From Direct Rule to Motorman: Adjusting British Military Strategy for Northern Ireland in 1972

HUW BENNETT

Defence Studies Department
King’s College London, at the Joint Services Command and Staff College
Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire, UK

The British campaign in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s is often portrayed as consistent in its repressive character and its failure to successfully relate military means to political ends. This article argues that British military strategy was adaptable, alternating between defensive and offensive means depending on the changing political context. The low profile policy allowed the army to consolidate a firm basis for later offensive operations against the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). This proved successful because it contrasted with Republican violence and was contextualized within the government’s willingness to negotiate and compromise when necessary.

Introduction

On 22 March 1972 the British Cabinet agreed the dire situation in Northern Ireland compelled the suspension of the devolved government at Stormont. It hoped direct rule from London would alter the political climate, ultimately bringing about a reduction in violence.¹ Both Official and Provisional wings of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) were on the offensive, inter-sectarian violence had become an everyday occurrence, and the government’s military policy was discredited by internment without trial, deep interrogation, and the Bloody Sunday massacre in Londonderry.² The Cabinet recognized that the prior objective, militarily defeating the IRA, was now unattainable, and thus wished to de-escalate the conflict.³ A rich political science literature considers change and continuity in government policy in this period.⁴ However, relatively little attention has been paid to military issues, and few studies draw on archival sources in assessing the British Army’s role in forming post-Stormont security policy.⁵ The lacunae in current knowledge are particularly striking considering the army’s dominant position in the government and administration of Northern

Received 24 July 2009; accepted 7 October 2009.

Many thanks to the staffs of the National Archives, Kew, the Joint Services Command and Staff College Library, and the Imperial War Museum for helping access source material. The Imperial War Museum kindly granted permission to quote from an oral history recording with Robin Evelegh. David French, Geraint Hughes, and M.L.R. Smith generously offered valuable comments on earlier versions of this article. Any resulting errors remain the author’s responsibility alone. The analysis, opinions, and conclusions expressed or implied in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Joint Services Command and Staff College, the Ministry of Defence or any other UK government agency.

Address correspondence to Dr. Huw Bennett, Defence Studies Department, King’s College London, at the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Faringdon Road, Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 8TS, UK. E-mail: hbennett.jsscsc@da.mod.uk
Ireland at this time. With the release of Ministry of Defence files on these matters, it is possible to address the question of how British military strategy responded to Republican violence in 1972, the most violent year in the history of the Troubles. These documents generally deal with the military strategic level of decision making, and thus future studies drawing on other records, such as those of the Operational Policy Committee, will be required when they become available. In contextualizing the insights offered by these newly accessible documents, it is useful to describe the claims made about military policy in this period in the existing literature. Overall, military strategy during 1972 is considered a failure, serving to enhance Catholic support for the IRA rather than weaken it. In John Newsinger’s opinion, the tactics adopted proved odious enough to alienate the population, yet insufficiently repressive to destroy the insurgents. The literature makes several more specific claims. Firstly, the government tended to distance itself from the practical aspects of military policy, and thus inconsistently exploited the political utility of the armed forces. Consequently the army lacked political direction, and at times perhaps even correct constitutional subservience. The other commonly identified failings flow from the fundamental defect in civil–military relations. Lacking any alternative direction, the military reverted to methods derived from their long experience in the colonies, namely repression. Whatever formal doctrine recommended, practice bore scant resemblance to the concept of minimum force, and initiatives to win hearts and minds were a low priority. The narrow emphasis on destroying the IRA is perceived to have largely marginalized community engagement.

Authors such as Cunningham, Dixon, and Tuck emphasize limited change in military activity, describing them as “tactical adjustment[s],” that “developed incrementally.” This article argues that the army was more politically driven and adaptable than the conventional impression allows for. It is sensible to consider the mid-1970s, with the “Way Ahead” policy review, and Ulsterization of the security forces, as significant turning points. But this perspective somewhat impairs an appreciation of the changes in military policy before 1975. Frequent changes in military activity took place in order to re-connect the army to political conditions. By varying the degree and type of force used, military strategy sought to weaken support for the Provisionals and show the government’s willingness to negotiate. Thus the variations in the military stance, seen by Cunningham as contradictory, were strategically logical. Another interpretation may be developed from Ó Dochartaigh’s insight that some elements in the security forces favored reform and conciliation, while others favored repression. Indeed, both factions could be said to exist within the army alone. At various times one tendency dominated policy rather than the other—the timing depended on the strategic context, or which approach seemed politically more viable at a given moment.

A recent resurgence in classical strategy, reacting against the “New Wars” theories so popular in the 1990s, asserts the suitability of Clausewitzian thought in analyzing guerrilla warfare. Indeed, insights from the Clausewitzian tradition can help interpret British military strategy in Northern Ireland in 1972. An illuminating starting point comes from defining strategy as “the use of the engagement for the purpose of the war.” The essence of strategy is thus the relationship between the political ends sought, and the military means employed to achieve them. The perspective dominant during the Cold War believed the ends–means relationship to be hierarchical and one-dimensional: the political masters decided on the objectives, and the military carried them out. More recent scholarship, based upon a new translation from the original German, argues that the nature of the political–military connection is actually dialectical, or iterative. Influence moves in both directions: sometimes the aims have a causal effect on the means, while on other
occasions alterations in the means necessitate a change in the aims. The literature on military activity in 1972 tends to neglect the dynamic extent to which the “process called strategy” shifted over time. Another important insight relates to the types of military means available—basically either attack or defense. The literature on Northern Ireland assumes a normative position on what might be regarded as “passive” activities. For example, the military’s own in-house history considers the low profile policy a failure because the army stopped attacking the IRA. But defense may be considered the stronger form of war, and is not axiomatically passive. As is argued below, because the army spent the low profile period re-organizing the intelligence apparatus, drastically improving the training regime, and cultivating a more salubrious reputation with the Catholic community, it may be viewed as an active defensive phase. Furthermore, the army waited for the apposite moment to strike the IRA, once they had miscalculated by killing on a wanton scale on the Bloody Friday bombings in July. A skewed emphasis on the use of force by the army thus distorts the importance ascribed in Clausewitzian theory to the exploitation of potential force. In boosting its potential effectiveness by thorough training based on reliable intelligence, the army stood ready to exploit this advantage when the strategic re-calculation in July changed the means employed from defense to attack.

