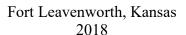THE CHALLENGES OF OPERATIONALIZING DOCTRINE. THE BRITISH ARMY IN
NORTHERN IRELAND, 1969 – 1971.

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

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Military History

by

WILLIAM TULLOCH, MAJOR, BRITISH ARMY
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One of the recurring criticisms of the British Army's initial deployment to Northern Ireland was the nature of its doctrine. The argument stands that the doctrine of the British Army at the time was 'colonial', 'aggressive' and 'repressive', was forged from the retreat from empire and had failed to incorporate the lessons from the small wars of the inter-war period (1919–1939) and the various counterinsurgency campaigns that followed the end of World War Two. What little doctrine existed was largely irrelevant to the complex mission set Northern Ireland required, and "colonial era" generals applied the same approach to the deployment as they had in policing the colonies. The important question is; how fair is this? The assertion that the British Army deployed on the streets of Northern Ireland in August 1969 intellectually and mentally unprepared for the task they faced requires further exploration. What doctrine was in use, both contemporary and adversarial, formal and informal, when the British Army deployed in August 1969? What was the culture and attitude toward doctrine at the time? Was it read, applied, and understood? Researchers have not addressed these questions satisfactorily. This thesis will attempt to fill the gaps in knowledge.

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Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Professor William H. Kautt, DPhil

_____, Member
Lieutenant Colonel Christopher J. Johnson, MA

_____, Member
Colonel Peter Little OBE, MA

Accepted this 15th day of June 2018 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not
necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or
any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing
statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE CHALLENGES OF OPERATIONALIZING DOCTRINE. THE BRITISH ARMY IN NORTHERN IRELAND, 1969 – 1971, by Major WJL Tulloch, 139 pages.

One of the recurring criticisms of the British Army's initial deployment to Northern Ireland was the nature of its doctrine. The argument stands that the doctrine of the British Army at the time was 'colonial', 'aggressive' and 'repressive', was forged from the retreat from empire and had failed to incorporate the lessons from the small wars of the inter-war period (1919–1939) and the various counterinsurgency campaigns that followed the end of World War Two. What little doctrine existed was largely irrelevant to the complex mission set Northern Ireland required, and "colonial era" generals applied the same approach to the deployment as they had in policing the colonies. The important question is; how fair is this? The assertion that the British Army deployed on the streets of Northern Ireland in August 1969 intellectually and mentally unprepared for the task they faced requires further exploration. What doctrine was in use, both contemporary and adversarial, formal and informal, when the British Army deployed in August 1969? What was the culture and attitude toward doctrine at the time? Was it read, applied, and understood? Researchers have not addressed these questions satisfactorily. This thesis will attempt to fill the gaps in knowledge.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

CCDC	Central Citizens' Defence Committees
DEFE	Ministry of Defence File Series, National Archives
EOKA	Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston
GOC	General Officer Commanding
IRA	Irish Republican Army
MAC-P	Military Aid to the Civil Power
MC	Military Cross
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
PIRA	Provisional IRA (Irish Republican Army)
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SAS	Special Air Service
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UDR	Ulster Defence Regiment
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1.   Northern Ireland

Source: Printed in Coogan, Tim Pat. *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966 –1996 and the Search for Peace*. New York: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1996.

On Friday 15 August 1969, a Lieutenant in the Royal Regiment of Wales deployed with his unit to Belfast. On the way to the Falls Road, an area of almost exclusively Catholic housing, the subaltern passed commuting traffic and was cheered on by Protestants shouting "get in there and smash the bastards." On arrival at the Falls Road, his soldiers were given cups of tea by grateful Catholics. The following morning, having spent the night sleeping in a front garden surrounded by burnt out houses, the Lieutenant woke to find the Regimental Sergeant Major, accompanied by a detachment of regimental police, marching down the Falls Road. Wheelbarrows and brooms were distributed, orders were issued and soldiers began to clear up the mess from the night before. Grateful Catholic families invited the soldiers in for breakfast. Daubed on the wall of a nearby building was "IRA = I ran away."[1]

Approximately eighteen months later, the Falls Road was a "no go area" for the Army and the police, the Army had become the target of persistent and vicious rioting from the Catholic community and the first of almost seven hundred and fifty British soldiers was killed by the same organization so discredited in the Catholic community in August 1969. Something went seriously wrong.

The British Army's deployment to Northern Ireland in 1969 provides a good example of the challenges an Army faces when it attempts to "operationalize" its doctrine. Doctrine is a common language, a set of principles and methods based on history and theory. It is a flexible guide that is dialectic, intuitive, timeless, and enduring. To be read it must be relevant and manageable, but resistant to impulsive reactions and

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[1] Max Arthur, *Northern Ireland: Soldiers Talking: 1969 to Today* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987), 6

must not be too vague or too prescriptive. It is challenging to get right. Writing doctrine requires a solid understanding of the past as well as an ability to guess what will be required for the future. It therefore needs to remain at a level that has universal applicability, not necessarily tied to a particular operating environment.

Operationalizing doctrine, where military practitioners take codified principles and develop procedures, approaches and tactics to solve operational problems and achieve strategic aims, is equally challenging. An army might hold comprehensive and readable doctrine. If the same army fails to develop actions that fit within those principles, then the doctrine becomes largely irrelevant. Unique operating environments will present situations where doctrine does not seem to fit. Political interest and posture may differ, the parameters and restrictions in which an army operates change, and the character of a conflict may be entirely new to the military professional fighting it. Understanding the role doctrine plays when approaching these unusual and unpredictable scenarios will help to prevent armies unconsciously departing from it.

One of the recurring criticisms of the British Army's initial deployment to Northern Ireland, is the nature of its doctrine. The argument stands that the doctrine of the British Army at the time was "colonial," "aggressive," and "repressive," forged from the retreat from empire and failed to incorporate the lessons from the small wars of the inter-war period (1919 to 1939) and the various counterinsurgency campaigns that followed the end of World War II. What little doctrine existed was largely irrelevant to the complex mission set Northern Ireland required, and "colonial era" generals applied the same approach to the deployment as they had in policing the colonies. The important question is; how fair is this? There is an inherent problem with accusing the Army of

having colonial, and thus inapplicable doctrine, while at the same time accusing the Army of failing to incorporate the lessons of counterinsurgency in the colonies into doctrine. If the lessons from the colonies were not applicable in Northern Ireland, what was the point in identifying them? The assertion that the British Army deployed on the streets of Northern Ireland in August 1969 intellectually and mentally unprepared for the task they faced requires further exploration. What doctrine was in use, both contemporary and adversarial, formal and informal, when the British Army deployed? What was the culture and attitude toward doctrine at the time? Was it read, applied, and understood? Researchers have not addressed these questions satisfactorily. This thesis attempts to fill the gaps in knowledge.

This study is not a defense of the British Army. It, however, attempts to provide some balance to the debate surrounding the initial deployment of the Army. The study concludes that the doctrine available to the British soldier in 1969 had, for the first time, codified many of the lessons and principles the British Army had learnt in previous counterinsurgency campaigns. Yet there is a difference, as the academic Christopher Tuck suggests, between identifying principles and translating them into effective strategy and tactics; "habits of thought do not necessarily translate into habits of action."[2] The inability to operationalize the principles identified and codified in the counterinsurgency operations between 1919 and 1969 resulted in a short term peacekeeping operation in support of the civil authorities morphing into a thirty year counterinsurgency campaign.

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[2] Christopher Tuck, "Northern Ireland and the British Approach to Counter Insurgency," *Defence and Security Analysis* 23, no. 2 (2007): 165.

Why the Army, equipped with effective doctrine, failed to correctly apply it across the whole force, forms much of the subject of this study.

The deployment of forces to Northern Ireland not only provides a unique case study because of the constitutional and political challenges soldiers faced soldiering on the streets of the United Kingdom, or because the deployment took place in a postindustrial westernized city rather than a colony, but because for the first time, British soldiers deployed with collated "counter revolutionary" doctrine available. Previous campaigns relied upon individual theorists and informal publications for guidance. *Keeping the Peace*, published in 1964, was a tactical doctrinal manual that built on the experience in Malaya. *Land Operations Volume III, Counter Revolutionary Operations*, published in 1969, was the first official publication to separate overarching principles of low intensity operations from the tactical actions that accompany them. This is an important distinction and forms much of the argument for this study.

What happened in the run up to the British deployment in 1969 and the key events that took place in the first year form the first part of this study. Chapter 2 looks at the British counterinsurgency experience between 1919 and 1969, drawing out the key principles and procedures that informed British counterinsurgency doctrine at the time. Chapter 3 examines how this experience was translated into doctrine and whether it was read and understood. Chapter 4 explores how the Army often failed to operationalize doctrine across the whole force through institutional failings, while chapter 5 examines other factors that prevented the Army from doing so. Conversely, chapter 6 looks at how the Irish Republican Army (IRA) read and applied revolutionary doctrine, often with great success. This study concludes that while the principles of British counter

revolutionary doctrine were more applicable than critics give them credit for, internal and external factors prevented the Army from operationalizing them effectively.

This study focuses on the period between the initial deployment of the British Army in August 1969 to the death of the first British soldier as a result of insurgent activity in February 1971. It does not include the most significant events of the early years of the Troubles: internment (August 1971), Bloody Sunday (January 1972), the suspension of Stormont (March 1972) and Operation Motorman (July 1972) as not only are these events hugely significant in their own right, by the time they took place, they cemented the feeling of enmity from the Catholic population to the Army, rather than created it. Although it is tempting to view the whole period of the "Troubles" as one long counterinsurgency campaign, it is important to note that the first two years of the Army's deployment were very different in nature. The Catholic community initially welcomed the deployment of the British Army, there was regular liaison with between the Army and the IRA, and for both politicians, soldiers, and the population of Northern Ireland, it appeared the deployment would be a short-term solution, finished, as is so often the case with military campaigns, 'by Christmas'. While it would be outside the remit of such a short study to identify all the factors that led to this change in the situation, this study attempts to identify those with a direct link to the understanding, and application of, doctrine.

Literature Review

John Whyte remarked that "in proportion to its size, Northern Ireland is the most researched area on earth."[3] This is not necessarily true of the first few years of the Troubles, which have received comparatively little attention. Thomas Hennessy's comprehensive account of the evolution of the Troubles, for example, starts in January 1970, almost six months after the initial deployment of British forces to the province. The research methodology for this study has combined a qualitative examination of a mixture of primary sources and informed secondary sources.

Interviews. A number of retired officers and soldiers agreed to be interviewed. For a variety of reasons, including service with special forces, some asked that the interviews were not for attribution. Where they were happy to be quoted anonymously, they are identified by their retirement rank and regiment only.

Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely, KCB, MC, joined the Army in 1968 and served as a junior officer in Germany, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland, completing a number of tours in the province. He was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for his courage on Tumbledown Mountain in the Falklands War in 1982. General Kiszely commanded the Scots Guards, 7 (Armoured) Brigade and 1st (United Kingdom) Armoured Division on deployment to Bosnia. He was the UK's senior military representative in, and Deputy Commanding General of, Multinational Task Force, Iraq in 2004, and in 2005 became the Director of the Defence Academy in Shrivenham. General Kiszley has written extensively on British counterinsurgency.

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[3] John Whyte, quoted in Thomas Hennessy, *The Evolution of the Troubles 1970 – 72* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), x.

Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Gascoigne MBE deployed as a subaltern to Northern Ireland in 1971 and a company commander in 1974. His experience with working as a staff liaison officer with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in 1971 provides a unique insight into the difficulty of civil-military cooperation at the early stage of the campaign.

Other primary sources include a number of *Army Quarterlies*, quarterly publications containing articles and essays by serving and retired soldiers and civilians working in Defence. The current equivalent publication is the *British Army Review*. Historic *Army Quarterlies* are stored at the National Army Museum in London. These publications will be used to assess whether doctrine, and the deployment to Northern Ireland, was being discussed at a formal level between 1969 and 1972.

A counterinsurgency survey completed by officers who had held command at battalion level and above from 1969 to 1972 is held in the National Archives at Kew. This survey provides a valuable insight into the relevance and applicability of the doctrine from officers who had commanded units and brigades in Northern Ireland from 1969 to 1971.

The tactical working group discussions that took place between the Ministry of Defense and the Army to assess whether any changes were necessary to tactical doctrine in 1970 are also held in the National Archives. Linked to the survey on counterinsurgency doctrine, this document provides a useful example of the attempt to modernize the doctrine following the challenges of the initial deployment.

Land Operations Volume III, which forms much of the discussion of the thesis, and is explored in detail in chapters 3 and 4. IRA literature published in the 1940s and 1950s, and the records of Regimental Service are explored and expanded upon

throughout the study and require no further explanation here. So too are publications by counterinsurgency authors such as Frank Kitson, David Galula, Robert Trinquier, Robert Thomspon, Juliet Paget, Sir Charles Gwynn, and Charles Callwell, along with those advocating effective ways to conduct an insurgency, most notably from Latin America. Carlos Marighella, Abraham Guillen, Regis Debray, and Robert Taber are all discussed in the main body of the thesis.

Other primary sources include the Hunt and Cameron reports published on 26 August 1969 and September 1969. Their contents, and the effect they had has been analyzed in the study.

Until recently, the British Army's story has largely been portrayed by collations of interviews with serving soldiers. This has changed significantly in recent years. Andrew Sanders, Ian Wood and Edward Burke have recently published books that include de-classified communiques and reports, regimental log books and publications, as well as extensive interviews with serving personnel.

Informed secondary sources are referred to throughout, but most are specific to the chapter they are used to inform and support.

Chapter 1, The Initial Deployment. There has been a recent increase in the amount that has been written on the British Army in the early years of Northern Ireland. Andrew Sanders and Ian Wood have used extensive regimental journals of selected regiments in *A Time of Troubles*. Charles Messenger provides a balanced and factual account of events that led to the deployment of British forces and beyond. Michael Dewar and David Barzilay write from the perspective of the British Army while Max Arthur and Ken Wharton have collated many interviews with soldiers. Articles by Rod

Thornton analyze the mistakes the Army made while Ed Burke has added fresh perspective by focusing on the behavior of British soldiers in Northern Ireland. Thomas Hennessy and the journalist and historian Desmond Hamill also provide considerable analysis on the initial deployment. The journalists and authors Tim Pat Coogan and Ed Moloney provide the Nationalist/Republican perspective while Andrew Boyd, William Kautt, and J. Bowyer Bell provide analysis from earlier parts of Irish history that help to establish the background to the deployment.

Chapter 2, The State of British Counterinsurgency in 1969. Andrew Mumford's and John Newsinger's critiques of British counterinsurgency, Sir Hew Strachan's synopsis of counterinsurgency in the interwar period, and articles by Thomas Mockaitis, Caroline Pipe-Kennedy, Christopher Tuck, Paul Neumann, Hew Bennet, Simon Robbins, General Sir John Kizsely, and Paul Dixon are discussed. Caroline Elkins and Alistair Horne will briefly feature as Algeria and Kenya experts, articles by John Reynolds are used to inform the legal perspective while Charles Townsend provides the constitutional complexities and nuances that British counterinsurgency entails.

Chapter 3. Available Doctrine. This chapter largely uses primary evidence in its analysis but refers to articles by James Hughes who provides a critique of celebrated counterinsurgency theorists like Frank Kitson. This chapter expands on many of the counterinsurgency authors mentioned under primary sources, weaving in more modern theorists like John Nagl and Caroline Pipe-Kennedy who argue that the British Army is not as good as reading, understanding, and learning its doctrine as it should be.

The analysis in chapter 4 is also largely based on primary sources, but includes articles by Colonels Alexander Alderson and Ian Rigden who provide a military

perspective on the British approach to counterinsurgency doctrine. Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Taw analyze why this approach has evolved, while Ed Burke has provided comprehensive analysis on the effect this approach had at the tactical level. Articles by Dr Aaron Edwards and Rod Thornton provide analysis on misapplying lessons learnt in previous campaigns, and Brigadier Francis Henn provides a comprehensive account of British peacekeeping operations in Cyprus.

Chapter 5 explores the challenges external to the Army that led to an inability to operationalize doctrine. There has been a recent increase in the amount of literature on the civil-military relationship, not least David Charters's comprehensive study, *Whose Mission, Whose Orders?* on the subject published in 2017. This study compliments existing works by Aaron Edwards who explores the relationship between Freeland, Stormont, and London. Christopher Tuck, Rod Thornton, and Sanders and Wood explore the effect this fractious relationship had at the tactical level with Caroline Pipe-Kennedy and John Newsinger suggesting it directly contributed to repressive action by the Army.

Chapter 6. Energizing an insurgency incorporates much of the republican literature on Northern Ireland as well as the role Latin American revolutionaries played in shaping the approach taken by the IRA. Key "players" in the IRA have written autobiographies. Sean MacStoifan, Joe Cahill, Martin McGuinness, and Gerry Adams provide firsthand accounts of the situation between 1969 and 1971, providing a perspective that Ed Moloney, sometimes provocatively, incorporates into his comprehensive study of the IRA. Tim Pat Coogan and John Hughes write critically about the actions of the British Army, while Richard English provides a more balanced and comprehensive account of the emergence of the IRA.

CHAPTER 1

THE INITIAL DEPLOYMENT.

> Should an anthropologist or a sociologist be looking for a bizarre society to study, I would suggest coming to Ulster…one of Europe's oddest countries. Here, in the middle of the twentieth century, with modern technology transforming everybody's lives, you have a medieval mentality which is being dragged painfully into the eighteenth century by some forward looking people.
> — Student activist and Member of Parliament, Bernadette Devlin.

At dusk on 14 August 1969, three hundred soldiers from the 1st Battalion Princess of Wales Own Regiment of Yorkshire deployed from existing military installations onto the streets of Londonderry.[4] Twenty-four hours later, soldiers from 2nd Battalion the Queen's Regiment deployed from Hollywood Barracks to West Belfast. A few days later, a further three battalions and a brigade headquarters established themselves in Northern Ireland. The thirty-year military commitment to Northern Ireland had begun. To say the situation that British soldiers deployed into was "unenviable"[5] understates the febrile, tense and exceptionally challenging operating environment that awaited them. This chapter provides a chronology of events that led to a change in view of the Army from protector to oppressor in the eyes of the Catholic population, and challenges some of the bolder claims in the literature written on the period 1969 – 1971.

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[4] Although the original name of the city is Derry, settlers changed the name to Londonderry to demonstrate their allegiance to the English crown in 1613. Londonderry remains the official name, although few Republican scholars acknowledge it, and will be used throughout this thesis.

[5] Tim Pat Coogan, *The Troubles. Ireland's Ordeal 1966–1996 and the Search for Peace* (New York: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1996), 107.

Since the partition of Ireland in 1921, Northern Ireland, or Ulster,[6] remained part of the UK, home to a Protestant majority uncompromisingly loyal to the institutions of the British state and the devolved Parliament in Stormont. Sir James Craig, the first Northern Irish Prime Minister, boasted of a "Protestant Government for Protestant people,"[7] a sentiment that had hardly changed by 1969. Since the sixteenth century, companies on the British mainland had sought, and been granted, royal approval to colonize parts of Ireland, particularly Ulster. The plantation of Ulster, often by Scots, took place predominantly in the reign of James I of England and IV of Scotland, (1603 to 1625). Over 13,000 English-Scots arrived by 1622, leading to a gradual and overwhelming Protestant settlement of Ulster.[8] This settlement grew as multiple waves of immigration throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries arrived in the province. By the middle of the twentieth century, the majority of the Northern Irish mixed a vociferous Scottish and English identity with an entrenched fear of being subsumed by the largely Gaelic, and predominantly Catholic, Republic of Ireland. Catholics made up about thirty per cent of the population of Ulster in 1969, many of whom wished Ulster to become part of the Republic of Ireland. In practice, differences

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[6] Historically, Ulster was one of the four provinces of Ireland (the others being Munster, Leinster, and Connaught). Ulster was made up of nine sub-provinces. After partition in 1921, with Northern Ireland remaining part of the United Kingdom, only six of the nine provinces became part of Northern Ireland: Fermanagh, Antrim, Armagh, Down, Lough, and Tyrone. The other three provinces, Monagahan, Cavan, and Donegal became part of the Irish Free State.

[7] Andrew Boyd, *Holy War in Belfast: A History of the Troubles in Northern Ireland* (New York: Grove Press, 1969), 176.

[8] Robert Kee, *Ireland. A History* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1982), 42.

between the main factions in Northern Ireland have been characterized less by religious belief than by the cultural, social, and political views that have shaped the two communities. Religion has provided a convenient badge for labelling the protagonists of the Troubles, but is only useful at a superficial level. Within the religious divide were Nationalists and Unionists, the former wishing to be united with the Republic of Ireland, and the latter wanting to remain part of the UK. Although similar, the term "Republican" represents those who swore allegiance to the Republic of Ireland founded in 1919, while the term "Loyalist" is used to describe those remaining unshakably loyal to the British crown (although not always to the government).[9] History played its part in forming identity as well, "giving the dispute a strong ethno-nationalist dimension marked by historical imaging, genuine fear, religion and nationality."[10]

While there were long periods of comparative calm, bolstered by industries created in the nineteenth century but expanded in post-war reconstruction projects and the introduction of the welfare state,[11] the dream of a united Ireland remained in the hearts and minds of many. From 1920 to 1969, the IRA continued their campaign to unify the six provinces of Ulster into the body of Ireland, but failed to find the necessary support from the Catholic population in the north or the material support from Dublin, to launch

[9] It is dangerous to generalize, but the average 'Nationalist' would likely identify as of Gaelic or possibly Anglo-Irish descent, Catholic and, certainly as the Troubles dragged on, would be at least sympathetic to the unification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. The average 'Unionist' would be descended from Scottish or English settlers, a low church Presbyterian or Anglican, and identify with being British, not Irish.

