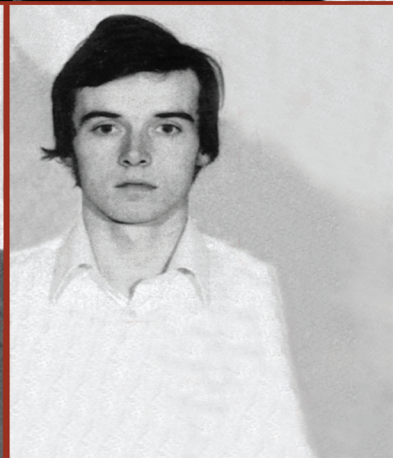
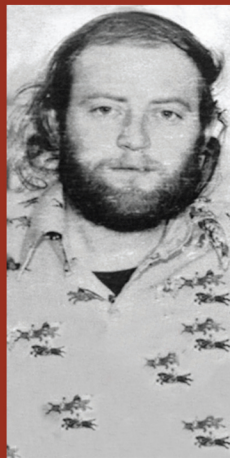


THE ROAD TO BALCOMBE STREET

THE IRA
REIGN OF TERROR
IN LONDON

STEVEN P. MOYSEY

Foreword by Lord Peter Imbert, QPM



The Road to Balcombe Street: The IRA Reign of Terror in London

The Road to Balcombe Street: The IRA Reign of Terror in London has been co-published simultaneously as *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, Volume 8, Numbers 1 and 2 2008.



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Steven P. Moysey, PhD

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Steven P. Moysey, PhD, is an organizational psychologist who specializes in the areas of conflict resolution and negotiation. He holds a PhD from Tufts University in Management and Psychology, and spent several years as an adjunct member of the graduate school faculty focusing on the psychological and behavioral aspects of leadership and team management. His research and writing centers on conflict and negotiation with a particular emphasis on law enforcement hostage stand-off situation. Dr. Moysey has previously published on the Balcombe Street siege in the *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*. Born and raised in the UK, Dr. Moysey now manages his consulting practice from Grafton, Massachusetts, where he lives with his wife, musician Monica Hatch, and their two Welsh Springer spaniels, while shuttling back and forth to London on research and consulting trips.



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Foreword

Acts of terrorism, by their very nature, are intended to appear random and unpredictable designed to cause maximum psychological impact. In this well-researched and well-written book, psychologist Dr. Steven Moysey traces the destructive and apparently random path taken by one of the most ruthless and murderous gangs of IRA terrorists ever to operate with such vicious consistency on the mainland of Great Britain. He covers the bombing, shooting and kidnapping offences carried out by this small group of determined killers and outlines in authentic (and dare I say exciting detail, as he triggers my own memory) the events leading up to their eventual capture when they were caught in a trap carefully placed and sprung by the London Metropolitan Police on 6th December 1975. Moysey clearly outlines the randomness and unpredictability which was the hallmark of this particular Active Service Unit and which was epitomised by: bombs left in shop doorways on one day; a doorstep shooting and killing the next; the murder of a child cancer physician, by placing a booby trapped bomb under the wheels of his neighbour's car; and opening fire from an automatic weapon on crowded restaurants and hotels while speeding past in a stolen car. In one evening alone in early 1975 no less than seven timed bombs were placed in shop doorways and under fuel storage dumps in and around London.

But although this almost daily switch of methods and likely targets helped them evade early identification and capture, their continued success, (which included the death of one of our top explosives experts), the very randomness itself contained a pattern which allowed the Metropolitan Police Anti-terrorist Squad to set a sophisticated trap into which, on the cold and damp evening of 6th December 1975, the most murderous IRA gang which had ever operated on the British mainland inadvertently entered as they attempted to carry out yet another deadly

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shooting by opening fire on a high class West End restaurant crowded with pre-Christmas diners. The terrorists, facing armed officers for the first time in their campaign of violence and finding themselves cut off in a part of the City, ran into a small block of Council flats, entered No. 22b, placed a gun to the head of the woman occupant and called to the pursuing officers that they would shoot her if the officers made a move to enter. The officers, knowing of the murders already committed by the terrorists knew this was no idle threat; they would carry it out. So began the siege of 22b Balcombe Street which with armed terrorists inside, who were more than capable of killing their hostages, and armed police covering the premises from the outside, presenting the police, and indeed the government, with a grave dilemma as to how this situation could be resolved.

Steven Moysey tells the story of the build up to the siege, which was to last six days, with great skill and thoroughness. He examines the state of mind of the hostage takers and the hostages during the stand off, and particularly the terrorists' psychological motivations for their actions and what drove them to stay the course of a hopeless siege and resist the relentless negotiation tactics employed by the police for a whole week.

Moysey's research included perusal of all press reports and pictures by journalists at the scene and lengthy and probing interviews with the main players on the police side. I admit to enjoying the exercise of casting my mind back 30 years and, with him, re-reading the transcripts of the many hours of interviews which my then boss, Detective Chief Superintendent Jim Nevill and I had with the four terrorists following their capture.

This is the first comprehensive and all embracing account of the events leading up to the hostage taking incident at Balcombe Street and the successful and peaceful efforts to secure the release of the victims and surrender of the perpetrators. I congratulate Dr. Moysey on his deep and meaningful research and his comprehensive and well written account of this hostage taking episode, the style of resolution of which has become a classic example throughout the democratic world for police procedure at such difficult and sensitive incidents.

*Lord Peter Imbert, QPM
Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London
City Hall
Westminster, London
May 30th, 2007*

Acknowledgments

The research and writing for this book could not have been completed without the help and support of many different individuals and groups. Firstly, I need to thank my wife Monica for her tireless support and apparently endless patience in dealing with the piles of paper that accumulated around the house and in my office as I worked on the manuscript. I need to also thank The Haworth Press for making the publishing a relatively painless process and especially Dr. Jim Greenstone, of the *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, for being a believer in the book when it was just an idea based on a previous academic paper.

