

**The Option of a “British Withdrawal”
from Northern Ireland:
An Exploration of its Meaning, Influence, and Feasibility**

by
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INTRODUCTION

The point of departure of much debate on the issue of a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland is analysis of why Britain stays, with attempts to weigh the relative significance of economic, strategic, and political factors. Rarely in such analysis is much consideration given to the actual mechanics of withdrawal and what it might entail, beyond the common objection that withdrawal could lead to a civil war in Northern Ireland, if not the whole of Ireland.¹ In this article, the issue of withdrawal is approached from a somewhat different angle by posing the question: if a British Government were thinking of withdrawal, what would it be setting out to do? Answering this question yields a set of criteria against which the possibility of various scenarios of British withdrawal can be tested. However, before these criteria can be established and different scenarios of withdrawal examined, the meaning of the notion of a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland needs to be explored. Further, in order to bring out the political salience of an analysis of scenarios of withdrawal, the influence that the notion of withdrawal exercises on the politics of Northern Ireland will be discussed and in this context some of the explanations for the continuing British presence in Northern Ireland will be considered.

MEANING

The term, “British withdrawal,” logically would seem to encompass a variety of possibilities. One might be military withdrawal, meaning the removal from the province of troops to the United Kingdom mainland. Another might be economic withdrawal, referring to disinvestment from Northern Ireland. And in fact, in the mid 1970s the British Government was accused of discouraging investment by nationalized industries in Northern Ireland as a part of a policy of economic withdrawal. A third possibility would be the use of the term to refer to the mass migration from the province of people with allegiance to Britain. However, in practice, when the possibility of withdrawal, *tout court*, is referred to in Britain or the two parts of Ireland, it is unambiguously understood to mean the ending of British sovereignty over the province and this is the usage that this article follows. This gives the notion of a British withdrawal an absolute meaning that most other possible usages do not possess. Of course, the ending of British sovereignty over Northern Ireland would almost certainly entail other forms of withdrawal as well, but the question of consequences is a quite separate issue on which a variety of opinions exists. The very fact that it is considered meaningful to discuss the issue of a “British withdrawal” from Northern Ireland in the specific sense of an ending of British sovereignty is itself an indication of

the extent to which Northern Ireland is different from other parts of the United Kingdom. To speak in this way of a British withdrawal from any other part of the UK would provoke the protest that such language was an inappropriate way to describe the disintegration of the British political system.

Speaking of British withdrawal from Northern Ireland does not carry that implication. This is because Northern Ireland is not perceived as an integral part of the national territory, nor is the British identity of its Unionist majority accepted at face value by most people on the UK mainland.² In short, the way the notion of British withdrawal is generally interpreted implies that Northern Ireland is expendable to Britain. To counteract this impression, Unionist politicians have periodically expressed their objections to the whole notion of a British withdrawal, usually on the lines that Protestants are not going anywhere else — with the implication that only their departure could end the British link with Northern Ireland. But while the question of the movement of population does arise in relation to the discussion of a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland, it is not generally equated with it, outside of Unionist efforts to impress their British identity on mainland opinion.

AUTONOMY

The notion of a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland does not simply rest on the perception in the UK mainland of a fundamental political difference between itself and Northern Ireland. For very nearly the first fifty years of the province's existence the issue of British withdrawal did not arise. From the creation of Northern Ireland as a political entity under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act until 1969, the province enjoyed a degree of autonomy that effectively placed it outside the domestic British political system. Admittedly, Northern Ireland elected twelve MPs to the House of Commons, but they formed a barely noticed contingent on the Conservative benches. The province's low profile at a national level was reinforced by the convention that the House of Commons at Westminster did not debate matters internal to Northern Ireland, as these were deemed to be solely the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Parliament. In the context of the complex web of constitutional relationships within the British Empire, these arrangements were not seen as conferring an inferior status on Northern Ireland. In fact, Unionists considered the province's autonomy to be a safeguard of its position within the United Kingdom, especially after the terms of the constitutional guarantee in the 1949 Ireland Act made the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland a specific condition for any change in the province's membership of the United Kingdom.

Until the present troubles exposed the political gulf between Britain and Northern Ireland, the province appeared to be an integral part of the United Kingdom politically. In fact, as far as most of the rest of the world was concerned, Northern Ireland did not exist as a political entity in its own right. Consequently, events in the province attracted little external interest since they seemed peripheral to the political direction or stability of the United Kingdom. It is therefore not surprising that the minor emergency of the IRA's Border campaign between 1956 and 1962 should have made virtually no impression on

opinion outside of Ireland. No foreign journalist stationed in London had any reason to pay attention to what was happening in Northern Ireland since it did not affect British domestic politics. In London, Northern Ireland affairs were an obscure departmental responsibility of the Home Office, an obscurity emphasized by the fact that the Home Secretary never visited the place. In fact, the constitutional arrangement into which Northern Ireland fitted was rather like the secret compartment of a suitcase. It was very useful while it worked; an enormous embarrassment once exposed. The illusion that Northern Ireland was a normal part of the United Kingdom was destroyed when British Government intervened directly and visibly in Northern Ireland's affairs.

What had made it sustainable for so long was the interest that both the British political establishment and the Unionists had in avoiding such intervention. After the partition settlements of the 1920s no British political party had any desire to re-import the destabilizing Irish Question into British politics, while Unionists had every reason to favor an arrangement that kept the province's affairs in comfortable obscurity. The arrangement started to break down when that became impossible during the 1960s. The mass media played a role by focusing British attention on Northern Ireland. Another significant step in the process was the formation of the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster with the support of a number of backbench Labour MPs. Once the possibility of Westminster intervention was raised, the cat was effectively out of the bag that Northern Ireland was not a normal part of the UK. Not surprisingly, the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland focused on the differences in political practice between Northern Ireland and the rest of the country as a way of ramming home the message.

BRITISH INTERVENTION

It was evident that British intervention at this juncture would expose the political relationship between Northern Ireland and Britain as well as the position of the two communities within the province to the full glare of international opinion at a time when the completion of the dissolution of the European empires in Africa and Asia had prompted the question: where next? The efforts of the Unionist government to avert intervention through reform, or at any rate, the rhetoric of reform, failed to meet the expectations of the minority, while underlining the government's vulnerability. A Loyalist backlash added to the explosive mix. As the resources of the local security forces became stretched as a result of tensions between the two communities, speculation grew that Britain would intervene. In August 1969 it happened. Prolonged rioting after the Apprentice Boys' Parade in Londonderry on 12 August prompted the Unionist government to request the assistance of British troops. They arrived on the streets of Derry and Belfast on 14 and 15 August.