The article thus seeks to analyze military strategy in 1972 with reference to the ends–means relationship. The first section considers the low profile period, from March to July, outlining the political intention and then analyzing how the military leadership translated it into a strategy for the army to deploy. An important finding here is that the cessation of offensive action against the Provisional IRA (PIRA) may not actually have happened until June. The next part in this section examines the means used to achieve these objectives, focusing on community relations and information policy, training, and intelligence operations. It concludes by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of these means in achieving the aim. Section two applies the same conceptual framework to the period from late July to December, covering the planning for and implementation of Operation Motorman. While the effectiveness of Motorman is well understood, the new archival material underscores how far it relied on the sophisticated intelligence picture built up and, crucially, its coherent incorporation into training schemes for all units deploying to Northern Ireland. In sum, the article argues that both the defensive and offensive measures contributed to the growing effectiveness of the military instrument in reducing violence.

The Low Profile Policy, March to July 1972

Major-General Robert Ford, the Commander Land Forces (or CLF, responsible to the commander-in-chief for day to day matters), wrote a paper two days prior to direct rule summarizing extant policy. He admitted the damage inflicted on the IRA’s organization in Belfast had failed to diminish their popular support. In Londonderry, bombings tripled after Bloody Sunday on 30 January. Ford predicted further trouble in the city, as the army’s decision to target the IRA in Belfast meant they exerted minimal influence in the second city. Appreciating the potential for large-scale civilian casualties, the Cabinet firmly opposed any proposals to occupy the resulting “no-go” areas. Instead, London advocated a “low profile” for the army as part of a wider raft of conciliatory gestures toward the Catholic community, also including the granting of special category status for internees, gradually releasing those in detention, and negotiating with the Republican leadership. A more sensitive use of the army than under the Stormont regime would create space for political dialogue and an eventual abandonment of violence by all parties to the conflict.
The imposition of direct rule is credited with giving the army clearer political direction, making the June PIRA cease-fire possible, and bringing about at least an initial drop in violence.35

**Defining the Military Aims**

Given this broad political setting, what then were the army’s strategic objectives? On 23 March, the chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) issued a new directive to General Sir Harry Tuzo, General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland (GOC). It gave Tuzo responsibility for security operations, including allocating the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) tasks in joint missions. Tuzo reported to the Secretary of State for Defence via the CDS and the Chief of the General Staff (CGS), while advising the newly appointed Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw, on military matters. The Joint Security Committee continued to be the main forum for discussing policy between the relevant government actors in Northern Ireland. If disagreements with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) arose, Tuzo should refer the matter to the CGS, who would ask the MoD and NIO to negotiate a final decision.36 In practice, the CGS oversaw Northern Ireland operations for the chiefs of staff, reflecting the army’s dominance in the campaign and the Chief of Defence Staff’s personal inexperience in the joint service environment.37 These arrangements made sense given the political acuity, and considerable experience in counterinsurgency, of the CGS, General Sir Mike Carver.38 However, the classic committee-style approach hindered rapid resolution to inter-departmental disputes.39 The instructions articulated the mechanisms for deciding military policy, without saying anything at all about the policy itself. On 5 April General Carver visited Northern Ireland to assess how the new low profile was working out. He agreed with Tuzo that the most urgent priority lay in re-establishing government authority in Catholic areas, preferably by improving army-community relations, followed by slowly re-introducing the RUC. Carver asked Tuzo to design a plan along these lines, and reported on the optimistic atmosphere in Ulster—even the strongly Republican Bogside and Creggan areas in Londonderry desired a peaceful resolution.40 Later in April at a meeting in Stormont, Whitelaw expressed his determination to retain the low profile policy, based on widespread parliamentary support for doing so, despite the rising violence that the GOC considered a deliberate IRA effort to undermine it.41 The continuing upward trajectory in violence prompted Carver to call, a month later, for a clearer expression of the military’s aim. He argued the existing position was leading to “confusion, doubt and difficulty” for commanders. Since direct rule came into force, the CGS interpreted the aim as being “...to maintain our position, doing everything we can, positively and negatively, to encourage non-violent methods of pressure and persuasion to bring violence to an end.” Meanwhile the IRA strengthened its military position. As a result, maintaining the low profile implied growing army casualties and an increasing drain on manpower resources. Carver could see no sign that the Provisionals were yet isolated, as Whitelaw’s plan intended, but thought the Official IRA might be influenced. A truce by either (or both) IRA factions was becoming a possibility. Whatever happened, how exactly the army should react remained poorly defined—although the Northern Ireland Office resolutely refused to return to the previous policy of attempting to destroy the IRA.42 From the army’s perspective the troubling aspect of the low profile was not that it told them what to avoid—restraints had been imposed on the army from 1969—but that they were not told what positive action to take. At this stage, the political leadership had not grasped the distinction between active defensive measures, as would be implemented later, and complete passivity. The army, reflecting its problem-solving culture, wished to be kept busy doing something constructive.
The desire for a clear military objective, as voiced by Carver, perhaps also represented an unease among soldiers at taking little action to strike back at the IRA in retaliation for the casualties suffered by the security forces. Lacking detailed instructions for the future, Headquarters Northern Ireland began drawing up their own plans. This demonstrates how, despite a view in the army that the low profile policy was a failure, the staff were committed to supporting it. A paper written by the Lisburn staff on 21 June recommended several responses to a potential cease-fire. All patrols would be drastically reduced, combined military police–RUC teams would patrol Catholic areas, and arrest policy was modified. In particular, arrests for internment would be suspended, people would only exceptionally be arrested just for questioning, most arrests should be conducted by the police and not the military, and property searches were suspended too. Further changes were suggested, such as halting vehicle check points, transporting soldiers in Landrovers rather than “Pigs” (armored personnel carriers), and abandoning flak jackets and helmets. Finally, the paper advised stopping cratering border roads and generally urged less activity on the border, normally conducted to interdict IRA movements into and from the Republic. The next day the GOC ordered these ideas to be implemented from 0001 hrs on Tuesday 27 June in response to the IRA cease-fire. The main priority became to stop sectarian violence. Commanders were given discretion to take measures they deemed necessary to reduce casualties to an absolute minimum, and to avoid confrontations in Catholic areas.

To support these efforts, the Commander Land Forces issued the most comprehensive instruction yet written in the low profile period. The commanders of the three brigades, 3rd, 8th, and 39th, were to cease offensive operations against the IRA and revert to peace-keeping. This suggests a key element in the low profile approach, suspending the offensive against PIRA, was implemented in late June, rather than March. Brigadiers should form contacts with Catholic and Protestant leaders in their areas and improve relations with them, where necessary by reducing patrols when requested. Ongoing covert surveillance operations by the Military Reaction Force (MRF) were permitted, but only on the Brigade commander’s authority and on “passive tasks.” The 3rd and 8th Infantry Brigades received specific orders to achieve closer co-operation with the Garda and the Irish Army. The 8th Infantry Brigade, whose area included Londonderry, prepared to withdraw from the locally unpopular posts in Blighs Lane and the Brandywell, and reduced operations in Catholic areas to a minimum. The 39th Infantry Brigade began to adopt the same posture in Belfast.