Many former officers from London's Metropolitan Police came forward with their recollections of the IRA terror campaign between 1974 and 1975 and several were critical to reconstructing the events of December 6th 1975 that resulted in the start of what became known as the Balcombe Street siege. I would like to thank Bob Fenton for his dual role as both a voice in the events of that night and as a contact person for the several thousand retired CID officers in his role as Secretary of the Association of Ex CID Officers of the Metropolitan Police. Through Bob, I was able to interview many police participants including Ron Chapman, Derek Wilson, Alec Edwards, David Waghorn and others who have requested that their names would not used in the book. I would also like to thank Alan Hill, FIFireE, formerly of the West Midlands Fire Service, for his excellent first-hand account of the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974.

Other people made a significant impact in the hunt for research material such as the staff at the British Newspaper Library, and big thanks go to Erin O'Connor at the BBC written archives for her tireless help in tracking down tidbits of information, and Kate Parsons of the Press As-

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sociation and Alan Moss of History by the Yard for their help in researching images for the book. Several members of Scotland Yard's SO15 Counter Terrorism Command deserve a mention for the help and time they extended to me, but because of the nature of their work I cannot name them.

I have enormous thanks for two very special people and the outstanding contribution they have made to the research for this work. Firstly, I have to thank Lord Peter Imbert, QPM JP, along with his staff of Edna Partridge and John Hope. Lord Imbert responded to a request for help from me as a researcher working on a book on Balcombe Street and he did not hesitate in offering his assistance. As someone who has researched and studied the events around the Balcombe Street siege for some time, I still get goose bumps recalling the afternoon of November 14th, 2006, sitting in a car with Lord Imbert and his personal driver Mike outside number 22 Balcombe Street. We were parked on the opposite side of the street to number 22, under the third floor apartment window of 20 Dorset Square where, for six days, Superintendent Peter Imbert and Chief Superintendent Jim Nevill had conducted negotiations with four members of the IRA Active Service Unit holding Mr. and Mrs. John and Sheila Mathews hostage. Almost 31 years later, I was being afforded a privilege by the now Lord Imbert as I sat there and listened to his razor sharp recollections of the events of 1974 and 1975 leading up to the siege.

Final thanks go to John Purnell, GM QPM, for his generous donation of memories around events of the 6th of December 1975. After several phone interviews, John had offered to walk me through the events in person that resulted in the siege. I met John Purnell in London on a bright February morning at the junction of Oxford Street and Portman Street where we retraced the steps taken by John and Sergeant Phil McVeigh, as they gave chase to the IRA team that had eluded capture for well over a year. John's calm recollections of a night filled with both abject terror and remarkable courage helped to put the events into a very clear perspective for the author. I am indebted to John for a quite special morning of recollections and his candid honesty about his own thoughts as he faced the most dangerous moments in his distinguished police career.

This book is therefore dedicated to law enforcement officers everywhere who, behind the scenes, quietly go about the task of combating crime and terrorism in our cities, and to those special people who manage the most delicate and potentially deadly situations in law enforcement: The hostage negotiators.

Introduction

This book is, at its core, about a hostage negotiation episode that occurred in London over six days in December of 1975. The hostage takers were four members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) that made up an Active Service Unit (ASU), sent to Britain by the IRA's General Headquarters (GHQ). They had been sent to England, under a cloak of relative anonymity, to wreck havoc on the capital, which they did with some success and notoriety for fourteen months. Their mission was to force the government of Harold Wilson to pull out the British troops from Northern Ireland and allow the six counties of Ulster, controlled by the British, to integrate with the Republic of Ireland. Their mission was part of a struggle that dated back over 200 years. The six days they spent as hostage takers was the direct result of the outstanding work on the part of London's Metropolitan police (the Met) in trapping them in a dragnet operation, designed to entice them one more time onto the streets of London to ply their deadly trade of terror. The six days were the culmination of a fourteen-month collision course the ASU and the Met had been set on since the IRA group became active on the streets of London, with the one side seeking to avoid detection, and the other side desperate to track the terrorists down to stop further death and destruction in the nation's capital. The British had become accustomed to seeing the scenes of carnage and mayhem, on the nightly news broadcasts and in the papers, inflicted on Northern Ireland by the Catholic and Protestant paramilitary groups as they waged a vicious sectarian war. The British public had been exposed on a few occasions to the car and parcel bombs of the IRA, but not since WWII had they been exposed to the concentrated violence the London ASU was to inflict during the

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campaign of 1974 and 1975. In order to understand the six days of intense pressure, psychological tension, careful maneuvering of the negotiators and the stoic resistance of the hostage takers, we need to trace the steps that both the hunted and the hunters took that drove the ASU to hold John and Sheila Matthews, in their own home, hostages for their cause.

Hostage taking is as old as civilization itself. The spectrum of holding people or possession hostage is very broad, i.e., I have something you want in exchange for something you hold dear or value. Psychologically, we can hold ourselves hostage in jobs or relationships we should have left, or never entered, arguing with ourselves and negotiating a mental truce between the dissonance creating forces so that we can stay in place and accept the situation. We hold others hostage to our own wants and needs, and negotiate to get our own way. We go through life negotiating with bosses, spouses, coworkers, car salesmen, our children and ourselves.