Overt British intervention in the Northern Ireland conflict is generally dated from August 1969, when the troops were first deployed on the streets of Londonderry and Belfast in aid of the civil power. However, the issue of whether British troops should be used in an internal security role in Northern Ireland had actually come up slightly earlier in April 1969, when troops were

deployed to protect key installations following bomb attacks on electricity supply lines and waterworks. In May 1969 Gallup conducted its first survey of public opinion in Britain on the issue of Northern Ireland. The answers to two of the four questions Gallup asked is set out below:

Do you approve or disapprove of sending British troops to Northern Ireland to guard key installations?

Approve	42%
Disapprove.	40%
Don't know	18%

Would you approve or disapprove if our Government encouraged Northern Ireland to join up with Southern Ireland (Eire)?

Approve	43%
Disapprove	24%
Don't know	33% ³

Because of its involvement through the deployment of the troops, the British Government now shared direct political responsibility for the domestic affairs of the province with the Northern Ireland Government. With British intervention, the idea of British withdrawal became meaningful. Northern Ireland now appeared to be a dependency of Britain, a status that was clearly regarded as an anachronistic in an international political system where colonial rule had no place. Inevitably, the Northern Ireland conflict became increasingly internationalized, putting Britain on the defensive. The British Government found it very hard to come to terms with the new realities of the situation. Its difficulty in doing so is nicely reflected in the Downing Street Declaration, the joint statement issued by the British and Northern Ireland Governments on 19 August 1969. It began: "The United Kingdom Government reaffirms that *nothing which has happened in recent weeks in Northern Ireland derogates from the clear pledges made by successive United Kingdom Governments. . .*" (emphasis added).⁴ Of course, the failure to impose direct rule at the same time as sending in the troops simply emphasized the differences between Britain and Northern Ireland politically to an international audience. At this stage, the British Government hoped through reform of the security forces to find a way of restoring the *status quo ante* with whatever modifications were needed to end the revolt of the minority. The problem was that from the minority's perspective this looked like an attempt to "put the pieces back in the box." It is hardly surprising that it encountered resistance. Inevitably, British disillusionment over the intervention followed.

SUPPORT FOR WITHDRAWAL

It is therefore not surprising that support for the idea of British withdrawal as a solution should be nearly as old as Westminster's intervention in the present troubles. For at least eighteen years it has been a persistent, if somewhat intermittent, theme of the political debate in the British media on what to do

about Northern Ireland. In August 1971, following the introduction of internment in Northern Ireland, the *New Statesman* under the editorship of a former Labour Cabinet Minister, Richard Crossman, carried a leading article entitled "British Troops in Ulster: One Year - Then Out." The article argued that British troops had ceased to be a peace-keeping force and had become an army of occupation and declared:

The army must be withdrawn; and the best way of achieving this while bringing the contending parties to their senses is to tell them now that in 12 months' time the withdrawal will take place, come what may. . . . This has to be said with meaning - no bluff, nor empty threat, but a firm statement of intent. For so long as they can rely on us to stay forever, so long will all parties postpone any kind of negotiation - and so long will the situation grow hopelessly worse.⁵

Crossman was far and away the most senior politician in Britain to advocate withdrawal in the early years of the troubles. Despite lack of support from his colleagues, his advocacy of withdrawal quickly attracted considerable public support. Gallup first put the option that "we should begin to withdraw our troops" to respondents in November 1971. It attracted the support of 37% of those polled. This figure rose to 64% in December 1975.⁶

Support for troop withdrawal has stayed at roughly this level ever since, with occasional dips in response to particularly outrageous atrocities by the Provisional IRA. But it climbed to a new high at the time of the 20th anniversary of the dispatch of the troops to aid the civil power in Northern Ireland. In a telephone poll of over 5,000 people, 77% of callers answered yes to the question: "After 20 years, is it time to pull the troops out of Northern Ireland?"⁷ The polling organizations have probed public attitudes towards Northern Ireland in different ways and there have been some interesting variations on the theme of British withdrawal. For example, in 1980 a poll for the *Sunday Times* asked respondents how they would vote on a referendum on Northern Ireland's membership in the United Kingdom. Only 29% of the sample were willing to support Northern Ireland's continued inclusion.⁸ Exactly the same percentage supported the option of Northern Ireland remaining part of the UK in a poll for the *Daily Express* in 1987, with 61% in that poll supporting the withdrawal of troops.⁹

The consistency of public support for withdrawal is remarkable in the light of the limited editorial backing the option of withdrawal has received in the national press. Only the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Times* have intermittently carried leading articles advocating withdrawal. However, individual columnists right across the political spectrum have been receptive to the idea from time to time. Advocacy of withdrawal has also been a very evident feature of the paperback book market on Northern Ireland. Examples are Geoffrey Bell, *The British in Ireland: A suitable case for withdrawal*; Bob Rowthorn and Naomi Wayne, *Northern Ireland: The Political Economy of the Conflict*; and Paul Foot, *Ireland: Why Britain Must Get Out*.¹⁰ By contrast, politicians have generally been much more resistant to the option of withdrawal, and among those who have ever held executive responsibility for the province's affairs support for

withdrawal in any shape or form has been negligible. Furthermore, politicians have not come under any pressure from organized public opinion to accommodate the prevailing sentiment in favor of withdrawal. In particular, the Troops Out Movement in Britain has failed to attract significant levels of support, which is hardly surprising, given the sympathy the organization has expressed for the cause of militant Irish nationalism.

Lack of support for withdrawal at the level of policy-making has been reflected in the fact that, in the course of the last twenty years, there has only been one juncture at which it appeared that the British Government was seriously considering withdrawal. This was in the aftermath of the Ulster Workers Council strike that brought down the power-sharing Executive in May 1974. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at the time, Merlyn Rees, spoke of the strike as a manifestation of the strength of Ulster nationalism and it appeared that the British Government was toying with the idea of an independent Northern Ireland as a way out of the problem. In the end, a much less radical option was adopted. This was the establishment of a Constitutional Convention to enable the people of Northern Ireland to chart their own way forward within broad guidelines laid by the British Government. By the time the Convention failed (because it could not come up with proposals acceptable to both communities), simply continuing with direct rule appeared to offer a viable way forward and withdrawal was *not* considered. The most interesting aspect of this episode was the reaction of the Government of the Republic of Ireland. In 1983 Rees revealed that the Irish Government had actually sought assurances from the British Government during the course of 1974 that Britain would *not* withdraw from Northern Ireland.¹¹ The revelation caused some embarrassment in Dublin. Here after all was an Irish Government committed by its nationalist ideology to a united Ireland demanding that Britain stay in a part of Ireland.