Regarding the rules of engagement, the “yellow card” rules from November 1971 stayed in force, although “... control is to be very strict and commanders must be fully aware of the implications of returning fire in conditions of a ceasefire with the IRA.” Despite efforts to engage the PIRA leadership, such as secret talks held in London, negotiations failed and the truce collapsed on 9 July. Although ultimately unsuccessful, the episode proved the government’s willingness to consider a compromise and arguably portrayed PIRA as dogmatic and unreasonable.

For the army the breakdown in diplomacy demanded another recasting of its aims and military policy. General Tuzo prepared a paper for Whitelaw in July setting out the options. He advocated “quick and effective” action before British public support faded in the face of another protracted campaign; between six weeks and three months seemed the ideal time-frame. Perhaps a little optimistic on the timing, Tuzo at least knew that seeking to totally eliminate the IRA was too ambitious. Demoralization and surrender seemed a realistic objective. To bring this about, the army needed greater co-operation from the Irish forces, wanting them to attack the IRA in the Republic. North of the border, “vigorous action and speed” in simultaneously flooding all IRA strongholds with troops.
would force the insurgents to fight. After an initial firefight lasting a few hours or days, the GOC imagined the security forces conducting searches and building up their tactical intelligence. Surprisingly, given pervasive concerns about rising Protestant militancy at the time, the paper advised that “... Vigilantes, whether UDA [Ulster Defence Association] or not, should be discreetly encouraged in Protestant areas to reduce the load on the Security Forces.” Emerging evidence on the Protestant paramilitaries is beginning to confirm this picture of collusion with the security forces from early on in the Troubles, although this is an area requiring further investigation. Such co-operation was in any case fully consistent with the army’s colonial practice of seeking “loyalist” elements in local society who could be co-opted in militia forces.

In an appendix on legal issues, Tuzo warned the operation might prompt a wave of civil litigation against soldiers. Therefore “... the concept of minimum and reasonable force, as it is presently interpreted” should be temporarily suspended, the yellow card rules changed, special courts instituted and an act of indemnity for the security forces passed. Although only proposals at this stage, these ideas give some insight into the GOC’s desire to resume the offensive, and in certain respects to escalate the campaign to an unprecedented level. Partly this urge stemmed from Tuzo’s appreciation that battalion and company commanders found the low profile posture a strain. The CGS noted the Cabinet’s concerns about the army beginning to pursue the policies advocated in Tuzo’s paper, and warned Headquarters Northern Ireland that it “must not affect the political situation by unrestricted action.” The Cabinet completely rejected the suggestion to place soldiers beyond the law, preferring United Nations intervention to this course of action. While Tuzo’s proposals may seem extreme concerning operations in the United Kingdom, when placed in the broader context of the Army’s counterinsurgency experience since 1945, they were routine measures. Emergency regulations and Acts of Indemnity often served to remove soldiers’ actions from legal intrusion; it seems that in Northern Ireland, the close interest taken by British and international media, the U.K. parliament and the Attorney-General in the Cabinet rendered such an option odious to the Prime Minister. This should be seen as an important normative development in what is sometimes called the increasing “juridification of war.”

By 13 July the prime minister conceded the current inconclusive stance could not last for more than a fortnight due to growing Protestant pressure for action against the IRA. At this point invading the Catholic “no-go” areas seemed politically impossible: these conditions finally altered later in the month, as explored in section two.

Given the Cabinet’s qualms about a military offensive, the measures taken to improve legal oversight of the use of force in this period may be viewed as both a means for ensuring democratic control, and for increasing Catholic confidence in the security forces. Although accountability mechanisms were arguably incomplete until 1998, when the Office of the Police Ombudsman was created, the changes introduced in 1972 deserve mention here. On 15 June the Attorney-General instructed the Northern Ireland director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to direct the RUC to investigate and report to him any circumstances where the police or army may have committed a criminal offense. After receiving the police report, the DPP would decide whether to institute court proceedings. Expediting these investigations promised to improve the security forces’ reputation. Together with the refusal to countenance Tuzo’s suggestion for escalation, these measures ensured the military objectives were kept well aligned with the over-arching political objective of bringing about peace in the Province. While these two cases show how the civilian leadership broadly exercised control over the military, it is important to note the activist stance taken by the senior generals in defining the strategy in detail. How though did the army meld the tactical position into these contours?
Fitting Military Means to the Chosen Ends

As argued in the introduction, the military tactics employed in the low profile phase comprised mainly in defensive means. These included expanding inter-agency co-operation, building public relations efforts, and engaging in limited patrols and static defences. In addition, a rejuvenated training scheme sought to boost the effectiveness of each of these tactics and corresponded with a reformed intelligence apparatus. Simply because attacking the IRA assumed a lower priority than before does not mean these tactics should be regarded as passive or completely ineffective. Their development granted the army time to regroup and recover from the exhausting pace of operations experienced from August 1971 to March 1972. A pause also showed the public at large that the army served a political purpose and were not hell-bent on destroying the IRA regardless of the consequences for ordinary people. The tactical developments witnessed in this phase reflected the prevailing political atmosphere, and their active defensive character demonstrated an appropriate alignment of ends and means.

Some commanders opined insufficient co-operation between the military and the civil organs of state, including the police. A few initiatives proved successful, such as joint operations with the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), and civil servants advising the 39th Brigade. But these were the exceptions. A 1972 survey found “a strong body of opinion considered that there was inadequate liaison with the civil administration.” In public relations, also called community relations, which incorporated social projects and propaganda, the army’s activities are largely undisclosed. It is known that there was no organized plan to counter IRA propaganda until 1972, when HQ Northern Ireland created an Information Policy Cell. This is a marked failure given the lessons learned in earlier campaigns. For example, during the Cyprus Emergency, the military established a public relations staff quite early on, and later set up a unit specifically to rebut allegations against the security forces. But unfortunately the lessons appear to have been lost. A staff Colonel headed a working party on Information Policy at GHQ, while each brigade and UDR headquarters also had their own Information Policy Cells. The stated aim was to “inform the public on military aspects of the Northern Ireland problem so as to facilitate action by the Security Forces in aid of the Civil Power.” Colonel Maurice Tugwell, responsible for information policy, advised the impact on public opinion should always be weighed up when designing operations. He advised how to deal with difficult situations:

Accidents and acts of indiscipline or stupidity are as a rule best dealt with by a prepared statement issued by PR at HQ NI. It is important that as soon as the facts are known units come clean to PR with the full details, as nothing is worse than issuing a statement and then having further embarrassments uncovered by energetic reporters. A frank admission, coupled when appropriate with words of regret or sympathy, is more often than not respected by the media who understand that no organisation is fool-proof. ... All ranks should treat the Press, etc with cheerful efficiency (regardless of what company or newspaper they represent).