The spectrum of hostage situations, therefore, can be broad and at one end benign and innocent, where at the other end it can be deadly dangerous to the hostages, hostage takers, and those trying to intervene and bring the situation to a hoped for peaceful resolution. At this extreme end of the hostage spectrum, resolution negotiations are never easy and never part of a win-win scenario. By the very nature of the situation it cannot be so, and that is where the skill, intuitive or trained, of the negotiators comes into play. At this deadly end of the spectrum, the hostage situation can take on many forms, each with their own special unique twists. A suicidal ex spouse, high on methamphetamine, holding a family member hostage until he can speak to his former wife. A distraught dismissed employee, holding former coworkers at gunpoint until someone agrees to give her back her job. A group of armed criminals in a botched hold-up, finding themselves trapped in the establishment they were attempting to rob with terrified employees and customers. Each of these situations requires a different, measured response from the law enforcement officers responding to the call for help. And then there are the deliberate, carefully planned and executed hostage episodes, such as the 1980 Iranian Embassy siege, where six armed revolutionaries of the Democratic Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Arabistan (DRMLA) seized the Iranian Embassy at No. 16 Princes Gate, London. Such situations can be a negotiator's nightmare, as the motivation to actually come out alive and or release the hostages cannot always be readily established, or assumed to exist. Then there are the "accidental" hostage situations, such as occurred on the night of De-

cember 6th, 1975, that involved four highly trained and experienced IRA urban guerillas. These men were not common criminals trapped during a failed bank hold-up. They were determined, disciplined members of the IRA who had absolutely no intention of giving up easily, and for reasons that were best known only to them.

Their opponents were equally skilled and just as determined to secure the safe release of the hostages. Chief Superintendent Jim Nevill and Superintendent Peter Imbert had been searching for the IRA men for the preceding fourteen months, having spent that time repeatedly sifting through the debris of numerous bomb sites and the remains of the human tragedies created by the fiendish handiwork of the four Irishmen. The six days of the siege at Balcombe Street had been almost inevitable, in some respects, with several interconnecting layers, rather like a Russian Matryoshka doll, with elements hidden inside each other. On the macro scale, the IRA were attempting to hold the British Government hostage by the campaign of violence it unleashed on the British mainland, while the British desperately sought a solution to the Troubles that would keep the Protestant parties satisfied and avoid a spiraling escalation to the already horrific sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. Similarly, the British wanted the Irish Government to understand what life could be like in the Republic if they did not assist them in their fight against the IRA. On the micro scale, the ASU were playing a catch-me-if-you-can routine with the Met's bomb squad, who had almost nothing to go on in terms of who they were going after. They had fingerprints that linked one key member of the team to several incidents and locations, but could not establish a recognized identity that connected the prints to any police records in Britain or the Irish Republic. Both the IRA team and the Metropolitan Police Bomb squad were on a collision course that resulted in the six days of the Balcombe Street siege, as a direct result of the fact that the type of investigations the Bomb squad had to conduct were essentially new and different from those they had looked into in the past. The sheer volume of incidents that the ASU unleashed on the capital made the traditional detective work of the Met ineffective in their hunt for the IRA men, forcing the police into uncharted territory in terms of innovative methods of detection and apprehension of terror suspects in a pre-CCD camera London. It was their fate to meet at Balcombe Street.

In this book, we will examine the road that brought the two opposing forces together in Balcombe Street. We will examine the political context of the deliberate campaign of violent terrorist activities perpetrated by the ASU, for without the situational context, we cannot begin to un-

derstand the men and their motivation in carrying out the unspeakable acts of violence on the streets, shops, pubs and restaurants of London. We will look at how both sides handled the hostage situation, and then examine the pros and cons of the strategy and tactics used by the Met, and how the lessons from this event apply to other such situations, or if they can be transfer to similar cases. This will give us a framework of how law enforcement and hostage negotiators handle such volatile situations.

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Chapter 1

Background to the 1974-1975 London ASU Campaign

During December of 1973, Harris Duggan, Sr., received a visit from members of the Provisional IRA at his home in Feakle, County Clare in the Republic of Ireland. They came to Mr. Duggan with heavy hearts and bad news. His son, Harris “Harry” Duggan Jr., was dead, killed on active service with the IRA while on an operation in the North. He had been buried, with honors, in a local cemetery, so Mr. Duggan was told. On receiving the news, Duggan Sr. spent several days searching for his dead son’s burial site, but could not find it no matter where he looked. His son had turned twenty-one on his last birthday the previous October. The younger Duggan had been a carpenter, a good trade, and had hoped to go to Canada where he had a job opportunity, but the Canadian authorities had turned down his application for a visa. Rejected, he joined the Provisional IRA. The police on both sides of the border wanted conversations with Harry Duggan regarding certain criminal activities, but now he was dead. Young Harry had been born in Kilburn, London, where he lived with his parents until the age of three, when his father brought him back to Ireland to settle in his native County Clare. The younger Duggan would grow up hearing the tales and exploits of the Republican struggle against the British.

News of Duggan’s death reached the Garda, the Irish police force, soon after his father had been told, resulting in Duggan’s file being re-

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moved from the list of active subversives that the Garda maintained on known members of paramilitary organizations, such as the IRA. At around the same time as Harry Duggan's death, another IRA operative disappeared. Eddie Butler, from Castle Connell, County Limerick, had joined the provisional IRA in 1972, a year of increased recruitment for the IRA. He had carried out minor activities for the IRA, such as selling Republican newspapers, but was not wanted for any major operations. He was 24 years old at the time of his disappearance, presumed to be the victim of the sectarian violence between the Republican Nationalist and Unionist Loyalist paramilitary forces, or a victim of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and British Army, his body dumped in some remote hedgerow to be picked at by crows.