[10] Sean Byrne quoted in Tuck, "Northern Ireland and the British Approach to Counter Insurgency," 168.

[11] Boyd, *Holy War in Belfast*, 178.

effective campaigns to achieve their aims.[12] During the 1960s, the closure of the linen

and textile mills that employed many Catholics in Ulster began to shut down, leaving

large amounts of the Catholic population unemployed, disenfranchised, and more acutely

affected by the social apartheid that existed in cities like Belfast and Londonderry.[13] As

the civil rights movement gained traction in the United States, the clamor for equality,

opportunity and an end to the gerrymandering that kept Stormont full of Unionists grew.

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), a conglomerate of organizations

demanding a fair deal for the Catholic community, as well as, more socially radical

organizations like People's Democracy, began to march for reform. While it would be

wrong to claim there were not a significant number of civil rights demonstrators who

wanted the north to be enveloped into the Irish republican family, the original literature

and focus of the protesters was about civil rights reform, rather than constitutional

change.[14]

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[12] In reality, violence was unlikely to achieve the aim of re-unification. While the IRA had focused their attacks on both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, both of which were seen as creations of the British, after 1948 the focus remained almost solely on Northern Ireland. The aim for much of the 1950s and early 1960s, the so called 'Border Campaign,' was to force a British withdrawal from the north while provoking a backlash from the Protestant community. It was extremely unlikely to succeed.

[13] Gerry Adams, *Before the Dawn*: *An Autobiography* (Ireland: Brandon Books, 1996), 89. It is important to note that many Protestants faced redundancy by the closures. Protestors, trade unionists and demonstrations in the 1960s included Protestant and Catholics, an important point when understanding the role the IRA played in developing an insurgency. This is explored more in chapter 6.

[14] Bell J. Bowyer, *The Gun in Politics: An Analysis of Irish Political Conflict, 1916–1986* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1987), 136.

To the Unionist community, reform was seen as a threat, a stepping stone of erosion that would eventually lead to a loss of the Unionist hegemony enjoyed for forty-five years. The demonstrations that increased in size and regularity throughout 1968 and 1969 were met with counter demonstrations by Protestant and Loyalist groups, descending into violence as Catholic marchers, equipped with banners and loudhailers, were met with bricks, bottles, and abuse. Ulster's police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), was predominantly Protestant.[15] Their inability to create a perception of fair treatment of both sides resulted in accusations of indifference at best, collusion with Protestant groups at worst. Impartiality was perhaps most acute when the RUC failed to protect Catholic demonstrators from Protestant assaults, but marshalled the highly inflammatory "Orange parades" through Catholic areas, where Protestants celebrate the victory of William of Orange over the Catholic James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1691 in July each year. A more aggravating organization was the B- Specials, the RUC reserve formed predominantly from the Loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force in 1920. In 1969, its membership was 10,000 strong. Not only were their tactics particularly aggressive and violent, they were exclusively Protestant, largely Loyalist and made little effort to hide their contempt for the Catholic community.

In 1967, a number of Catholic reform organizations merged to form NICRA, drew up demands, including an end to gerrymandering, fairer public housing allocation, a single transferable vote and an ombudsman to investigate citizens' complaints; none of

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[15] Estimates vary, but usually the number of Catholics in the RUC in 1969 was around 5-10 percent. In 1961 the RUC was 12 percent Catholic according to the blog "The New Irishman." This number would only reduce as violence increased toward the end of 1969.

which seemed unreasonable. These demands were not constitutional in nature, but were about economic and social betterment. They contained little mention of ending partition, and were supported by some Protestants.[16] The first significant outbreak of violence came in October 1968, when an Orange march clashed with a NICRA demonstration in Londonderry. In the following year, sporadic outbreaks of violence continued in both Londonderry and Belfast, increasing in scale, violence, and bloodshed. Following the events of October 1968, there were a number of incidents that made it increasingly likely that military intervention would become inevitable.

The first significant violence followed a NICRA civil rights march on 5 October 1968 in Londonderry. William Craig, the Minister for Home Affairs in Northern Ireland, had attempted to ban the march, along with a planned march by the Protestant fraternal organization, the Apprentice Boys, on the same day. The march went ahead, and was met with baton charges from the RUC. The Labour MP Gerry Fitt's bloodied face appeared on British television screens and there followed two days of rioting in Londonderry. In the following months, it appeared unlikely that calm would be restored. The Rev. Ian Paisley, the champion of the hard line Protestants gained a significant following and national attention through bellicose rhetoric and firebrand oration. The People's Democracy organized a seventy-five-mile march from Londonderry to Belfast in an attempt to replicate Martin Luther King's march from Selma to Montgomery. The march was attacked by Loyalists in January 1969, resulting in fourteen students requiring hospital treatment. Terrence O'Neill, perhaps the only man who could have arrested the

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[16] Charles Messenger, *Northern Ireland–The Troubles* (New York: Gallery Books, 1985), 70.

violence, was forced to resign as prime minister by Paisley's supporters after conceding

to some moderate housing reforms in April 1969. The first attacks on infrastructure took

place (allegedly by the IRA, but more likely by Loyalists attempting to hasten O'Neill's

downfall), and the twenty-one-year-old Catholic student Bernadette Devlin was elected to

Parliament on a civil rights platform, rapidly becoming a media sensation. It was the end

of moderation in Ulster.

The violence that once again followed the Apprentice Boys' march in August

1969, this time celebrating the 280th anniversary of the siege of Londonderry, an

important Protestant victory, was the worst yet. Two days of rioting between 12–14

August resulted in the Bogside, a Catholic area of Londonderry, being declared Free

Derry, a no go area for the RUC. In Belfast, several Catholic houses were burnt to the

ground, the RUC overreacted with significant use of CS gas, and fired indiscriminately

into crowds. In twenty-four hours, ten people were dead, nine of them Catholic, with a

further hundred Catholic and Protestants injured.[17] The RUC could not contain or control

the violence. James Chichester-Clerk, who had replaced Terrence O'Neill as Northern

Irish Prime Minister, asked the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson to deploy soldiers

to assist in keeping the peace.

The request from Stormont to deploy the Army did not come as a surprise to

politicians in London. The Home Secretary, James Callaghan, and the Labour Cabinet

were debating whether to intervene, but "hoping and praying we would not have to."[18]

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[17] Ibid., 77.

[18] James Callaghan quoted in English, *Armed Struggle*, 101.

The "debating" had been going on for months, with conversations about constitutional

and legal implications, command and control structures, and the overall intelligence

picture being the subject of cabinet meetings for at least four months prior to the decision

being made.[19] The Labour Government had good reason to be reluctant to deploy forces,

not least because of the sense of historical foreboding that "no one with any knowledge

of Irish history can have forgotten."[20]

The initial deployment of British forces created a two-month lull in civil

disturbance and rioting. The violence restarted, not by Catholics, who were enjoying the

protection from Loyalist attacks the British Army provided, but by Protestant mobs

furious at the disarming of the RUC and the disbandment of the B Specials after the

publication of the Hunt Report, a review into civil policing in Ulster published on 10

October 1969.[21] The report called for widespread reform of the RUC, including the

disarming and renaming of the B Specials, the removal of armored cars, active

recruitment of Catholics and that it should be subject to external, independent

inspections.[22] In short, it suggested the RUC become more of a police force than an

armed gendarmerie. For many Loyalists, this was too much, too soon. To demonstrate

their anger at the report, a 2,000 strong Protestant mob advanced toward Catholic houses

[19] David A. Charteris, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders? British Civil-Military Command and Control in Northern Ireland, 1968–1974* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 58-64.

[20] *Guardian*, 15 August 1969; Charteris, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders?*, 70.

[21] Baron Hunt, "Report of the Advisory Committee on Police in Northern Ireland," Accessed 18 March 2018.

[22] Ibid., 183.

in the Unity Flats in West Belfast. To prevent the inevitable bloodshed, 1,000 soldiers deployed to block their path. The ensuing violence saw the first use of CS gas by the Army, the first RUC policeman killed, shot by a Protestant gunman, the first soldier wounded, and the first death as a result of Army action. It is often overlooked that the first fatality of the Troubles from the actions of a British soldier was a Protestant protester that swore allegiance to the same flag stitched on to the left arm of the soldier's uniform. The journalist, Tim Pat Coogan, in a rare acknowledgment of military impartiality, concedes that during the events of 10–11 Oct, the "the British Army openly and impartially took Loyalist mobs on."[23] Ian Paisley went so far as to call the deployment of the Army a confidence trick, as soldiers had told him "they were there to keep the Catholics happy,"[24] which certainly suggests the absence of any support to the hardline Protestant community. Although lower level sporadic demonstrations continued for the remainder of the year and in to the first months of 1970, the Army prevented large scale violence between the two communities.

It was not to last. By April 1970, following the celebration of the anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916, and the counter protests that followed from Loyalist groups, the Army deployed to Ballymurphy, the most febrile part of Belfast, following significant rioting. The actions the Army took during those critical months of spring are widely seen as an inflexion point in the campaign. There is a chicken/egg argument that runs through most commentary on the period. Was it the actions of angry Catholic protestors,

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[23] Coogan, *The Troubles*, 98.

[24] Desmond Hamil, *Pig in the Middle: Army in Northern Ireland, 1969 –1984* (London: Methuen Publishing, 1985), 27.

dismayed at the lack of any serious reform coming from Stormont, that vented their anger at the Army, who eventually tired of playing "a bizarre and deadly game of "pig in the middle" between more than just two opposing factions,"[25] and retaliated? Or, was it the Army, who, having been deployed as the sole enforcer of law and order for over eight months, tired, overstretched, and under constant attack from one side or another, chose sides and conducted harsh and unnecessary retaliatory measures against the (predominantly) Catholic crowds? A more detailed answer is explored later in this study, but most commentators agree that the excessive use of CS gas which soaked into Catholic housing estates, and baton charges against Catholic protesters resulted in anger and violence being directed towards the Army by the Catholics for the first time.

Following rioting from both communities in late March, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Northern Ireland, General Sir Ian Freeland, announced the infamous "get tough" policy on 3 April 1970, stating that any rioter caught making, carrying, or throwing petrol bombs was liable to be shot.[26] This was followed by a further proclamation that anyone refusing to disperse from a demonstration was liable for arrest and prosecution. These proclamations, disciplinarian in nature and evoking a sense of military overreach, did little to quell unrest. Following the sentence of Bernadette Devlin to six months in prison for her part in the riots the previous August, rioting erupted in Londonderry in late June. When an Orange parade became the target of abuse from Catholics in Belfast two days later, running battles broke out with the RUC, the Army,

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[25] Hamill, *Pig in the Middle*, 21.

[26] Messenger, *The Troubles*, 88.

Loyalist and Catholics; three Loyalists were killed, over fifty civilians wounded, and millions of pounds worth of damage caused. The Army, over stretched and under resourced, failed to protect Catholic communities in the Short Strand area of Belfast, over two hundred of whom were burned out of their houses by vengeful Protestant mobs. By the end of June 1970, fairly or unfairly, the view of the Army had changed in the eyes of the Catholic community. Worse was to come. On 3 July, in an attempt to seize weapons being used in attacks on soldiers and Loyalists, the Army deployed a brigade into a cordon and search operation on the Falls Road. Despite seizing hundreds of weapons and explosives, the Army failed to publicize the find successfully, and by conducting a systematic search of the Falls Road, with many accusations of heavy handedness, spent what little credit they had left with the population.

Between August 1970 and February 1971 there was a period of comparative calm. The Army remained on the streets providing security for the province while the RUC restructured and reformed. Violence erupted again in February 1971 when, under pressure from Unionist politicians, the Army began to raid Nationalist areas in Belfast in January 1971. The violence that followed was deadly. The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) attacked the British Army with small arms fire, killing Gunner Robert Curtis, the first British soldier to die in the conflict. The following month, three Scottish soldiers were found executed outside of Belfast. The conflict changed from a peacekeeping operation in support of the civil authority to a counterinsurgency campaign that would last until the end of Operation Banner, the name the Army gave to operations in Northern Ireland, in 2007.

With the change in attitude from the Catholic population toward the Army came a change in the character of the conflict. The period from August 1969 to February 1971 was one of civil unrest, rioting, sectarian violence and attempts to maintain a fragile peace. As 1971 continued, soldiers were executed, James Chichester-Clerk resigned, the Army responded to the most violent rioting yet and the British government introduced the controversial policy of internment. In January 1972, when fourteen protesters were killed in Londonderry on what became known as 'Bloody Sunday,' the ranks of PIRA swelled and it became clear the British Army was deployed for a lengthy counterinsurgency campaign. When assessing why opportunities were missed, and why certain decisions were made, it is important to challenge some of the more sensational claims that make up much of the Republican literature. The Irish journalist and author Ed Moloney's account of the period reads like an Army on the rampage, a deployment designed to crush any form of Catholic dissent on behalf of Stormont, with callous disregard of the civilians hurt or killed in the process.[27] Decisions to allow marches to go ahead were not made by ignorant Commanding Officers, but by the Joint Security Council.[28] Indeed, the GOC Northern Ireland, and the only man capable of influencing the Joint Security Council

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[27] Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 100-103. Moloney uses examples like Brendan Hughes's assertion that he joined the IRA in August 1969 after being attacked by Loyalists, the 'B Specials', the RUC and *the British Army* at a time when almost all authors accept that the British Army was not attacking anyone. Moloney goes on to claim that the Commanding Officer of the Royal Scots allowed a provocative Orange march to take place despite being warned of the risks. It was not within the Commanding Officer's remit or power to do so.

[28] The Joint Security Committee was established in 1969 and chaired by the Northern Irish Prime Minister. The GOC had been designated Director of Operations and briefed the Prime Minister directly. The Chief Constable of the RUC, and other security and specialist officers would attend.

from a military perspective, is alleged to have declared "grown men! Marching! It's pathetic!"[29] The Falls Road curfew has been subject to particular venom from the Republican authorship. According to Molony, "every house on the Falls Road was looted, four civilians were killed, one crushed by an armored car, all of which made the Provos strategy seem unavoidable, appealing, and necessary."[30] Using Regimental log books and first-hand accounts, the historians Andrew Sanders and Ian Wood describe a different version of events. A company of soldiers knocked on the door of a house given to them in a tip off, found a cache of weapons and were extracting them when crowds began to assemble and assault the soldiers carrying out the operation.[31] The situation spiraled out of control, both sides over reacted, stone and bricks turned to petrol bombs, grenades, and bullets. Four civilians were killed and over eighty soldiers were injured, many by gunshot wounds and grenade fragments. To wound eighty soldiers, especially with grenades, requires a significant amount of ordinance and personal audacity. Faced with an obvious threat, soldiers, naturally on edge when being threatened with lethal force, defended themselves. That considerable amount of weapons found is often overlooked by the Republican authorship, some of whom provide the irrelevant excuse that they belonged to the Official, not the Provisional IRA.[32] Another journalist with limited empathy for the British Army, Tim Pat Coogan, claims that the Falls Road curfew

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[29] Andrew Sanders and Ian S. Wood, *Times of Troubles: Britain's War in Northern Ireland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 14.

[30] Moloney, *A Secret History,* 91.

[31] Sanders and Wood, *A Time of Troubles*, 25-27.

[32] Moloney, *Secret History*, 91.

was "intended as a rough handed ransack operation which would pacify the natives,"[33] yet offers no evidence other than listing previous counterinsurgency campaigns the Army had conducted to support this claim. Coogan goes on to claim that the significant find of explosives, weapons, and ammunition was nothing compared to the negative reaction of the Falls Road residents, suggesting that it would have been more sensible to leave the Falls Road alone, an arms cache that must not be touched in case it antagonizes the locals.[34] Similarly, the term "the Rape of the Falls Road" became ubiquitous in the Republican narrative, more as a recruiting call to arms than to offer any serious analysis on the event itself. The curfew was a tragic series of events, but portraying it through the prism of a deliberate attempt at trying to stamp authority on a population at large, detracts from the effort to restore some semblance of order to a situation that had spiraled out of control. One local Catholic, perhaps generously, summarized the debate by stating that some soldiers "behaved excellently while others were less than reasonable."[35] Other accusations include soldiers "firing rubber bullets point blank into the faces of rioters,"[36] applying "colonial techniques"[37] devoid of political rationale, and describing the Army as an "arrogant, overbearing and degrading" organization capable of "mindless harassment"

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[33] Coogan, *The Troubles*, 109.

[34] Ibid., 109-110.

[35] Hamill, *Pig in the Middle*, 39.

[36] Coogan, *The Troubles*, 111.

[37] Ibid., 107.

and "casual brutality."[38] Andrew Mumford suggests that the Army behaved with "the heavy handedness of a reactionary colonial force,"[39] while one journalist suggested the Army behaved like "it was the rebellious Crater district in the Aden Colony."[40] This thesis acknowledges the Army made significant mistakes. Yet, it is too simplistic to state that the Army in Northern Ireland, as an entire organization, was guilty of approaching a Military Aid to the Civil Power (MAC-P) task in the United Kingdom like a colonial counterinsurgency operation without exploring why. Ed Burke's statement that "the army's initial operations in Northern Ireland did reply upon some measures recently used in the colonies"[41] is certainly accurate: tactics, techniques and procedures were developed in the colonies, not in the United Kingdom. However, there is a difference between tactics, techniques and procedures, and a behavioral approach. A tactical document will inform a soldier how to carry out a particular task. Behavior is subject to leadership, culture and the climate of an organization, all three of which are informed by experience. While the behavior of the Army on the Falls Road curfew, for example, might well be labelled aggressive and below the standard expected by the public of their armed forces, it is not necessarily "colonial." The manner in which campus demonstrators, anti-Vietnam protestors or civil rights marches in America were dealt with by the police and

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[38] Patrick Devlin, quoted in Coogan, *The Troubles*, 115.

[39] Andrew Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth: The British Experience of Irregular Warfare* (Oxford: Routledge, 2012), 95.

[40] Tony Geraghty, *The Irish War* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), 33.

[41] Edward Burke, "Counter-Insurgency against 'Kith and Kin'? The British Army in Northern Ireland, 1970-76," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43, no. 4 (2015): 660.

the National Guard were not described as "colonial", nor were American curfews in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The behavior of soldiers reflected the threat they faced in certain situations, a fact rarely acknowledged by the Republican authorship. A soldier retains a right to defend himself, or others, from lethal force. This is not subject to rules of engagement or military policy; it is enshrined in law. While it is good practice to ensure that as little harm is done when interacting with a population on operations, and accepting that a British military uniform is an "irritant" from the outset to an Irishman, it is also important to note that if the situation has reached a stage where the Army has been deployed to stop people killing each other, the usual standard of interaction a population has with the security forces enjoyed by most western nations is likely to be strained in the first place.

There is a temptation to assess the deployment of British forces in 1969 as part of an assessment of the Army during the Troubles as a whole. For the Republican authorship, this would include Bloody Sunday, internment, and the role of the Special Air Service. Between 1969 and 1971, however, the situation was very different from what it became. Describing the actions of the Army with blanketed derision does little to explain why senior and junior officers made the decisions they did. To correct this, it is important to assess what the recent experience of "low intensity" campaigns was, and what lessons had been drawn out, before assessing how these were codified in doctrine, both formal and informal, and whether this doctrine was read, understood, and applied effectively. Was it the doctrine that was inapplicable? Or was it the manner in which it was interpreted that led to mistakes being made? What else contributed to the situation in Northern Ireland turning so dramatically against the Army in those crucial early years?

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CHAPTER 2

THE STATE OF BRITISH COUNTERINSURGENCY IN 1969

Military doctrine grows from an understanding of history and experience. To form, it usually follows the process of taking history, adding theory and producing doctrine. This chapter attempts to identify the aspects and trends that informed the doctrine available to British soldiers in 1969, the first time counterinsurgency doctrine was officially codified.[42] While it would be unwise to ignore the counterinsurgency campaigns of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the campaigns of the interwar period (1918 to 1939), all of which had a lasting legacy on the fundamentals of British counterinsurgency principles and practice, the focus will largely be on the British counterinsurgency experience between 1945 and 1969, which was the most recent, and the most relevant experience. This chapter argues that there are distinct common threads, or principles, that run through the main counterinsurgency campaigns the British conducted. These had been identified in 1969 and codified accordingly.

It is somewhat of a paradox that one of the few post war official publications the British produced regarding irregular warfare was about how to wage it, not counter it. The 1957 publication entitled *Guerilla Warfare*, was based on the partisan operations of World War II, [43] and designed to be used if Western Europe was overrun by the Soviet Union. This is perhaps unsurprising. Since the end of the Second World War, one

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[42] Sir Hew Strachan, "British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," *The RUSI Journal* 152, no. 6 (January 2008): 8-11.