In trying to improve community relations in Catholic areas projects such as youth clubs, and involving people in local security committees, were tried out, although little is known about their ubiquity or effectiveness. The 1972 survey surmised a broad feeling that public relations were “too little, and too late,” and recorded a desire for enhanced offensive psychological warfare operations. Commanders viewed strict discipline among the troops...
as more efficacious in community relations than any project. Headquarters encouraged officers and non-commissioned officers to attend meetings with residents whenever possible to discuss how they could help solve local problems. As mentioned earlier, the government advocated compliance with rules of engagement in order to retain public support. Some commanders found the minimum force concept too vague, calling for greater direction in how to interpret it. Three officers requested permission to use greater force, and eight officers thought minimum force the army’s biggest weakness in Northern Ireland.

The army tried to limit its commitment to static defensive tasks, although certain “key points,” such as power stations, had to be protected from insurgent attacks. For example, by June 1972 the army provided guards at thirty-three police stations around the clock, and night-time guards at forty-two others. These duties absorbed 22 percent of the total regular army and UDR forces in the Province.

Critical to the army’s ability to increase its effectiveness in this phase, and to enhance its capability to adapt to changing political circumstances, was the development of the training program. Several commanders found the extant doctrine, *Land Operations Volume III*, “extremely useful” as an aid to in-house teaching. However, real progress came with the pre-tour training system formalized in 1972 into the Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Team (NITAT), run by the U.K. Land Forces command. The team trained all units being sent to Northern Ireland, whether on residential tours (for one or two years) or roulement tours (for four or six months). For people sent individually, a Reinforcement Training Team existed in theater. NITAT instructors possessed recent operational experience, and the leadership regularly visited Ulster to track the latest developments. They also arranged to have copies of relevant television programs sent to them soon after broadcast. The course provided information about the background to the Troubles, the types of paramilitary groups and their various tactics, the sorts of operations the army conducted, and the rules of engagement. A second team was set up at Sennelager, under British Army of the Rhine authority, on 1 May. Probably of most benefit to non-infantry units, during 1972 the Rhine NITAT trained the following such formations:

- The Life Guards
- 19th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery
- 1st Royal Horse Artillery
- 35th Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers
- 16th Light Air Defence Regiment, Royal Artillery
- 3rd Royal Tank Regiment

The reliance on units assigned a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) role, and the need to draw on non-infantry forces for essentially infantry tasks, would endure until the end of the conflict. In the early days, one or two units slipped through the net; neither the 4th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, nor the 1st Duke of Wellington’s Regiment attended the course. The British team built an experimental urban Close Quarter Battle Range in Hythe to replicate street conditions in Northern Ireland, before moving it to Lydd Ranges in January 1973. In addition to the general course, NITAT ran specialist courses for a small number from each unit. The week-long search course advised on building construction, systematic house searching, mine detection, booby traps, vehicle searches, using search dogs, and current terrorist techniques. During the year the 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 2nd Light Infantry, 3rd Royal Green Jackets and other units sent at least 144 men to be trained as searchers, and 60 to work with sniffer dogs. NITAT also ran “intelligence environmental courses,” with assistance from the School of Service.
Intelligence, to brief unit intelligence sections on the situation in Northern Ireland. From 21 February to 23 June 1972, 26 officers, 83 Warrant Officers and Sergeants, and 104 Corporals and other ranks took this course. Clearly, these numbers undermine any claim that the army wasted the low profile period.

The training regime relied on the intelligence system for its effectiveness. Assessing this aspect of the campaign is problematic for several reasons. First, political intelligence fell to MI5 and MI6, agencies traditionally slow to release files to the archives. Most material on military intelligence remains closed, but some new evidence is available. The army exploited eight basic sources when gathering intelligence: observations made on patrol, clandestine observations including “black face patrols,” vehicle check points, local police contacts, information obtained from interrogation, talks with community leaders, “IRA defectors working in uniform for a regiment,” and informal contacts with ex-servicemen. Foot patrols enabled soldiers to keep in touch with local people, getting a feel for their area and picking up tactical information by observation and in conversations on the streets. In addition, the army conducted frequent house searches, with 36,617 taking place in 1972 (up on the 17,262 of 1971). This unpopular tactic, combined with patrolling, allowed the development of a house by house survey in the early 1970s. With such detailed information at their disposal, intelligence officers could identify unusual activities, such as visits by IRA leaders from other areas. Reliable material on covert methods is still in short supply. Probably the most notable formations at the time were the MRF, soldiers working in plain clothes to gather intelligence, and the “Freds,” turned former IRA members run by military handlers. Some commentators accuse the undercover squads of pursuing a campaign of extra-judicial killing. These claims cannot yet be thoroughly assessed, so receive no further treatment here. Despite recognizing the need for good relations with the police force, several commanders noted that Special Branch officers in particular seemed to distrust the army, probably due to the torture scandal of 1971. Optimizing military intelligence organization compensated for the poor police co-operation to some degree. Most battalion commanders considered a company-level intelligence cell vital, and some recommended devolving the function to platoons. Military Intelligence Officers (MIOs) and Field Intelligence NCOs (FINCOs) manned these units. In the political fallout from internment and deep interrogation, the government banned the notorious (and illegal under international law) “five techniques,” and in April issued modified arrest orders. They directed the rapid handover of prisoners to the police and a presumption of innocence. On 24 June, the CLF ordered soldiers to desist arresting people on suspicion alone, to only arrest those seen committing a crime, and not to arrest anyone only to interrogate them. Ideally, arrests should be entirely left to the police. By promoting a more discriminate and restrained arrest and interrogation policy in the low profile period, the army hoped to make progress toward the political goal of eventually denying the IRA moderate Catholic support.