However, the facts did not match the circumstances. Duggan was not dead, and Butler was not a victim of the sectarian violence either. In preparation for an audacious terror campaign in the heart of the British mainland, the IRA would build them new identities. They had been selected, and volunteered, for a mission to strike at the British Government, through the mechanisms of terror, should the hoped-for truce and changes in the North not materialize. They were being made ready, along with others, through training in explosives, timers and bomb building. Now that they did not exist on record, the IRA could build them new identities and have them operate in England without fear of detection through past misdeeds. The plan was simple, but would prove to be more deadly than previous IRA operations on the British mainland. The Provisionals created sleeper cells, groups of either unknowns or, like Duggan, with new identities. Their job was to blend into the background of British society and keep to themselves. They would avoid neighborhoods traditionally associated with Irish families, and stay clear of pubs and clubs popular with Irish people. They would remain a tight knit group and stay inactive until they received instructions from the IRA's GHQ to strike at a target or to initiate a string of attacks. The ASU's would be small, between four to six men, and they would remain unknown to each other, with only GHQ knowing the whereabouts and identities of the units. In this manner, should one group be compromised, they would not be able, under interrogation, to give away any details of the other groups. The Provisionals planned to send sleeper cells to London, Birmingham, Manchester, Southampton and Liverpool. The London team had to be their best people, as the scope and range of the mission and the types of targets to be attacked, would require total discipline and dedication at what would be a brutally grim campaign of terror on the capital city. The IRA ASU's would be put in place during 1974, a

year of bloody violence in both the north and south of Ireland between the warring paramilitary groups and a year of political battling to keep the Westminster goal of a power-sharing assembly, and a link with the Irish Republic, alive in the face of fierce Unionist resistance. But what had led the Provisionals to train and place teams of operatives on the British mainland in waiting for the command to unleash terror on the British public? To understand this, and to contextualize the bloody violence that was to be inflicted on Britain, we need to look at a series of events that occurred during the early 1970's that would result in the IRA London ASU being on a collision course with the London Metropolitan Police that would lead to the siege at Balcombe Street.

The Irish Troubles have been well documented by several expert authors on the subject and therefore this is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the Irish conflict. However there are certain key events that will link us to the placement of the London ASU, and these will be reviewed as they add meaning and context, as stated earlier, to the actions carried out on the British Mainland.

Northern Ireland, a Province of the United Kingdom that during the period of increasing sectarian violence in the 1970's was still governed by the assembly at Stormont Castle, where the elected MPs for the region would meet to govern the Province, as well as having seats in the Westminster government. The partition of the Irish nation, and the establishment of the Stormont assembly, stemmed from the Government of Ireland Act of 1920. The Act recognized that the largely Protestant Unionist population in the northern six counties of the country refused to be governed by the predominantly Catholic free Irish state in the south. The Catholic Nationalist minority in the north became discriminated against by the Protestant majority through control of political power in Stormont and the allocation of housing and state jobs. The Unionists, the Protestant majority, wanted to stay aligned and linked with Great Britain. The way in which the Constitution of Northern Ireland had been constructed, and through the gerrymandering of electoral boundaries in regions where the largely Catholic Nationalist were in the minority, had ensured that the Catholics would be denied political power, and therefore, any vote on the hoped for reunification would never achieve a majority.

In an effort to raise public awareness of the situation in Northern Ireland, and drive to be a catalyst for social change, a group known as the Northern Island Civil Rights Association [NICRA] was established. It had its beginnings in 1968, but held the first official meeting of the group at Belfast's International Hotel on January 28th, 1969. The group

was a cross-section of Nationalists, civil rights activists of several persuasions and had the behind-the-scenes presence of the IRA. In fact vocal Unionists, against the whole notion of granting civil rights to Catholic Republicans, publicly taunted the group arguing that CRA was “just another way of saying IRA.” The leadership was cross denominational, with Protestant MP Ivan Cooper and Catholic MP John Hulm prominent members of the group, along with Catholic MP Bernadette Devlin. The Unionists taunts only helped the NICRA gain in stature, as no shots were fired during the marches and rallies, and the IRA made a point of not appearing to look like the IRA when they took part in civil rights events, blending into the crowds rather than standing out on the sidelines. The movement was built on the principles of peaceful protest and passive resistance, reminiscent of the civil rights movement of Dr. Martin Luther King in the USA during the early part of the 1960’s. The movement was to prove highly successful in raising national and international recognition of the drive for civil rights in the six counties. This was to be further enhanced after a peaceful civil rights march in Derry was attacked by the Royal Ulster Constabulary, wielding batons as they beat marchers in an effort to disperse the crowd, an action that caused a rapid escalation into pitch battles with stone-throwing youths, degenerating into two further days of clashes between the RUC and demonstrators.

Further sectarian violence between the IRA, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and other Loyalist paramilitary groups such as the Ulster Defense Association (UDA), often with the tacit complicity of the RUC, continued through the remainder of 1970, peaking in August of that year. The August 12th Protestant Apprentice Boys march, through Derry and Belfast, triggered three days of intense sectarian violence. By day two, with the RUC exhausted, Stormont requested that the British government deploy the Army on the streets of Northern Ireland, and faced with a mounting crisis the British government agreed, sending members of the British Army onto the streets of Derry on August 14th. The Wilson government viewed the move to deploy troops on British soil as a peacekeeping force, deployed to keep order in a part of the United Kingdom. Many others in the six counties and beyond viewed the action as nothing more than a military takeover of the Province. Wilson’s Minister of Defense, Roy Hattersley, was to keep a close watch on day-to-day activities of the Army and insisted that they acted as impartial peace keepers between the warring populations on both sides of the sectarian divides. The Army presence, and their apparent initial impartiality, did not endear them to either the Unionists, who expected a de-

gree of support from the troops, or the Republicans who felt they bore the brunt of the Army's attentions.

The United Kingdom general election on June 18th, 1970, would have an almost immediate and negative impact on the Republican side. With Harold Wilson's Labour government seen as being responsible for the serious decline in British economic fortunes, with the devaluation of the Pound and the humiliating rebuff from the European Community, denying Britain entry into the Common Market, as European Community was then called, failed to maintain power. The opposition Tory party, led by Edward Heath, won the election with 46.8% share of the seats in the House, and Labour with 43%. This was despite the pre-elections polls and media coverage in Britain all believing that Wilson and the Labour Party would be returned to power. The month-long campaign had coincided with TV coverage of the 1970 soccer World Cup in Mexico, and with England as reigning world champions, soccer proved to be a greater draw for the electorate than politics.

