



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

“Let’s Target Irish Terrorists Too!!”



The following article is copied from the Wall Street Journal of Friday, 21st Sept 2001. It should have made interesting reading for the general public in USA. While Frederick Forsythe is a writer whose works we would never encourage anyone to read, on this occasion he makes a lot of sense.

LONDON — President Bush was pretty explicit. He did not have to mince his words. We are, he said, at war with global terrorism. If there was any ambiguity, it was about the “we.” We the Americans or we the Western alliance? For the British this was rapidly cleared up by Tony Blair who attended Mr. Bush’s speech last night. We Brits are in this with you, a decision about 90% of Brits agree with. But here I have to say—and readers must imagine a polite cough—that this leaves us both with a bit of unfinished business. It’s called the Irish Republican Army.

Let’s see how the 1RA measures up with the definition of the enemy that Mr. Bush has outlined. That the IRA, either the Provisional or “Real” branch, is a terrorist organization can hardly be doubted. Nothing of course can compare with the sheer scale of the death toll in Manhattan, but the deliberate evil of placing a large bomb in a building or public place swarming with civilians is exactly, exactly the same. Twenty-eight dead, men and women and children, in Omagh, Northern Ireland; more than five times that number in Oklahoma City; a hundred times that in Manhattan. The evil is the same.

The following, partial list of IRA bombings or other outrages will mean little to most non-British readers: La Mon (restaurant — napalm in the vent pipes, they fried alive the Ulster Collie-Dog Society that night); Grand Hotel (attempt to assassinate Margaret Thatcher and her cabinet); Bishopsgate (heart of London); Old Bailey (law court); Downing Street (attempt to murder John Major and his cabinet); Alders (shopping mall). I guess that qualifies them as terrorists. But that is just the tip. There have been close to 400 attacks in all, and about 2,000 that were intercepted and defused. Death toll? Over 30 years, the IRA has murdered 302 police officers, 651 soldiers and reservists, around 2,000 civilians. As I say, the “score” cannot match Manhattan on a single day, but it shares approximate parity with Hamas and Hezbollah.

Next question: Is the IRA truly “global,” the president’s second qualification? Well, they are trained in Lebanon, Libya and Sudan; they have liaised with every known Mideast terror group. They have killed or attempted to kill in five countries in Western Europe. Some years ago they happily accepted five entire shiploads of arms from Moammar Gadhafi, when he was at the height of his terror-supporting mode. (Four got through, we intercepted the fifth.) Only a few weeks ago, three of their top reps were exchanging bomb-making technology with the FARC in Colombia. Beirut via Dublin to Colombia seems pretty “global.” But President Bush went further. Not only would the terrorists themselves be hunted down and put out of business, but also those who supported, armed and funded them. Fine. So where has the main support, funding and weapon-source for the IRA been? I am afraid the answer is the United States.



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Over here we still recall the oily endorsements of the “Irish struggle” by Sen. Ted Kennedy. We recall the avid backing by Rep. Peter King (R., N.Y.). We remember the interviews with Martin Galvin of Noraid, the American group through which aid to Northern Irish terrorists is funneled, openly jubilant at every fresh death of a soldier or policeman. And we have reeled at the gullible acceptance by a section of the American public of the lies put out by the IRA and their supporters.

There are two things that have to be borne in mind. The first is that Ireland is not a land of easy simplicities; it is an extremely complicated place with an extraordinarily complex history. The six counties that comprise Ulster today are a leftover from the Irish war of independence and the Irish civil war that followed immediately.

It is an enclave that chose by a massive majority to remain British upon the arrival of Irish independence 80 years ago. Unfortunately it contains two populations: about a million fiercely British Unionists and some half a million Republicans. The Unionists have made very plain that, having remained utterly loyal to the United Kingdom through two world wars, they do not deserve to be abandoned for absorption into a state of which they do not wish to be citizens. The Republicans have made equally plain that they would like the enclave to be united with the Republic of Ireland. If the proportions were reversed, our course would be easy: referendum, self-determination, the full Monty. But the proportions are not reversed.

The second fact is that the IRA has sold a section of the Irish-American community a bill of goods, of which the IRA men themselves believe not a word. This is the myth of a once-and-future Irish Utopia, wall-to-wall leprechauns and shamrocks, with everyone living in brotherly harmony—prevented by the brutal Brits who insist on keeping them in subjection. For the past 30 years the British presence in Ulster has not been in order to subjugate anyone but to prevent two communities from tearing each others’ throats out. As the Americans discovered in Somalia, that is a very dangerous and utterly thankless task.

The Republic of Ireland and the U.K. are two democracies. In each country, just as in the U.S., if you want to change the political map, you convince enough of your fellow citizens, you get elected, and then you govern by popular consent. It is no more legitimate to put a Semtex bomb in a shopping mall than it was for Timothy McVeigh to blow up the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City.

Despite all this, Irish-Americans have contributed millions of dollars via Noraid to the slaughter pile, and successive administrations, fearful of the power of the Irish vote, have turned a blind eye.

Americans must have been offended to see Palestinians and others dancing for joy at America’s agony. They can imagine how the British felt as jigs were danced and toasts raised to “the lads” in the bars of Boston when another British Tommy was carried, flag-decked, to his grave. They can also guess at how Brits felt when men we know to have shot our policemen in the back were received at the White House with a warm Clintonian embrace. We are either united in this fight against terrorism—all terrorism—or we are not. But you cannot cherry-pick the acceptable killers who shoot Brits and the unacceptable ones who kill Americans.

So the next time Mr. Galvin rattles the collecting tin for the IRA, Americans should tell him



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to take a hike.