In assessing the impact of political decisions, David Charters extrapolated from secondary sources that the low profile policy seriously impeded intelligence collection, which only recovered after the army gained a presence in Catholic areas. Some archival evidence now supports his view. On 21 April, a meeting between the Northern Ireland Office and the Ministry of Defence noted how the amount of information obtained from questioning at police centres stood at about one tenth of the quantity prior to direct rule, and information derived from army patrolling was at a third of its previous level. Members from both IRA factions returned from exile in the South during the low profile. The Director of Intelligence blamed the policy for “the increasing boldness of the IRA.” An assessment in early May discovered the Provisionals building up their positions in Catholic
areas by recruiting new volunteers and retraining existing members. The CGS reported on the IRA resurgence:

There had been a noticeable increase in the number and quality of shooting incidents and there were signs that the IRA had brought both into Belfast and Londonderry additional gunmen who had been on the run in the Republic—probably about 100 in each city. One significant development was that about half the IRA shootings were not at the security forces but at other Catholics. There was no open warfare between the Official and Provisional wings of the IRA but there was clear evidence of fighting within the factions. There were fewer explosions since these tended to antagonise the populace, and a concentration on shooting to try to provoke the security forces into a reaction which would destroy the conciliatory atmosphere.

The rising intra-communal violence, and the intention to provoke the security forces were particularly difficult for the army to deal with. More positively, the comparatively low level of bombings was accompanied by a reduction in “hooligan activity” (rioting). The army struggled to decide whether the restraints imposed on intelligence collection, which seemed to cause short-term problems, would bring longer-term benefits. Meanwhile, reports continued to mention IRA training, including activity in the Republic near Londonderry, and suggested weapons being brought across the border. Therefore the following points can be made about the military means applied in the low profile phase. First, it took some time to translate the political intention into concrete military activities—the survey taken of unit commanders found particular confusion on this point. Second, the pause granted the IRA the opportunity to import guns and gunmen across the border, to train its personnel, to recruit new members and to increase sniping actions both quantitatively and qualitatively. Third, and positively for the government, there were fewer bombings. Fourth, and in a similarly positive vein for the army, conflict within the IRA factions promised to undermine their cohesion and thus effectiveness. Finally, the army mirrored the IRA in using the hiatus to substantially improve its training and intelligence situation. Most importantly though, following a long succession of self-inflicted disasters, the army’s pause provided the IRA with the chance to make mistakes of its own. Thus the defensive stance taken during the low profile period can be seen to have held a number of advantages from a strategic point of view. But because this was a transition for the army, it took some time for all commanders to be convinced that it would work.

Renewing the Offensive, July to December 1972

A common tactic in the IRA’s offensive since 1970 was to provoke the security forces into escalating their use of force to a level which alienated public opinion. On 21 July, or “Bloody Friday” as it became known, the Provisionals detonated twenty-one bombs in Belfast, killing nine people. This renewed offensive proved a serious miscalculation by PIRA, an over-escalation of the type they had previously sought to provoke. Public opinion in Northern Ireland was outraged by the incident and prompted a dramatic change in the Cabinet’s attitude toward military policy. Previously convinced that occupying the “no-go” Catholic areas would cause massive bloodshed, the events of 21 July persuaded ministers the growing IRA offensive could be halted no other way. In the subsequent weeks the army planned for and executed a large-scale operation to capitalize on the changed political
environment. The nature of the change in policy shows the government’s ability to employ the army with strategic agility, reacting to a morphing conflict environment.

**Re-Defining the Military Aims**

On 24 July the Cabinet Northern Ireland Committee instructed the Chief of the General Staff to compose planning options for operations to counter the IRA. The army suggested two alternatives: Car Can and Motorman. Car Can required only three or four extra units (limiting the demand on the British Army of the Rhine, BAOR), it tackled militancy in Londonderry, and could be mounted quickly. But Car Can would be perceived as discriminatory in targeting only Catholics, promised nothing in Belfast, and meant the army would have too few forces to deal with any backlash. The more ambitious option, Motorman, might allow a more thorough degrading of the IRA’s capabilities, although it required an extra seven units, undermining the British commitment in Germany. On 27 July the Cabinet approved Motorman:

> ... an early operation to remove barriers, where necessary, and to re-enter the no-go areas so as to enable the security forces to move without hindrance in all areas of the Province and to take all necessary measures to prevent the Provisional IRA from perpetrating further violence. This operation is not to be confined to Londonderry but to be initiated simultaneously in both Londonderry and Belfast. It is to commence early on Monday 31 July; and the force level in Northern Ireland is to be reinforced by seven major units in the infantry role, with supporting units and sub-units as necessary.

Major-General Ford issued his orders later the same day, covering a three month period. Importantly, Ford stated the government’s main political aim since direct rule, reaching a political resolution, remained intact. Consequently, operations had to be conducted selectively, against the IRA alone. Arguably the army had only gained the space to do so as a result of the preceding low profile approach. The army hoped to win popular support as they “remove[d] the IRA from the backs of the Catholic community.” Doing so would create security in the former no-go areas and permit political progress. The staff planned three phases for Motorman. During the first phase the army sought to establish bases in “all hard Catholic areas,” concentrating on the Creggan and Bogside in Londonderry, and Andersonstown and Ballymurphy in Belfast. Patrols from these bases would swamp all areas. Phase two, lasting two or three days, entailed achieving “total domination” in these areas. The third phase involved gradually accumulating intelligence by mass patrols and selectively arresting key terrorists for interrogation. Following these steps would neutralize the Provisional IRA and separate them from the Catholic community. By removing barricades from Protestant areas too, the army envisaged demonstrating its impartiality. General Carver pressed Tuzo to ensure all ranks knew separating the insurgents from the population required the army to use “only the minimum force necessary to achieve the immediate aim.” The government sought to enhance compliance with the minimum force principle, and public confidence in it, by reforming the oversight mechanism. From August 1972, all allegations against the security forces were referred to the Law Officers’ Department, who decided whether the director of Public Prosecutions and the police needed to investigate the case. The RUC found the resulting work burdensome; in October they had six superintendents, eighteen chief inspectors, and 109 inspectors devoted to these cases. The results of their labors are as yet unclear: by January 1973, 237 cases had been investigated,
and seven sent for criminal prosecution. However, the Director of Public Prosecutions disputed the figures, stating they were actually much higher, and that the police often failed to investigate fully. Irksome though these investigations may have seemed to the police, they helped keep the military’s means within the stated aims and slowly win back public opinion lost a year earlier. The extent and effectiveness of the efforts to legally scrutinize the security forces warrants a great deal of further archival research beyond the scope of this article.

