness the continuing tragedy in Darfur.

"Nearer to home we had seen the outbreak of violence against fellow Africans in our own country and the tragic failure of leadership in our neighbouring Zimbabwe.

"It is within this context that we should also see the plight of those affected by HIV and AIDS. It is now in the hands of your generations to help rid the world of such suffering.

"I thank you."

From Athol Books Catalogue

Ireland In The Great War

Author: O'Donnell, Charles James

Editor: Clifford, Brendan

Publisher: Athol Books

Published: 1992

Contents: The establishment of a sovereign state in Ireland occurred as a direct consequence of Irish participation in Britain's war on Germany which was launched in August 1914. Nationalist Ireland was in 1914 in process of being secured as a region of the United Kingdom and the Empire under the form of Home Rule. The Nationalist leaders joined with the Unionists in giving unquestioning support to Britain's war against Germany, Austria and Turkey. The alliance of Britain, France and Russia failed to achieve the rapid victory which its great superiority of men and arms had caused it to anticipate. The prolongation of the war and the unprecedented scale of the casualties created the conditions in which nationalists opposed to the British war effort, many of them in sympathy with Germany, organised the Insurrection of 1916, which caused a fundamental change in the dynamic of Irish affairs. Despite this intimate connection between the Great War and the Easter Rising, no history of the War from an Irish viewpoint has been published for half a century—not since Charles James O'Donnell's "The Irish Future And The Lordship

Of The World" in the 1920s. O'Donnell, born in Donegal and educated in Galway, served for thirty years in the Indian Civil Service before retiring to contest the 1906 Election on an old-fashioned Liberal platform opposed both to Curzon's Tory Imperialism and Asquith's Liberal Imperialism. Some Chapters from his history of the Great War are reproduced here. In an introductory chapter Brendan Clifford shows how, in the course of the Home Rule conflict (1912-14) the Home Rule movement was drawn into the web of Asquith's Liberal Imperialism, and how in August 1914 Home Rule journalists, such as T. M. Kettle, T. P. O'Connor and Robert Lynd supplied Asquith with the frenzied war propaganda which he needed. And he shows how Roger Casement and James Connolly did not act out of narrow nationalist considerations. They saw Britain's declaration of war on Germany as a barbaric attempt by a world empire in decline to destroy a civilised and progressive European state, and acted accordingly. This book is intended to dispel the deadening West-British influence of recent decades and to restore the European orientation which characterised Irish thought in earlier centuries, but which has been lost in recent times. 116 pp. Bibliography. Index.

Price: £7.50; €10.00

The "Upgrading" of EU-Israeli relations: Response by the Palestinian Authority and the Republic of Ireland

(compiled by David Morrison)

Salam Fayyad is usually referred to as the Palestinian Prime Minister. He isn't. He was appointed as Prime Minister by President Mahmoud Abbas, but the Government he put together never sought, nor received, the endorsement of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) as required by the Palestinian constitution [1]).

Salam Fayyad's popularity in Washington was his main qualification for his appointment by President Abbas. An economist who lived in the United States for twenty years, he was an official of the World Bank from 1987-95 and later the IMF representative to Palestine until 2001, when the US forced Yasser Arafat to accept him as Finance Minister (to root out the alleged corruption in the Palestinian Authority).

He served in this post until the Fatah Government resigned after their defeat by Hamas in the January 2006 elections. He was elected to the PLC in those elections as the leader of the Third Way party, which received 2.4% of the "national list" vote and got 2 seats on the PLC (out of 132). By contrast, Hamas, which headed the previous National Unity Government, got 44.5% of the "national list" vote and won 74 seats overall.

Salam Fayyad challenges Israel's EU privileges

Going on past experience, Salam Fayyad was unlikely to give Israel any bother. That was why the US was so keen on him. But, on 27th May 2008, he wrote a letter to leading political figures in the EU in which he dared to say that:

"Israel continues to systematically violate Palestinian human rights and flaunt its international obligations".