The embarrassment over this particular episode aside, it is notable that leading politicians of the main parties in the Republic have rarely given their support to calls for British withdrawal. In 1975 Jack Lynch as Leader of the Opposition specifically called on Britain to make a declaration of intent to withdraw, but he did not repeat the call when he returned to office in 1977. It was perhaps not without significance that the speech was made after it had become evident that the British Government had decided it would not withdraw. In 1980 the Irish Prime Minister, Charles Haughey, called on the British Government to declare its interest in encouraging the unity of Ireland, by agreement. But if this implied withdrawal at the end of the process, it was not the same as demanding unilateral withdrawal by Britain. Similarly, Loyalist calls for the establishment of an independent Northern Ireland also carry the implication of British withdrawal, but no Unionist or Loyalist has ever mounted a campaign for British withdrawal as such. The attitude of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), a party aspiring to the achievement of Irish unity by peaceful means, towards the notion of British withdrawal has varied, but for the most part leaders of the SDLP have been hostile to withdrawal. In fact, of the major parties in Ireland north or south, only Sinn Fein has consistently given its wholehearted support to withdrawal and then only if Britain

fulfils certain conditions, such as the disbandment of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and the disarming of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).

The weakness of political support for British withdrawal in Ireland itself has not prevented the existence of the option of withdrawal from exerting an immense influence on politics in Northern Ireland. The possibility that one day public support for the option might overcome the political resistance in Britain to it has helped to sustain the Provisional IRA in its campaign. Indeed, in the early years of the troubles the Provisionals clearly believed that Britain's departure from Ireland was imminent. In her book, *To Take Arms*, Maria McGuire records that senior figures in the movement believed that Britain would leave after the deaths of a set number of British soldiers, using the analogy of Aden where Britain departed after the deaths of 36 soldiers.¹² The adoption by Britain of direct rule as a long-term policy in the mid 1970s forced a rethink within the Provisional movement and its leaders are now resigned to a long-term war of attrition.¹³ Nonetheless, the belief that the point of British withdrawal will eventually be reached forms a crucial element of Provisional thinking.

REASONS FOR STAYING

In explaining why Britain has stayed contrary to their initial expectations, the Provisionals have placed a great deal of emphasis on the notion that Britain has a strategic interest in maintaining a presence in Ireland. It has also been the explanation that leftwing supporters of withdrawal in Britain have favored. In this connection, the warning in 1983 to Conservative MPs by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Prior, that Ireland could become another Cuba if Sinn Fein came to power¹⁴ is often cited. But this could account for the British presence only if maintaining British forces in Northern Ireland was the sole way to prevent Sinn Fein from coming to power, which in the context of the strength of different political forces in Ireland is unpersuasive. By contrast, Unionists such as Enoch Powell have suggested that the British Foreign Office and the US State Department have been engaged in a plot to bring about a united Ireland as a way of securing Ireland's entry into NATO.¹⁵ The obvious objection to this line of argument is that it grossly exaggerates the significance of Irish neutrality and Western concern over it. A more realistic view of the strategic significance of Northern Ireland was suggested in 1986 by the Deputy Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Jonathan Alford, when he argued that technology had made it a "non-issue."¹⁶ This view fits in with official silence over the strategic issue. If a persuasive strategic case existed for the retention of Northern Ireland, it would hardly be in the interests of the British Government to conceal the fact.

But if the strategic factor does not explain the British presence, what does? There seems to be a consensus that economic factors can be discounted, given the scale of British subventions to the province. Some writers have suggested that the principal reason for the continuing British presence in Northern Ireland is simply to prevent a bloodbath.¹⁷ In other words, the continuing British presence is to be explained by altruism. This carries the further implication that its permanence is by no means guaranteed, since presumably

there is an upper limit to the sacrifice that might reasonable be expected of any country in carrying out peace-keeping duties in a situation where its own interests were not at stake. What the altruistic explanation has in common with the strategic explanation is that both explanations gloss over the official reason for the British presence, that it is in accord with the wishes of a majority of the province's inhabitants. In practice, the principle of consent cannot so easily be laid aside. It has a significance for the British that extends beyond the issue of Northern Ireland's status.

The principle of consent along with loyalty to the Crown and an ethnocentric notion of kith and kin has played an important role in the development of a British identity in the absence of the usual emphasis on the state or on territoriality as the basis of national identity.¹⁸ In particular, the rights and obligations that go with being British are perceived as being independent of territory. Consequently, defence of the rights of free British subjects, wherever they be, against the imposition of alien rule has much the same power to arouse patriotic feelings as does defence of the national territory in other countries, as the war with Argentina over the Falkland Islands vividly demonstrated. The implication for Northern Ireland is that the principle of consent is too strongly bound up with the legitimization of the political rights of the British to be wantonly discarded simply to enable Britain to rid itself of an unpopular province. This is for the most part a concealed constraint on British decision-making in relation to Northern Ireland. Indeed, it is only during a process of British withdrawal that its significance is likely to become apparent, as is explained below.

However the question of why Britain stays in Northern Ireland is answered, it is evident that the costs to Britain of its presence in Northern Ireland are considerable. To the material and human costs one can add the damage to Britain's international standing as a result of the conflict. These costs have led many who do not support the Republican campaign to end the British presence to question the likelihood of Britain remaining. For example, a year after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, Conor Cruise O'Brien predicted that it could result in a British withdrawal within five years, though, unlike the Provisional IRA, O'Brien did not expect a united Ireland to result from withdrawal.¹⁹ The *Financial Times* journalist, John Lloyd, argued in 1988 that the Anglo-Irish Agreement was the beginning of the end of the union.

It is quite possible that the British are now bidding an ungrateful, sour goodbye to the one million or so of their fellow citizens in Ulster who wish to remain British but are ceasing, slice by slice, to be so.²⁰

In July 1989 the Anglican Primate of Ireland, Dr. Robin Eames, told the General Synod of the Church of England that withdrawal would have disastrous consequences, but he would hardly have issued such a warning had he not thought there was a real possibility of withdrawal.²¹ Since the British desire to leave is so clear, such an assumption is on the face of it quite reasonable. That calculation is also evident in Unionist responses to British initiatives, especially

in the strength of Unionist suspicion that an aim of British policy is to find a means of levering Unionists out of the UK through the construction of links between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.²² Taking the effect of the prospect of British withdrawal both on the Provisionals' campaign and on Unionist attitudes towards British efforts to promote a political accommodation within Northern Ireland, it is evident that calculations about its likelihood has played an important role in reinforcing the province's sectarian divisions and weakening the effectiveness of British intervention.

FEASIBILITY OF WITHDRAWAL

The question of whether withdrawal is in fact feasible can now be examined. For this purpose, a number of scenarios in which it is suggested it might occur are analyzed and what the probable consequences of withdrawal would be in the different sets of circumstances examined is spelt out. The analysis is not meant to provide predictions of how any government will actually behave in practice, firstly because it is impossible to predict with any certainty that changes in the political environment will not alter circumstances so radically as to undermine the most basic assumptions about the situation, and secondly because the government may calculate the consequences differently. However, through the construction of the scenarios and analysis of the consequences, it is hoped that a reasonably realistic picture of the possibility of withdrawal will emerge.