[43] Special Operations Executive (SOE) published *The Partisan Leader's Handbook* and *How to Use High Explosives* between March 1939 and August 1940. See NAUK, HS 58/256.

perennial aspect of British Defense Policy has been to plan for the most dangerous course of action, while remaining capable of fighting the most likely. On the one hand, Britain must be prepared to fight full spectrum conflict, alongside her allies, with a peer, or near-peer enemy. On the other hand, the British Army must be prepared to engage in conflicts of a much smaller scale, in whatever guise they appear. *The Strategic Trends Programme: Future Operating Environment to 2035*[44] suggests future threats will come from "state" and "non state" actors; military force has a place in combating both. A similar dichotomy, although defined in a less binary fashion, existed between 1945 and 1969. Britain had to be prepared to fight a full-scale Soviet invasion of western Europe, the most dangerous threat, but remain capable of fighting those operations not defined as "war," which were more likely. The preponderance of doctrine available at the time favored the former; "shifting down the scale seemed to be an easier task than shifting up it."[45] The main focus of defense following World War II remained state-on-state fighting; smaller campaigns were considered aberrations of the "real thing."[46] Yet, Britain's colonial responsibilities meant that she had more experience than any other country fighting these aberrations, especially as she began to give up the colonies. It is unsurprising that the Army learnt much about counterinsurgency while doing so. While

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[44] Ministry of Defense, *Future Operating Environment 2035* (United Kingdom: Ministry of Defense, 2015).

[45] Hew Strachan, ed., *Big Wars and Small Wars: The British Army and the Lessons of War in the 20th Century* (Military History and Policy) (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 7.

[46] General Sir John Kiszely, "Postmodern Challenges for Modern Warriors," in *The Impenetrable Fog of War: Reflections on Modern Warfare and Strategic Surprise*, ed. Patrick Cronin (London: Praeger Security International, 2008), 130.

this experience did not necessarily remain unwritten, it often remained unpublished and

unavailable to serving officers and soldiers at the time.[47]

This experience did not necessarily translate into effective practice. The British

counterinsurgency operations since 1945, having often been used as examples of good

counterinsurgency practice, have been revised in the last ten years. The historian Andrew

Mumford focuses on four campaigns the British became embroiled in as the de-

colonialization process accelerated following World War II to highlight the fallacy of the

British reputation for success in countering insurgency. Mumford strongly critiqued the

performance of British civil institutions and the Army in the Malayan Emergency (1948

to 1960), the Mau Mau uprising (1952 to 1960), and the withdrawal from Aden (1962 to

1967), while Northern Ireland is referred to as "the nadir."[48] This review contrasts the

likes of Julian Paget and Robert Thompson, who hail the same campaigns (with the

exception of Northern Ireland) as examples of good counterinsurgency practice.

Mumford's study, published in 2012, came at a time when the British counterinsurgency

campaign in Iraq challenged Brigadier Alwyn Foster's claim in 2005 that, unlike the

United States, the British understood how, or certainly how not to, conduct

counterinsurgency operations.[49] Combined with the increasingly criticized

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[47] The Irish Command in 1922 wrote a four volume record of the Irish War of Independence from 1919-21, which contained sound counterinsurgency recommendations, but the document was never published and only released to the public on 27 July 1999. See *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland in 1920-21, and the Part Played by the Army in Dealing with It*, NAUK, WO 141/93 and WO 141/94.

[48] Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth*, Chapters 1 and 5.

[49] Thomas Donnelly, "The Cousins' Counterinsurgency Wars," *The RUSI Journal* 154, no. 3 (2009): 4-9.

counterinsurgency operation in Helmand Province, British counterinsurgency doctrine

and practice were under the spotlight.

The scope of this thesis prevents exploration of each campaign in detail, but to

understand the state of British counterinsurgency thinking and doctrine in 1969, it is

important to look at the strands that run through British experience in counterinsurgency

between 1945 and 1969. Although the campaigns mentioned differed considerably

(Kenya in particular), there are trends and parallels that tie one to the next. The struggle

the British had defining each situation, the discussions over the application of appropriate

force, the concept of "hearts and minds," relationship between the military and the civil

administration as well as the relationship with other parts of government, particularly the

police, are all tenets of the British experience in counterinsurgency during the twentieth

century which informed the doctrine available and the decision making during the initial

deployment of troops to Northern Ireland in 1969.

<u>Defining the Problem</u>

"The British[50] constitution, so far as it exists at all, does not recognize

insurgency."[51] The constitutional and legal historian Charles Townshend's opening line

in the somewhat telling title *Britain's Civil Wars* explains that ever since the Boer War

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[50] "Britain" or "Great Britain," refers to the three countries, England, Scotland, and Wales, constitutionally bound by the Act of Union in 1707. The 1800 Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland was amended after Irish independence in 1921 to only include Northern Ireland. The technically correct full term is "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland", whose inhabitants are almost always known as "The British".

[51] Charles Townsend, *Britain's Civil Wars: Counter Insurgency in the Twentieth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), 13.

(1899 to 1902), Britain has been perplexed by the nomenclature of the type of engagement the Army faced. Townshend suggests that there is no "third way" for the British–the state of affairs is "at war," or "at peace," a concept represented in the polar differences between an armed standing army, and an unarmed police force. The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 was the last open threat to the status quo in Britain. Since then, there has been no sustained irregular threat to the mainland, and the legacy of Stuart absolutism and Cromwellian dictatorship shape the Victorian reluctance to act outside the rule of law, and the preservation of "order" is *primus interpares* for any military operation short of war.[52] Charles Callwell's work of 1906, entitled *Small Wars*, suggests that the definition is a matter of regular versus irregular forces, with no relation to the size of the conflict.[53] Sir Charles Gwynn suggests "small wars" refers to wars conducted by a non-conscript standing Army,[54] and offers the term "Imperial Policing" to describe the counter insurgency campaigns up until 1934. The title of Frank Kitson's work, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency and Peacekeeping,* suggests a military approach to a criminal problem, while Robert Thompson refers to "insurgency," but purely in an ideological framework (*Defeating the Communist Insurgency*). Only Julian Paget recognizes "counter insurgency" as a standalone title. It is worth noting that international authors such as the French writers and soldiers David Galula and Roger

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[52] Townsend, *Britain's Civil Wars*, 17.

[53] Charles Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London: Endeavour Press, 1906), 11-12.

[54] Sir Charles Gwynn, *Imperial Policing* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1939), 4, accessed 15 September 2017.

Trinquier feature counterinsurgency in the titles of their works, while Robert Taber talks of "the fallacies of counterinsurgency" in his opening chapter.[55]

The historian Thomas Mockaitis suggests that this habit stretches well into the twenty first century, with nebulous terms like "preventative diplomacy" forming part of the UN charters peacekeeping directive.[56] The confusion over what a certain situation was can be seen in most cases prior to, and indeed well beyond, 1969. In 1943, Jewish groups that used violence to force the British out of Palestine once the full horrors of the holocaust became apparent, were labelled "terrorists"; the "prospect that Britain was faced with a Jewish insurgency was one that was too uncomfortable for the Government to draw."[57] In 1930, "civil disobedience" was the term used by the British Government to label the attempts by Ali Musaliar to replace the British with a caliphate, the Malayan "Emergency" was the term used to refer to the communist insurgency in Britain's first "post-colonial war," and the Mau Mau conflict was publicly referred to as a "Gikuyu civil war", while privately as a formidable "planned revolutionary movement."[58] Perhaps the most challenging conflict for the British to label was in Ireland in the early 1920s. This was the closest irregular conflict to the mainland the British had to deal with, creating ambiguity and confusion as to what the nature of the situation was, and thus how

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[55] Robert Taber, *The War of the Flea: A Study of Guerilla Warfare Theory and Practice* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1965), 9.

[56] Thomas R. Mockaitis, "From Counterinsurgency to Peace Enforcement: New Names for Old Games?" *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 10, no. 2 (1999): 43.

[57] Townsend, *Britain's Civil Wars*, 114.

[58] Ibid., 200.

to approach it. Following the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act in the summer of 1920, Lloyd George, keen to "insist the situation was one of peace," responded to Field Marshall French's request for a more warlike position against the Volunteers by stating that "you do not declare war on rebels".[59] The same ambiguity would follow the British to Ulster in 1969. Indeed, debate continues over whether "insurgency" and "terrorism" are military or criminal matters. For the British in Northern Ireland, "terrorism" or "terrorist" has been used to describe the actions and individuals regardless of whether they are directed against civilian or military targets. It is hard to argue that terrorism is the correct term to describe an attack on a military patrol when it is also used to describe the bombing of a shopping center. The term "insurgency", carries a certain stigma that the British government was unwilling to except; that there often existed an organized effort to overthrow the government, which went far beyond the limits of the police to prevent, was not something the British government was prepared to entertain. Failing acutely to define this resulted in an inability to respond appropriately, especially when it came to the use of force. As will be discussed, it is particularly challenging to write doctrine, a common language for the military professional, for a situation that has little common understanding.

The Rule of Law

When conducting military operations, be they full scale combat operations or counterinsurgency operations, the British, generally speaking, observe the established rule of law. This is not necessarily solely to preserve the moral high ground, deeming it

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[59] Ibid., 57.

better to "suffer injustices than commit them,"[60] it also stems from the experience in empire. How can a colonizing nation claim to provide a civilizing role when it refuses to observe the very rules it attempts to impose on the native population? As Secretary of State for the Colonies during the Malaya Emergency, Oliver Lyttelton refused to accept the planters demands for "drastic action" to be taken against "collaborators," stating that "until the government could deliver its part of the bargain, which was to protect the citizen on his lawful occasions, it was mere cynicism to prosecute those who were defending themselves in the only way open to them."[61] There were, of course, significant abuses that took place, most notably in Kenya.[62] The execution of 1,086 Mau Mau suspects and the indiscriminate bombing of Kikuyu in the forests of Kenya,[63] along with what Caroline Elkins describes as "extreme sanctioned violence"[64] has received more public attention recently as archives become declassified. Although the campaign might be the "most Hobbesian of counter insurgency campaigns"[65] and as unpalatable as the actions were, they were conducted within the legal framework in place at the time. This was usually due to temporary "emergency" acts, special systems of military rule that

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[60] Albert Camus quoted in David. Benest, "Aden to Northern Ireland 1966–1976," in *Big Wars and Small Wars: The British Army and the Lessons of War in the 20th Century* (Military History and Policy) ed. Hew Strachan (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 116.

[61] Townsend, *Britain's Civil Wars,* 165

[62] Caroline Elkins, *Imperial reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 305-310.

[63] Strachan, *Big Wars and Small Wars*, 12.

[64] Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning,* 310.

[65] Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth,* 71.

superseded the civilian statute while still being subject to an overarching rule of law.[66]

There were four emergency "acts" in India between 1915 and 1925, two in Palestine in

1931 and 1937, one in Ireland in 1920, two in Malaya in 1939 (which extended to

Cyprus) and 1948, and one in Kenya in 1952.[67] These emergency acts were demanded by

the governor, and usually granted without much challenge.[68] While it is easy to criticize a

system that allows the law to be stretched unchallenged, it is important to note that the

British recognized the importance of doing so. Unlike the French in Algeria, where there

was a conscious departure from the rule of law, [69] the British found ways to ensure they

were conducting what was deemed necessary, however immoral by modern standards,

within the confines of what was legally acceptable.

Minimum Force

The legal framework in which a country deploys an armed force is inextricably

linked to the permitted use of that force. Mockaitis suggests that the experience of British

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[66] John Reynold, "The Long Shadow of Colonialism: The Origins of the Doctrine of Emergency in International Human Rights Law" (Research Paper No. 19/2010, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University). The Restoration of Order in Ireland Act was passed due to the expiration of the Defence of the Realm Act of 1914, which had provided the same powers.

[67] Ibid., 6-14.

[68] Ibid., 10.

[69] Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954 –1962* (New York: New York Review of Books, 1977), 195-201. Horne suggests that 'by way of explaining the essential atmosphere in which torture could become institutionalized within the French Army in Algeria, one needs to take into account all those factors . . . horror at the atrocities of the FLN, a determination not to lose another campaign, and the generally brutalizing of so cruel and protracted war'.

counterinsurgency in the twentieth century was not one of excessive force.[70] The primacy

of civil power, common law, of which the soldier was always part, and the limited

objective of the soldier to return a situation to a state of law and order resulted in

acceptance that "no more force shall be applied than the situation demands."[71] While it is

hard not to agree with Mockaitis, the problem comes in defining what the "situation"

actually is, and what force is therefore appropriate and permitted. Further, under the

doctrine of civil control of the military, the civil government is responsible for defining

both the mission and the end state, as well as any political factors that bear on the use of

force domestically.

The debate about the appropriate use of force is an enduring feature of British

counterinsurgency campaigning. General Sir Charles Napier asked whether he "should be

shot for his forbearance by a court martial or hanged for over-zeal by a jury", when

confronted with a mob in 1837.[72] A similar question came from soldiers in Afghanistan

in the twentieth century, who debated whether it was "better to be judged by twelve than

carried by six." The debates that followed the widely decried Amritsar Massacre of 1919,

and Brigadier General Reginald Dyer's subsequent cashiering, served to remind British

soldiers that the doctrine of the British Army throughout the twentieth century was

"predicated more on the legal authority on which it acted than on its military

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[70] Mockaitis, "From Counterinsurgency to Peace Enforcement," 41.

[71] Ibid., 53.

[72] Townsend, *Britain's Civil Wars,* 20.

capability."[73] The combined arms firepower and surprise that accompanied the major military engagements of World War II were rarely used in the smaller post war years; armored vehicles were used for awe rather than kinetic effect, and discrimination and proportionality were deemed mandatory.

What constituted "appropriate force" reflected the circumstances of the campaign. In Malaya, small groups of comparatively isolated communist insurgents were easier to find, fix and destroy within the legal limits of the operation. In Cyprus, Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston (EOKA)[74] mastered operations in urban environments, but they were limited in duration and objective, and usually resulted in a retreat to rural areas for reconstitution. The majority of offensive operations launched against EOKA took place away from civilian population and infrastructure. Although larger in number, the Mau Mau was a predominantly rural organization that never really threatened the colonial center of gravity in Nairobi. The fact that the air force had a role in Kenya is indicative of the rural nature of the campaign. The use of force, be it lethal or non-lethal, becomes a significantly less challenging issue when the insurgency can be isolated from the people a government is trying to protect.

<u>Hearts and Minds</u>

In large measure, counterinsurgency is a battle of opinion. The insurgent usually attempts to achieve his aims through violence. The counterinsurgent tries to prevent him

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[73] Strachan, *Big Wars and Small Wars*, 10.

[74] Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) was a Greek Cypriot nationalist group that fought against British rule in Cyprus and for the island's eventual re-unification with Greece.

from doing so while protecting the territorial integrity or the sovereignty of the state, as well as the institutions that govern the state. In conventional warfare, the vital ground is normally that–ground. In counterinsurgency, the vital ground is at best the consent, at worst the co-operation, willing or unwilling, of the people. It is unclear where the term "hearts and minds" came from, but it has been a consistent "feature" of British counter insurgency since Malaya. What has not been constant, is agreement about what hearts and minds actually means. The meaning seems to have changed over time, the current understanding of the term does not reflect the original intent. Mockaitis suggests that hearts and minds is about providing materialistic solutions to a population, as "in most cases, discontent stems from bread and butter issues. Lack of jobs, decent housing, electricity, running water, health care, education can motivate people to accept or even actively support insurgents."[75] This "economic" approach does not reflect the less altruistic nature of earlier authors on the subject. Most commentators agree that hearts and minds was a concept the British first consciously applied in the Malaya campaign; a political solution designed to deny the insurgents a safe environment in which to operate. If the population believes the government will win the campaign, it will not support the insurgent. By losing the support of the population, an insurgent can not sustain himself and ceases to exist in any threatening form.[76] Julian Paget suggests that the application of

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[75] Thomas Mockaitis quoted in Paul Dixon, "'Hearts and Minds'? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (2009): 364.

[76] Dixon, "'Hearts and Minds'? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," 362.

hearts and minds is essential, but mainly because it leads to good intelligence.[77] None of this was, as Hew Strachan notes, "about being nice to the natives,"[78] it was about persuading insurgents and those that supported them that their lot is better off with the government. The difference in heart (an emotional attachment) and mind (a logical, pragmatic approach), is nothing more than a modern reflection of Clausewitz's trinity; the nature of (any) conflict is a balance between the passion, or will of the people, the calculated reason of government and the creative endeavors of the military. Modern experience of hearts and minds suggests favoring the former, but the British experience in the run up to 1969 is more informed by the latter. Consent, political or otherwise, can rarely be bought.

<center>Civil-Military Relationship</center>

Counterinsurgency is an inherently political activity. David Galula, paraphrasing Clausewitz, went so far as to say that "insurgency is the pursuit of the policy of a party, inside a country, by every means."[79] While this might simplify insurgencies that cross borders or exist to achieve more limited aims, it serves to remind us that for counterinsurgency strategies to be effective, they must select and maintain a political aim before military action is considered. Another theory, in its infancy at the time, was an

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[77] Julian Paget, *Counter Insurgency Campaigning* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 167.

[78] Hew Strachan quoted in Dixon, "'Hearts and Minds'? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," 364.

[79] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (London: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 3.

offshoot of the "foco" theory developing in Latin America; revolutionary violence will bring people to the politics. The British experience of counterinsurgency from 1945 was one of de-centralized command. This was less to do with ensuring the "military campaign was commensurate with overarching political objectives,"[80] and more to do with the significant difficulty civilian institutions in London had controlling a campaign being fought in the eastern Mediterranean, Pacific, or central Africa. There is the visible aspect of civilian primacy which appeals to the materialistic desires of a population (discussed as hearts and minds earlier in this chapter), and the unseen aspect of civil military relations; clear command and control, unity of effort, adequate resourcing and effective, integrated use of those resources across all parts of government. These unseen aspects allow political objectives to be set, and the military, along with other organs of state, to devise a strategy to achieve them. Although this concept was not new, it was first properly codified during the Malayan campaign, where lines of effort crossed military, political, legal, and social spheres, in what became known as the "Briggs Plan." Whether or not the key individuals were military or civilian, the aim was "to set civil military relations on a more formal basis."[81] This so called "war by committee" was carried forward to Cyprus, Kenya, and Aden and became a consistent feature of the interwar counterinsurgency campaign.

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[80] Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth*, 10.

[81] Thomas Mockaitis, "The Origins of British Counter Insurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 1, no. 3 (December 1990): 223.

Working with Indigenous Police

Unlike other countries, Britain had avoided a "Gendarmerie" style model for its police force. British police, on the whole, operated unarmed on the mainland. Exceptions included the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and indigenous police forces in the colonies, who, facing a different level of threat, adapted accordingly. The RIC was always armed, while in the north, the paramilitary arm of the RUC, the "B Specials", and the RUC itself, were also always armed. However, these organizations were one deep. When a situation presented overmatch for unarmed, or lightly armed police forces, the problem became a question of "where to go next?" This explains why the Army featured so prominently in counterinsurgency campaigns in the interwar period. Writing in 1934, Charles Gwynn suggests that the Army's role moved from the small wars of the Victorian era, where the purpose was to establish civil control, to the role of maintaining or restoring civil power, where it ceases to exist, or when the police were incapable of supporting the civil government adequately.[82] Gwynn's assessment reflects the experience of the British, with the later deployment of the Army falling entirely within the latter two categories from 1945 to 1969.

The expanse of the British empire forced the colonial administrations to invest heavily in well-resourced, well-led, indigenous police forces.[83] Following Malaya, Paget and Kitson both pointed to the ability to gather "background intelligence," and "convert it

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[82] Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 5.

[83] These were patterned after the RIC, founded in 1836, which served as the model for armed policing until its abolition in 1922. Interestingly, the Irish Free State had an unarmed police force for the first few months of its establishment, before the founding of the armed Garda Siochnachta in 1922.

to contact information as the key to counterinsurgency operations. This was achieved by close cooperation between the Army and the police, often with a local face. In principle, this was sound logic, and certainly provided results in Malaya and Kenya. The dangerous by-product was, however, essentially a licensed militia, armed not only with weapons, but the tacit authority of the state. These "counter gangs," as Kitson referred to them, were the antidote to irregular activity among their own people. However morally dubious this process was,[84] it achieved results.[85] The model of the RIC's supplementation of intelligence to the Dublin Metropolitan Police, which provided the Irish government with most of its information until army intelligence got off the ground in 1922, was considered best practice. As will be discussed, it was very hard to implement a similar model in 1969.

It was against the backdrop of almost twenty-five years of consecutive counterinsurgency campaigns that Britain deployed forces to Northern Ireland in 1969. The decisions that were going to have such a crucial effect on the tense situation were made by individuals whose experiences not only in war, but in counterinsurgency, were considerable. The Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Mike Carver, had been mentioned in dispatches, awarded a Military Cross (MC) and bar, a Distinguished Service

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[84] Turning people against their own can be interpreted as a morally misaligned activity, unless it can be demonstrated that those most threatened by the insurgent, or those with the greater stake in the future, have a vested interest in doing so.

[85] There is an important philosophical issue which western nations, particularly those with imperial pasts have wrestled with. Can a "foreigner", however defined, really be a counterinsurgent, or does the only true counterinsurgent have to be a 'native'? If "native", then there was a considerable problem in Northern Ireland as only a Catholic "Irishman" could be a true counterinsurgent–anyone else was just a foreigner with a gun.