Not only that, he gave chapter and verse of Israel's recent misdeeds in a manner that regrettably Palestinian leaders rarely do. The full text of the letter is available at [2].

He sent this detailed indictment of Israel to the Prime Minister of each of the 27 Member States of the EU, to José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, to Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, to Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Commissioner for External Relations, and to Hans-Gert Pöttering, the President of the European Parliament.

His objective was to persuade the EU not to upgrade its relationship with Israel under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) [3], which was to be discussed at an EU-Israel meeting on 16th June 2008. It was discussed and a decision was taken to upgrade the relationship. [4]

(The ENP is additional to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership [5], under which Israel has an Association Agreement [6], aka the Euro-Med Agreement, granting it privileged access to the EU market since 2000.)

Shared values?

Salam Fayyad's letter to the EU began:

"It has come to my attention that the European Union is

contemplating upgrading its relationship with Israel, including in the political and economic spheres, and that the Council may take a decision on this matter in its June 16th meeting.

"I am writing you to register my deep reservations concerning such an upgrade while Israel continues to systematically violate Palestinian human rights and flaunt its international obligations, including certain of its commitments to the EU."

He continued:

"Our understanding is that one of the principal rationales for the EU to extend political and economic co-operation to neighbouring third states under the European Neighbourhood Policy is to generate incentives for those third states to respect EU values, central among them human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Yet, what we fear may happen in the case of Israel is a decoupling of the incentive (ie economic integration) from the desired behaviour (ie respect for human rights)."

In other words, according to Fayyad, the ENP is meant to encourage neighbouring states to respect "EU values" by tailoring the EU's relationship with a state according to its respect for "EU values"— which is what it says on the ENP website:

"The EU offers our neighbours a privileged relationship, building upon a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development). The ENP goes beyond existing relationships to offer a deeper political relationship and economic integration. The level of ambition of the relationship will depend on the extent to which these values are shared [my emphasis]."[3]

Obviously, the EU doesn't take this seriously, otherwise it would never have considered granting Israel a privileged relationship in the first place. If the EU did take this seriously, Israel would be debarred because of its discrimination against Arab Israelis, never mind its behaviour in the Occupied Territories since 1967, during which it has displayed a thoroughgoing contempt for international humanitarian law, violated umpteen Security Council resolutions and regularly failed to honour agreements it has entered into.

Israel's recent misdeeds

In his letter, Salam Fayyad proceeded to outline some of Israel's recent misdeeds:

"In the months since [the] Annapolis [conference in November 2007], we have continued to see a flagrant disregard on the part of Israel for Palestinian national and individual rights, in violation of international law and the Road Map.

First, on settlement building:

"Construction has continued in at least 101 settlements (not including Jerusalem-area settlements). Similarly, Israeli authorities have issued tenders for 847 new housing units since Annapolis, as compared with 138 housing units tendered in the 11 months prior to Annapolis."

He might have added that all settlement building in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is in breach of international humanitarian law, specifically, of Article 49

of the Fourth Geneva Convention [7], which states that:

"The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

The Security Council has stated many times that the West Bank and Gaza are "occupied territories" within the meaning of the Convention (and this was confirmed by the International Court of Justice when it declared Israel's construction of the Wall illegal in July 2004), so Article 49 of the Convention is applicable to Israel's settlement building. On these grounds, beginning in March 1979, the Security Council has demanded (in resolutions 446, 452 and 465) that Israel cease settlement building and remove its existing settlements. Israel has been in breach of these resolutions for nearly 30 years.

Destruction of property

Second, on the destruction of Palestinian property, Salam Fayyad writes:

"Meanwhile, Israeli authorities demolished at least 185 Palestinian structures, including 85 residential structures, in the first four months after Annapolis."

Destruction of property by the Occupying Power is also prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention, specifically, by Article 53, which states:

"Any destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, or to the State, or to other public authorities, or to social or cooperative organizations, is prohibited, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations."