At this point, the considerations that would be uppermost in a British Government decision about leaving need to be addressed. There are at least three fundamental objectives that any British Government would wish to achieve. Firstly, it would want to be rid of the international embarrassment of Northern Ireland. There is nothing in it for Britain to withdraw from Northern Ireland if it is still facing international criticism on account of it. Secondly, Britain would not want to import the Northern Ireland problem onto the British mainland. If it had done so already, as the Algeria problem had been brought onto the streets of Paris, this might not be much of a consideration. However, as Britain has succeeded in keeping the problem at arm's length and as unemployment remains high, it can be reasonably certainly predicted that Britain would want to prevent an exodus from Northern Ireland to the mainland. Thirdly, one of the major attractions of a withdrawal is encapsulated in the slogan, "troops out." Britain would want to reduce as rapidly and as easily as possible the involvement of mainland troops in Northern Ireland. Possible scenarios can now be explored against this background. A distinction has to be made straightaway between a British withdrawal that takes place as part of a negotiated settlement or as a result of a majority of people in Northern Ireland demanding it and withdrawal as a result of a unilateral action by the British Government. The latter includes the situation where Britain makes an irreversible declaration of intent to withdraw. The former set of cases is examined first. It needs to be underlined that withdrawal in these cases is the outcome of other political developments and is not itself of primary importance.

Scenario 1: Negotiated Independence

In 1979 the New Ulster Political Research Group (NUPRG) working under the umbrella of the Loyalist paramilitary organization, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), put forward the idea of a negotiated independence as "the only proposal which does not have a victor and loser."²³ The idea has attracted a diverse range of supporters, but it presently enjoys little popular support in either community in Northern Ireland. To be viable at all, the proposal would require the support of a majority in each community. A fear of many is that independence would be economically disadvantageous, given the scale of the British subvention to the province. Another fear is that in the event of a breakdown of political accommodation between the communities, there would be nothing to prevent Northern Ireland from sliding into chaos. These fears could perhaps be overcome by firm assurances of continuing British economic support for Northern Ireland and by Britain and the Republic acting as external guarantors for a constitution underpinning the political deal between the two communities. The 1960 constitution of an independent Cyprus is an obvious, if somewhat unfortunate, precedent for such an arrangement. The same question might arise in the case of Northern Ireland as arose in Cyprus. Could external guarantees bind a sovereign independent state?

However, what is most implausible about the notion of a negotiated independence is the assumption that it would be possible to achieve political accommodation between the two communities in the context of an agreement on independence, when it was impossible to achieve that outcome in any other context. Many of the stumbling blocks to an internal agreement, such as the entrenchment of the nationalist minority's role in the decision-making process or the guarantor role of the Republic on their behalf, would reappear as even more momentous questions if British sovereignty were ending. If agreement could be reached on this kind of arrangement it would secure international recognition and put an end to Northern Ireland's lack of international legitimacy. But it could do this only if the Republic was satisfied about the entrenchment of the minority's position and if it was therefore prepared to give its approval to independence. In short, an independent Ulster of this kind would be a work of internal accommodation which both the external parties agreed to underwrite. Withdrawal of British troops would be a natural result of, rather than a crucial phase in, the shaping of this outcome.

Scenario 2: Loyalist Self-determination

From time to time, a number of Unionist leaders have canvassed the possibility of a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) as a last resort to frustrate the British Government's plans for the province. The basis of such a declaration would be the support of representatives of the majority community. One might envisage such a possibility in the context of a Labour Government's pursuit of a policy of unity by consent, with the consequence that Protestants believed that independence was the only way to prevent a united Ireland. If made, it would be virtually impossible for any British Government to refuse a demand for independence from representatives of the majority. Indeed, then

British Prime Minister Thatcher went on record that she would accept a decision by a majority in Northern Ireland to choose independence.²⁴ Given that Britain justifies its presence in Northern Ireland on the basis that it is there by the will of a majority of the inhabitants, it could hardly stay in the absence of the majority's consent. However, the Republic would almost certainly contest the legitimacy of Northern Ireland's independence in such circumstances. Not to do so would entail giving up any right to speak on behalf of the minority in Northern Ireland and would also forego its aspiration to a united Ireland.

The difference between this and the first scenario is that in this case there are no acceptable safeguards for the nationalist minority and so the Republic could not legitimize the process. What is more, the Republic would probably be successful in preventing a Loyalist Northern Ireland from gaining international recognition. Britain would then be faced with the same embarrassment as she suffers at the moment, though with reduced power over the embarrassing situation. In particular, Britain would be caught between giving the new regime enough support to prevent an exodus and giving so much economic assistance that Northern Ireland's independence looked unreal to the international community. Britain would continue to be seen as having a responsibility for what happened in the province; if it was to happen at all it would probably involve cutting economic assistance and with an eye on some other ultimate political settlement. This is one reason why Unionists would not be likely to take the risks of going this way.

Scenario 3: Unity by Consent

The Labour Party in Britain adopted the policy of unity by consent at its annual conference in 1981.²⁵ That is why it is included in the list of scenarios, despite its inherent implausibility as long as Protestants constitute a majority of the population of Northern Ireland. The unreal character of the policy is reflected in party statements on the subject. Thus Labour's principal spokesperson on Northern Ireland, Kevin McNamara, has declared that the Loyalists will not be allowed to veto any of the preliminary stages of a move towards unity through harmonization between north and south, though he acknowledges that their consent will be required for the last step, the change of sovereign jurisdiction!²⁶ In fact, it is highly unlikely that unity could ever be made attractive, even from a narrow economic perspective, to a majority of people in Northern Ireland. Indeed, that is one reason why Catholic supporters of the continuation of the British link have far outnumbered Protestant adherents to a united Ireland. In any event, it would require much more than economic incentives to persuade Protestants to give up their position as a majority, especially while sectarian divisions are being reinforced by political violence.

Protestants advocating a united Ireland in these circumstances would find themselves accused of urging surrender to Provisional IRA terror. That is not something that any significant section of the Protestant community would be ready to face. Consequently, a Labour Government would soon have to confront the fact that unity by consent was impossible. Indeed, it would need to increase its military commitment to the province to keep control of the

situation. It would find that adherence to the formula of unity by consent made day-to-day administration of the province more difficult because of the suspicion of its intentions among Protestants. As a policy the most charitable interpretation that can be placed upon it is that it is not meant to be carried out in practice but rather to put the leadership of the Labour Party in the position of having said nothing that it cannot unsay with the aid of another part of the policy. To a party out of power thinking of British public opinion, the policy's attraction is that it seems to promise an end to both British involvement and responsibility while satisfying international opinion. Nor does it damage the party electorally by associating it with Sinn Fein. But in operational terms, Labour's policy of unity by consent is a nonsense. In practice, it would turn into something else. In theory, one possibility is that it would lead to the next scenario, the Sinn Fein Version, but this is very much less likely than its evolution into the last scenario, Trapping the Republic, for reasons discussed below.