**Recalibrating the Means**

Motorman’s first few days went according to plan, the fourteen units deployed in Belfast, eight in Londonderry, and five in rural areas meeting little or no resistance as barricades erected by both communities came down. The lack of popular resistance in Catholic areas suggests the government correctly calibrated ends and means here. Operations in phase two yielded arms finds and arrests, including some in Protestant areas. The army patrolled the “hard areas” constantly, often in combined military police–RUC teams. Rigid discipline denied the Republicans the chance to issue brutality propaganda. Throughout August patrols continued at a high intensity in urban areas in order to restrict IRA movements. The IRA adapted by launching attacks in suburban areas instead. Another PIRA response was to increase intimidation of the population to dissuade them from aiding the security forces. Despite Motorman’s long-term impact on reducing violence, casualty rates did not drop off immediately; by 25 August the Provisionals had killed fourteen and wounded fifty-six security force members since the operation started. By 20 September progress was being made towards the phase three aim of intelligence gathering, with over seven hundred people arrested (of whom three hundred faced criminal charges) since Motorman began. Searches and arrests carried on into October in urban areas; the manpower needed for these tasks compelled a limited stance in rural and border areas. HQ Northern Ireland considered phase three successful in denting PIRA morale, hampering their ability to launch attacks and undermining its leadership by selective arrests, such as the detention of the operations officer of PIRA’s 1st (Belfast) Battalion. Echoing suggestions in some earlier reports, by November the government recognized PIRA’s reaction to the squeeze in urban areas of moving most activities into the countryside. From 31 July to 2 November there were 286 “security incidents on or close to the border.” Most incidents originated from IRA Active Service Units, judged less cohesive and disciplined than their urban counterparts. Apprehending them proved difficult because the Republic’s security forces appeared reluctant to “patrol vigorously” near the border. The IRA remained, to a certain extent, intact; but they were largely separated now from the urban populace.

During the Motorman phase the army persisted in training soldiers to match Republican adaptation to the changing context. Further units underwent the established specialist courses, such as that for search/sniffer teams. New courses appeared, including one on intelligence photography. An assessment by BAOR in September branded NITAT a success, and provided some interesting insights into its work. The Sennelager team, commanded by Major Baskervyle-Clegg, comprised two captains, a lieutenant, three sergeants, a clerk, a storeman, and three drivers. The full program taught soldiers about the general situation in Northern Ireland, types of patrols, check points, riot drill, border operations, cordon and searching, evidence, arrest procedures, public relations, intelligence, IRA organization, weapons and equipment, marksmanship, defenses, and using dogs. Non-infantry units studied all these subjects, whereas infantry battalions picked only those subjects
where their knowledge was wanting. The BAOR team alone provided training to three major non-infantry units, six minor non-infantry units, and two major infantry units.130

As dictated in the Motorman plan, the army prioritized intelligence operations in phase three. Surviving NITAT training notes outline the apparatus in existence by September. Intelligence personnel, excluding MI5 and MI6, numbered approximately 500, organized into five groupings. Civil servants, headed by the Director of Intelligence, worked at GHQ and formation intelligence staffs. HQ Northern Ireland employed a staff colonel, a general staff officer (GSO) Grade II, four grade three staff officers, and a support section. Each brigade had a GSO III officer and a support section. Every unit (battalion equivalent) maintained an intelligence section, and MIOs and FINCOs were attached to liaise with the Special Branch. Finally, the Intelligence Corps provided personnel for elements of a security and counterintelligence company.131 In November the Chief of the General Staff oversaw the reorganization of the special units conducting covert operations. The new squadron, the Special Reconnaissance Unit (SRU), would number 120 all ranks, including 80 engaged on patrols, and fall under the CLF’s direct control, rather than coming under brigade instructions as in the past. Its members might originate from any part of the services and would be selected and trained by 22nd Special Air Service Regiment for eight weeks. They must exercise special care to keep all operations within the law.132 The army planned the first training session for 1 January 1973.133 The term SRU and the details of its organization and operations were kept secret; it worked under the cover name of NITAT(NI).134 Into 1973 the SRU conducted important surveillance missions, for example leading to the arrest of sixteen PIRA officers in October.135

Major-General Ford issued new arrest instructions on 27 July. Keeping within the law, soldiers would arrest anyone seen committing, or suspected of having just committed, a criminal offense. But in addition, soldiers were ordered to arrest those designated in three categories by the police. For category one suspects, sufficient evidence existed to prefer a criminal charge. By contrast, the police sought category two persons for interview in relation to offenses where they had some intelligence material. Those wanted on the category three list had no direct evidence against them, but were believed to have directed others to commit violent acts. All arrested persons were passed to a Royal Military Police Arrest Team as soon as possible.136 A week into Motorman the Cabinet authorized “a much wider discretion” in arresting those not on the lists. PIRA members must be arrested even if charges were unlikely to stick in all cases.137 By October some battalions found the list system, and the strict prescriptions regarding handing prisoners over to the police, prevented them from stopping people in the street for an informal chat.138 Meanwhile, the Secretary of State for Defence noticed that two interrogation centers had been in operation since the start of Motorman. He deemed it “unsatisfactory” that their establishment had not awaited approval by ministers.139 Civil–military relations also came under stress because soldiers wanted arrested Provisionals kept in custody. General Tuzo personally opposed releasing internees. The effectiveness of interrogation was undermined by Special Branch being shaken by allegations of brutality, rendering many policemen too nervous to interrogate anyone.140 So the effectiveness of the ends–means relationship to a degree continued to be undermined by a lack of political oversight and strained inter-departmental relations. One battalion commander argued that brutality in interrogations produced nothing worthwhile; in any case, other motivations rendered it superfluous:

... what you actually want to know is the answer to the questions you never knew you had to ask, that’s the things that are totally concealed from you. And you will only get this from a defector either by getting their co-operation,
and this is often achieved, you can convince people that they are wrong, and I remember in Northern Ireland a case of a member of the IRA who was particularly appalled by bomb damage . . . and he really felt that, was this right. . . . and he turned round and he gave us information to things we had no idea were going on, and that’s what you need. . . . People give information for most extraordinary reasons. I remember one IRA man who thought he should have been the next company commander of a particular company of the IRA, who gave us information because he wasn’t promoted, in order to have the person who had been promoted in his place removed. So we hauled this guy in. Believe it or not, he again wasn’t promoted, so he again shopped the next chap.141