West Bank barriers

Third, on barriers to movement on the West Bank, Salam Fayyad writes:

"The number of checkpoints, roadblocks and other physical barriers to movement now exceeds 600."

In the Agreement on Movement and Access signed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority in November 2005, Israel undertook:

"Consistent with Israel's security needs, to facilitate movement of people and goods within the West Bank and to minimize disruption to Palestinian lives, the ongoing work between Israel and the U.S. to establish an agreed list of obstacles to movement and develop a plan to reduce them to the maximum extent possible will be accelerated so that the work can be completed by December 31 [2005]."[8]

In August 2005, there were fewer than 400 checkpoints. Today, as Salam Fayyad says, there are more than 600.

The Wall

Third, on the construction of the Wall, Salam Fayyad writes:

"And, of course, Israel has yet to comply with the 2004 ruling of the International Court of Justice, which held that the settlements and the Wall that are built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) are illegal, and which requires Israel to stop constructing the Wall, remove those parts already built and provide reparations."

Here are the unambiguous decisions of the Court:

"A. The construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law;

"B. Israel is under an obligation to terminate its breaches of international law; it is under an obligation to cease forthwith the

works of construction of the wall being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle forthwith the structure therein situated, and to repeal or render ineffective forthwith all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto, in accordance with paragraph 151 of this Opinion;

"C. Israel is under an obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem;"

Association Agreements breached

The Palestinian Authority has some kind of interim Association Agreement [10] supposedly giving it privileged access to the EU market. The difficulty is that goods for export to the EU from the Occupied Territories have to pass through Israel. In his letter, Salam Fayyad complains bitterly about Israel hampering this process, saying:

"... despite its obligations under the Barcelona Process, Israel continues, through a myriad of restrictions, to hamper implementation of the Interim Association Agreement concluded between the EU and the PLO on behalf of the PA."

He also complains about Israel breaching its own Association Agreement with the EU by passing off goods from settlements in the Occupied Territories as if they come from Israel:

"Moreover, Israel continues to breach its own Association Agreement and EU directives regarding settlement products by allowing these products to be exported to the EU as if they were manufactured and/or wholly obtained in Israel and to refund settlement businesses (through illegal subsidies) for any import taxes paid by these businesses in their export to the EU."

Rewarding unlawful behaviour

In the light of these numerous transgressions by Israel, Salam Fayyad makes the very reasonable point:

"If the EU were to upgrade its relationship with Israel at this juncture, in view of Israel's systematic breach of legal obligations and agreements, Palestinians could only view it as rewarding unlawful behaviour – and Israel could only interpret it to mean that such behaviour and EU calls to stop it, have no consequences. Furthermore, the EU would be depriving itself of an important tool to push the peace process in the right direction, and jeopardizing its ability to play the active political role this region needs and that we, Palestinians, expect and support.

"Now is the time for the EU to convey to its friend, Israel, that the key to strengthening its ties with the EU is to demonstrate, by way of action, that it indeed shares and embraces the goals and values of Europeans.

"Now is the time for the EU to demonstrate to its Palestinian friends and other friends in the region the seriousness with which it views the principled position it has taken in the peace process.

"Now – more than ever – is the time for the EU to act on the principled position that it reaffirmed again today that Israeli settlement activity "anywhere in the [OPT], including East Jerusalem, is illegal" and "threatens the viability of an agreed two-state solution".

(The EU General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting on 26/27 May 2008 did indeed restate the EU position that all settlements are illegal under international law:

"The EU is deeply concerned by recent accelerated settlement expansion. The EU reiterates that settlement building anywhere in the occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law. Settlement activity prejudices the outcome of final status negotiations and threatens the viability of an agreed two-state solution. It reiterates its call on Israel to

freeze all settlement activity including natural growth, and to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001." [11]

The latter merely repeats the demands on settlements set out in the Roadmap and ignored by Israel ever since. It doesn't demand that all settlements be removed, despite describing them as "illegal under international law". Remember the Roadmap first saw the light of day on 30 April 2003 and was supposed to point the way to a final solution by the end of 2005.)