Order and Commander of the British Empire for his services in World War II in Montgomery's Eight Army. He was awarded another mention in dispatches for his service in the Mau Mau uprising after being appointed Deputy Chief of Staff, East Africa Command in June 1954. He was head of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission to Cyprus from 1964 to 1966.[86] General Sir Ian Freeland, appointed to be GOC Northern Ireland in July 1969, had commanded a battalion in Cyprus during the EOKA counterinsurgency campaign, and was decorated for his role in quelling the Zanzibar Revolution when GOC Land Forces, Kenya.[87] The Commander in Chief, Land Forces, General Sir Robert Ford, was decorated for his role in the D-Day landings, and again for his service in Palestine as a Commanding Officer in 1948.[88] General Sir Harry Tuzo was perhaps the most significant of these decision makers, and had the most counterinsurgency experience. Born in India, awarded the MC during the breakout from Caen, Tuzo commanded the Gurkha Brigade responsible for the feted hearts and minds

[86] The Daily Telegraph, "Obituary-General Sir Robert Ford," *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 November 2015, accessed 10 January 2018, https://www.telegraph.co.uk /news/obituaries/12018648/General-Sir-Robert-Ford-obituary.html.

[87] See Aaron Edwards, "'A Whipping Boy if ever there was one'? The British Army and the Politics of Civil–Military Relations in Northern Ireland, 1969–79," *Contemporary British History* 28, no. 2 (June 2014) 166-189; Desmond Hamill, *Pig in the Middle: Army in Northern Ireland, 1969 –1984* (London: Methuen Publishing, 1985), 11-12. Freeland is one of the few GOCs of Northern Ireland to have deposited his papers in the Imperial War Museum, London. For the listed collection, visit https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205004744.

[88] The Daily Telegraph, "Obituary-General Sir Robert Ford"; Independent, "General Sir Robert Ford: D-Day Veteran who Led British Forces on Bloody Sunday but Refused to Accept Blame for Killings," *Independent*, 30 November 2015, accessed 10 January 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/general-sir-robert-ford-d-day-veteran-who-led-british-forces-on-bloody-sunday-but-refused-to-accept-a6755061.html

campaign in Borneo. So impressed with the results Tuzo achieved, not only with the

Gurkha brigade, but also with the Special Air Service in the cross border raids, the Sultan

of Brunei honored him in 1965.[89] The more junior officers, and perhaps those close

enough to the unfolding events on the ground that their actions had more significance,

had similar experiences in the de-colonialization period. Brigadiers Frank Kitson and Pat

MacLellan, the two brigade commanders by 1972, had extensive experience during the

interwar counterinsurgency campaigns.

If the military decision makers were decorated, experienced soldiers, so too were

their political masters. Dennis Healey served in the Royal Artillery at Anzio, Reginauld

Maulding was an intelligence officer in the Royal Air Force, Jim Callaghan served in the

navy, Peter (Lord) Carrington won an MC with the Grenadier Guards on D-Day, and

Edward Heath, Willie Whitelaw, and James Chichester Clerk were all decorated for their

service in World War II. While it is true that very little of this combined service included

counterinsurgency campaigning, whatever mistakes were made by politicians or soldiers,

they were not due to military inexperience. Indeed, the type of their military experience

may well have biased their civilian decision making.

It is important to draw out the key factors of the recent British experience in

counterinsurgency operations to understand what shaped the doctrine available to British

soldiers in 1969. The bifurcated approach to defense, where Britain planned for full scale

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[89] New York Times, "Commander in Ulster Harry Crauford Tuzo," *The New York Times*, 1 August 1972, accessed 10 December 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/1972/ 08/01/archives/commander-in-ulster-harry-craufurd-tuzo.html; Independent, "Obituary: General Sir Harry Tuzo, *Independent*, 18 August, 1998, accessed 10 January 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-general-sir-harry-tuzo-1172615.html.

war while conducting "low intensity operations," the lack of consistency in defining what "low intensity operations" were, the role the rule of law played, the emphasis on minimal force, hearts and minds – however interpreted, civil-military relations and working with indigenous civil authorities had, by 1969 become enshrined in the British understanding of how to conduct these operations. Mockaitis suggests that "experience had given Britain an Army almost ideally suited to counter insurgency, but it was an army slow to convert that experience into doctrine."[90] While this may be true of the first half of the twentieth century, in 1969 the publication of the first manuals on counterinsurgency operations attempted to translate the British experience into doctrine. Was it an accurate reflection of the recent experience? Was it read? The following chapter will contend that the principles that were present in counterinsurgency doctrine were sensible, and remain sensible to this day.

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[90] Mockaitis, "The Origins of British Counter Insurgency," 223.

CHAPTER 3

AVAILABLE BRITISH DOCTRINE

The current British Army Field Manual for counterinsurgency lists ten principles
that should be followed when conducting counterinsurgency operations: primacy of
political purpose, unity of effort, understand the human terrain, secure the population,
neutralize the insurgent, gain and maintain popular support, operate in accordance with
the law, integrate intelligence, prepare for the long term while learning and adapting.[91]
Although not explicitly written as one collection, all of the principles currently held as
doctrine existed in the doctrine soldiers had access to in 1969. It is somewhat axiomatic
to state that British counterinsurgency doctrine in 1969 was "colonial." The British
experience of counterinsurgency prior to 1969 had taken place, almost exclusively, in the
colonies. Doctrine formed in the colonies does not necessarily make it inapplicable or
obsolete, however. This chapter contends that doctrine can be broken down into two main
parts: principles, which are largely enduring, and tactics, which change often. To focus
on the latter is to overlook the purpose of doctrine, which is to provide enough guidance
to allow a commander to effectively execute a mission, while not being so prescriptive
that it limits the commander's initiative when doing so.

Forming sound doctrine certainly challenged the British Army following World
War II. Counterinsurgency operations in Malaya only became a model as the American
involvement increased in Vietnam at the end of the 1960s; until then there were no

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[91] Ministry of Defence, *British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10, Countering Insurgency*, Army Code 71876 (London: Ministry of Defense, October 2009), 1-1.

official publications about how to counter an insurgency.[92] This changed with the publication of *Land Operations Volume III,* the first part of which was published in early 1969. *Land Operations Volume III* was the overarching document that covered "revolutionary warfare," and was largely based on the British experience in Aden, but incorporated many of the principles the British identified in previous campaigns. *Land Operations Volume III* was divided into three parts: *Principles and Techniques* (Part 1), *Internal Security* (Part 2) and *Counter Insurgency* (Part 3). Interestingly, Part 2 replaced what was previously referred to as *Keeping the Peace*, highlighting the ongoing struggle with the vernacular surrounding low intensity operations described in chapter 1.

Part 1 focuses largely on the definitions and techniques to be applied in "counter revolutionary warfare." It is a predominantly tactical document, describing the layout of revolutionary cells, likely enemy tactics and procedures, and how to respond. There is a distinctly counter communist flavor to the doctrine, clearly influenced by Malaya and Vietnam. It contains, as its title suggests, certain principles that should be applied in "counter-revolutionary" operations. The principles of counter revolutionary operations, it argues, consist of leveraging all aspects of national power (no revolutionary movement is purely military), ensuring the counter revolutionary action is supporting a government that "is aware of, and has sympathy with, the aspirations of the mass of the people," and an emphasis on gaining and maintaining the popular support of the people.[93] These

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[92] Strachan, "British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq.

[93] Ministry of Defence, *Land Operations Volume III: Counter Revolutionary Operations, Part 1–Principles and General Aspects* (London: Ministry of Defence, August 1969), 41.

principles are consistent throughout subsequent chapters of the publication, and remain sound counterinsurgency principles to this day.

Part II focuses on Internal Security. The difference between internal security and counterinsurgency, it suggests, is twofold. First, internal security is primarily a police affair. The Army will be called upon to support the civil authorities to control civil disobedience, assemblies and riots if required. Secondly, it specifies dealing with armed terrorists in urban areas as a major component of conducting internal security. Internal operations against insurgents in rural areas are covered under counterinsurgency. To separate insurgent activity from terrorism, and political disenchantment (which fuels insurgency) from civil unrest is to un-couple factors that rely on each other to exist.[94] While this serves as an example of a mindset heavily influenced by Aden, it would be wrong to dismiss the document's relevance out of hand. Prevention of violence, minimum force, legal obligations, safeguarding loyal citizens, maintenance of public confidence and the collection of evidence, are all listed in Part II as principles which must be adhered to when deployed on internal security operations. When applying such principles, separating civil disobedience and terrorist activity, proportionate escalation, distinguishing the use of force with the number of forces, and the importance of individual commanders' initiative is vital to act "soundly and intelligently" when confronted with "unusual situations."[95]

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[94] Ministry of Defence, *Land Operations Volume III: Counter Revolutionary Operations, Part 2–Internal Security* (London: Ministry of Defence, November 1969), Section 1.

[95] Ibid., 2.

Another theme, cooperation with security forces, is also evident. The aim of the military is to act "in concert" with the civilian authorities, be prepared for timely deployment when called for, and to integrate as part of the pre-rehearsed security plan.[96] A section devoted to the command and control of integrated army and police emphasizes the need for joint planning, the establishment of a system of control and direction, and even suggests a command structure starting at brigade down to company level. What is emphasized throughout, is the absolute assertion that British forces are assisting the civil authorities, and not acting unilaterally. This can only be achieved if the civil authorities define exactly what assistance they require.

The authors of the doctrine make some apposite assessments of the effect deploying military force in support of the civil authorities will have on the local population. On the one hand, the "arrival of military force will often do much to restore the confidence and peace in an area involved in civil disturbances," while on the other hand, the presence of British forces could antagonize the local population, especially when the "treaty arrangements were themselves a political issue."[97] Identifying and maintaining the right balance between protecting the aggrieved and being identified as part of the problem became a significant problem for the British on deployment to Northern Ireland.

Perhaps the most relevant part of the doctrine for soldiers deploying in 1969 is Section 12, which deals with the military being used for normal police duties. The

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[96] Ibid., 4.

[97] Ibid., 13.

doctrine accepts the use of the military must be a last resort, especially if it is for riot control. This reflects the limited ability to gradually escalate a response in the event of civil unrest. Britain has no Gendarmerie or para-military police force to deploy when the regular police are overwhelmed. To deploy the Army is, quite literally, the last resort. [98] The doctrine reflects an understanding of this limitation, and the political ramifications behind it. When the Army is required to assist, assistance must be provided as peacefully as possible, and a thorough record of events is to be kept for the inevitable enquiry that follows.[99] For reasons that will be explained later, the British discovered this was much harder to apply in practice than acknowledge in theory.

Part III focuses on rural counterinsurgency and contains language and concepts heavily influenced by the recent de-colonialization campaigns discussed in chapter 1. The discussion of jungle operations reflects the experience of the Malayan emergency. Gaining control of the whole country and the use of air and naval support or the local armed forces reflects the experience in Kenya and Aden, while offensive operations in depth, with armor, mortar, and artillery support[100] suggests a counterinsurgency campaign reminiscent of French operations in Algeria or the American involvement in Vietnam. Overall, the document implies that counterinsurgency operations would be conducted with the benefit of time, the use of force to an almost conventional level and the general absence of civilian considerations. They would also be conducted against an

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[98] Ministry of Defence, *Land Operations Volume III: Internal Security*, 37.

[99] Ibid., 27-30.

[100] Ministry of Defence, *Land Operations Volume III, Counter Insurgency*, 37.

insurgent more likely to use "bamboo stakes" and caltraps[101] than one that could bring significant lethal force to bare on the security services before blending back in to a discontented population in an urban environment. Superficially it provides very little assistance for a soldier conducting counterinsurgency in an urban environment.

It is important to separate the principles from the tactics however. Although largely tactical in nature, Part III lists a number of principles, named "ingredients for successful counterinsurgency," that were not only applicable in Northern Ireland in 1969, but resonate with modern principles of counterinsurgency. Part III accepts the full spectrum of counterinsurgency (political, economic, psychological, and sociological) and the need for the Army to operate within that context.[102] It emphasizes the necessity for a clear legal status within which soldiers operate,[103] and that all soldiers must understand the political situation in which they find themselves deployed.[104] It identifies that "the leaven of revolutionary war is discontent, and whilst the purely military operations to kill or capture the insurgents may succeed, it is not until the source of that discontent is removed that a revolutionary war can be brought to a successful conclusion."[105] Replace "revolutionary war" with "the situation in Northern Ireland in 1969" and it is hard to argue there is any other difference in the principle the document is trying to purport.

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[101] Ibid., 125.

[102] Ibid., 2-11.

[103] Ibid., 6-16.

[104] Ibid., 17.

[105] Ibid.

Finally, the conclusion that without unity between the government, "indigenous security forces" and the Army, counterinsurgency operations were likely to fail,[106] proved to be particularly relevant for the British Army in 1969.

Doctrine can come from both formal and informal sources; the British Army has often preferred the latter.[107] While the Land Operations Volumes were published under the Ministry of Defense, non-official but highly regarded works were also in circulation. Brigadier Frank Kitson's work *Low Intensity Operations* was published in 1971, the same year he deployed to Northern Ireland as a brigade commander. Unlike the authors of formal doctrine, Kitson had the benefit of witnessing the initial deployment to Northern Ireland and could therefore incorporate the unique example into his assessment. Kitson argued that previous military assistance to the civil authority was "a polite term used to describe a mild form of countering subversion."[108] Peace-keeping, a comparatively new term, reflected the military role in preventing one group of people from attacking another, rather than attacking the Army, an accurate description of the initial problem the Army faced in Northern Ireland. While Kitson's advocacy of controversial tactical methods has left a debated legacy,[109] his principles of focusing on hearts and minds, intelligence gathering, covert surveillance, and psychological operations were widely read and

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[106] Ibid., 30.

[107] See Sergio Catignani, "Coping with Knowledge: Organizational Learning in the British Army?" *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 37, no. 1 (2014): 30-40.

[108] Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 25.

[109] James Hughes, "Frank Kitson in Northern Ireland and the 'British way' of Counterinsurgency," *Features* 22, no. 1 (January/February 2014), accessed 22 November 2017.

understood at the time, not just by soldiers, but by the IRA. The IRA Chief of Staff, Sean MacStoifan, referred to Frank Kitson as "our deadliest enemy in the North."[110] While the tactics used in Kenya to obtain intelligence would never have been deemed acceptable in the United Kingdom, the principle of sound intelligence remains part of universal counterinsurgency doctrine today.

While Kitson may well have been the most current non-official author of doctrine, counterinsurgency authors that published material earlier in the century continued to be relevant. As discussed in chapter 1, British counterinsurgency doctrine has seen a steady drumbeat of publications since Maj Gen Sir Charles Callwell's *Small Wars* in 1906. Robert Thompson focuses on legitimate political grievances as the primary driver of an insurgency, rather than the motivations of the insurgent group, and was the first to advocate clearly the "balance between the military and civil effort, with complete coordination in all fields."[111] Julian Paget described how the British were successful at winning hearts and minds in *Counter-Insurgency Operations*, published two years before the deployment of British troops to Northern Ireland in 1969.[112] The effectiveness and relevance of these publications have been debated by authors such as Andrew Mumford and Paul Dixon, but it is hard to argue that many of the principles espoused, like the formal doctrine, were as relevant in 1969 as they were in the post-World War II period,

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[110] Sean MacStiofain, *Revolutionary in Ireland* (Edinburgh: R. and R. Clark, 1975), 72.

[111] Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences in Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), 51.

[112] Paget, *Counter Insurgency Campaigning*, Chapters 2-5.

and continue to hold relevance today. Selecting a clear political aim, functioning within

the law, identifying an overall plan, isolating political subversion and the "ink spot"

theory of securing base areas before expanding influence and control are, if interpreted

and operationalized correctly, retain their validity. Although Mumford cautions against

too literal an interpretation of what is referred to as the "classical" period of

counterinsurgency - the 1950s and 60s, the coalition approach to counterinsurgency in

Iraq, for example, could have benefitted significantly from "contemporizing Thompson's

basic principles."[113]

 The British, of course, were not alone in writing about the subject. Published in

1964, David Galula's four principles of the counterinsurgent are another example of a

celebrated theorist whose writing was readily available in 1969. Galula argued that the

population is paramount, and the support from it should be the primary focus of the

campaign, that identifying key groups who will support the counterinsurgency campaign

is vital, the counterinsurgent must maintain public support and provide sufficient will and

resources to see it through.[114] It is hard to see which principle was not applicable in

Northern Ireland. The French military officer and historian Roger Trinquier published

Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency in 1961. It became one of the

best-selling post World War II books in France.[115] Trinquier was one of the first theorists

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[113] Andrew Mumford, "Sir Robert Thompson's Lessons for Iraq: Bringing the 'Basic Principles of Counter-Insurgency' into the 21st Century," *Defence Studies* 10, no. 1-2 (2010): 180.

[114] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 50-56.

[115] Robert R. Tomes, "Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Parameters* (Spring 2004): 17.

to focus on the complex entanglement of political, economic, military and social aspects of counterinsurgency, arguing that military action alone is insufficient to defeat an insurgency.[116]

While informal friendly doctrine can broaden the approach of an Army on operations, so too can doctrine written by those who are likely to be, or are actually, fighting. Robert Taber's work *War of the Flea* was first published in 1965. While it is unclear how widely circulated his work was, as is discussed in later chapters, it was being read by members of the IRA. Taber argued that guerilla resistance against a colonial power would eventually succeed, stating that "no colonial war has been lost by a colonial people, once entered into."[117] The British Army might not have seen themselves as "colonial masters" in Northern Ireland, but most members of the IRA did. Taber's work would have been particularly appealing to an Irish "revolutionary." One chapter is devoted to the early Irish "Troubles" and asserts that "the English did capitulate, if not to the threat per se, then to the intolerable political and economic situation that it was to produce, given another year."[118] Taber's emphasis on the importance of headlines over the bombs and marches over machine guns was not lost on the IRA. Other doctrine, largely from Latin American insurgents championing urban insurgency is discussed more in chapter 6. How widely circulated it was is hard to tell but reading and understanding insurgency doctrine may well have provided an edge when attempting to combat it.

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[116] Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 1-27.

[117] Taber, *The War of the Flea*, 62.

[118] Ibid., 102.

While doctrine existed, and existed in relative abundance, it is important to ask if it was read. John Nagl states that "the only real indication that experience gained had been reflected in army units, was by the training of those units before they deployed to Northern Ireland for duty . . . hostile tactics were studied, changes in training promulgated quickly, and troops informed immediately. None of this seems to have been reflected in any official doctrine."[119] While Nagl was talking of the campaign as a whole, the statement seems to ignore the "principles and guidelines" of counter-revolutionary operations in *Land Operations Volume III*. While *Land Operations Volume III* was not updated until the mid-1980s, it is hard to agree with Nagl that experience was not codified in official doctrine. It is true that the tactical element of the doctrine was quickly deemed irrelevant–tactics are the most theatre specific part of any campaign, but the principles present in all chapters had an enduring nature. The challenge was how to apply these principles in a far more constitutionally complex situation than had tested them before.

Caroline Kennedy Pipe and Colin McInnes argue that despite being engaged in small wars and counterinsurgency campaigns for the previous twenty years, counterinsurgency doctrine featured little in the commissioning course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst for junior officers and the entrance exams to staff college for intermediate officers.[120] This is unsurprising. The main threat to national security, and

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[119] John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 204.

[120] Caroline Kennedy-Pipe and Colin McInnes, "The British Army in Northern Ireland 1969–1972: From Policing to Counter-Terror," *Journal of Strategic Studies Journal of Strategic Studies* 20, no. 2 (January 2008): 3.

therefore what the preponderance of training was designed to combat, was a peer on peer conflict in central Europe. It was the same experience for officer cadets at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2008, the height of Britain's commitment to Afghanistan.[121] Counterinsurgency appears to be so subject to a specific condition or situation, that it is only effectively taught in pre-deployment, rather than generalist training. This is not to suggest that the history, theory and doctrine of previous counterinsurgency campaigns could not be discussed or taught, but the prioritization of time and resources was deemed better suited to combat the most dangerous threat to national security. One senior officer stated that in the late sixties "we spent time in the various schools studying Part II and Part III, and in the battalion we also did some training based on them. The main threat at that time was that of conventional then nuclear war with the Soviet Union, so there was the factor of time. Both Parts II and III were our bibles but they still needed to be adapted to the circumstances we faced."[122]

The *Army Quarterlies* of the period 1969 to 1972 do not contain many articles that suggest that either the situation in Northern Ireland, or the Army's role in it, was being routinely discussed. Only two articles are written on the subject, neither in the context of the early Troubles. The majority of articles focus on the Soviet threat and other more conventional and historical issues.[123] It might be tempting to present this as

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[121] The author was a cadet at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst from September 2008 to August 2009.

[122] Senior officer in the Scots Guards, email message received by author, 10 January 2018.