The change in government in the United Kingdom was to have a significant impact on Northern Ireland and on the supposed peacekeeping mission of the British Army. The controls and restraints exerted on the Army by the Wilson government would be relaxed by the new Heath government. The traditional and historical relationship between the Tory party and the Unionists would make it difficult for Westminster not to help with the implementation of Unionist policies and interests. The Army would be seen in action to support the RUC and the Unionist movement, moving them away from the impartial role in the eyes of the Nationalist community. These fears were soon proved by Army action in the Falls Road area, where "streets were barricaded, curfews imposed and streets saturated with troops." For three days the area was pounded with CS gas attacks, with widespread violence, compounded by the use of Scottish Protestant British Army troops in the operation.

The Nationalist communities were outraged at the Falls Road episode, with a flood of money and support flowing into the IRA. The unrest, sporadic violence and rioting continued through into August 1971. During this period, the fiercely Unionist Stormont assembly, led by an equally hard-line Bernard Faulkner as Prime Minister, focused the energies of the assembly on the Catholic paramilitary groups rather than the equally violent and ruthless Protestant bands of militia that openly received the assistance of the RUC, while the British Army often looked the other way. Faulkner was under increasing pressure from Westminster to bring the warring factions under control and prevent the Province from spiraling into all-out anarchy. As a result, on August 9th, 1971,

Stormont, with the full agreement of the Heath government in Westminster, introduced Internment, a policy of arrest and imprisonment without trial and the target population was predominately Catholic, with no Protestants being swept up in the initial mass arrests of suspected Nationalist activists. The sad fact is that the majority of Catholics sent to internment camps in the initial sweep were not members of the Provisional IRA. Despite urgings from Westminster, Faulkner refused to include Protestants on the list of targets to be picked up in the first round, totaling 342 arrested. The bulk of the IRA members picked up came from the Official's and not the Provisionals, because of the supposedly Marxist leanings of the Official's that made them more of a threat in the eyes of the British intelligence service.

As with the Belfast and Derry riots, the anger that resulted from the introduction of Internment drove many more people to actively participate in the IRA or willingly offer shelter and support for its members both north and south of the border. In some respects, Internment helped the Provo's, as the new policy increased support and sympathy for their cause and the ensuing attention overseas, particularly from the United States, resulted in dollars pouring into the IRA's coffers from Republican sympathizers in communities such as South Boston. Even as late as 1993, the author remembers a huge mural on the side of a building in "Southie" depicting an AK47, with the slogan "Support the IRA."

Internment sparked a marked increase in sectarian violence directed at both Protestant and Catholic, reaching such a fever pitch that seven thousand Catholics and two thousand Protestants were driven from their homes by the fighting. Internationally, the Northern Ireland situation was becoming an embarrassment to the Heath government, as it looked as though Stormont was incapable, unwilling, or just plain did not care enough to look for a peaceful resolution to the apparently endless sectarian strife. The situation was compounded by the withdrawal of the Nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) from the Stormont assembly in protest against the British-backed policy of Internment without trial for Northern Ireland.

As a response to the introduction of Internment, the NICRA started a campaign of civil disobedience, in a nonviolent manner, by encouraging and obtaining a rent and rates strike from those living in public-sector housing. The topic of Internment, an additional burden being faced by the Nationalist population, would become another element of the civil rights movement's protests. Faulkner, in an effort to reduce the impact of the NICRA on the political situation and to undermine the growing public support for the civil rights movement, instituted a ban on

public rallies and marches effective from January 18th, 1972, intended to run until the end of the year. But NICRA had planned a large civil rights and anti-Internment rally for Sunday, January 30th, and the organizers, led by Stormont MP Ivan Cooper, wanted the march to go ahead despite the ban, arguing that it was a peaceful march in accordance with the NICRA manifesto. The marchers would be sticking to the passive resistance policy of the civil rights movement, striving for the goals of ending internment without trial, one person one vote in local elections, the introduction of antidiscrimination laws, fair allocation of public housing and the disbanding of the RUC. The organizers pushed ahead with the planned event, despite the misgivings of many involved.

The British Army was under orders conduct mass arrests during the planned NICRA march, to “scoop up” any known troublemakers and arrest any hooligan elements in the crowd. General Ford, commander of land forces in Northern Ireland, placed Andrew McClellan, commander of the Eighth Infantry division, in overall command of the forces involved the containment of the Sunday rally. Fearing a potential powder keg situation could develop between the Army and elements of the IRA, Ivan Cooper sought and received assurances from the IRA they would withdraw from the area during the march. However, the Army expected trouble, especially in the face of the swoop arrest operation they intended to carry out, and so deployed members of the 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment to the planned march route. They were members of the Army’s crack airborne forces renowned for their toughness and fighting ability. This deployment would add increased tension to an already highly volatile situation, proving Cooper’s fears to be well founded.

January 30th was a bright and sunny day, ideal for a peaceful protest march, with people gathering at the start point, the Greggan Estate at around 2:00pm. The intended route was to go from Greggan, through the Brandywell and Bogside and on to Guildhall Square. At Guildhall, the flatbed truck leading the procession would be used as a platform for the speakers to address the gathering crowds. An estimated 10,000 people started the march at approximately 2:50pm that afternoon, with many others joining as the snaking procession made its way through the Brandywell. The Army had no intention of allowing the march to reach Guildhall Square and had erected several barricades to block off the streets leading to Guildhall. Once the marchers had reached the barricades, the Para’s planned to start the arrest sweep action as planned.