Scenario 4: The Sinn Fein Version

The Provisional IRA and Sinn Fein want a declaration by the British Government of its intent to withdraw by a definite date. The Provisionals argue that a firm declaration by Britain will oblige Unionists to face the reality that they are no longer British. At the same time they demand that the UDR be disbanded and the RUC disarmed to close off the option of a Loyalist UDI. To facilitate the transition, they envisage the election of an all-Ireland Conference to draw up the constitution of the new 32-country Republic.²⁷ The crux of the proposals is the second element, the demand that Britain in effect coerce the Loyalists during the process of withdrawal itself. The enormity of the Provisionals' demand can be gauged by considering what *both* disbanding the UDR *and* disarming the RUC would entail in the context of a British declaration of intent to withdraw. It would require a sufficiently large mainland troop presence to overawe both the UDR and the RUC and people who might join in a revolt to prevent disbandment and disarming of these forces. Fear of being left defenceless in the context of sectarian strife and the desire to frustrate the implementation of withdrawal would provide potent motivations for revolt. In fact, such a mainland force would have to be large enough to deal with all the other sources of insecurity as well, if it was to be able to create enough calm to stop a revolt from occurring out of sheer panic. Because the Government would need to be certain of the success of the operation, a reasonable guess is that the RUC and UDR would need to be outnumbered between 2 and 3 to 1. Furthermore, the troops would need to stay as long as the prospect of a Loyalist revolt remained. In concrete terms, an additional 30,000 to 40,000 British troops would need to be brought into Northern Ireland for a period of a year or two, if not longer, to satisfy this element in Sinn Fein's scenario for peace. This is not physically impossible. It would mean using about half of the British forces stationed in Germany. What would be unprecedented would be the purpose for which the troops were being used. No British Government has hitherto ever contemplated the use of force on this scale to put British citizens out of the UK.

The third element in Sinn Fein's plan, the election of an all-Ireland Constitutional Conference, would involve persuading the Republic to partici-

pate in elections to a body that would terminate the existence of both the twenty-six county state in the south and the British administration in Northern Ireland. What is more, the election campaign would be conducted against the background of what would be widely interpreted as a Provisional IRA victory. Such a prospect would be bound to raise fears in the Republic of being infected by the north's political instability. For different reasons to Sinn Fein, the Republic's Government would find the saturation of the north with British troops reassuring. As far as the Unionists are concerned, it would be more than any Unionist's life was worth to oppose Loyalist defiance as long as that stood the remotest prospect of success. Indeed resistance would tend to grow by default simply because of the sheer heroism it would require to oppose such Loyalist defiance from within the Protestant community. It would be impossible for any Unionist to participate in an all-Ireland Conference, until it was absolutely clear (rather than only probable) that there was no other avenue. However, it is possible that Unionists might participate in the elections on an abstentionist basis to await the point at which it became safe to involve themselves in making the best deal possible for the people they represented. Although no Unionist is going to welcome a massive British military presence to ensure that Unionists comply, it is possible that many would actually breathe a sigh of relief if they could really say to their irate followers that nothing else was possible. At least that might stop the adventurists from starting an actual civil war.

Thus, Sinn Fein's proposals do present a possible route to a united Ireland in circumstances short of a bloodbath and chaos, but the proposals are critically dependent on the readiness of the British Government to dispatch very large numbers of troops to Northern Ireland in the first phase of the process. To put it another way, "troops out" would mean troops in. That would make it one of the most unusual decolonizations ever to have occurred. This is because there is an important difference between British withdrawal from Northern Ireland and other examples of colonial retreat. Britain would not be withdrawing from an area where the mass of the people was sympathetic to the insurgent force and where the insurgents could take over government relatively easily. In this case, to achieve their principal objective, the insurgents would require the troops they had been fighting in effect to join forces with them in coercing the population that the troops had previously been engaged in defending. The obvious question is what is in it for any British Government to deliver a united Ireland in this way. How could any British Government justify such an operation to its electorate?

Scenario 5: The Algerian Analogy

It is sometimes said that the resolution of the Northern Ireland conflict awaits a British De Gaulle to cope with a British version of Algeria. The analogy runs something like this. The determination of those who fight for national independence always wins out in the end. Once upon a time, even radical French politicians - like Pierre Mendes-France, the great cutter of other colonial Gordian knots - could not admit that Algeria was a colony and decolonizing Algeria had seemed impossible, except to those who were prepared to stake everything on fighting for it. Yet it happened eventually. A colony is a colony.

Settlers are settlers. Imperialism is imperialism and the FLN campaign had to win, however bad the odds may have seemed to be at some stages. Northern Ireland is, as Algeria was, nominally part of the imperial mother country. Northern Ireland contains a million Unionists just as Algeria had a million French citizens. It does not really matter that the descendants of settlers are a higher proportion of the people of Northern Ireland. (Algeria 10-12% European; Northern Ireland 55-60% Protestant/Unionist; Ireland 20% Unionist.) The real enemy is imperialism. Settlers, whether they are very many or merely many, are only ever its pawns and excuses for holding on. The army, colonial capitalists and all the other bastions of imperial France led the Algeria settlers in their fight. What was required was for some strong man to come to power in France and see what was inevitable, as De Gaulle did. A British De Gaulle, so it is reckoned, could achieve similar success in Ireland.²⁸

What the analogy fails to recognize is that De Gaulle had to do very little actually to coerce the French Algerians to accept anything. It was enough to cut the bonds between metropolitan France and the settlers and to leave them to reckon with the reality of ten million Muslim Algerians, two neighboring states that explicitly supported the FLN and 60,000 trained FLN soldiers waiting in those two states to come into Algeria. De Gaulle's task in decolonizing Algeria was an immense one, but it was different in kind from anything that would confront a British Government withdrawing from Northern Ireland.²⁹ When De Gaulle came to power, he was faced by considerable enthusiasm for the option of the full integration of Algeria into France as a solution to the conflict. However, support for this option was based on two quite different assumptions. Many people in metropolitan France supported integration because they thought it could secure the support of most Algerians, while others, especially the settlers in Algeria, supported integration to prevent the Muslim majority from being allowed to exercise the choice of independence. By making the issue one of whether the majority in Algeria should be allowed to *choose* among a number of options for self-determination, including integration, De Gaulle successfully isolated the hardline version of support for integration. His next task was to find a muslim leadership with whom to negotiate about self-determination options. But eventually it became clear that no-one was prepared to take on that role in opposition to the FLN. So at that point he had to brave the objections of the army to his negotiating with the FLN. The fact that he had carried metropolitan opinion by holding a referendum on self-determination helped him to cope with the revolt within the army over this issue. In desperation, settlers organized in the OAS attacked the French army itself, hoping that their actions would provide a catalyst for a further revolt within the army against the implementation of De Gaulle's policy. Instead it provoked the military into confronting the settlers in the suburb of Bab-el-Oued.