[123] Major General R. F. K. Goldsmith, ed. *The Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* 100-102, no. 1-4 (January 1969-January 1972). National Army Museum.

evidence that British Army officers were simply not reading their own doctrine, or if they were, lacked the professionalism to air ideas on improving it. Yet interviews with serving soldiers at the time, along with other evidence suggest that it was not only read, but well understood.[124]

A survey conducted in 1972 reveals that British officers were not only reading counterinsurgency doctrine, but that it was understood and considered largely fit for purpose. The survey was sent to all officers who had deployed at the battalion or brigade level between August 1969 and January 1972. In total it surveyed fifty four officers of lieutenant colonel rank or above, all of them unit commanders.[125] Inadequate liaison with civil institutions, a clear long term aim with a coordinated policy, a lack of realistic training, an immature intelligence picture, limited non-lethal equipment and confusion over what constituted 'minimum force' are the major concerns raised by those who responded.[126] In other words, a list of issues that are routinely listed in formal and informal doctrine as necessary tenets of successful counterinsurgency operations.[127] The document also states that those surveyed felt that "*Land Operations, Volume III* was a

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[124] General Kiszely email messages received by author, 10 January 2018 and 5 February 2018.

[125] A Survey of Military Opinion on Current Internal Security Doctrine and Methods based on Experience in Northern Ireland. DEFE 48/256, October 1972, 3. Hereafter referred as DEFE 48/256.

[126] DEFE 48/256, i.

[127] Ministry of Defence, *Land Operations Volume III, Principles and Techniques*, 41-44.

useful (tactical) guide, provided that it was not interpreted too dogmatically."[128] Doctrine

also continued to be reviewed in the early years of the Troubles. On 4 August 1970, a

working party was established by the Home Office and the Army to consider changes to

doctrine for dealing with unlawful assemblies and riots, partly due to the experience in

Northern Ireland, and partly by observing the role of the National Guard in dealing with

campus disorder in the United States.[129]

Much of the doctrine, especially at a tactical level, was inapplicable on the streets

of the United Kingdom; a private in 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment (1 Para)

prophetically warned that riot control tactics being used "worked in India, they probably

worked in Saudi Arabia, or Kenya and Africa, but it would never have worked in the UK

homeland."[130] Tactical doctrine evolves very quickly. It is the first to alter given the

situation and the easiest to adapt. Doctrinal principles are not tactics or procedures but

rather reflect enduring themes garnered from experience and cultural values. The

principle of minimum force, for an example, was a tenet of British counterinsurgency. It

did not have to be. The Sri Lankans demonstrated that insurgencies can be defeated with

an unrelenting military campaign and a lack of concern for civilian casualties in 2006.

Whether the principle of minimum force exists for ethical, moral or operational reasons is

a different debate; as a principle, it was not going to change quickly. While the tactical

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[128] DEFE 48/256, ii.

[129] Security Tactical Doctrine Working Party, Notes from an Internal Security
Tactical Doctrine Working Party, DEFE 325/132, July 1970, 1-26. Hereafter referred as
DEFE 325/132.

[130] Arthur, *Soldiers Talking*, 12.

doctrine was often irrelevant and out dated, the doctrinal principles were often sound, and remain so. It is important to focus on the principles.

Having established that there were credible doctrinal principles in existence, both in formal and informal publications and discourse, and the doctrine was being read and understood by both British Army officers and the enemy they were fighting, it is worth asking what the approach to applying the doctrine was. The following chapter will assess how the British have historically approached doctrine, before assessing what happened in Northern Ireland, and whether the doctrine was effectively "operationalized."

CHAPTER 4

THE BRITISH APPROACH TO DOCTRINE

The British approach to doctrine, especially counterinsurgency doctrine, has differed from other armies, most notably the United States'. In practice, the British Army has almost always viewed doctrine with some suspicion; a potential constraint on what it perceived as one of its greatest strengths: the individual initiative of its junior commanders.[131] This approach prioritized opening minds and allowing officers to analyze the circumstances they faced intellectually, rather than base the doctrine on one or two experiences.[132] The origins of this approach lie in the policing of empire in the nineteenth century, but had most recently developed from the counterinsurgency campaigns of the 1950s and 60s, where the post war economic restrictions and the existing colonial infrastructure meant a single military representative was often responsible for the counterinsurgency campaign.[133] It was these representatives that "with no doctrine to guide them and restricted by a serious manpower shortage, had to develop tactics that capitalized on whatever advantages the British could accrue from the specific political and military situations in each country."[134] This concept was evident through the

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[131] General Sir John Kiszely DSO MC, email message received by author, 5 February 2018.

[132] Col Alexander Alderson, "Revising the British Army's Counter-Insurgency Doctrine," *The RUSI Journal* 152, no. 4 (2007): 6-11.

[133] Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Taw, *Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: The Development of Britain's "Small Wars" Doctrine during the 1950s* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1991), 20.

[134] Ibid., 20.

duration of the Troubles and remains a very British approach; the sub-title of the current British counterinsurgency manual is "Strategic and Operational Guidelines."[135] Other analysts agree that the British Army "had a distinct aversion to theorizing about war at a higher level and to constructing a formal doctrine of war."[136]

This approach to counterinsurgency doctrine is not something that should be dismissed as foolhardy. Each campaign has its own flavor, a set of circumstances so unique that only broad doctrinal theories, guidelines, and principles can apply. The almost persistent engagement in smaller "wars" around the world, which punctuated larger, global conflicts in the twentieth century, meant the British Army was constantly adapting its doctrine on the job, rather than finding periods that allowed introspective professional analysis of future trends, threats and how best to prepare for them.[137] Never was this truer than in Northern Ireland. One senior officer stated, "yes, we had the doctrine in 1969 and we had trained against it. It was based on our experience in dealing with problems all over the world and had worked well–but it had stood still. The situation was very much worse than envisaged in our doctrine and we had to consistently adapt."[138] The unique situation, as well as the tendency to "make it up as they went

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[135] Colonel I. A. Rigden, "The British Approach to Counter-Insurgency: Myths, Realities and Strategic Challenges" (Strategy Research Project, US Army War College, Carlisle, 2008).

[136] Brian Holden Reid quoted in Kennedy-Pipe and McInnes, "The British Army in Northern Ireland 1969–1972," 2.

[137] Strachan, *Big Wars and Small Wars*, 4.

[138] Senior Officer, Scots Guards, email message received by author, 1 February 2018.

along," resulted in serious errors being made. What is noticeable in the British Army's experience in Northern Ireland however, is how quickly junior commanders and soldiers, with little to no experience of serving outside of the UK or Germany, began to understand the intricacies of a particularly difficult problem set, and began to "develop their own responses independently and without reference to counter-insurgency campaigns waged elsewhere."[139] The British approach to doctrine, while on one hand erratic, could, on the other, provide the flexibility that officers and soldiers needed to succeed.

The interpretation of British counterinsurgency doctrine is therefore often subject to the experience and mental versatility of junior officers. While the British Army, like any army, is often guilty of cultural flaws such as anti-intellectualism, a hierarchical discomfort with internal criticism and resistance to institutional change,[140] there is plenty of evidence that numerous officers understood the operational environment and problem set the Army faced in Northern Ireland and adopted their operating methods accordingly. There is also evidence that others failed to do so, mixing their role as a "policeman" with the "traditions" formed in the colonies.[141]

The division of parts of Belfast, Londonderry and the surrounding countryside into Tactical Areas of Operational Responsibilities allowed junior commanders to set the conduct and tone of operations in a microcosm of the overall campaign. An officer, as junior as a captain, would have responsibility for an area of several thousand people. The

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[139] Strachan, *Big Wars and Small Wars*, 8.

[140] Ibid., 18.

[141] Kennedy-Pipe and McInnes, "The British Army in Northern Ireland 1969–1972, 1.

officer was responsible for the order, security, and relations with the community within that area. Some commanders took an approach of draconian discipline, often "bending or breaking the rules to get the job done–usually these were the regiments who traditionally had the most combat experience during the colonial counterinsurgency era."[142] Other officers adopted a more cerebral approach, one where community relationships were the priority. Four-month tours and varying regimental ethos resulted in a lack of consistency in the Tactical Areas of Operational Responsibility where progress could be undone in a week by a follow-on unit adopting a different approach. It was, as General Sir John Kiszley stated, "like playing snakes and ladders."[143] In practice, doctrine was largely a matter for commanding officers and unit ethos. Senior officers allowed too much latitude in the interpretation of doctrine. "A number of battalions flagrantly flouted the hearts and minds approach, but, as far as I know, in the whole Op `Banner` campaign, not a single commanding officer was sacked as a result. It would only have needed one for the message to get through."[144] The reason no commanding officer was sacked lies not only in the attitude of "our boys, right or wrong," but also with a tendency of senior commanders to take a pejorative view of those reporting incidents and complaints, some of whom were doing so for propaganda purposes rather than to address legitimate

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[142] Burke, "Counter-Insurgency Against 'Kith and Kin'?," 667.

[143] General Sir John Kiszely DSO MC, email message received by author, 5 February 2018.

[144] Ibid.

grievances.[145] The regimental system, which contributed to units being separated by a

tactical approach, leadership and experience, often meant that lessons learnt were only

learnt by the regiments that experienced them.[146] While tactical lessons for soldiers could

be rapidly collected and disseminated, there was no system to analyze, codify, and

commend actions at the operational level that might have had a beneficial effect for the

campaign.

The "operational" level of war, where tactical actions are linked to strategic

success, was not taught as part of a military curriculum to British officers until the mid-

1980s.[147] This is to not say it did not exist, but confusion over terminology and how to

effectively apply what became known as "operational art," prevented it from being

effective in operations short of war.[148] In 1969, there was a tendency to focus on the short

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[145] Edward Burke, *An Army of Tribes. British Army Cohesion, Deviancy and Murder in Northern Ireland* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 111-114.

[146] The British Army in the 1960s, as it remains to a lesser extent today, was a tribal organization. Officers and soldiers join regiments for life; they might be posted out from time to time, but they would usually return. Until 2011, senior officers who progressed to command brigades, divisions and work in the Army staff continued to wear regimental clothing and followed regimental traditions. There was an inherent cultural identity in a regiment: soldiers and officers were fiercely loyal to it, the colours held reverential status and each regiment held a distinct ethos. While this generates an *espirit de corps* few armies can rival, it also prevents the Army functioning as the singular organization it needs to be. See Burke, *An Army of Tribes* for a more comprehensive analysis.

[147] General Sir John Kiszely DSO MC, email message received by author, 5 February 2018.

[148] Grand tactics, major tactics and minor strategy are all terms that were used to identify what is now known as the operational level of war. The application of operational art in operations other than war, is the series of related political, economic and military operations that accomplish an objective in space and time.

term tactical victories rather the strategic objectives. A battalion's tour was largely measured in the number of operational awards it received for gallantry, rather than whether the battalion had achieved progress towards strategic success and continuity was hampered by very short tour lengths of four months, which led to short-termism in approach; commanders were thinking short when they should have been thinking long. This was only corrected in the late 1980s with the establishment of the Higher Command and Staff Course (the focus of which was the operational level).

This "short termism" may have been accompanied by a certain amount of lethargy when establishing what the problem was, and how it could be solved. The 1960s was a period of demonstration and change. The civil rights protesters in Londonderry and Belfast took their lead from the increasingly violent de-segregation and anti-Vietnam war protests sweeping the United States. It is unsurprising that many felt the situation was "the world as a village: protest and demonstration, really."[149] Unlike previous counterinsurgency campaigns, where men like Frank Kitson would invest considerable mental power into addressing the problem, officers deploying to Northern Ireland did not, assuming the police would regain their role and the Army would return to barracks.[150] This approach might account for the lack of articles and published conversation about the deployment in regimental journals and the *Army Quarterlies*. As discussed in chapter 2, the British refused to acknowledge Irish "rebels" as insurgents, or members of Irgun as "terrorists" due to the uncomfortable repercussions correctly identifying them would

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[149] Arthur, *Northern Ireland: Soldiers Talking*, 5.

[150] Patrick Gascoigne, email message received by author, 18 February 2018.

have. So it was with Northern Ireland; civil unrest at home was more comfortable to identify than counterinsurgency operations at home. Kennedy-Pipe and McInnes argue that no insurgency existed in 1969, it was only with the emergence of PIRA in 1970 and 1971 that an insurgency developed.[151] While the IRA never achieved the levels of violence in 1969 that PIRA would manage in the following years, homemade bombs and sporadic shootings caused industrial damage and personal injury to soldiers and civilians. Even if the IRA were inactive, which they were not, an insurgency does not necessarily have to be committing acts of violence to exist.

Clausewitz warned that "the first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."[152] The British Army struggled to define accurately what the mission was in 1969, or when they did define it, defined it incorrectly. Although internal security seems to fit the problem faced by the British Army in Northern Ireland in 1969, internal security, to most officers, was written for imperial campaigns of "counter-revolutionary warfare."[153] Major General Charles Callwell's *Imperial Policing* had a resonating influence on internal security doctrine and civil unrest was something almost every soldier had only experienced in the colonies.

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[151] Kennedy-Pipe and McInnes, "The British Army in Northern Ireland 1969–1972," 1-24.

[152] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 605.

[153] Senior Officer (Brigadier), Black Watch, email message received by author, 5 February 2018.

Aaron Edwards suggests that the Army was deployed to protect Catholic communities from orchestrated Loyalist attacks.[154] The orders given to soldiers on the initial deployment directed them to keep the peace, not stray into political issues and to maintain neutrality. This was a peacekeeping mission that was, in the words of Kitson, about preventing violence between two sides "without having recourse to warlike actions against either of them."[155] On deployment however, the mission was defined as Military Aid to the Civil Power (MAC-P), on the streets of the UK, a short term backfill to a police force struggling to cope with sectarian rioting and a breakdown of the rule of law.[156] Doctrinally, the mission was "to support the civil authorities in preserving or restoring peace."[157] The Army would not only support the civil authority; however, it would become it, especially when the RUC was reformed in October 1969. This role for the Army had been described as "a remote possibility" nine months before, and it was not one for which the Army had prepared.[158] There is a key difference between peacekeeping operations and MAC-P. Regaining control of a situation, which is what is often required in MAC-P missions, is an offensive task, while separating two sides from fighting is a defensive one. The prism through which the operation was viewed changed once more; as

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[154] Aaron Edwards, "Misapplying lessons learned? Analyzing the utility of British counterinsurgency strategy in Northern Ireland, 1971–76," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 21, no. 2 (2010): 306.

[155] Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 25.

[156] General Kizsley, email message received by author, 10 February 2018.

[157] Ministry of Defense, *Land Operations Volume III, Internal Security*, 1.

[158] Edwards, "Misapplying Lessons Learned," 306.

the situation became increasingly violent, the Army adopted counterinsurgency methods and tactics. In the eyes of historians, it has remained in the bracket of counterinsurgency ever since. All of this matters because defining a situation correctly allows a military practitioner to adapt the range of tools available to them, tools that are often codified in doctrine. Much of the doctrine that existed was applicable in MAC-P, peacekeeping, and internal security operations, but because of the lack of clarity on what the Army was trying to achieve, much of it was deemed irrelevant. While specific doctrine for peacekeeping operations was relatively new, it was not the first peacekeeping operation the British had conducted.

Following independence from Britain in 1961, the newly formed Republic of Cyprus descended into ethno-religious violence between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot population along a demarcation line running east to west through the island in 1963. British forces were deployed to prevent an increase in violence in and around Nicosia, attempting to form a tripartite force between Greek, Turkish, and British soldiers to prevent an escalation in hostilities.[159] While the force was undermined by partisan actions on both the Greek and Turkish sides, the British managed to prevent a serious increase in hostilities until a UN formed force could take over the responsibility.[160] The British had no desire to become embroiled in a prolonged conflict between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, preferring to secure the Sovereign Base Areas in Akrotiri and Episkopi,

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[159] Brigadier Francis Henn, *A Business of Some Heat: The United Nations Force in Cyprus Before and During the 1974 Turkish Invasion* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2004), 14.

[160] Ibid.

but they discovered the direction of popular anger could rapidly swing from ethno-religious issues to a force deployed to keep the peace. Britain could not simply leave Northern Ireland for the UN to control, but the lessons learnt from Cyprus were clear; the longer a force remains in a peace-keeping role, the more likely it will become part of the problem in the eyes of one, or both, fighting communities. The deployment in Cyprus was in recent enough memory to provide evidence that peacekeeping operations are unlikely to be short term, but does not appear to have been captured in any sort of formal doctrine. The experience the British had in conducting counterinsurgency where the Army was the target of a campaign, was significantly greater than the experience the Army had in separating fighting communities. The number of British soldiers that deployed to Cyprus for a relatively short period between 1963 and 1964 (a division), was significantly smaller than the amount that served in Aden (30,000 at the peak of a ten-year campaign). In military eyes, peacekeeping may well take place, but would do so under the control of a wider organization; UN, the Commonwealth or NATO, and not be the sole responsibility of the British Army, particularly on British soil.

To suggest that by using one type of "counter revolutionary" publication over the other, simplifies the purpose of doctrine. There were principles in all three *Land Operations Volume III* sub-publications that were applicable in Northern Ireland, and there were tactcis that were not. The challenge for the Army was harnessing the initiative of the junior commanders so that the most effective approach was followed. This led to an inconsistent and uncoordinated approach, where some officers got it, and others did not. Gains in one area were undermined by worsening relations in another. This approach was often accompanied by a sense of short termism, professional lethargy and an inability

to identify the mission, as well as institutional errors: short tour lengths, codifying, collecting, and disseminating best practice at the operational level (where it could be identified), rewarding commanders for a lack of violence in a battalion's area of operations, rather than the reaction to it, and a more intellectually rigorous discussion of the complexity of the situation at home training stations. This led to mistakes being made at the tactical level, mistakes that had a disproportionate effect on the descent into violence. The doctrine warned against most of them. To explain the failure of correctly "operationalizing" doctrine by internal issues alone is too simplistic, however. Other factors effect an army's ability to turn doctrinal principles into tactical actions that implement a strategy.

CHAPTER 5

THE CHALLENGE OF "OPERATIONALIZING" DOCTRINE

The British Army's approach to doctrine, and the internal faults the Army had that

prevented it from being applied effectively, does not satisfactorily explain the difficulty

in operationalizing it in 1969 alone. Other factors existed, many out of the Army's

control. This chapter analyses the principles of British counterinsurgency identified and

codified in chapter 2 and 3, and the difficulty the Army had in applying them in Northern

Ireland. The campaign in Northern Ireland is almost always included in the literature of

British counterinsurgency experience. There are some obvious differences: the

deployment was initially to keep the peace rather than combat an insurgency, the

operational environment was predominantly a post-industrial western city and the

proximity to the British mainland to name but a few. There were subtler differences as

well, however. An inability to abandon Northern Ireland, the lack of credible indigenous

security forces, outside interest and international lobbying as well as the complex civil

arrangement which, for the first time, received direct oversight from London all played a

part in the descent into violence.

The Rule of Law

The British government did, and still does, retain political, legal, economic, and

constitutional responsibility for Northern Ireland. However, the devolved Northern Irish

government at Stormont has largely run its own affairs, including internal security, since

1922. The only constitutional alteration to this agreement was the Ireland Act of 1949,

which stated that Northern Ireland will remain part of the British state unless an act of

parliament, changed to a referendum in 1973, voted to become part of Ireland. The Northern Irish population voted for Members of Parliament (MPs) to represent them at Westminster and Stormont and were, whether Catholic or Protestant, citizens of the UK. In 1969, for the first time since the Anglo-Irish War (1919 to 1921), British troops would fight British citizens in British cities.

The government in Westminster initially took the view that this was an issue of law and order, not insurgency or terrorism. There was no higher counterinsurgency strategy or direction to accompany the deployment,[161] but there was no option to "up and leave" as the British had done in Aden for example. The UK had to find a solution to the problem; failure to do so would threaten the constitutional integrity of the UK. This constitutionally complex situation resulted in confusion as to what, exactly, the Army was required to do. The situation was not improved by politicians in London, who, on the one hand understood the necessity to address emerging violence in Northern Ireland, but on the other retained a great reluctance to do so.[162]

While the deployment of the Army created significant concerns for Westminster, the alternative, which Stormont was only too keen to point out, created more. As mentioned earlier, the government in Westminster could not simply desert Northern Ireland; they were obliged to find a solution to the problem. One risk of hesitation was that Stormont would deploy the B Specials to provide the assistance the RUC needed, a

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[161] Tuck, "Northern Ireland and the British Approach to Counter Insurgency," 167.

[162] The same problem existed during the Anglo-Irish War. The GOC had orders to deal with it, but no orders or doctrine to do it.

move that was likely to go some way into an irreversible descent into violence that might result in all out civil war. What worried the British Government most if this situation were to materialize, was the possible intervention from the Republic of Ireland, who may well respond to Westminster's failure to protect Catholic communities by doing so themselves. The fallout from such an action would provide a far greater problem for Westminster than short term military assistance to Stormont. The decision to deploy the Army was not a simple one; to do so would create significant problems for the Labour Government who were already under pressure for their economic policies a year out from a general election. To refuse military support, however, would risk unprecedented violence which could invite the intervention of a foreign power. The concerns politicians had about the legal repercussions of deploying the Army were not addressed before the decision to deploy the Army was made. These unattended debates prevented the Army from identifying the parameters it could operate within.

First, there were a number of concerns about the constitutional implications for Stormont if the Army was deployed. The deployment of British forces was more of a constitutional obligation from Westminster to Stormont than a gesture of support.[163] If Westminster provided Stormont with military force, a sign of the Northern Irish Government's inability to provide the security it was elected to do, surely the constitutional relationship would need to be reconsidered? This question was being openly debated in the British press as well as behind closed doors.[164] Any suggestion that

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[163] Edwards, "A Whipping Boy," 168; Charters, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders?*, 43.