Fayyad ends his letter with the following plea:

"Therefore, I strongly urge the EU to decide against the upgrade of its relations with Israel until such time as Israel abides by international and human rights laws, including by freezing all settlement activity, and allows the Palestinian people to enjoy the same neighbourly relations with the EU as other nations in the region."

Letter to the OECD

Israel's relationship with the EU isn't Salam Fayyad's only target. Earlier, he sent a letter to the Organisation for European Co-operation and Development (OECD) [12], which Israel is seeking to join. The OECD has 30 member states, mostly European, but the US, Canada, Japan and Australia are also members.

In May 2007, OECD countries agreed to invite Israel (and Chile, Estonia, Russia and Slovenia) to open discussions with a view to membership. In December 2007, a "roadmap" towards membership was agreed with Israel [13] and accession talks began.

Section I of this "roadmap", entitled Fundamental values and like-mindedness, states:

"The Council reaffirms that OECD Membership is committed to fundamental values, which candidate countries are expected to share. These fundamental values serve as the foundation of the likemindedness of OECD Members and have been expressed in various OECD Ministerial Communiqués.

"Accepting these values, along with the established body of OECD instruments, standards and benchmarks, is a requirement for membership [my emphasis]."

And what are these fundamental values? The "roadmap" says that they include

"a commitment to pluralist democracy based on the rule of law and the respect of human rights, adherence to open and transparent market economy principles and a shared goal of sustainable development".

According to the Jerusalem Post (4th June 2008) [14], Fayyad's letter points out that "Israel is in breach of various requirements of the United Nations and other bodies concerning its treatment of the Palestinian population" and suggests that it isn't fit to join. The letter has been passed on to OECD member states. It remains to be seen if this has any impact on Israel's application for membership.

Israeli reaction

Israel reacted to Salam Fayyad sending these letters to the EU and OECD by delaying the handover of tax revenue it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. As a result, in early June some 150,000 Palestinians employed by the Palestinian Authority had to wait for several days for their wages.

Israel collects this revenue under the Paris Economic Protocols it signed in 1994, as an economic appendix to the Oslo Agreement. So, holding on to this revenue, which

Israel did while the Palestinian Authority was under Hamas control from February 2006 until June 2007, amounts to theft.

This is yet another example of Israel's contemptuous attitude towards international legal agreements. In this case, it was prepared to break its obligations under the Paris Protocols in order to mete out punishment to Palestinians, because Salam Fayyad dared to express an opinion of which it disapproved.

Egyptian complicity

'Egypt tries to thwart Israel's plans in Europe' was the heading on an article in Haaretz on 3rd June 2008 [15]. This implied that Salam Fayyad was working in concert with Egypt to thwart Israel's ambition to upgrade its relations with in the EU. According to the article:

"... Cairo had instructed its ambassadors in Europe to wage a diplomatic campaign against the agreement. As part of this campaign, Egyptian ambassadors in London, Paris, Brussels, Spain, Rome and other European capitals have met with high-level Foreign Ministry officials in their respective countries to ask them to reconsider the agreement. The Egyptian argument is that in light of Israel's ongoing construction in West Bank settlements and its blockade of Gaza, the EU must not reward Jerusalem in any way."

Why is Egypt doing this? According to the article:

"... the Egyptian campaign constitutes retaliation for a United States Congress decision to freeze up to \$200 million in American military aid to Egypt. Cairo blames Israel for this freeze, because Israel has frequently complained to Washington about Egypt's failure to combat arms smuggling into Gaza. One of the conditions Congress set for unfreezing the aid was an improvement in Egypt's performance in this sphere.

"In addition, Israeli officials said, Cairo is upset because the EU has refused to grant Egypt a similarly favorable agreement."

At present, there are signs that relations between Fatah and Hamas are thawing. And Egypt is involved in this too. In early June, President Abbas called for a "national dialogue" and Egypt is to host a reconciliation meeting between Fatah and Hamas shortly. The US and Israel must be a little bit concerned that their successful negotiation of the outcome of the January 2006 election may yet be reversed and the Hamas-led National Unity Government reinstated.