At first sight, it might seem that the battle of Bab-el-Oued presents a precedent for the use of British troops to coerce Unionists. However, that is misleading. In practice, the battle simply served final notice that French military help would not be forthcoming for the settlers. It did not need to turn into a concerted campaign. No sanctions were necessary to make the settlers accept

what was going to happen. The lesson De Gaulle had to teach the settlers was simply to confront them with the reality that they could no longer rely on actual French military support against the 60,000 FLN troops coming from Morocco and Tunisia, while the effect of the actions of the OAS was to set an exodus in motion because most settlers feared that they would be held responsible for the atrocities committed by the OAS in their name. If British troops were ordered to confront Unionists protesting about their expulsion from the UK, it is probable that they would obey their orders as long as they were confronting an open Loyalist insurrection directed against themselves. But to remove the risk of a Loyalist revolt immediately following British withdrawal, much more would be required of the troops. They would have to conduct searches for Loyalist arms and in other ways suppress any Loyalist preparations for a rebellion in a manner similar to military action against the Provisional IRA. It seems likely that there would be military opposition to such a course of action. But if such suppression of the Loyalists occurred nonetheless, it would surely provoke protest in the UK that people were being suppressed for nothing more than their passionate desire to remain part of the UK. The question that the protesters would pose in such circumstances would be: why had the numbers of British troops in the province been increased, perhaps even quadrupled, to suppress a potential Loyalist revolt, when such an increase might have been used to flatten the IRA? In the end, the relative numbers of "settlers" and "natives" do matter and this is where the Algerian analogy breaks down.

Scenario 6: The Scuttle

An assumption underlying the previous two scenarios is that Britain would want to arrange an orderly transfer of power. But what would stop Britain from simply abandoning the province and leaving it to the people of Northern Ireland to sort out their own political future? In the scenario of a British scuttle, the troops would simply be removed unilaterally and there would be no question of their use to coerce anyone to achieve a political settlement. Withdrawal from a territory without making provision for a successor is unusual in international affairs but no unprecedented. In May 1948 Britain withdrew from Palestine which it had ruled as a mandate of the League of Nations without making arrangements for a transfer of power. An Act was passed by Westminster that provided for the ending of British responsibility on a set date. This example has not escaped critics of British policy in Northern Ireland. Thus, Tony Benn has proposed a Bill for withdrawal from Northern Ireland based on this case. Another example of a scuttle was Portugal's withdrawal from Angola in 1975 leaving three liberation movements to contest the succession. In both these examples, the imperial power's scuttle was followed by civil war in the territory concerned.

However, it is conceivable that a British Government would not be deterred by the prospect that it would be held responsible by the international community for any such consequences following a scuttle from Northern Ireland. Much more problematic for the British Government would be the economic consequences of a scuttle. The most important economic fact about

Northern Ireland's present link to Britain is its effects on UK government finances. As a peripheral region with high unemployment, a large proportion of state employees in the employed work force, and a low tax base, its expenditure vastly exceeds its tax revenue contribution. It might even seem advantageous to Britain to end its economic commitment to the province, were it not for the other consequences this would have. Much of the economics of daily life in Northern Ireland is tied up with state employment and expenditure and with all-UK institutions such as banks and building societies. All kinds of problems would arise in relation to these functions in the event of a British withdrawal. One of the most important would be the financing of state expenditure. In particular, if welfare cheques, pensions, government salaries, etc. were not continued or were seriously devalued, it would almost certainly prompt an exodus from Northern Ireland to the UK. The British Government could not prevent an influx of what would be its own citizens in such circumstances. Furthermore, once an exodus was triggered for economic reasons, it could set off all sorts of sectarian ripple effects, as areas came to be seen as vulnerable to takeover by the other side.

The likelihood therefore if Britain pulled the plug on Northern Ireland is that it would find itself faced with the problem of absorbing large numbers of refugees from the province, with the danger that politics in the mainland itself might become infected by the Northern Ireland conflict. Given the balance of military forces in Northern Ireland, it cannot be predicted who would leave in an exodus. Large numbers might not leave at all, so long as economic factors were not added to the political uncertainties. For this reason it would be in the British Government's interest to finance an interim regime to allow the daily routine of economic life to continue. It would consist in the first instance of the existing state structure, plus whatever political leadership could be superimposed upon it that would give it a greater chance of being able to operate. Consequently, in this scenario, some sort of Loyalist state in Northern Ireland would be likely to emerge. This scenario and the Loyalist self-determination scenario tend to collapse into each other. But it is entirely predictable that nationalists in Ireland would place the blame on Britain for such a state's existence and for the continuation of partition. This would especially be the case if the British Government attempted to prop it up to reduce the exodus to Britain from Northern Ireland. Thus, The Scuttle fails to pass the test of removing the international embarrassment to Britain. The continuation of armed conflict in such circumstances, highlighting the interim regime's dependence on support from Britain, would simply compound the embarrassment.

Scenario 7: Imposed Independence

Above it is argued that The Scuttle and Loyalist Self-determination scenarios tend to collapse into each other and that both involve some kind of new administration in the north. If that is going to happen and to leave Britain with international embarrassment, why not take the bull by the horns and do it properly? Face the international flack, avoid an exodus (of Protestants to Britain anyway) and keep the friendship and dependence of the new Loyalist govern-

ment? Britain could impose independence on Northern Ireland using the threat of a straightforward scuttle, if necessary, to elicit co-operation from the Protestants. The problems with this scenario have already been alluded to. In putting them together here some loose ends are tidied up. Independent Northern Ireland set up in these circumstances (with continuing British aid to sustain its finances) would not look independent, especially if the Republic of Ireland chose to highlight just how dependent it was on Britain. To international opinion, an independent Northern Ireland would probably seem in these circumstances like a British version of the independent state of Northern Cyprus, the Turkish area of the island that Turkey alone recognizes or like one of the South Africa's independent Bantustans. In other words, imposed independence would look like a contrived device by the British to deflect international criticism over their responsibility for the situation in Northern Ireland. It would be viewed with the same cynicism by international opinion as the claims that colonial powers such as Portugal made that they had integrated their overseas possessions into their national territory and that therefore the issue of the self-determination of such territories did not arise. Further, in all probability, the Provisional IRA or another Republican paramilitary organization would continue to attack British personnel after independence as a way of underlining the contention of Republicans that Britain continued to pull the strings.