[164] Charteris, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders?*, 63.

the deployment of the Army might lead to a restriction of Stormont's power, or its suspension entirely, met with hostility from Unionists in Northern Ireland, many of whom refused to acknowledge Stormont's political bankruptcy. Chichester-Clark argued that such a step would be seen as the first toward unification with Ireland, as the 1920 Government of Ireland Act forbade constitutional change to Northern Ireland without Dublin's consent.[165] It is unsurprising, therefore, that there was a general concern from the RUC and Stormont about deploying the Army. If the Army was to be deployed, it should be deployed without conditions attached; it was Ulster's Army too.[166] This argument was initially rejected by Westminster; deployment of armed force would inevitably lead to political interference of some sort, and it was disingenuous to put so much stake in the sovereignty of Stormont when the very request for troops suggested the government had failed in its primary purpose of providing security to its citizens. It was a peculiar situation. A devolved government in desperate need of support from the Army, but with serious reservations about the deployment of it, was requesting its deployment from a government equally reticent to provide it. The result for the Army was that the political direction and chain of command was unclear at best, while the relationship with the RUC was strained from the outset. Two doctrinal principles would be hard to operationalize.

Secondly, if the Army was to be deployed, there was concern about what they would be used for. The enmity from Catholics in Northern Ireland was directed at

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[165] Ibid., 66.

[166] Charetris, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders?*, 64.

Stormont, the RUC and the B Specials, and "the police, the courts, the prisons, the entire

Stormont community had been discredited."[167] The Army was seen as a force for good by

the Catholic community, one that would protect them from Protestant violence in lieu of

an ineffective RUC. The attitude of the predominantly Protestant Stormont on the other

hand, was that if the Army were on side, then there was a good chance they "could beat

the Micks," a situation that lead to "an enormous chasm of understanding between the

Stormont and Westminster Governments,"[168] the latter clearly disagreeing with the

suggested purpose of deploying armed force.[169] This further contributed to an unclear

command and control structure for the use of the Army, much of it based on assurances

from Stormont rather than any solid legal conditions.

Following the Statute of Westminster in 1931, the status of the dominions:

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Newfoundland and the Irish Free State,

was independent of the United Kingdom and the Imperial Parliament at Westminster.

This was not the case with other self-governing colonies under the protection of the

United Kingdom, and crown colonies, which were governed directly by the United

Kingdom. Although the 1920 Emergency Powers Act was amended in 1964, allowing the

British Government to declare a "state of emergency" for largely economic threats, using

such legislation was unlikely to work on sovereign soil. This would be a major difference

between counterinsurgency in the colonies, and in Northern Ireland. Deploying military

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[167] Bowyer, *The Gun in Politics*, 139.

[168] Hamill, *Pig in the Middle*, 13.

[169] Ibid.

force on sovereign soil carried significant risk. Unlike the colonies, the British could not simply declare a state of emergency, granting them more robust legal authority to deal with the situation, be it arrest, detention, coercion or the use of lethal force. This was not only because British citizens would be effected by it, or that actions would be carried out in front of a more scrupulous British and international media. It was also because, unlike the colonies, the initial deployment focused on preventing further violence between two groups, and therefore, the use of force centers more around what was appropriate in controlling civil disturbance than the use of lethal force against an identified enemy. This would change, but from 1969 to 1971 at least, the problem in Northern Ireland was not going to be solved by creating a bespoke legal operating environment. Operating within the law was a doctrinal principle based on the ability to create laws that allowed soldiers and police forces to defeat an enemy. When public opinion or constitutional restrictions prevented the law from being manipulated in such a way, the British Army could not use tactics and procedures that had worked in the colonies. When they tried, the result was a disaster. In July 1970, soldiers from the Kings Own Scottish Borderers deployed to assist an RUC unit in West Belfast. On arrival at the New Lodge Road and the Antrim Road, the soldiers were met by rioters, allegedly organized by PIRA, who attacked the soldiers for an hour with petrol bombs and rubble. After a series of warnings were ignored, the platoon commander ordered a soldier to shoot the next individual who threw a petrol bomb. The soldier duly did so, shooting nineteen year old Daniel O'Hagan dead as he bent over to pick up a petrol bomb.[170] The debate over the legality of the shooting

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[170] Sanders and Wood, *Times of Troubles*, 33 – 35.

centered around whether O'Hagan was a member of the IRA or not. According to the RUC, he was well known for being a "hard core member."[171] The fact that the action was deemed legal, and the soldiers acquitted, was irrelevant. The damage such an action had was significant. 3,000 people attended O'Hagan's funeral, while Gerry Adams referred to it as a new turning point that would lead "inexorably towards war."[172] Operating within the law was a difficult principle to operationalize when the law was not recognized by the community soldiers were deployed to protect.

From 1969 to 1971, most of the debate over the legality of a soldier's action lay less in the use of force than the actions that fell short of it. What posture were soldiers to adopt? A policeman on routine patrol is an overt sight, a soldier patrols defensively, and often as covertly as possible. Were soldiers permitted to shoot out street lights to patrol at night more effectively? What are a soldier's powers of arrest? Some officers directed punitive action against local residents which, aside from clashing with the principle of hearts and minds, was legally questionable as well. The legality of the military decision to impose a curfew on the Falls Road was investigated in London, and led to a tighter control of the military, which, as will be discussed later, was not accompanied by more coherent direction. The law of armed conflict was well established and understood by soldiers in 1969, and to a lesser extent so was the dichotomy between international law and internal armed conflict.[173] The deployment in 1969 was not classified as either. One

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[171] Ibid., 34

[172] Adams, Gerry. *Before the Dawn*: *An Autobiography*. Ireland: Brandon Books, 1996, 145.

[173] It should be noted that The Hague and Geneva Conventions did not apply to "internal" conflicts until The Hague Tribunal for Rwanda ruled they do in 1995.

officer stated that the only guideline they had was the law. Behaving within it, especially when it had ceased to be enforced by the police, was a significant challenge for soldiers trying to establish an intelligence network, for example.

<div align="center">Minimum Force</div>

One of the questions that comes from the legal context soldiers operate in centers around the use of force. The yellow card that was hastily issued to all soldiers deploying to Northern Ireland in 1970 provided guidance on what force could be used and when. It forms the basis of "Card Alpha," the rules of engagement currently issued to all British servicemen when conducting routine, armed operations in or outside the UK. The yellow card ultimately preserved the right of a soldier to defend him or herself from lethal force by using a series of escalatory warnings before using lethal force if the threat persists. It also preserves the right to use lethal force if there is an imminent threat to the lives of others. This approach, based on the doctrinal principle of minimum force was clear when it came to lethal force, but less clear on when it did not. The debate about using lethal force only really emerged in early 1971, when British soldiers routinely came under accurate and effective fire but were unable to act preemptively. The debate over the use of force prior to February 1971, the O'Hagan case aside, centered around the use of CS gas and baton charges, both of which, it should be noted, can isolate a community as quickly as a well-aimed lethal shot against a ringleader. This relative approach to the use of force is often forgotten, however. A commander returning from separating rioting Catholic and Protestants having used CS gas could point to the fact that the mission had been achieved and no one was killed in the process. This approach, especially considering the total war mindset of the units deploying to Northern Ireland in 1969, was

not unreasonable. Yet the threshold of acceptable violence was much lower in Northern Ireland. Unlike Malaya and Kenya, and outside of a few hard line Unionists, minimum force meant almost no force at all, a tall order for an organization trained, equipped and prepared to fight full scale combat operations.

How "heavy" was the Army to be when dealing with rioters? A violent situation needs to be addressed, but should it be addressed by aggressive dispersal methods, or contained as is more common in modern counter-rioting techniques? The doctrine of "equivalent force" was the government's answer to the murky question about soldiers being used for policing; the level of retaliatory action was at the discretion of the commander based on the situation. While this provides a military commander with the flexibility to make a decision under pressure, the "appropriate" response can be interpreted in wildly different ways. As discussed in chapter 4, this sort of disparity was not uncommon. "Equivalent force" would become increasingly difficult to wrestle with as petrol bombs became widely used to assault troops, who could (understandably) not decide on what the equivalent force of a petrol or gelignite bomb was. Rules of engagement are a mix of military and political policy requirements, bounded by extant international and domestic legal parameters. If a situation is devoid of political policy, or the political policy response is the common law any civilian is answerable to, the Army will subject itself to what it thinks is appropriate, be this too little or too much force to approach the mission at hand.

The debate about minimum force has often centered around the actions of soldiers, rather than the presence of them. The focus of British defence policy was in Europe; Northern Ireland was not a priority. Insufficient troop numbers were made

available to conduct manpower intensive urban peace keeping. The 2,500-man garrison that existed prior to the deployment of forces as a MAC-P mission in August 1969 were already guarding civilian institutions, allowing the RUC to focus their attention on civil disturbances. While additional regiments were deployed to bolster the committed garrison from August 1969 to January 1970, there were insufficient "boots on the ground" to protect the Catholic community of the Short Strand when rioting broke out in April 1970, leading to a souring of the relationship between the Catholic population and a propaganda coup for the embryonic PIRA. Indeed, as previously mentioned, forces were being withdrawn in February 1970, their task, in the eyes of military chiefs, completed. When planning for an all-out Protestant rebellion in 1968, the government had estimated that 20,000 troops would be needed to deal with the situation.[174] When the worst of the rioting broke out between Catholics and Protestants in August 1969, troop numbers only grew by 3,000. In a post operational report dated July 1970, the author, an officer in the Royal Scots appositely stated that "maximum force now means minimum force later."[175] He was not necessarily referring to the approach soldiers should take. Doctrinally, in urban environments the ratio of soldier to civilian should be about 1:20. For Belfast alone in 1970, that would equate to 12,000 soldiers. Arguably, the most successful operation of the Troubles came in 1972 when almost 30,000 soldiers deployed to break into the no-go areas of Belfast and Londonderry. Only two people died in the operation, and it denied PIRA the freedom of movement it had enjoyed for almost two years.

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[174] Kennedy-Pipe and McInnes, "The British Army in Northern Ireland 1969–1972," 8.

[175] Sanders and Wood, *Times of Troubles,* 31

Finally, and on a more tactical level, *Internal Security* cautions against the use of CS gas, not only pointing to the effect on civilians, especially in confined spaces, but suggests that only the necessary amount to disperse a crowd need be used.[176] In one incident in Ballymurphy in April 1970, the Army fired 104 canisters of CS gas, never understanding quite how indiscriminate and radicalizing the use of it was.[177] The risk of using CS gas was well known to commanding officers, who stated that it was indiscriminate, liable to cause embarrassment and create hostility among neutral and friendly civilians.[178] Regardless, it was used without restraint, largely because of an absence of other options that could control or disperse rioting crowds.

<p align="center">Hearts and Minds?</p>

Land Operations Volume III: Counter Revolutionary Operations states that "all ranks must understand the political background. Often purely military aims become subservient to political requirements"[179] Frank Kitson suggests that "at every level the civil authorities will rightly expect the soldier to know how to use non-military forms of action as part of the operational plan, although once it has been decided to use a particular measure they will know how to put it into effect."[180] Both formally, and

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[176] Ibid., 109.

[177] Thornton, "Getting it Wrong," 83.

[178] DEFE 48/256, 33.

[179] Ministry of Defence, *Land Operations, Volume III: Counter Revolutionary Operations, Part 3: Counter Insurgency* (London: Ministry of Defence, January 1970).

[180] Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency and Peacekeeping* (Harrisburg, PA. Stackpole Books, 1971), 7.

informally, the principle of hearts and minds, however interpreted, was inculcated in the British soldier. Whether hearts and minds is successful, however, is subject to the operating environment in which it is applied.

The historians Sanders and Wood point to examples of small hearts and minds initiatives carried out across the province as evidence of the Army adopting a very different approach to the one described in Republican literature. In 1970 the Kings Own Scottish Borderers set up a fund for childrens' trips to the beach, the Royal Scots opened and ran a community center for both Protestant and Catholic children, and football games were commonly held between Catholic and Protestant teams.[181] Regular liaison took place between soldiers and the Central Citizens' Defence Committees (CCDC),[182] Catholic organizations established to represent communities in Belfast and Londonderry, often de-escalating situations that would otherwise have boiled over into violence.[183]

Whether these small economic and psychological initiatives at the tactical level qualify as hearts and minds is debatable, but it provides evidence that the Army was acting in accordance with its doctrine. Discontent was in abundance and there was plenty

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[181] Sanders and Wood, *Times of Troubles*, Chapter 1.

[182] One of the leaders of the Lower Falls Road CCDC, Jim Sullivan, was a member of the OIRA and acted as the liaison officer to the British Army. Sullivan requested that the Army stay out of sealed of Catholic areas in order to preserve the peace, a request one commanding officer accepted, and another did not. Wanting to re-establish the rule of law in his area of operations, the Commanding Officer of the Royal Scots announced a return of the "Queen's writ," and used force to provide it. This demonstrates the lack of continuity between one unit and the next, as well as the change in attitude toward the Army; Jim Sullivan is suspected of killing two soldiers in 1971 and 1972. Burke, *Army of Tribes*, 72.

[183] Burke, *Army of Tribes*, 72.

of evidence of the Army trying to provide relief. The efforts of soldiers to assist with flood relief on the Falls Road went some way to repairing the damage caused by the curfew two weeks before.

The challenge the Army had was the lack of equivalent actions at the political and strategic level. The Army did not need to persuade the Catholic community of its legitimacy. The Army had legitimacy and eventually lost it. It was Stormont and the RUC that needed to win the Catholic population over and without a "province-wide strategy which could convince Catholics of Stormont's legitimacy, these initiatives could only have limited impact."[184] The Army suffered from an inability to provide any form of meaningful, long term economic, social or political improvement to the Catholic community that could only come from the political establishment. Like any army conducting a peace support or counterinsurgency campaign, they were buying time until the political establishment could provide initiatives, which never came.[185] As a result, all residents had to judge the Army by was the way they conducted themselves during operations and day to day interaction.[186] It mattered little how many football games the Army organized if the loyalty of the Catholic population remained in the Nationalist/Republican camp, and that loyalty would not shift until the Catholic community experienced genuine reform.

Much of hearts and minds is about perception. How the Army is viewed, fairly or

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[184] Kennedy-Pipe and McInnes, "The British Army in Northern Ireland," 17.

[185] Thornton, "Getting it Wrong," 80.

[186] Ibid.

unfairly, is crucial when persuading communities of their impartiality. The historian and former Director of Military History at the Defense Services Academy in Shrivenham, Rod Thronton, argues that part of the problem for the Army in 1970 and 1971 was that many of the battalions initially deployed were Scottish. Scotland, especially in and around Glasgow, was divided down sectarian lines that mirrored Northern Ireland and held a long history of sympathy and support for Protestant Ulstermen.[187] The Catholic population of Belfast and Londonderry saw them as collaborators "who could only have been with their local co-religionists."[188] This suggestion warrants further investigation, but at a glance it overlooks a number of qualifiers: there were many Catholics within the ranks of Scottish regiments, particularly highland ones, up to thirty-five percent of the Scots Guards (one of the regiments named by Thornton) were Englishmen. The perception, however, was that prejudice existed. The majority of Scottish regiments were UK based infantry units and therefore the preferred choice for service in Northern Ireland. The disproportionate amount of tours these units deployed on, however, fed the narrative that they would habitually take a tougher line against Catholic communities.

The impartiality the Army initially demonstrated following the initial deployment to Northern Ireland was another feature of the hearts and minds campaign. Had the Army conducted a similar curfew on the Shankhill Road to the Falls Road, or had the response to Protestant rioting remained as robust as it had been in October 1969, the image of the

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[187] Steve Bruce et al. *Sectarianism in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 123-138.

[188] Rod Thornton, "Getting it Wrong: The Crucial Mistakes Made in the Early Stages of the British Army's Deployment to Northern Ireland (August 1969 to March 1972)," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007): 82.

Army may have remained favorable in the eyes of the Catholic community for longer. If hearts and minds was about persuading the population that their lot was better with the government than with those seeking to overthrow or replace it, it is hard to see how any army could provide that assurance while the government the army serves is dilatory or reluctant to do so as well.

<div align="center">Civil-Military Relationship</div>

In most functioning democracies, militaries do not usually act unilaterally. The deployment of forces, their legal operating environment and the mission they are given come from elected governments. This was very much part of the British counterinsurgency experience prior to 1969, where "the principle of civilian control, expressed through an appropriate command structure is regarded as one of the key facets of the British approach."[189] Where there has been any form of what could be described as "success" in counterinsurgency operations, there has been a single major factor; more of the population supported the government than the insurgency.[190] The British focus on what historian Max Boot calls the "one-two punch" of both the political machine and military force has contributed in no small part to retaining that support.[191] It is therefore surprising that the civil-military relationship British forces deployed under, and the political objectives the Army were given, were quite so disjointed. The lack of political

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[189] Tuck, "Northern Ireland and the British Approach to Counter Insurgency," 166.

[190] Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerilla Warfare from Ancient Times to The Present* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2013), 392.

[191] Ibid.

ambition and a confused command and control structure resulted in little or no political guidance being provided. While the Army failed to make politicians provide that guidance, solving a political problem with the military is impossible without a political end state. In the absence of clear guidance, the Army adopted a reactionary mode using tactics they were comfortable with, losing the initiative while they did.

Wilson's Labour government was reluctant to deploy the Army to Northern Ireland. Once it was clear the government was running out of options, there was significant wrangling between Stormont and London over how troops should be used, who should task them, and to whom they should report. What exactly an "appropriate chain of command" was, given the situation, was never fully established. Instead, communiques that stated troops would remain under the command of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in Whitehall, not take orders from the civil authorities, but assist the civil authorities in operations the same civil authorities controlled, created a tenuous and fragile agreement unlikely to last.[192] The MoD retained command of the Army, but to a certain extent had lost control of it. Even when the agreement was formalized in what became known as the Downing Street declaration, confusion remained. Part of the declaration included an assurance that "with reference to the deployment of troops, it (Stormont) would take the views of the British government into the fullest consideration at all times."[193] This sounded like Stormont would have more control over the Army than had initially been anticipated. This was not the only option available to Wilson's

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[192] Charteris, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders?*, 71.

[193] Ibid.

government. Stormont could have been suspended entirely, direct rule imposed from London and the Army deployed alongside staff from the Home Office, Northern Ireland Office and Ministry of Defence. Although the suspension of Stormont proved a useful threat to encourage reform, the actual implication was always seen as an extreme option.[194] While it is hard to establish what the reaction would have been had Stormont been suspended, putting the Army under the control of the institution primarily responsible for failing to alleviate the discontent in Northern Ireland was always likely to limit the Army's ability to be seen as impartial.

There was also the issue of accountability. When an army deploys, eventually something will go wrong. The accountability of the Army, and the way the fallout is handled, can go some way to turning a population against it. Who should be accountable for the Falls Road curfew, for example, remains a debate to this day. Although there was a limited reduction in Stormont's autonomy, British soldiers were deployed to act under the direction of Stormont while remaining accountable to London; "simply put, from August 1969 to March 1972 (when Stormont was suspended), the Northern Ireland government retained responsibility for maintaining law and order in the province while the British government provided the troops which allowed it to do so."[195] To whom exactly the Army was answering when rioting broke out the following year was a case in point. Was the Army taking orders from Stormont or London? To whom were grievances

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[194] Stormont was suspended in March 1972 and abolished in 1973. Direct rule lasted for 26 years. In 1998 the Government of Northern Ireland formed following the Good Friday peace agreement.

[195] Charteris, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders?*, 75.

against the Army to be addressed? The unwillingness or inability of politicians in London to define what the Army was to do, combined with a refusal to take direct orders from Stormont, led to the Army becoming the "self-tasking" organization it should never be. Part of the problem was government departments competing for control. The Army was involved in assisting the civil authority to restore law and order, the realm of the Home Office. This resulted in Freeland receiving tactical direction from the Home Secretary on two accounts, and the dispatch of senior Home Office officials to Belfast in August 1969. As Freeland pointed out, while the Home Office was responsible for law and order, orders for the Army came from the Ministry of Defense.[196] In order to ensure the Army was appropriately tasked by Stormont, the GOC was instructed to report straight to the Chief of the Defense Staff, not the Chief of the General Staff, as would normally be the case. London's provision of troops to sort out a situation of Stormont's making was unpopular, as was the concept of troops falling under the direction of Stormont, one military chiefs in London would monitor closely. Any major operation, the definition of which was left to Freeland's judgement, required prior consultation with London. This congested chain of command was bound to cause friction, and routinely did. If few in the Army could properly comprehend the political direction, and limits of Stormont's control over the Army, it is unsurprising that the Catholic population began to see it all as the same, repressive entity.