At 3:50pm to avoid generating any trouble with the police or Army, the organizers, riding on the flatbed truck, led the marchers down

Rossville Street toward Free Derry Corner and away from the Army barricades ahead of them. A splinter group of youths broke away from the main march to head toward the barricades in order to confront and taunt the British soldiers on duty there. They started to throw rocks at the troops, a practice that had become an almost daily scene on the streets of Derry and Belfast. In their usual response, the Army fired rubber bullets and CS gas to disperse the rowdy crowd, which forced many to seek refuge in the Bogside, along with the bulk of the peace marchers heading towards the Rossville flats ahead.

At 4:10pm, under orders to arrest as many civil rights marchers as possible, along with targeted troublemakers and hooligans, the Paras charged down Rossville Street on foot and in armored cars. The troops had been wound-up for the swoop and arrest operational all day, and had also been hyping each other up while waiting to go into action. As they started to make arrests a shot rang out, possibly from a soldier, but subsequently the Army would claim they had come under sustained rifle fire and nail-bomb attack. In response, the Paras started shooting at anyone of "military age" and for twenty-three minutes fired at the fleeing demonstrators trying to take cover from the intense gunfire. Eyewitnesses later described scenes of indiscriminate killing by the Paras.

Raymond Manassas tried to drive a wounded Gerald Donaghy to a nearby hospital in his car. A doctor on the scene told Manassas the young man would die from a serious bullet wound to his lower abdomen if he did not receive emergency treatment. On the way to the hospital his car was stopped at a checkpoint by members of the Army's Royal Anglian Regiment. Manassas was pulled from the car, at gunpoint, and detained for three hours. His passenger, 17-year-old Gerald Donaghy, died while the Army held Manassas for questioning.

The Paras continued to shoot at the marchers, who were desperately trying to get out of line of fire. Outside the Rossville Road flats forecourt, a wounded Paddy Dougherty, age 31, was attempting to crawl to safety. Bernard McGuigan, 41, attempted to reach the man on hearing his cries for help. "If I wave my white hanky," McGuigan told a bystander, "they'll not shoot me." He attempted to reach Dougherty, but was shot in the head and fell dead after taking only a couple of crouched paces. The wounded Dougherty was shot and killed as he lay on the ground.

A local Catholic priest, Father Daley, risked his life to get to the growing number of dead and wounded to administer the last rites. By the time the Paras had ceased firing, thirteen people had been fatally shot and fourteen seriously wounded. Of the wounded, John Johnson,

59, would later die of his wounds, raising the death toll to fourteen. General Ford, later interviewed by the BBC, stated that his men had only fired five to ten rounds in response to incoming fire. It would later be revealed that twenty-one members of the Parachute Regiment had between them fired 108 rounds at the unarmed demonstrators.

Reactions to the shooting were rapid and widespread, with Nationalists and civil rights members outraged at the atrocity. Gerry Adams, the future leader of Sinn Féin, the IRA's political wing, later stated that the operation had been a deliberate attempt by the British Army to "strike terror into the hearts of all Irish Nationalists." The resulting Nationalist outcry would send "money, guns, and recruits" flooding into the IRA, with young men clamoring to join to strike back at the British, as there was a widespread feeling that, on this occasion, the British had gone too far. In the south the following day, tens of thousands of people stopped work to march in protest at the atrocities in the north. Angry crowds besieged the British Embassy in Dublin, throwing petrol bombs that set the building ablaze, burning to the ground.

At Westminster, MP Bernadette Devlin, one of the civil rights marchers who had witnessed for herself the shooting, left her seat in the House to physically assault the Home Secretary Reginald Maudling, hitting him in the face. The shooting incident was making Britain look worse and worse, to the point where it would eventually find itself in violation of international human rights laws. Edward Heath, the Prime Minister, believed it was only his close personal relationship with the United States President, Richard Nixon, that prevented the USA from intervening in the crisis, given the pressure that Nixon was under from powerful Irish-American groups.

Pressure from both inside the country and the growing international concerns over Northern Ireland led Edward Heath to have growing personal doubts about the situation, "The atmosphere had now grown more poisonous than ever," he wrote, "and I feared that we might be on the threshold of complete anarchy." Heath ordered an immediate inquiry into the January 30th shootings, labeled "Bloody Sunday" by the media. He instructed the then the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery, to conduct an investigation and deliver a report in the most expedient timeframe possible. There was outrage in Nationalist circles at having the British Chief Justice investigate acts by the British Army, on British soil, and there was a low expectation for any true sense of justice to be handed out to any involved.

The Official IRA took matters into their own hands. On February 22, 1972, a stolen light blue Ford Cortina was parked outside the officer's

mess of the 16th Parachute Brigade in Aldershot, Hampshire. The one-year-old car was packed with high explosives and was detonated by a timing device at lunchtime that day, hoping to catch members of the Parachute Regiment, the unit involved in the Bloody Sunday shooting, while they were at lunch. The detonation was huge and was felt a mile away in Aldershot town center. The blast killed five female kitchen staff and 37-year-old Captain Jerry Weston. Ironically, Captain Weston was a Roman Catholic priest acting as a Padre to the regiment and as a liaison with the Catholic community. The official IRA claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that it was in revenge for the January 30th shootings of innocent Catholics.

Heath had to act. It was becoming increasingly obvious to the Prime Minister that Faulkner and Stormont could not control the security and law and order in the Province, especially since the Nationalist SDLP MP's had withdrawn from the assembly. Heath discussed with his Cabinet the concept of having Direct Rule over the law and order situation in Northern Ireland from Westminster, through the appointment of a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Some of Heath's Cabinet pushed back, fearing the problem may be too big to control from a distance. However, an agreement was eventually reached that they would prorogue Stormont, taking control of law and order, leaving the remaining duties of government in the province with Faulkner and his Cabinet. All Heath had to do was to put it to the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, which would not be easy. The prorogue of Stormont would be a temporary measure, while Heath and his Cabinet explored a means of securing a fair and equitable method of power-sharing in the province, something Heath knew the Unionists, such as the Reverend Ian Paisley, would vehemently resist.