Scenario 8: Trapping the Republic

We can now draw out the main points. Because it would be impossible for the area that constitutes Northern Ireland to be economically independent under any of the various options, it will always be possible to show Britain's hand in any arrangement. Therefore, it will never be possible to end international criticism of the British role in the north, so long as the Republic feels compelled to denounce Britain for what is happening there. This does not actually mean there is some way that Britain could sever the dependency of the north upon itself and evade such criticism. No-one, neither Britain nor indeed anyone actually living in the north of Ireland, has any interest in Britain truly pulling the plug and starting an exodus. Therefore the only withdrawal scenarios that meet the British requirements are the ones the Republic will not denounce. But is that the same as saying that the Republic must approve the British withdrawal scenario before it can be an advantage to Britain to do it? Of the withdrawal scenarios that have been considered so far only three might attract the Republic's imprimatur. The first is the negotiated independence formula which indeed requires the Republic's blessing as a condition for it to work. That blessing would be forthcoming only if the Loyalists agreed to accept an entrenched role for the nationalist minority in the north, thereby allowing the Republic to abandon its claim to the north. Otherwise the Republic would have to keep up its claim to the north to safeguard its guarantor role and that is why it would have to expose the unreal aspect of most alternative kinds of British withdrawal.

The Algerian scenario, as has been seen, does not work, and to get anything like the Algerian result (but without a Protestant exodus), a proposal

nearer to the Sinn Fein scenario would be needed. From the Irish Republic's perspective the advantage in a massive British troop presence is that it reduces the difficulty the Republic would experience in securing Loyalist consent to Irish unification. And it decreases the chances of Sinn Fein seizing any kind of position of strength in the north before the Republic's own forces arrive. It also reduces the dangers of sectarian collisions which the Republic's forces would have to suppress. So for entirely different reasons from Sinn Fein they might be glad of the disarmament of the RUC and UDR, not for their own sake, but because of the size of the British troop movement into the north replacing them. It would mean that a united Ireland was brought about by a bigger British army of occupation than anything seen in Ireland since Cromwell, but that would not necessarily be a problem for the Republic. The big problem with this scenario is that it flatly contradicts British interests in withdrawing. It raises the spectre that "troops out" becomes in practice "troops in." It even creates the possibility when they eventually withdraw that the Loyalists and Republicans and the people of the south, not having fought each other directly but all having shared the experience of being dictated to by Britain, might base their unity on casting Britain in the role of perfidious Albion. As that result has no chance whatever of coming about by any other method of withdrawal, it can be stated as a certainty that Britain would not go out of its way to create such a future strategic risk for itself, especially not at that price.

Of the remaining scenarios Unity by Consent would secure the Republic's approval as a mere declaration of the Labour Party that it recognizes the Republic's legitimate interest in the north. It was shown earlier that Unity by Consent was not achievable as an actual policy and that any attempt to implement it in practice would evolve into something else. The Sinn Fein Version is one possibility. Another scenario more realistically would involve much less of a British commitment to coerce Loyalists. This brings us to the last scenario, Trapping the Republic. In our judgement this is far and away the most likely form British withdrawal would take if it actually happened. Sinn Fein's proposals and in fact any proposal that the Irish government would like, *if it was forced to face the problem of withdrawal*, would require a massive additional commitment of military resources to the province by the British Government for the purpose of expelling people from the UK. However alienated mainland British opinion is from the Protestants of Northern Ireland, this would be virtually impossible to sustain politically. What is required from the perspective of the British is an option that would result in a united Ireland - so as to be freed of the international embarrassment of Northern Ireland - but which would not require the British Government to coerce the Protestant population to bring it about. That means transferring the responsibility for securing Protestant consent to a united Ireland to somebody else. The obvious candidate is the Republic of Ireland, given its rhetorical commitment to unity by consent.

Under this scenario, the mainland troops would be withdrawn in such a way as to make their exit as easy as possible. That means without too much collision with the local security forces. Perhaps an all-Ireland Constitutional Conference would be called but the Unionists would boycott. Britain would

continue to provide the finance for a transition administration, consisting of the existing state apparatus. The Republic would hardly be able to propose an alternative, as it would share the British interest in not wanting chaos and an exodus to start. Where this scenario would differ from the previous one is that withdrawal would be accompanied by a British announcement justifying the act of withdrawal as Britain's contribution to clearing the way for a united Ireland. In that way, Britain would seek to gain international credit for its action. At the same time, responsibility for securing Protestant consent for a united Ireland would be left to the Republic of Ireland. The Republic would not like this but if it objected too loudly that reconciling Protestants to a united Ireland was beyond its capacity, its own words could be used to justify the case for an independent Ulster. In fact, the Republic would be trapped in a position of having to validate the nationalist contention that reconciliation between the different traditions in Ireland was possible in the absence of the British presence. It would become for the Republic an absolute priority to create co-operative links with some authority in the north as quickly as possible. The Unionists would boycott at this stage, so they would have to relate to the civil service and the RUC.

The Republic's next priority would be to secure some kind of consent from the Unionists. No unionist would feel able to do this except in return for some very major concession indeed. The very minimum they could expect would be a large measure of autonomy for Protestants in Northern Ireland within what would probably only nominally be one country and the Republic's cooperation in crushing Republican paramilitary organizations. The two things would go together in that the area of the autonomous province would be the area in which this was done by the RUC and everywhere else it would be done by the forces of the Republic. The effects of population movements caused by sectarian panics before, during, and after the withdrawal, coupled with the subsequent demarcation of areas controlled by the RUC on one hand, and areas controlled by the Garda and the Irish army, on the other, would tend to separate the two communities in Northern Ireland. Notwithstanding the ostensible unification of Ireland, it would in fact be more divided than ever in human terms. And the need for British economic support for the autonomous province would remain.

CONCLUSION

The desire of British public opinion for withdrawal from Northern Ireland goes back almost to the beginning of Northern Ireland's present troubles. The examination of different scenarios for withdrawal provide a clue as to why it has not happened. Only the last of the scenarios offers Britain a way out of Northern Ireland that might actually be successful in ending Britain's responsibility for the situation and the country's embarrassment over the issue. The Sinn Fein Version is simply not in Britain's interest to carry out, when an alternative is to hand which will leave other people to pick up the costs. Even Trapping the Republic contains risks. Once Ulster Protestants are being put out of the UK there is a real possibility that their Loyalism will suddenly start interesting

British nationalists as did that of the Falkland Islanders. So even quite low levels of coercion of Loyalists run the risk of a backlash in Britain. The risk of mutinies, however remote, also become very real. If a regiment decided it does not like expelling British citizens from the UK, it is not easy just to bring in another one to suppress it or to put down those who may be encouraged by the mutiny. So while this kind of consideration rules the Sinn Fein Version right out, it jeopardizes even the more subtle plan of Trapping the Republic in the trammels of its historical aspirations. Furthermore, any miscalculation could trigger an exodus, with damaging consequences for Britain.