Finally, there was no clear definition of the Army's responsibilities. Freeland was put in charge of all security operations, for which the RUC would come under his

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[196] Ibid., 77.

command. For "normal police duties" the RUC would remain responsible to the Inspector General. The problem was separating what was a "normal police duty" from a "security operation," in a province where "security" meant different things to different parts of the population. Were sectarian killings, for example, simply a "normal police duty" or were they part of a wider security threat that was the Army's responsibility to prevent? The creation of the Joint Security Committee on 18 August 1969, and the dispatch of liaison officers into the Cabinet and Home Office of the Northern Ireland Government in June 1970, were attempts to streamline this unusual control structure. Ultimately however, the failure of both Westminster and Stormont to flesh out these intricacies resulted in "the absence of that precious commodity in any military operation–unity of command."[197]

This unclear command and control structure was exacerbated by a failure of politicians to give clear guidance. What was it that the politicians, both in London and Stormont, wanted the Army to do? Were they to keep the peace? Did they need to make the peace before it could be kept? Thornton argues that despite having three political masters (the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence, and the Prime Minister in Stormont), the Army received little clear direction from either.[198] There was an assumption from politicians in London that the Army's experience in previous counterinsurgency campaigns would result in it knowing best how to "sort out this bloody mess."[199]As discussed earlier, this was not simply a counterinsurgency operation. Counterinsurgency

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[197] Thornton, "Getting it Wrong," 77.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Thornton, "Getting it Wrong," 77.

experience did not necessarily mean the Army was experienced peacekeepers, especially in western cities with such social, religious and ethnic divisions. Even if it was, a clearly defined political end state allows a military to define its operational approach and seize the initiative. Until they were provided with clear direction, the Army would simply react to events rather than act in accordance with a wider strategy. The failure of a robust public relations campaign following events like the death of O'Hagan and the Falls Road curfew, left the Army unabke to counter the far more active Republican narrative that used such events as an effective recruiting sergeant.

While political direction to the Army was lacking, political decisions were still being made that effected it. Westminster still hoped to alleviate Catholic disenchantment by forcing political reforms.[200] The publication of the Hunt Report in October 1969 was perhaps the most damaging of this "reformist" agenda. The report, which recommended wide ranging reforms to the RUC, as well as the disbandment of the hated B Specials, provided limited recourse to Catholic communities who still viewed Stormont as being institutionally corrupt, it antagonized Loyalists who thought it too drastic a move, and it rendered the RUC ineffective; propelling the Army into a policing function for which it was neither prepared nor trained. In short, the decision made the situation far harder for the Army to deal with. The collapse of the RUC and the "willingness of London-based politicians to give the Army the lead in tackling civil disturbances,"[201] placed the Army

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[200] Edwards, "Whipping Boy," 169.

[201] Ibid..

in the position of being the only organization of providing law and order. Coming to the aid of a civil power meant becoming the civil power.[202]

While the Army lacked clear direction from London, the direction it received from Stormont made its ability to "impartially hold the ring"[203] while politicians "solved the peace"[204] equally challenging. Despite continually asking for a statement of aims and policy for the security forces from military chiefs in London; Freeland was never given one.[205] Freeland became the self-declared whipping boy, "subject to a bifurcated system of direction. Stormont was responsible for enforcing law and order, while London was responsible for the troops that allowed Stormont to do so."[206] The embattled Northern Irish Prime Minister, James Chichister-Clerk encouraged Freeland to make decisions that were politically savvy, but harmful to security operations.[207] These decisions included the removal of "peace barricades" which separated Protestant and Catholic communities. While on one hand it prevented the two sides clashing, and therefore favored by the Army, politically, it represented an embarrassment for Stormont – the state should provide security, not arbitrary defenses between communities.

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[202] Coogan, *The Troubles*, 108-110.

[203] Freeland, quoted in Edwards, "Whipping Boy," 168.

[204] Freeland, quotes in Hennessey, *The Evolution of the Troubles 1970-72*, 15.

[205] Hamill, *Pig in the Middle*, 26.

[206] Charteris, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders?*, 71.

[207] Edwards, "Whipping Boy," 171.

It is unsurprising that without the political guidance the Army needed from

London, or damaging political guidance from Stormont, the Army lost the initiative, and

as Aaron Edwards argues, reverted to what it was comfortable with; colonial era

counterinsurgency tactics. Following the violence of April 1970, Freeland issued the

proclamation that those throwing petrol bombs would be shot. Freeland also seemed to

act unilaterally when deciding to impose a curfew on the Falls Road after rioting in

Ballymurphy in June 1970. The decision to conduct the operation smacks of a lack of

political direction combined with political pressure to "do something" resulting in a

decision that had worked in the colonies, but was never going to work in Northern

Ireland. This was not necessarily in accordance with doctrine, but rather a reaction to

incidents based on personal experience in the absence of coherent political direction.

Political direction altered little with the arrival of a Conservative government in

June 1970. Certain authors have suggested military mistakes like the Falls Road curfew

were a result of a new government wanting to show a tougher line on civil disorder.[208] As

discussed earlier, it appears that Freeland acted without the knowledge of the government

in Westminster. The new Conservative government did make decisions that contributed

to the unstable situation, many of them against military advice. While the military

required additional troops to conduct resource intensive riot control while the RUC

reformed, the Chief of the General Staff, Sir Michael Carver, remained adamant that the

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[208] According to Tim Pat Coogan, the government wanted "a brutal search within a few days." Coogan, *The Troubles*, 103, while Caroline Kennedy-Pipe and Colin McInnes suggest that "tougher tactics were implemented by the new Conservative Government." in Kennedy-Pipe and McInnes, "The British Army in Northern Ireland 1969–1972," 12.

Army was not the long-term solution. Ted Heath emphasized the importance of developing the security and intelligence apparatus that needed to precede any political solution, while defense chiefs argued that sending more troops would only draw out the deployment, rather than encourage a political solution to be found.[209] Brian Faulkner successfully persuaded the Heath government to introduce internment in the summer of 1971, against the advice of the military chain of command.[210] While this received political applause in Belfast, the legality of such an operation, along with the poor intelligence resulted in the wrong people being arrested, and became one of the most controversial decisions of the Troubles, and significantly contributed to the souring of relations between the Army and the Catholic community.

Whereas political direction remained incoherent, political control began to expand into the tactical realm. In July 1970, the Defense Secretary Dennis Healey directed that major military decisions be run past him first, such were the political repercussions if they went wrong. The possible involvement of the Republic of Ireland in Northern Ireland, or attempts, led by the Republic of Ireland, to establish a UN peacekeeping force remained a real concern to British politicians. Freeland thought this directive interfered with the tempo of decision making, which he was reluctant to entertain.[211]

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[209] Edwards, "Whipping Boy," 172.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Charteris, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders?*, 83-85.

The academic John Newsinger goes so far to state that a "consistent lack of political direction led to 'contradictory and repressive' action"[212] in Northern Ireland while Colm Campbell and Ita Connolly argue that "fractured and ineffectual civilian control facilitated a return to primordial military thinking" which ultimately led to repressive techniques. These assertions are perhaps too strong. Internment, the obvious example of a "repressive technique," was discouraged my senior military officials. Other "repressive" techniques between 1969 and late 1971 might include curfews and house searches as well as the use of CS gas. As argued earlier, the lack of political direction and clarity over what the Army was directed or permitted to do, meant that the Army did what had worked in the past, but within an entirely different legal framework. The extent of the weak political direction had on the Army's operations in Northern Ireland remains debatable, but it is hard to disagree with Mumford's assertion that "in counterinsurgency warfare there is a tangible relationship between the effectiveness of the military campaign and the quality of the political direction it receives. The 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland were to severely test the efficacy of this bond."[213] Any military deployment relies on clear political direction, a strategic end state and a coherent chain of command. These allow the development of a military end state, objectives and parameters to operate within.

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[212] John Newsinger, "From Counter-Insurgency to Internal Security: Northern Ireland, 1969-1992, *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 14, no 3 (2003): 47.

[213] Mumford, *The Counterinsurgency Myth*, 98.

<u>Working with the RUC</u>

A disjointed civil-military relationship at the strategic level has a significant effect on operations at a more tactical level. Never was this more acute than the Army's initial relationship with the RUC. For much of the Troubles, especially when the British Army reverted to a more supporting role in 1976, the relationship was as doctrine described it should be; "the military forces and police must be considered as one force operating jointly to a pre-rehearsed security plan."[214] From August 1969 to February 1971, however, it was fraught at best.

The disarming and reorganization of the RUC after the Hunt Report in October 1969 rendered the RUC ineffective for a long period of time, time where enforcement of the law was often left to the Army. Interviews with junior officers who deployed at the time reveal either a consistent lack of police to support, and where there was a police presence, it was largely unable to enforce basic law and order.[215]

Part of the problem of military cooperation with the RUC was that the police force, where it was operating at all, was a largely discredited entity, both in the eyes of the Catholic community, who were not only seen as partisan enforcers of Stormont's repressive policies, and in the eyes of the British Army, whose very presence suggested they had failed in their role. Military commanders listed problems with attitude, effectiveness, security and parochial compartmentalization as some of the problems working with the police force.[216] The Army discovered that at intersections between

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[214] Ministry of Defence, *Land Operations Volume III, Internal Security*, 3.

[215] Patrick Gascoigne, email message sent to author, 10 February 2018.

[216] DEFE 48/256, 7

Protestant and Catholic communities, where barricades had been erected to keep the two sides apart, local Catholics would talk to soldiers, but had no such desire to engage with RUC officers accompanying them.[217] The appearance of RUC personnel in Catholic areas was so inflammatory the Army prevented the RUC from entering them.[218] Despite the obvious understanding of the tribal nature of Belfast and Londonderry the RUC had, the Army seemed to build their own intelligence picture from scratch, without much assistance from the RUC. In some cases, the Army even hindered the RUC Special Branch intelligence gathering effort, as well as refusing to share findings with the police force.[219] Whether this was due to a sense that the RUC could not be trusted, or whether it was more to do with an attitude that if the Army had been deployed, the police force had failed, the relationship was counterproductive to another crucial aspect of British counterinsurgency; developing intelligence. The Army's approach to the RUC led to regular complaints, both of a "colonial attitude"[220] and a reluctance to operate as an integrated force. While these criticisms are valid, military officers may well have deemed it more damaging to be seen operating with the RUC than the benefit of the human terrain knowledge they provided. There was a deliberate divergence between what doctrine suggested, both in terms of working with local police forces, and gathering intelligence, and the actions that were carried out.

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[217] Michael Dewar, *The British Army in Northern Ireland* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1985), 32-49.

[218] Edwards, "Whipping Boy," 170.

[219] Ibid.

[220] Burke, "Counter-Insurgency against 'Kith and Kin'?" 658-77.

The difficult relationship between the Army and the RUC was personified by Freeland's relationship with the RUC Inspectors General. Anthony Peacocke, the RUC Inspector General at the time of the military deployment, falsely reassured Freeland that "the Protestants would not cause trouble, because they never did,"[221] while Sir Arthur Young,[222] who replaced Peacocke in November 1969, disapproved of the military having overall command of riot situations. These were issues that would continue to surface for the following five years.[223] There were, as ever, those who understood the value of close cooperation with the RUC. In late 1970 and early 1971, Kitson held regular meetings with the Assistant Constable of West Belfast, Sam Bradley, while the Army integrated personnel into the existing police structures in Belfast and Londonderry in an attempt to unify operations, intelligence and central control.[224] Despite these efforts, and contrary to doctrine, between August 1969 and February 1971, the overall picture was a military working alongside, rather than in conjunction with, the local police force.

Although disputed by Mumford and others who are critical of Britain's counterinsurgency campaigns following World War II, compared to Northern Ireland, the recent military experience was one "where the rules were simple, the chain of command

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[221] Hamill, *Pig in the Middle*, 12.

[222] Sir Arthur Young, a highly respected policeman who had spent most of his career reforming the Metropolitan Police in London, carried out significant work disarming, de-militarizing and dislocating the RUC from Stormont's political grasp. This took time, however, and while reforms were carried out, the Army was left not only to restore law and order, but to keep it.

[223] Charteris, *Whose Mission? Whose Orders?*, 87.

[224] Edwards, "Misapplying Lessons Learned?"

direct and the objective clear."[225] In 1969, officers and soldiers remained confused as to what role they were operating in, what legal limitations this role imposed on tactical actions, and what the government wanted them to achieve. Despite this confusion and lack of political direction between 1969 and late 1971, there was evidence that some in the British Army were attempting to follow the principles of their doctrine. The Army argued that using non-lethal gas was minimum force. Small hearts and minds programmes were established, some joint operations were taking place with the RUC, the use of lethal force remained rare, and demand for political primacy and direction was at least called for. Without an overarching political process however, one that would genuinely convince the Catholic population that they had a future worth believing in, tactical actions were never going to result in strategic victory; operationalizing the doctrine effectively was almost impossible.

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[225] Hamill, *Pig in the Middle*, 21.

CHAPTER 6

ENERGIZING AN INSURGENCY

As discussed in earlier chapters, a number of authors have stated that the

emergence of the PIRA was largely due to the "colonial" or "medieval" behavior of the

British Army, "typical of a decaying imperial power"[226] that dominated the early

deployment of the Army into Northern Ireland. It reflects an enduring vision of how the

English treated the other parts of the United Kingdom. Such language suggests

preeminence of recent British de-colonialization experience; the Army failed to adapt its

doctrine and strategy to deal with a very different situation, the result of which was the

alienation of the Catholic community and the emergence of PIRA as a force that would

fight on their behalf. James Hughes goes further, suggesting that a "misconceived violent

British state security response in the period 1969 to 1972, overwhelmingly directed

against the Catholic community, transformed what was, in essence, a non-nationalist

peaceful protest movement for reform and civil rights into a formidable nationalist cause

championed by the Provisional Irish Republican Army."[227] This statement overlooks the

considerable effort the British army initially made to remain impartial, as well as the

efforts violent Republicans were making to ensure they did not. This chapter accepts that

the Army fell in to a well laid trap through its actions, thus energizing an insurgency, but

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[226] Patrick Devlin, quoted in Coogan, *The Troubles*, 110; Rurai O'Braidigh quoted in Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 124.

[227] James Hughes, "State Violence in the Origins of Nationalism: The British Reinvention of Irish Nationalism, 1969–1972" (paper for the Nationalism and War Workshop, McGill University, Montreal, March 24-26, 2011), 2.

those actions did not create the insurgency. While much of the Republican anger is directed at the Army for the violence that followed, few mention the Machiavellian approach adopted by an insurgent group with little interest in civil rights, who were prepared to go to great lengths to pursue their nationalist ambitions.

It is important to acknowledge the split between the Official IRA and PIRA, the stated intent of PIRA, the methods they intended to use to achieve that intent, and present evidence that PIRA deliberately turned people demanding increased civil rights into a community favoring constitutional change to balance the narrative that historians like Hughes present. It is also important to assess why the British failed to see the emergence of this threat and why British counterinsurgency doctrine did not evolve at the same speed with which PIRA's insurgency strategy and tactics did.

During the 1940s and 1950s, future prominent PIRA members were jailed for acts relating to terrorism. Sean MacStoifan, who would become the first Chief of Staff of PIRA, was jailed for eight years in 1953 for stealing weapons from an armory in Essex along with Catal Goulding, another future IRA Chief of Staff, while Joe Cahill, a future Belfast commander, had been sentenced to death for his part in the shooting of an RUC policeman in 1942.[228] Towards the end of the 1950s and at the beginning of the 1960s, these men were released from prison, and returned to find an IRA that many of them thought had politically and ideologically lost its way.

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[228] See MacStiofain, *Revolutionary in Ireland*, 31-73; Brendan Anderson, *Joe Cahill: A Life in the IRA* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2002), 33-45.

Catal Goulding, the Chief of Staff of the IRA from 1962 appeared[229] to be steering the IRA away from offensive operations against the Unionist establishment and the British state to attempt uniting Protestant and Catholic workers in a wider social revolution, one that would "interweave Marxism into the Republican concept."[230] Goulding himself, allegedly a convert to radical Marxism following his detention in Wormwood Scrubs, where he became close to the Soviet spy Klaus Fuchs,[231] focused on the theories of Marxism as a vehicle to bring about not only the end of British imperial rule, but a socialist revolution that united workers regardless of religious persuasion.

The civil rights movement, long claimed by some as an IRA "creation,"[232] was, in the eyes of the IRA, the most effective method of peacefully uniting both Catholic and Protestant communities in "a newly forged radical alliance which would simultaneously undermine Irish capitalism and Irish partition alike."[233] While the IRA was instrumental in creating the civil rights movement, it was hijacked by Republicans who viewed the more benign approach to what they viewed as continued British imperialism insufficient in bringing it to an end.[234] For most protagonists in civil rights marches, the demands

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[229] It is not entirely clear whether Goulding was steering, or being steered, by other members of the IRA. The majority of PIRA literature criticizes Goulding for not doing enough to arrest this change of direction.

[230] English, *Armed Struggle*, 84.

[231] Anderson, *Cahill*: *A Life in the IRA*, 155.

[232] English, *Armed Struggle*, 91-100.

[233] Ibid., 89.

[234] English, *Armed Struggle*, 92-98. The Burntollet march on 1 January 1969 was organized by more radical elements of Peoples' Democracy, against the advice of NICRA. According to English, the demonstrators, having rejected a minor reform

were about the quality of life, not Irish unity. The reluctance of Loyalist political parties

to accept the demands, seeing increased rights as the erosion of their dominant position in

Northern Ireland, created a situation that Goulding had not predicted. As the civil rights

movement increased in volume, frequency, and numbers, sectarian divisions became

more entrenched, and "the inherent, leftist republican philosophy set in to events that

which they (the IRA) could not control."[235]

After the initial deployment of British forces in August 1969, the relationship

between the IRA and the British Army was unrecognizable from what it would become.

Thornton argues that the IRA, even if they wanted to attack the "forces of imperialism,"

could not do so while the British Army functioned in the role as protector of the Catholic

community. Senior IRA officers were dispatched to liaise with British forces at the time,

a prospect unthinkable a year later.[236] As the British Army had initially protected the

Catholic community from Loyalist mobs, the *defensive* role of the IRA, for so long the

stated aim of the organization, was superfluous, while they lacked the popular and

materiel support to successfully conduct *offensive* operations. This would change.

A large body of the IRA felt the swing to ideological socialism was a betrayal of

the cause. Men like Sean MacStoifen, Joe Cahill, and Ruari O Bradaigh had all been

forties men, had all served time in various British prisons, and all disagreed with the way

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package from O'Neill's government marched with the full knowledge that they would be
'molested' by Loyalist elements. Loyalist elements duly obliged with "all the unthinking
automatism of Pavlov's dog."

[235] Ibid., 88.

[236] Thornton, "Getting it Wrong," 78.

Goulding was taking the organization they had sworn allegiance to. Both Cahill and

MacStoifan accepted that "as revolutionaries, we were automatically anti-capitalist" but

"we opposed the extreme socialism of the revisionists because we believed that its aim

was a Marxist dictatorship, which would be no more acceptable to us than British

imperialism or Free State capitalism."[237] It may have been that members of the IRA saw

the shift in ideology as a betrayal of the Pearsean argument during the struggle for

independence from 1916 to 1919,[238] which, although ideological, lacked detail over what

a republic would look like, or Goulding's approach was an inefficient way to achieve the

aim of Irish unity, or simply because Marxism does not dovetail with the conservative

Catholicism many IRA men practiced. Either way, the new generation of Republican

militants argued that the IRA should resume the role it played between 1942 and 1944

and 1956 to 1962; attacking British infrastructure and security personnel to force a

withdrawal from Northern Ireland. To some of the forties men, "civil rights" meant

nothing when they were not accompanied by "national rights."[239] MacStoifan lamented

the IRA being labelled "I Ran Away" after failing to protect Catholics during the

violence in Belfast in July and August 1969, stating that "that the 'Politicals' refused to

do anything. To these men, and to nobody else, we must ascribe the disaster and disgrace

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[237] MacStoifan, *Revolutionary in Ireland*, 135; Anderson, *Cahill: A Life in the IRA,* 153-160.

[238] Pearse was an educator and Irish language enthusiast who argued for a progressive Ireland with an emphasis on personal responsibility and individual freedoms. Often branded a cultural nationalist, his writing conflicts with the James Connolly, who combined socialism and republicanism as the most effective way of achieving independence.

[239] Anderson, *Cahill: A Life in the IRA*, 167.

that fell upon the IRA in August 1969."[240] Analyzing the ideological split between the

Official IRA and PIRA is, however not as simple as a ballot versus bullet debate.

Goulding was no stranger to violence, nor was MacStoifan entirely dismissive of the

political process. Into this complex discussion came conservative Catholicism and its

relationship to violence,[241] anti-imperialism, economic models and class war as well as

Republican aspiration. Unlike the revolutionary movements in South America, where the

emphasis on "inspiring revolutionary rhetoric" with basic training and techniques led to

many failed revolutions, PIRA combined "pragmatism, patriotism and ruthlessness" to

generate particular appeal to a disenfranchised and disillusioned Catholic population.

When trying to assess the ideological pull toward the violent organization, it is perhaps

hard to disagree with the scholar J. Bowyer Bell's conclusion that "in Ireland, common

sense and a recourse to the loyalties of the past may prove more effective incubators than

elegant ideological analysis."[242]

These disagreements extended to the participation of Republican candidates in

elections for Stormont, an institution viewed by MacStoifan and others as a British

imposition that must be removed, not accepted, and what role the military wing of the

organization would play in the increasingly febrile environment in Belfast and

Londonderry. Ultimately, it was a disagreement on "legitimacy (in the eyes of the rank

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[240] Macstoifan, *Revolutionary in Ireland*, 119.

[241] Sean MacStoifan allegedly claimed he would rather be caught with a machine gun in his car than condoms.