It cannot be a coincidence that Salam Fayyad chose this moment to write a letter to the EU saying "Israel continues to systematically violate Palestinian human rights and flaunt its international obligations", a letter he knew would anger both Israel and the US. □

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The lies of Hiroshima live on

By John Pilger

[Reprinted from The Guardian, 6th August 2008]

The lies of Hiroshima live on, props in the war crimes of the 20th century. The 1945 attack was murder on an epic scale. When I first went to Hiroshima in 1967, the shadow on the steps was still there. It was an almost perfect impression of a human being at ease: legs splayed, back bent, one hand by her side as she sat waiting for a bank to open. At a quarter past eight on the morning of August 6, 1945, she and her silhouette were burned into the granite. I stared at the shadow for an hour or more, then walked down to the river and met a man called Yukio, whose chest was still etched with the pattern of the shirt he was wearing when the atomic bomb was dropped.

He and his family still lived in a shack thrown up in the dust of an atomic desert. He described a huge flash over the city, "a bluish light, something like an electrical short", after which wind blew like a tornado and black rain fell. "I was thrown on the ground and noticed only the stalks of my flowers were left. Everything was still and quiet, and when I got up, there were people naked, not saying anything. Some of them had no skin or hair. I was certain I was dead." Nine years later, when I returned to look for him, he was dead from leukemia.

In the immediate aftermath of the bomb, the allied occupation authorities banned all mention of radiation poisoning and insisted that people had been killed or injured only by the bomb's blast. It was the first big lie. "No radioactivity in Hiroshima ruin" said the front page of the New York Times, a classic of disinformation and journalistic abdication, which the Australian reporter Wilfred Burchett put right with his scoop of the century. "I write this as a warning to the world," reported Burchett in the Daily Express, having reached Hiroshima after a perilous journey, the first correspondent to dare. He described hospital wards filled with people with no visible injuries but who were dying from what he called "an atomic plague". For telling this truth, his press accreditation was withdrawn, he was pilloried and smeared - and vindicated.

The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a criminal act on an epic scale. It was premeditated mass murder that unleashed a weapon of intrinsic criminality. For this reason its apologists have sought refuge in the

mythology of the ultimate "good war", whose "ethical bath", as Richard Drayton called it, has allowed the west not only to expiate its bloody imperial past but to promote 60 years of rapacious war, always beneath the shadow of The Bomb.

The most enduring lie is that the atomic bomb was dropped to end the war in the Pacific and save lives. "Even without the atomic bombing attacks,"

concluded the United States Strategic Bombing Survey of 1946, "air supremacy over Japan could have exerted sufficient pressure to bring about unconditional surrender and obviate the need for invasion. Based on a detailed investigation of all the facts, and supported by the testimony of the surviving Japanese leaders involved, it is the Survey's opinion that ... Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated."

The National Archives in Washington contain US government documents that chart Japanese peace overtures as early as 1943. None was pursued. A cable sent on May 5, 1945 by the German ambassador in Tokyo and intercepted by the US dispels any doubt that the Japanese were desperate to sue for peace, including "capitulation even if the terms were hard". Instead, the US secretary of war, Henry Stimson, told President Truman he was "fearful" that the US air force would have Japan so "bombed out" that the new weapon would not be able "to show its strength". He later admitted that "no effort was made, and none was seriously considered, to achieve surrender merely in order not to have to use the bomb". His foreign policy colleagues were eager "to browbeat the Russians with the bomb held rather ostentatiously on our hip". General Leslie Groves, director of the Manhattan Project that made the bomb, testified: "There was never any illusion on my part that Russia was our enemy, and that the project was conducted on that basis." The day after Hiroshima was obliterated, President Truman voiced his satisfaction with the "overwhelming success" of "the experiment".