Not all of Heath's Cabinet remained comfortable with moving forward with the plan and in a secret and private memo to the Prime Minister, on March 13, 1972, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, laid out his concerns. He stated he "really disliked" direct rule for Northern Ireland, because, "I do not believe that they are like the Scots or the Welsh and doubt if they ever will be." He believed it would be better to push towards a united Ireland rather than, "tying them closer to the United Kingdom." Home concluded that the government would be left with running the Province indefinitely unless some timetable was put in place for the limitations on the prorogement of the Stormont assembly.

Two days after receiving Home's memo, Heath telephoned Faulkner and invited him to come to Downing Street for a conversation on the

current situation. He did not want to ambush Faulkner with the direct rule topic, but at the same time he did not want to tip his hand to the canny Irishman. Faulkner obviously sensed something was amiss, and asked Heath for a written agenda for the meeting, so he could research the issues and be prepared to discuss them. Heath dodged the point with the somewhat vague response, "well, we did consider that," stated the Prime Minister, "we really felt that there was so much from the general points but it is very difficult to put down on a piece of paper." Faulkner agreed to a meeting on March 22nd with Heath in London, but the meeting did not go smoothly. Heath went straight to the point. Faulkner was told of the Westminster government's intentions to take direct control of law and order in the Province, leaving all other duties with the current Stormont Cabinet. Heath also outlined his vision on the timing of talks regarding the Northern Ireland government making a consideration regarding a power-sharing arrangement with the Nationalist parties, in order to give the Catholic minority population a more equitable input into the direction and future of the Province. Faulkner was adamant, telling Heath he would absolutely refuse to do so as he would not have a Nationalist, possibly seeking reunification, serving on his Cabinet. Faulkner also argued that to take away law and order from Stormont and institute direct rule would be akin to neutering his government, rendering it unable to govern effectively. Heath and Faulkner continued discussions the entire day, with Faulkner eventually stating that he would not stay in office under the terms as presented by Heath, and so he would resign along with the rest of his Cabinet and as a result Northern Ireland would be under direct rule from Westminster. Heath appointed William Whitelaw, a long-term political ally of the Prime Minister's, to the post of Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and introduced direct rule of the Province on March 30th, 1972, to mixed reactions. Gerry Adams described the reaction of the Nationalists as "utter jubilation" as the IRA believed they had pushed the British a step closer to pulling out the troops from Northern Ireland, paving the way for a fair and equitable political process that would, they hoped, result in a populist vote in favor of the reunification of a divided nation.

The Unionists, as Heath would later relate, "responded virulently" with protest marches, demonstrations and very vocal indication of their displeasure at what they viewed as a backdoor way of eventually breaking their stranglehold over the political processes in the Province, processes that had enabled the majority Unionist population to dominate the North and ensure the Nationalist movement would never obtain what the IRA had hoped to gain—a united Ireland. They felt betrayed by

the Heath government. On hearing news of the introduction of direct rule, The Ulster Vanguard movement called a two day industrial strike, resulting in power cuts, disruptions in public transportation, and the closure of many shops and business. On the second day of the stoppage, a crowd of approximately one hundred thousand Unionist demonstrators gathered at Stormont Castle to mark the last sitting of the Stormont assembly on March 28th, 1972. The Unionists were not happy with direct rule, and were determined to let the Westminster Government know just how angry they were at the change in status quo in the North.

The IRA would view the fall of Stormont as a tremendous victory, as this had been a declared goal of the Provisionals as one of the steps toward eliminating British rule in the Province. Feeling as though they had the upper hand, the IRA requested a meeting with William Whitelaw in Ireland, and not at Stormont, but the request was turned down. At a June 13th press conference, Whitelaw stated that the British government would not let "part of the United Kingdom default from the rule of law." This comment left the door open for the Nationalist SDLP to meet and talk with Provisional IRA leadership to establish ground rules for a meeting in Ireland between the IRA and representatives of the Westminster government. The results of the conversations between the two groups were related to Whitelaw's office and agreement for a meeting was reached and set up for June 20th.

The location for the meeting was a private country house in Balleyarnet, situated close to the border between Derry and Donegal. The IRA delegation consisted of the Provisionals Chief-of-Staff Daithi O'Connell and a young Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein and the Belfast brigade of the Provisionals. They brought with them a Mr. Paddy McGrory, a lawyer known by the two IRA men. The British government's interests were represented by civil servant Philip Woodfield and Frank Steele of the British Secret Intelligence Service, MI6. Woodfield handed a letter of introduction from William Whitelaw to the lawyer accompanying the IRA delegation. Satisfied as to its authenticity McGrory left the meeting. Woodfield open the conversation with an outline of the Provisionals position, regarding a meeting with Whitelaw, as the Westminster government understood the situation. They were to initiate an immediate cease-fire and put a truce in place, providing the Secretary of State would grant several convicted prisoners political status, cease all harassment of the IRA and grant a meeting with the IRA, providing the truce had held over an agreed period of time. Woodfield's outline triggered three of hours of intense discussion. The Secretary of State, he explained, could not grant special

status to prisoners, but would give an assurance that “rights, searches and arrests to look for people wanted for their past activities” would not occur as long as the truce held. The Secretary of State, he stated, was prepared to grant direct talks in London, if the IRA could maintain the truce for a specific period of time. Whitfield suggested fourteen days; O’Connell wanted seven, so middle ground was found in a ten day truce. If the truce was maintained to Whitelaw’s satisfaction, then he would grant the meeting the day after the truce period expired. It was important that any meeting arranged would be kept totally secret, both from the rank-and-file IRA members and the British public. O’Connell was unsure as to how best to break the news of the cease-fire and truce without revealing that talks had been held and that the truce was prelude to a full meeting with the British government. Woodfield suggested an approach and dictated a message, which Adams and O’Connell wrote down. The agreed statement would say “we are ordering an indefinite cease-fire to take place effective from, date-to-be-determined, in the confident belief that the Secretary of State will make an exceptional response to this exceptional measure as he has said he will do in his public statements.” As the meeting closed, O’Connell requested an effort by the Northern Ireland office to make an introduction for the IRA to the Ulster Defense Association, obviously mindful of the threat posed by the equally violent UDA.