[242] Bowyer, *Politics and the Gun*, 146.

and file members), ideology and militarism."[243] The differences in opinion proved too much to reconcile. In December 1969, the IRA split. The so called original IRA began to fade into ideological hand wringing and political adventure. PIRA would take an entirely different path. On 28 December 1969, with MacStoifan as its new Chief of Staff, flanked by three other significant members of PIRA's leadership,[244] PIRA made its first announcement; a return to the fundamental Republican position.[245] This return would be accompanied by an offensive strategy and current revolutionary doctrine, doctrine that had evolved faster than the British Army could respond.[246]

MacStoifan, Cahill, O'Braidgaigh, and Twomey, whose responsibility it was to develop PIRA's strategy, were all self-professed scholars, men who claimed to have read widely about Ireland, guerilla tactics, and other British counterinsurgency campaigns. MacStoifan spent time in Wormwood Scrubs in "long and deeply interesting discussions of revolutionary methods and military action"[247] with recently jailed EOKA men, while

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[243] English, *Armed Struggle*, 107.

[244] Seamus Twomey, Daithi O Conaill, and Martin McGuiness were the other three appearing in the press conference.

[245] MacStoifan, *Revolutionary in Ireland*, 142.

[246] Interestingly, the first political manifesto laid out by PIRA in 1971 seemed to balance its position between the imperfections and inequalities of Western capitalism with the limited individual rights of Eastern bloc state capitalism. The publisher of the manifesto, *Eire Nua*, argued PIRA were therefore on the left of the political spectrum, but fell far short of Marxist. See Michael McKinley, "Of 'Alien Influences': Accounting and Discounting for the International Contacts of the Provisional Irish Republican Army," *Conflict Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 24.

[247] MacStoifan, *Revolutionary in Ireland*, 74.

most PIRA leaders were well read on the recent British retreat from Aden.[248] Insurgents, like professional soldiers, study other groups and armies when constructing their operational approach. At the beginning of the 1970s, there was a noticeable shift from PIRA's previous strategy of predominantly rural, isolated attacks, to predominantly urban operations. It is unlikely that PIRA was inventing this approach on its own.

It is also clear that PIRA learned from past campaigns and current "revolutionary" authors. The comparative lack of action by the IRA in the 1950s and 1960s does not reflect a lack of thinking about action. PIRA understood their operating environment and that "a guerilla force will be unable to operate in an area where people are hostile to its aims."[249] This was a significant problem for the embryonic PIRA; while there may not have been hostility toward PIRA, neither was there a need for them to exist in the eyes of many in the Catholic population. In the 1950s, the IRA found more support in the rural areas of Ulster, away from the linen and textile mills that provided jobs and stability. The 1950s IRA doctrine chimes with Mao Tse-Tung's emphasis on guerilla mobility, which can be better achieved in the rural environment, while Che Guevara's assertion that "the main terrain of the struggle should be the countryside"[250] was one of the primary pre-conditions for successful revolutionary operations in *Guerilla Warfare*, published in 1959.

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[248] Hennessy, *Evolution of the Troubles*, 214.

[249] Anonymous, *Handbook for Volunteers of the Irish Republican Army: Notes on Guerilla Warfare* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1958), 17.

[250] Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare. Authorized Edition*, (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2006), 15.

The recently published insurgency manual *War of the Flea* by Robert Taber, was allegedly distributed to all members of the PIRA Army Council.[251] Anyone reading Taber's work can hardly fail to notice that he is a proponent of rural insurgency. Much of what Taber argues seems to be present in PIRA's emerging doctrine: the purity of a revolutionary, winning and maintaining the popular will and guerilla warfare being a "war of the world's have nots."[252] Yet Taber uses examples to support his theories that are almost entirely of a rural nature: Indochina, Cuba, and Malaya, and states that "the ideal terrain will be found in a country more rural than urban, mountainous than flat, thickly forested rather than bare, with extensive railway lines, bad roads, and an economy that is preponderantly agricultural rather than industrial."[253] While this description is a far cry from Northern Ireland, PIRA leaders subscribing to the theory might question the utility in focusing their efforts in an urban environment. It is perhaps more likely that PIRA's leaders were reading further afield than Taber. During the 1960s, the emerging Latin American theory behind guerilla warfare was that it should be launched in an urban environment.

Writing shortly before his death in 1969 that made him a cause celébrè, the Brazilian Marxist guerilla Carlos Marighella advocated urban insurgency as the most effective operating environment for revolutionary movements. Although urban operations were an adjunct to the rural main force, urban operations would be characterized by

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[251] Hennessey, *The Evolution of the Troubles 1970–72*, 214.

[252] Taber, *The War of the Flea*, 174.

[253] Ibid., 158.

unconventional methods; guerillas use the cities as their operating platform, and the people as their cloak.[254]

> The urban guerilla is an implacable enemy of the regime, and systematically inflicts damage on the authorities and on the people who dominate the country and exercise power. The primary task of the urban guerilla, is to distract, to wear down, to demoralize the military regime and its repressive forces.[255]

Marighella's ideas became popular following his death and spread through Europe and the Middle East. It is possible to draw similarities between PIRA's approach and what Marighella advocated. Although the focus on the worker persecuted by the ruling elite had only some relevance to PIRA's aims, the concept of popular support being generated and maintained for the benefit of the urban guerilla certainly applied in Northern Ireland, as did many of the tactics Marighella describes.[256]

The Spanish-born Uruguayan anarchist Abraham Guillen, supports the concept of "urban insurgencies," and espouses views that would apply to the newly emerging PIRA doctrine. Few of the senior PIRA leaders would disagree that "for politics of the people to be effective under conditions of a Pretorian dictatorship it is necessary to resort to an urban strategy that upsets the political apparatus, replying to violence with violence, revolutionary war should be based on the optimal political conditions, or that "today the

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[254] Carlos Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011), 9.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Ibid., 29.

epicenter of the revolutionary war must be in the great urban zones, where heavy artillery is not as efficient in the countryside for annihilating guerrillas tied to the land."[257]

Regis Debray's wide ranging assessment of socialist insurgencies across South America, Mexico, and other parts of the world provides more evidence to suggest revolutionaries copied and developed tactics used by groups pursuing similar aims against similar odds. A follower of Guevara (he was with Che in Bolivia in 1968), Debray popularized foco, and he is the source for Castro claiming that "cities are the graveyards of revolutionaries." Debray's assessment that small groups of determined foco[258] can have a disproportionate effect on a revolutionary movement, thereby "jumpstarting" the revolution, was also likely to be well received in the disillusioned minds of IRA veterans in the late 1960s.[259] Although an advocate of rural insurgency, and despite PIRA's rejection of the radical socialist doctrine Debray championed, Debray's three stages of guerilla warfare: establishment, development, and revolutionary offensive,[260] certainly reflect PIRA's experience as they went from an underfunded and undermanned organization to a potent offensive force. Further, these stages mirror those of Mao. Marighella's contribution, like Guillen's, was placing the revolution back into

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[257] Donald C. Hodges, ed., *Philosophy of the Urban Guerilla. The Revolutionary Writings of Abraham Guillen* (New York: Morrow Books, 1973), 240, 291 and 222. Although Guillen writes before Marighella, his work is not translated into English until 1973.

[258] Meaning "focus" or "focal point" of the revolution.

[259] Bowyer, *The Gun in Politics*, 135.

[260] Regis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America*, trans. Bobbye Ortiz (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 32.

the city. PIRA looked far and wide for influence when forming its strategy. In western

Europe, most links remained ideological: French trade unions, German Marxist groups

and Italian anarchists all claimed solidarity with PIRA, many printing journals

highlighting the ongoing "repression" in Northern Ireland. PIRA also found sympathy in

eastern Europe, where PIRA's cause was heralded by the Soviet propaganda machine as

an ongoing struggle against British imperialism.[261] Members of PIRA had formed

contacts with EOKA, and established links with the Baader-Meinhof gang, the Red

Brigades and the Red Army Faction as these groups formed at the beginning of 1970.[262]

Inspiration for their strategy and campaign came from a variety of resistance campaigns:

the Finnish defiance of the Soviet Union, the Warsaw rising of 1944 and Irgun's

operations in Israel to name but a few.[263]

Following the split between PIRA and the IRA in December 1969, PIRA set out a

strategy of defending the Catholic community, retaliating against perceived injustice and,

most importantly, a guerilla campaign against the British.[264] This was a curious approach

considering the Army was in the process of leaving in early 1970, but it became key to

PIRA's strategy. While they acknowledged the need for civil reform, PIRA brought with

it a sentiment of nationalism that went further than seeing Stormont reformed; it wanted it

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[261] Michael McKinley, "Of 'Alien Influences': Accounting and Discounting for the International Contacts of the Provisional Irish Republican Army," *Conflict Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 8-14.

[262] Ibid., 14-21.

[263] Ibid., 27-31.

[264] Coogan, *The Troubles*, 97.

removed altogether. Only then would the debate be about Ireland and Britain rather than disagreement about voting, housing reform and equal employment opportunity between local people. This strategy would only work if the focus of resentment was against Ireland's oldest enemy – the British Army. There was a deliberate and calculated attempt to switch the focus of the campaign from reform to nationalist republicanism[265] and Irish unity.[266]

The ability of PIRA to conduct offensive operations at this time was limited by the amount of available material and men, not by a lack of desire. The new organization focused on three priorities; re-arming, recruiting, and winning support from the local population. The search for funds and arms from private donations and other revolutionary movements, notably in Libya,[267] was the first priority. Secondly, PIRA had to become appealing to young Catholic men who would fill its ranks. Finally, the primary circumstance that allows an effective insurgency to exist; the support of the population, was crucial.

MacStoifan and PIRA's leadership knew they could not conduct a successful offensive strategy until the Army became unpopular. Nor could they bring the British government to the negotiating table without creating a situation where it was easier for the government to want a ceasefire than continue to fight PIRA and contain civil unrest.

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[265] Richard English argues that this sentiment was more than simply uniting the thirty-two counties of Ireland, and included political, social and economic dimensions.

[266] English, *Armed Struggle*, 128.

[267] MacStoifan, *Revolutionary in Ireland*, 148; Anderson, *Cahill: A Life in the IRA*, 265-267.

These "conspiring" leaders of PIRA founded the organization primarily "so that they could go to war."[268] Yet from August 1969 until March 1970, the focus of the blame for the ongoing injustice was on Stormont, not the Army. In fact, the Catholic population were "dismayingly appreciative" of the Army's presence, a situation that "brought tears to Joe Cahill's eyes."[269] The British Army had to become the enemy of the Catholic community if PIRA were to force the British government to the negotiating table. The strategy of PIRA became based on the idea that "attrition with the British Army was vital in producing the atmosphere in which the new IRA grew and in which their violence gradually became acceptable to people who would not otherwise have condoned or supported it."[270] The opportunity came in March 1970.

Previous civil rights marches that spiraled into violence had certainly got the attention of PIRA's leaders. As previously mentioned, the Burntollet marches in early 1969 were an example of more radical individuals demonstrating despite advice from NICRA, knowing that being attacked would generate sympathy and support for their cause. The violence that followed had set back the IRA's attempts to unite the civil rights movement into a non-sectarian effort, instead of providing, in the eyes of what became the Official IRA a "disastrously counterproductive riot" that "set up the civil rights movement as a perceived nationalist provocation."[271] Yet this is exactly what PIRA

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[268] Coogan, *The Troubles*, 104.

[269] Ibid., 94.

[270] English, *Armed Struggle*, 134.

[271] Ibid., 97.

wanted, a situation where Nationalists became increasingly angry at the failure of the state to protect them. Although the British Army had not deployed in January 1969, the violence at Burntollet was particularly pleasing to MacStoifan, who "greatly welcomed it,"[272] seeing the civil rights movement as the opportunity to "provoke the British security forces into a repression that would alienate the Nationalist population."[273] Violence against innocent demonstrators was the most likely action to cause the chaos needed for revolution.

The political decision to allow the Orange marches to proceed in March 1970 predictably resulted in violence between Protestant and Catholic communities. In response to the violence, an overstretched Army that had begun to be withdrawn from Northern Ireland in February 1970, used excessive amounts of CS gas and heavy-handed tactics in an attempt to control it. Desperate to demonstrate their commitment to defending the population, members of the newly formed PIRA prepared to attack soldiers deployed to contain the rioting. According to Ed Moloney, the pragmatic and visionary Gerry Adams detained Billy McKee, a local PIRA commander planning to launch attacks on the British Army, at gunpoint, informing his team that "he wanted ordinary people involved in the rioting as a way of radicalizing them."[274]

There were also members of PIRA's Army Council keen to bring the British to the negotiating table by deliberately targeting British soldiers whether involved in riot

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[272] Ibid., 97.

[273] Bowyer, *The Gun in Politics*, 152.

[274] Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA*, 88.

control or not. Although there is a debate about MacStoifan's willingness to do so, other PIRA commanders advocated as many deaths as possible to force the opening of negotiations. The original suggestion was that thirty six British dead, the same amount that had been killed in Aden, would suffice, but this was later revised up to eighty.[275] The theory was the British would opt for a similar path as they had in Aden; at the start of the violence, the government voiced its commitment not to yield territory or governance, soldiers were then killed, the government's position weakens, and eventually the territory is ceded.[276] It was an error for PIRA to base British resolve to stay the course on an entirely different campaign to Aden - where the British had the ability to leave - but PIRA was hardly following extant revolutionary strategy anyway.

The delayed approach that the PIRA Army Council advocated; defense, retaliation, and offense was a strategy developed out of necessity rather than desire. The ill equipped and embryonic PIRA of late 1969 and early 1970 did not have the ability to attack the British Army. This did not mean that it did not want to. PIRA acknowledged the importance of defense, but largely as a way of buying time to re-arm and organize for offensive operations. Veterans "while recognizing the crucial nature of defense, never lost sight of the movement's primary objective–the establishment of a thirty-two county Irish republic."[277] PIRA were an organization that read and applied revolutionary doctrine, understood the necessity for popular support, and managed to demonstrate "the

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[275] Hennessy, *Evolution of the Troubles*, 214.

[276] Hamill, *Pig in the Middle*, 22.

[277] Anderson, *Cahill: A Life in the IRA*, 191.

advantages in fomenting a sufficient level of violence so that the British army response would solidify Provo support,"[278] Ultimately, PIRA knew that the Army would behave like an army usually does; it would over react.

From early 1970, the British Army faced a deliberate attempt from determined, militant Republicans, armed with violent doctrine, ideas and theory from revolutionary movements across the world, to radicalize a population through goading the British Army into overreaction, often by directly attacking them, and later to force the British Government to the negotiating table by accumulating a body count, all the while endangering the very population it sought to defend. It was not created as a result of the deliberate action of the Army, although tactical mistakes acted as an effective recruiting sergeant for PIRA. The opinion that the British Army demonstrated considerable restraint in comparison to other armies,[279] or that the period was one of professional peace keeping and information gathering[280] overlooks fundamental errors the British Army made. This fundamental truth provides balance to the republican narrative that the period from August 1969 to March 1971 was one of unprovoked military aggression towards the Catholic community in Northern Ireland.

The importance of assessing PIRA's strategy is not simply to ask how culpable the British Army was in the descent into violence in 1970 and 1971, but also to demonstrate the effect operationalizing doctrine can have. It is almost impossible to

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[278] Bowyer, *The Gun in Politics*, 142.

[279] Ibid., 158.

[280] Ibid., 140.

prove that PIRA was basing strategy on any singular revolutionary doctrine. All that can be said with relative certainty is that PIRA's leaders had access to current revolutionary material, and were reading it. What Marighella, Guillen, Debray and other revolutionary authors were proposing: generating popular support, urbanization of revolutionary activity, the necessity of violence and the disproportionate effect of small cells and units creating the focal point of revolutionary activity were all evident in PIRA's strategy between 1970 and 1971. Although PIRA's ultimate aim was the unification of the thirty-two counties of Ireland under a republican system of government that reflected a somewhat undefined political ideology, PIRA's initial aim was more limited. The British Army had to become the enemy. PIRA eventually failed in the former, but was far more successful in the latter.

Could this have been avoided? In its entirety, probably not. As previously discussed, the extended presence of the Army would have likely resulted in violence eventually. At the time PIRA began to operationalize revolutionary doctrine through radicalizing demonstrators and attacking Northern Ireland's institutions, the British Army was on the back foot. The Army had deployed with little political enthusiasm, direction or guidance, had a poor relationship with the RUC and a subsequent lack of intelligence, and was reacting to violence rather than preempting it. The Army was in no position to take the offensive, and when it attempted to, could not identify where tactical actions would link to strategy, largely because a strategy did not exist. The result was that an insurgency could grow unchecked.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The British counterinsurgency experience between 1945 and 1969 was not based on a series of doctrinal principles identified, codified, and distributed as each new campaign unfolded. Soldiers deploying to Kenya were not sifting through lessons learnt from Malaya, deciding what would and would not work. Malaya only received significant analysis when the Americans became more committed to Vietnam. The unique environment of each individual operation hindered the development of cohesive doctrine; the difference in circumstances deemed too great to form any golden thread of principle and practice to be universally applied. The first major attempt to form a catalogue of lessons learned coincided with the initial deployment of forces to Northern Ireland. Strachan suggests that when Brigadier RCP Jeffries wrote *Land Operations Volume III*, it was to assimilate lessons from Aden, as if they "were of general application."[281] Yet Strachan focuses on the tactical aspects, rather than the principles of the doctrine. As discussed earlier, tactics will evolve with each theatre depending on the circumstances, but principles endure. Like any series of principles, or big ideas, there will be exceptions that challenge the rule. The absence of minimal force in Kenya, for example, challenged the notion that minimum force was a ubiquitous feature of the post-World War II counterinsurgency experience.[282] There are no absolutes in any military operation, especially counterinsurgency.

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[281] Strachan, "British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," 10.

[282] Ibid.

Principles of the British counterinsurgency experience, as much as they could be, had been identified and codified in *Land Operations Volume III*, and were read and understood. There is also evidence that they were being applied. As this study has argued, it is therefore perhaps unfair to say that the British officers and soldiers were intellectually unprepared for the deployment. The British Army, as an institution, was unprepared for an internal security task in a domestic context. Most armies would be; internal security in a domestic context is usually the remit of the police. If tactics are always unique to the situation, then it will take time to identify exactly what works and what does not. Applying the principles from the start allows the tactics to evolve faster.

To place too much emphasis on the role doctrine played when assessing what went wrong following the initial deployment would be unhelpful. First, the myriad other factors that were so crucial in contributing to the situation sliding into a counterinsurgency campaign: the political context and military relationship, the focus of British defense policy and troop numbers provided, the role of the IRA to name but a few were more formulative in the campaign than the doctrine of the British Army. Secondly, to suggest that the doctrine of the British Army was a crucial factor on one hand, and that the British approach to the doctrine meant that it was solely used as a guideline on the other, contradict each other.

There are lessons to be drawn from the initial deployment. The military must be given clear and unambiguous objectives that can be transformed into an end state linked to political objectives. They must also be given clear parameters in which military action must be conducted. This may seem self-evident, but recent experience in Iraq and Afghanistan suggest that it has not been learned. Few operations can be identified down

clear linear lines with matching doctrine to use. Counterinsurgency, peacekeeping, MAC-P all, to a certain extent, blend into one. Attempting to fit a particular type of doctrine into a situation that is alien to its nature will cause more harm than good. A thorough analysis of the operating environment is one antidote, adopting a sensible approach to applying the doctrine another. Finally, it is important to identify and understand the enemy's doctrine. It will provide clues on his strategy and offer opportunities to attack it. Insurgent groups rarely create original concepts and ideas. Identifying what influences them, and how, will allow the formulation of an operational approach that better identifies what the enemy might do.

Doctrine, according to the British military theorist J.F.C. Fuller, is "to be based on the principles of war, and which to be effective must be elastic enough to admit mutation in accordance with a change in circumstances. In its ultimate relationship to the human understanding this central idea or doctrine is nothing else than common sense – that is, action adapted to circumstances."[283] The danger of doctrine is that it can be seen as a book of answers, that if followed correctly, will provide simple solutions to complex problems. A too litteral interpretation of doctrine can provide the unimaginative with a rigid, unbending, and dogmatic set of rules which are too neat to fit the kaleidoscope of political, military, economic, and social aspects required to combat counterinsurgency or any irregular operation. If decision makers walk the line between accepting the principles garnered from experience, and avoiding becoming slaves to the tactics of the past, they can mitigate "the military's tendency, unless checked, either to ignore doctrine

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[283] J. F. C. Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War* (London: Military Bookshop, 2012), 254.

completely, or to treat it as Holy Writ, applying it unquestioningly, as a template, regardless of the circumstances."[284]

British doctrine was not irrelevant or obsolete in 1969. If it was, then the current principles of counterinsurgency, which mirror many of those in 1969, need revising. Theorizing about principles is fine and necessary, but the real challenge is how to operationalize those principles into tactical actions that link to strategic success when faced with an operating environment completely unique to the military practitioner. The British approach to doctrine is not necessarily wrong, but it needs to be accompanied by mentally dexterous officers and soldiers who can understand the principles created from experience and theory, apply it where necessary, and consciously depart from it where it is not.

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[284] General Sir John Kiszely, "Learning about Counter-Insurgency," *The RUSI Journal* 151, no. 6 (2006): 19.

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