Even more importantly, the adoption by the British Government of a policy of withdrawal would entail the ending of any commitment to political accommodation between the communities, and a search for reduced responsibility. This would involve a very considerable change in the approach of the British Government towards the conflict. These various factors all suggest that in practice withdrawal is very unlikely, notwithstanding the support of British public opinion for it as an option. That is not to say that the possibility of withdrawal can be ruled out altogether. It is possible to construct scenarios in which the cost of maintaining British rule escalates sharply and in which consequently a British Government might be tempted to withdraw, notwithstanding the risks of such a course of action. The most obvious would be a breakdown of the Anglo-Irish Agreement that placed Britain in the dock internationally. British frustration with the problem of Northern Ireland is evident at a number of levels and it is possible to envisage a situation arising in which it led to such a fundamental souring of Anglo-Irish relations that the Agreement became a dead letter, whatever its formal status. That possibility is enhanced by the failure of Britain fully to come to terms with the necessity of its continuing involvement in Northern Ireland, reflected in British resentment at the intrusion of the Irish Question into the body politic after it had seemingly lain dormant for nearly fifty years. The elusive objective of political accommodation in Northern Ireland, which offers the only benign route out of the present impasse, requires both engagement by Britain in the affairs of Northern Ireland to allay Unionist fears of withdrawal, and the recognition that the Irish dimension remains a *sine qua non* of any settlement of the conflict. Neither requirement is likely to be fully met, as long as the disposition continues to exist that Britain can turn its back on the problem through withdrawal.

Endnotes

1. See, for example, Anthony Kenny, *The road to Hillsborough, The shaping of the Anglo-Irish Agreement* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1986), pp. 133-6.
2. For example, see *Ibid.*, p. 131.
3. George H. Gallup, *The Gallup International Opinion Polls: Great Britain 1937-1975*, 2 (New York: Random House, n.d.), p. 1054.
4. Downing Street Declaration of 19 August 1969, quoted in *The Times* (London), 20 August 1969.
5. *New Statesman*, 13 August 1989.
6. Gallup, p. 1160 and p. 1462.
7. *The Irish Times*, 12 August 1989.
8. *The Sunday Times*, 12 December 1980.
9. Reported in *The Irish Times*, 11 February 1987.
10. Geoffrey Bell *The British in Ireland: A suitable case for withdrawal* (London: Pluto Press, 1984); Bob Rowthorn and Naomi Wayne, *Northern Ireland: The political economy of the conflict* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988); Paul Foot, *Ireland: Why Britain must get out* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1989).
11. See Merlyn Rees, *Northern Ireland: a personal perspective* (London: Methuen, 1985); *Irish Times*, 20 July 1983.
12. Maria McGuire, *To Take Arms: A Year in the Provisional IRA* (London: Quartet Books, 1973), pp. 69-70.
13. See, for example, Vincent Browne, "The Provos Settle Down for a 20 Year War," *Magill* (Dublin), August 1982.
14. *The Irish Times*, 11 November 1983.
15. See, for example, the report of a speech by Powell in *Belfast Telegraph*, 12 October 1982.
16. Colonel Jonathan Alford, "North's strategic value is a non-issue," *The Irish Times*, 31 January 1986.
17. See, for example, Kenny, *The road to Hillsborough*, p. 136.
18. See, for example, the introduction of Neil Evans, ed., *National identity in the British Isles*, (Harlech: Coleg Harlech, 1989), pp. 6-22.
19. *The Irish Times*, 18 August 1986.
20. John Lloyd, "Ulster's long goodbye," *Financial Times*, 20 February 1988.
21. *Sunday Tribune* (Dublin), 9 July 1989.
22. See, for example, Peter Smith, *Why Unionists Say No* (Belfast: The Joint Unionist Working Party, 1986), pp. 31-32.
23. *Beyond the religious divide* (Belfast: New Ulster Political Research Group, 1979).
24. See her interview with *Newsweek*, 16 May 1983.
25. There is a very full report of the Conference decision in *The Irish Times*, 30 September 1981.
26. See Kevin McNamara, "The Anglo-Irish Agreement and Political Change — A Labour Party View," speech at Queen's University, Belfast on 28 June 1988, issued as press release from his office in the House of Commons, London. See especially p. 17.
27. See "A Scenario for Peace: A Discussion Paper," *An Phoblacht/Republican News* (Dublin), 7 May 1987.
28. This analogy is usually made in asides, like Ken Livingstone's suggestion of the need for a quick withdrawal to avoid a prolonged OAS type reaction. Of greater length are, Brian Walden, *Evening Standard* (London), 10 December 1985, and R.W. Johnson, *New Society* (June 1981). It is rarely developed by those who make it, probably for fear of what

closer look at the “analogy” would turn up. Nonetheless the wish for a drastic cutter of colonial umbilical cords is clear enough. An example is in Rowthorn and Wayne, *Northern Ireland*, p. 24, “. . . Many decades later [i.e. after the partition of Ireland] something similar happened in Algeria, where French settlers took up arms to block independence and sections of the French army threatened a military coup. France’s President de Gaulle simply dumped the settlers and pulled out of Algeria. But Britain’s prime minister Lloyd George . . . was no de Gaulle.” Geoff Bell also mentioned Algeria in the same spirit in his first book *The Protestants of Ulster* (London: Pluto Press, 1976). But Algeria does not appear in his *Suitable case for withdrawal*. However, the “analogy” is not very useful either to those who simply try to use its weaknesses to make a pro-Unionist point, like A.T.Q. Stewart in *The narrow ground* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977). He says on p. 161, that white Algerians are settlers in a sense that Ulstermen are not, but he does not elaborate. Hugh Roberts in *Northern Ireland: a suitable case for Gaullism?* (Belfast: Athol Books, 1986), though far more thorough in relation to Algeria, stays on the level of debating the desirability and morality of keeping or leaving Northern Ireland. Like the others cited he fails to look at the issues of *real politik*, which the “analogy” might throw light upon.

29. For a more detailed version of this section of the argument see Frank Wright. “L’Irlande du Nord est-elle l’Algerie de la Grande-Bretagne?” *Journees Internationales. De Gaulle en son siecle. Institute Charles De Gaulle. UNESCO*, Paris, November 1990, paper number F 086; Alistair Home, *Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (London: Macmillan, 1977); C.R. Ageron, *L’Algerie algerienne’ de Napoleon III a de Gaulle*. (Sinbad, 1980); Alain Peyrefitte *Faut-il partager L’Algeria?* (Paris: Plon, 1961).