Since 1945, the United States is believed to have been on the brink of using nuclear weapons at least three times. In

waging their bogus "war on terror", the present governments in Washington and London have declared they are prepared to make "pre-emptive" nuclear strikes against non-nuclear states. With each stroke toward the midnight of a nuclear Armageddon, the lies of justification grow more outrageous. Iran is the current "threat". But Iran has no nuclear weapons and the disinformation that it is planning a nuclear arsenal comes largely from a discredited CIA-sponsored Iranian opposition group, the MEK - just as the lies about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction originated with the Iraqi National Congress, set up by Washington.

The role of western journalism in erecting this straw man is critical. That America's Defence Intelligence Estimate says "with high confidence" that Iran gave up its nuclear weapons programme in 2003 has been consigned to the memory hole. That Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad never threatened to "wipe Israel off the map" is of no interest. But such has been the mantra of this media "fact" that in his recent, obsequious performance before the Israeli parliament, Gordon Brown alluded to it as he threatened Iran, yet again.

This progression of lies has brought us to one of the most dangerous nuclear crises since 1945, because the real threat remains almost unmentionable in western establishment

circles and therefore in the media. There is only one rampant nuclear power in the Middle East and that is Israel. The heroic Mordechai Vanunu tried to warn the world in 1986 when he smuggled out evidence that Israel was building as many as 200 nuclear warheads. In defiance of UN resolutions, Israel is today clearly itching to attack Iran, fearful that a new American administration might, just might, conduct genuine negotiations with a nation the west has defiled since Britain and America overthrew Iranian democracy in 1953.

In the New York Times on July 18, the Israeli historian Benny Morris, once considered a liberal and now a consultant to his country's political and military establishment threatened "an Iran turned into a nuclear wasteland". This would be mass murder. For a Jew, the irony cries out.

The question begs: are the rest of us to be mere bystanders, claiming, as good Germans did, that "we did not know"? Do we hide ever more behind what Richard Falk has called "a self-righteous, one-way, legal/moral screen [with] positive images of western values and innocence portrayed as threatened, validating a campaign of unrestricted violence"? Catching war criminals is fashionable again. Radovan Karadzic stands in the dock, but Sharon and Olmert, Bush and Blair do not. Why not? The memory of Hiroshima requires an answer. □

Canada and British honours

(from a letter by Tom Cooper in the Irish Examiner, July 14 2008).

IN his response to my letter (June 9) on the acceptance of British titles by Irish citizens, Cian Martin ('Flawed case against accepting honours', June 30) accuses me of xenophobia — a charge I reject emphatically.

However, some of Mr. Martin's comments require a more thorough response.

To draw a comparison between the awarding of imperial titles by the British monarch to Irish citizens with foreign artists being welcomed into Aosdána, as Mr. Martin does, is quite frankly, bizarre.

No comparison exists. Membership of Aosdána is by peer nomination and election, and those nominated must have produced a body of work that is original and creative. The same cannot be said for the awarding of imperial titles.

Mr. Martin makes the point that Queen Elizabeth grants honours to those most deserving regardless of origin. The facts suggest otherwise. It is the British government which advises the monarch on who should be the recipient of titles and, in many instances, those who are large financial donors to the political parties in Britain are rewarded with peerages or knighthoods.

Despite the fact that the issue of peerages and titles has become immersed in unsavoury and sordid controversy amid charges of "honours for cash" (with former British prime minister Tony Blair being questioned on five occasions by the Metropolitan police), it appears these archaic awards are much valued by many of Ireland's elite and notables.

Compared with the supine and ridiculous position being adopted by the Irish State in the matter of British titles and

honours, Canada, for example, is showing more backbone.

Canada has always been a loyal and active member of the British Commonwealth. Because it is not a republic, Queen Elizabeth is Canada's head of state. Nevertheless, when it comes to matters of citizenship and sovereignty, Canada takes a very firm line.

Despite the British ancestry of most of Canada's population, no Canadian may accept a British knighthood or peerage.