The archive material on NITAT demonstrates the sophistication of the army’s understanding of their opponent in the Motorman phase. One report described the IRA’s structure and modus operandi. Companies were run by a commander with nine subordinate officers. The commander was responsible for operational briefing and tasking, siting arms caches, promotions, and discipline. He could impose various punishments to maintain discipline, such as shooting in the knee caps for taking drugs, execution for informing, and tarring and feathering for stealing cars without permission. The adjutant organized training and parades. The quartermaster supplied, serviced, and hid arms and ammunition, delivered them before attacks, and then collected them afterward. The training officer presided over weapon training and sometimes commanded a gun team in action, whereas the education officer provided ideological instruction. The transport and recruitment officer’s roles were self-explanatory. An engineer officer manufactured nail and blast bombs, controlled the explosive caches, and detonated bombs. As each company needed about £300 per month to pay for wages (at £5 per single man and £10 for married men), food, accommodation, travel expenses, and weaponry, a finance officer was necessary. He obtained funds from robberies, protection rackets, and collections. Finally, the intelligence officer prepared appreciations prior to operations, vetted safe houses and potential recruits, and gathered information. He sought information on security force movements and patterns of behavior, their reaction to incidents, local political feeling and Protestant organizations. These details came from sources such as the Catholic Ex-Serviceman’s Association (CESA), Sinn Fein’s youth and women’s wings, and auxiliaries. Each company intelligence officer also created “. . . an intelligence corps of about 4 youths and 4 girls who work in pairs to reconnoiter jobs and watch people. Girls are used particularly in discotheques and for chatting up soldiers.” The report noted how the IRA ran three operational units: bomb teams, gun teams (numbering three or five gunmen), and Active Service Units—a gun or bomb team working outside a unit’s own area.142

The training teams also understood Provisional tactics quite well. The IRA apparently launched attacks for five reasons: to weaken public support for government policy, to disrupt the economy, in revenge for security force successes, to test newly deployed army units, or to defend sanctuaries. The document curiously mentions Bloody Sunday here, perhaps as an example of the IRA being brought to battle through the pressure imposed by mass arrests, internment and deep interrogation. Soldiers might anticipate attacks by watching for certain indicators, including deserted streets, a crowd suddenly parting, and windows open with curtains half drawn, concealing a sniper position. Sniper assaults came from either the “yobo,” who shot without prior planning or accuracy at short range, or more dangerously, from an expert. They shot at troops from high rise flats, derelict or occupied houses, and often from one street back through a gap in the houses. Firing from inside a room concealed their location, and across regimental boundaries caused added confusion. They planned
carefully, picking a suitable firing position and escape route, and displayed patience in waiting hours for the perfect time to fire, or not firing at all. The expert sniper often relied on a woman to transport the weapon and scouts to warn of possible targets and threats to the escape route. NITAT proposed countermeasures to the sniper threat, ranging from saturation patrolling, rapidly cordoning-off suspect areas, avoiding repetitious behavior and using army snipers. Covering IRA ambush techniques and how to deal with them, the report went on to discuss improvised explosive devices, charitably noting how: “The IRA are not all stupid. They have many intelligent brains behind them.” Consequently, soldiers must not take anything at face value, avoid routine, and beware of hoaxes. Entering buildings without going through the main door was recommended during searches, and searching vehicles and people in suspect areas reduced the risk of bombings.143 Such intelligence-based training made it more likely that soldiers would act proportionately even when the army pursued offensive means of achieving its aims.

The 3rd Infantry Brigade, based in Lurgan and responsible for the border areas, provided an intelligence appreciation of IRA activity in their zone. Operations, aside from robberies and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), were “of a very low standard.” Even thoroughly planned attacks lacked imagination, and displayed terrible marksmanship. Organized in ASUs comprising up to six men, they lacked training and genuine local support. The 3rd Brigade only rated the IRA as successful in moving men and supplies across the border from Belfast and Londonderry into Eire.144 The IRA presented a graver threat in Belfast. Intelligence deemed the Provisional wing more dangerous in the short term because of their commitment to violence, but the Officials a greater long-term challenge as they used violence with political sophistication. The army disagreed on whether volunteers were politically highly motivated or “just low calibre criminals or psychopaths.” Discipline, although formally strict, depended on a commander’s personality. CESA confused military intelligence, being friendly toward the security forces yet helping the IRA. On balance, their actions seemed to be defensive against Protestant violence. In preserving local support, the IRA used intimidation freely, but also endeavored to avoid displeasing their community, “... aware that just one phone call could mean their death or capture.” The IRA excelled at propaganda, especially of the immediate, local kind, where they were “winning hands down.” In terms of daily routine, PIRA members tended to sleep away from home in a billet, normally a single woman’s house, who received £2 per week per person for keeping the billet. Volunteers visited their families and friends when on stand-down, or spent standby time in a safe house, awaiting briefing for operations from the commander or adjutant. The report observed how “The Irish and IRA are creatures of habit, they will visit their old haunts, the pubs, the bookies their favourite street corner.”145 Clearly then, the army training scheme benefited from elaborate intelligence and, not withstanding some peculiar notions about the Irish character, served to enhance soldiers’ effectiveness in operations.

Conclusion: Military Strategy in 1972

Operations against the IRA continued following the conclusion of Operation Motorman in early December 1972. Major-General Ford re-orientated security policy with a new directive on 7 December. Ford acclaimed great progress in reducing the IRA’s morale and command structure, although “neutralization” was not yet achieved. Defeating the IRA was the main priority, without causing “unnecessary irritation” to the majority of law-abiding Catholics. Attacking the IRA would undermine support for the increasingly militant Protestant extremists. In achieving these goals, Ford set all brigades in Northern Ireland three priorities. First, to degrade the IRA’s morale and capacity by focusing on
intelligence gathering; second, protecting threatened sections of the community; third, gradually reducing the ability of the paramilitaries to intimidate the population. Ford stipulated that any operation involving the search of over 30 houses must have his prior approval, and required “... all units to find some time to assist with local community projects.”146 At this juncture, the Cabinet rejected a proposal from the CGS that the MoD and Northern Ireland Office issue a joint political directive on the post-Motorman situation.147 Instead, the CGS sent his own directive to Tuzo on 15 December. Carver ordered the army to assist the police in maintaining law and order by controlling inter-sectarian violence, suppressing violent organizations, and protecting the public against them.148 Tuzo planned to increase the civil action work undertaken by the army. He wanted more Civil Affairs Liaison Officers, employed by the Ministry of Community Relations and located within battalion headquarters.149

The constant re-calibration of military strategy, adapting the means–ends relationship, therefore took place from the imposition of direct rule in March until the end of the year, and beyond. The change in the character of the strategic equation from the low profile phase to the Motorman offensive should be interpreted as a dynamic, interrelated shift that proved the necessity of both the attack and the defense. Admittedly some serious disadvantages bedeviled the low profile approach, such as initial political ambiguity about how to translate it into military means, and the opportunity for the IRA to recover its strength in several ways. Nonetheless, some indicators of violence dropped, and the army itself found itself able to step back from the fray, re-connect ends and means to ensure a more politically astute use of force, and to train systematically for the first time. In the low profile period and into Motorman, the crucial symbiotic relationship between training and intelligence gave the army a distinct advantage. Better intelligence made the training program thorough, and relevant, while well-trained soldiers (and especially the intelligence soldiers—MIOs and FINCOs) produced higher-quality intelligence once deployed. An important initial conclusion from the study is that the assault on the IRA was not suspended until June, when PIRA offered a cease-fire, rather than in March. Further research in unit and brigade records is required to elaborate on this matter, particularly the implications for the efficacy of civilian control. On other occasions, the formulation of military plans was strictly controlled by effective democratic oversight—the cases of the refusal to allow Tuzo to alter the minimum force posture, and the strengthening of legal restraints through the director of Public Prosecutions, are notable in this regard. By the end of 1972, military strategy had succeeded in largely neutralizing IRA operations in urban areas. Previous studies, such as those by Smith and Neumann, have correctly stressed Motorman’s decisive role here. Yet, as this article has argued, the defensive measures taken in the low profile period made such later successes possible. The offensive measures pursued during Motorman worked precisely because by then the army had learned, during the low profile, how to act with greater strategic acuity than in 1971.