The cease-fire was announced on June 26th, 1972, and held for 10 days as required under the terms of the agreement, so the full-scale meeting with Whitelaw and his representatives was set for July 7th in London. The venue would be at 96 Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, the home of Paul Channon, one of Whitelaw’s team of junior ministers. The IRA delegation of Daithi O’Connell, Gerry Adams, Seamus Twomy, Martin McGuinness and Ivor Bell, together with a Dublin lawyer Miles Shemlin, acting as a note taker for the group, flew to Belfast by Army helicopter for a transfer flight to RAF Benson in Oxfordshire. From RAF Benson, the IRA delegation traveled to London in two limousines. The meeting was somewhat historic, as the IRA had, in effect, forced the British government to the negotiation table for only the second time in the history of the Troubles, after fifty-two years of an on-again off-again violent conflict.

Arriving at the meeting location, the IRA delegates were greeted by the civil servants Paul Channon, David Steel and Philip Woodfield. Whitelaw was late, so the Westminster group pushed to start the meeting, however, the IRA delegation would have no part of it—they had come to meet with the Secretary of State and that was who they were go-

ing to talk to. Gerry Adams later recalled that Whitelaw appeared flushed and flustered upon his arrival, with damp sweaty hands. From the start of the discussions, it was obvious that the gulf between the two side's positions was huge. The British government wanted a more just and equitable form of power-sharing in the North, with a more representative assembly. The IRA wanted a full-scale independence, not another assembly, the likes of which they had forced into collapse a short time before. Whitelaw was adamant that the only real solution to the situation in the north would be for all sides to have an equal say in how the Province was run, and forge tighter links with the Republic in the south who would help govern the six counties.

The IRA delegation made two key suggestions to the Westminster group that would, they hoped, enable the truce to continue and achieve further meaningful dialogue. They suggested that the British government make a statement that it was for the entire people of Ireland to decide the future of Ireland, and that they should make another declaration, as soon as possible, of the government's intent to withdraw from the North. Whitelaw stated they would consider the suggestions and would return to the IRA with proposals of their own. The meeting ended with little real agreement, other than the satisfaction the IRA delegation had gained from forcing Westminster to talk to them directly. They did, however, agree to maintain the truce until July 14th.

In reality, it would serve no purpose for the IRA to maintain the truce. They were fearful of the British who were simply playing for time, hoping the IRA rank-and-file would get lax and make themselves more exposed publicly than they would have done if the truce had not been in place. Two days after the London meeting, the violence erupted again in Northern Ireland and in doing so the IRA would make a critical tactical error, one that would result in an outcry against the Republican violence from all sides.

In an operation, supposedly planned prior to the London talks, on July 21st the Provisional IRA placed 22 car bombs across the city of Belfast in predominantly Unionist areas. It was a concentrated and co-ordinated attack, intended to primarily cause financial damage, according to IRA accounts of the episode. Warnings were given to the police and the army, but the IRA vastly underestimated the ability of the authorities to handle such a large amount of incidents in a relatively short time span. In the space of 75 minutes, the 22 car bombs exploded throughout Belfast killing nine people and maiming 130 others. In the attempt to evacuate people from danger, the public were inadvertently moved from one bomb site to another. Two bombs, one in the Oxford

Street bus station and the other outside shops in Cavehill Road, caused the nine deaths. The Oxford street bomb killed four bus company employees and two soldiers. Emergency services personnel reported that some of the victims had literally been blown to pieces, resulting in an initial death toll estimate of 11. Scenes of rescue workers shoveling body parts into plastic bags would capture the horror of that day. At Cavehill Road, a 14-year-old schoolboy was killed along with two female shoppers. The scenes of unbelievable carnage caused by the bombs led the media to label the event "Bloody Friday," and the IRA had handed the Loyalist groups just the type of political ammunition they themselves had gained from Bloody Sunday.

The resulting focus on the IRA from the July bombings also included a greatly increased Army presence. Approximately 4,000 additional troops were poured to Derry and Belfast with the express intention of pulling down the sectarian no-go area barricades and setting up local bases of operation in Republican areas, increasing the surveillance on the IRA. The bombings on Bloody Friday had backfired on the IRA strategically and emotionally. It backfired strategically because their activities and efforts would be hampered by the additional Army presence in their traditional areas of operation. It backfired emotionally, as the droves of recruits that had flocked to the IRA after Bloody Sunday, outraged at the British government for murdering innocent Catholics, would have to look at the actions of the Provisionals and the carnage they had created in a different light. They were just as ruthless and bloody and obviously prepared to perpetrate mass murder on the streets of Northern Ireland in the name of the cause. In an effort to deflect blame away from the IRA for the deaths and destruction, the Provisionals accused the RUC and the Army of deliberately ignoring some of the warnings thereby increasing the number of people left in harms way.

In Westminster, an increased sense of urgency to establish a power-sharing assembly in Northern Ireland took hold, something both the Nationalists and the Unionists were determined to stop as such a setup would give neither of them what they wanted. The Unionists did not want a diluted powerbase that would allow the Catholics to gain greater electoral representation that could, ultimately, result in a potential referendum in favor of unification, meaning they would be governed from Dublin. It was also not what the IRA wanted, as this would represent a step back towards the Stormont type assembly they had fought so hard to bring down. Nevertheless, that was the direction William Whitelaw was driving the Westminster government to adopt and in order to lay the groundwork for such an assembly, and stimulate debate among the in-