In 2001, Canada was involved in a major diplomatic row with Britain because the Blair government had advised the queen to award knighthoods to two Canadian citizens. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien accused the British of insulting Canada, stating that such titles were "not compatible with the ideals of democracy as have been developed in Canada".

In 1999, billionaire newspaper owner Conrad Black was forced to consider renouncing his Canadian citizenship in order to be able to take a seat in the British House of Lords.

Irish democrats should demand that the Irish State adopt the same policy as Canada in this matter. Our self-respect as citizens in a republic demands nothing less. Irish republican democracy is not compatible with the monarchy and the caste-ridden system of subservience as practised in the British state. My view is that no Irish citizen should be allowed accept a British 'title of nobility' unless he or she is prepared to renounce their Irish citizenship.

Tom Cooper
Dublin 16

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin T.D. on upgrading of EU-Israel relations

In answer to questions from Aengus Ó Snodaigh T.D. (Sinn Féin) on 24th June 2008, Minister Micheál Martin stated the Government position in the Dáil on the upgrading of the EU-Israel relationship as follows:

The Government has been very seriously concerned about the humanitarian and security situation in Gaza and the West Bank. We have consistently called for an end to the isolation of the people of Gaza, the re-opening of crossing points for people and goods and the lifting of restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the West Bank. We have also called for decisive action by the Israeli Government to demonstrate a genuine commitment to a freeze on all settlement construction on occupied land. We and our EU partners are deeply concerned about a series of decisions in recent months authorising the construction of large numbers of new housing units in settlements in and around Jerusalem. Ireland has worked with other Member States to ensure that the EU has conveyed its concerns about settlement expansion directly to the Israeli Government at every opportunity, including at the most recent meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council in Luxembourg on 16 June. The EU position is very clear. Settlement expansion anywhere in the Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law. It also prejudices the outcome of final status negotiations and threatens the viability of an agreed two-State solution.

There has been growing concern internationally that events on the ground will undermine the prospects for political progress, despite the determination of the Israeli Prime Minister and the Palestinian President to press ahead with their negotiations towards a final status agreement by the end of 2008. I have already expressed the Government's strong welcome for the ceasefire in Gaza, which was brokered by the Egyptian Government, and which came into effect on 19 June. I hope that developments in the weeks ahead will contribute to a new momentum in the political process.

We have been calling for an urgent end to all violence in and from the Occupied Territories, including Palestinian rocket attacks and Israeli military opera-

tions. I am therefore encouraged by the courageous move by Israel and the Palestinians to try to end the violence in Gaza and Southern Israel. All sides must be assured of the full support of the international community in implementing and developing the initial agreement. Sensitive efforts will be required to reach agreement on the re-opening of crossing points and on future prisoner and hostage releases. The EU will give every possible support to the process. It has already stated that it is ready to resume the border assistance mission at the Rafah crossing-point in the event of agreement between Israel, the Palestinians and Egypt. The mission was established under the Agreement on Movement and Access brokered by the EU and the US between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in November 2005.

The Government has worked with our partners to strengthen the political role of the EU in the promotion of a negotiated two-State solution. The agreement at the EU-Israel Association Council on 16 June to upgrade relations with Israel was placed firmly in this context. It also comes on the completion of the first EU-Israel Action Plan under the European Neighbourhood Policy. I hope that similar progress will be possible with other ENP partners as they complete their Action Plans with the EU. The precise elements of the upgrading will be discussed with Israel in the months ahead. They will include intensified political and human rights discussions. The EU stated clearly at the Association Council that they will also imply a stronger EU involvement in the peace process and in the monitoring of the situation on the ground.

The Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority wrote to all EU Heads of State and Government in advance of the decision to outline his reservations about any upgrading of relations in the current political context. I welcome the fact that he did so. The Government believes that the peace process must remain at the heart of the EU's relations with Israel and the Palestinians. Ireland played a crucial role within the EU in ensuring that Prime Minister Fayyad's concerns were clearly addressed in the Statement by the EU at the Association Council, which was approved by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 16 June.