Notes


18. The changes in Official IRA strategy, and the rise of a “Protestant backlash” were also significant security concerns, but they are excluded here because the army prioritized tackling the Provisional IRA. On the Protestant backlash, see: Henry Patterson, “British Governments and the Protestant Backlash 1969–74,” in Alan O’Day, ed., *Ireland’s Terrorist Dilemma* (Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986).


29. Daase, “Clausewitz and Small Wars,” p. 188.


40. CJ 4/266: Report of a visit to Northern Ireland by CGS, 10 April 1972.


42. DEFE 13/907: Minute from CGS to Secretary of State for Defence, 30 May 1972.

43. Hamill, *Pig in the Middle*, p. 106.

44. Carver, *Out of Step*, p. 422.


46. DEFE 13/908: Minute from Col GS MO4 to Director of Military Operations, 22 June 1972.

47. DEFE 13/908: Signal from CLF to commanders of 3, 8 and 39 Bdes, and HQ Ulster Defence Regiment [UDR], 22 June 1972.

48. Confirmatory research in the Brigade records is needed when these files become available.

49. The MRF is sometimes referred to in the literature as Mobile Reaction Force or Military Reconnaissance Force. The definition Military Reaction Force is the one found in the primary documents.


55. DEFE 13/908: Minute from Undersecretary of State (Army) to Secretary of State for Defence, 11 July 1972.

56. DEFE 13/908: Record of a meeting held at Hillsborough, 11 July 1972.

57. Many thanks to David French for making this point.


59. DEFE 13/908: Note of a meeting held by Secretary of State for Defence, 13 July 1972.


63. CJ 4/607: Note of a meeting held in the offices of the DPP NI, 25 July 1972.


69. WO 32/21732: Memo by Colonel M. A. J. Tugwell, for Chief of Staff HQ Northern Ireland, 4 July 1972.

70. Ibid.


73. CJ 4/266: Letter from J. F. Howe, Civil Advisor to GOC NI, to R. C. Stevens, Northern Ireland Office, 1 June 1972.

74. DEFE 48/256: DOAE, Memo 7221: “A Survey of Military Opinion,” pp. iii, 19, 49. The army’s approach to riot control, including the use of non-lethal weapons such as baton rounds and gas, evolved and is an area deserving future archival study.


78. WO 32/21732: Letter from Director of Army Training to HQ Northern Ireland, British Army of the Rhine [BAOR] and United Kingdom Land Forces [UKLF], 20 June 1972.


83. WO 32/21732: Letter from Major J. P. R. Jackson, for GOC HQ South East District, Aldershot, to HQ UKLF, Salisbury, 7 July 1972.


89. The following files covering military intelligence are closed to public access, and a Freedom of Information Act request by the author to open them failed: DEFE 13/956, DEFE 13/919 (extracts), DEFE 13/430, DEFE 13/986, DEFE 13/987. For intelligence on the outbreak of the Troubles, see: Eunan O’Halpin, “‘A Poor Thing but Our Own’: The Joint Intelligence Committee and Ireland, 1965–72,” *Intelligence and National Security* 23(5) (2008), pp. 658–680.


91. Ibid., p. 16.


96. Rolston, “‘An Effective Mask for Terror,’” p. 192.


98. Ibid., pp. ii, 28.


102. DEFE 11/789: Note of a meeting held between Northern Ireland Office [NIO] and Ministry of Defence [MoD], 21 April 1972.

103. DEFE 11/789: HQ Northern Ireland Intelligence Summary No. 16/72, for the period 13–19 April 1972.


105. DEFE 11/789: HQ Northern Ireland Intelligence Summary No. 18/72, for the period 27 April–3 May 1972.
108. DEFE 13/1243: Note of a NIO-MoD meeting, 5 May 1972.
111. DEFE 24/718: Minute from A. W. Stephens to Brigadier General Staff (Intelligence) [BGS(Int)], 25 July 1972.
120. DEFE 24/718: HQ Northern Ireland operational summary for the week ending 2 August 1972.
121. DEFE 13/1358: HQ Northern Ireland operational summary for the week ending 23 August 1972.
122. DEFE 13/1358: HQ Northern Ireland operational summary for the week ending 30 August 1972.
125. DEFE 13/1358: HQ Northern Ireland operational summary for the week ending 11 October 1972.
126. DEFE 13/1358: HQ Northern Ireland operational summary for the week ending 18 October 1972.
129. WO 32/21733: School of Service Intelligence Army Intelligence Wing notes, “The Use of Intelligence Section Photographers,” September 1972.
132. DEFE 25/282: Minute from CGS to Secretary of State for Defence, 17 November 1972.
133. DEFE 25/282: Minute from Secretary of State for Defence to Prime Minister, 28 November 1972.
134. CAB 134/3778: Cabinet Northern Ireland Committee, “Army Plain Clothes Patrols in Northern Ireland,” Note by the Secretary of State for Defence, 28 March 1974. Many thanks to Dr. Geraint Hughes for bringing this source to my attention.
137. CJ 4/36: Minutes of a meeting between the Secretary of State for Defence, Chief Constable of the RUC, and the GOC Northern Ireland, 7 August 1972.
138. DEFE 24/871: Letter from J. F. Howe, Civil Adviser to the GOC Northern Ireland, to A. W. Stephens, MoD, 9 October 1972.
139. DEFE 13/919: Record of a meeting between the Secretary of State for Defence, CGS, PUS, DUS(Army) and AUS(GS), 10 August 1972.
140. DEFE 13/919: Minute from BGS(Int) to MA to the CGS, circa 8 September 1972.
141. Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, Robin Evelegh, Accession no. 11148.
147. DEFE 13/912: Minute from R. A. Custis, APS to Secretary of State for Defence, to MA to CGS, 14 December 1972.