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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUB-COMMITTEE ON EUROPE
HEARINGS ON NORTHERN IRELAND

Statement submitted by Mr Bill Henderson,
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March 1st, 1972.

My family have lived in Northern Ireland since the early 1800s and have been connected with publishing for six generations. We publish a near 100,000 daily paper the Belfast Newsletter Monday through Saturday and a Sunday paper - the Sunday News, selling nearly 125,000 copies. We do not permit religious discrimination and employ Protestants and Roman Catholics at all levels, including high executive office. The Assistant Editor of the Newsletter is a Roman Catholic and both the Editor and the Deputy Editor of the Sunday News are Roman Catholics.

I served in the Irish Guards during 1939-45 War and was proud to be in a regiment fifty-fifty Protestant and Roman Catholic and never saw any religious or political bickering or friction. The Irish Guards were and still are recruited about one third each from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. It is significant that citizens of Eire joined with us and the United States in the war against Fascism and Naziism. However the Government of the Republic of Ireland preserved a strict neutrality even to the

extent of denying the use of Irish ports from which Allied naval forces could have set forth to save some of the ships and crews which were sunk by the Nazi U boats in the Atlantic.

Never during those years of trial and testing for freedom and democracy did the Southern Irish Government offer any support and indeed we should recall the Irish rebellion of 1916 when Britain was stabbed in the back when once again the free world was threatened by tyrannical forces. History certainly repeats itself.

I was for five years a Member in the Parliament of Northern Ireland, and presently hold senior office in the Unionist Party. This party has regularly been returned at successive free, fully enfranchised and democratic elections to provide the Government of the province of Ulster.

Since 1921 the Eire Government has constantly maintained a policy of annexation towards Northern Ireland, notwithstanding the strong and continuing support for the British connection shown by the majority will of Northern Irish voters.

Is it surprising that the majority community in Ulster, regardless of class, religion or other affiliations, feel fearful of our Southern neighbours with their nationalistic and covetous eyes continually on our fair and prosperous land and industry?

As a community, the Ulster people or the Scots Irish as we are often called, have close connections with the USA. Some eleven Presidents of the USA came from Ulster and Thomas Jefferson, one of our sons, wrote your Declaration of Independence. Indeed, a Mr Dunlap from Strabane in Co Tyrone, actually printed the Declaration.

The past three years of violence in Ulster has certainly enjoyed worldwide publicity and we would claim that many activists and protagonists from all quarters have received a patronage, often highly rewarding in cash terms, from the media of the world that in my opinion has exacerbated a highly intractable problem.

What few realise is that the blueprint for the past three years of violence was written as long ago as 1966 and I now table a photostat from the Belfast Newsletter of 21 May 1966. This shows some alarming plans.

"The IRA document captured in Eire includes a lengthy plan to take over Northern Ireland with the aid of an "armed stand" in the heart of Belfast, and an appeal to the United Nations, it was disclosed in Dublin last night.

What is so frightening about the document? From reliable sources I learn that it contains not only details of plans for an eventual military takeover by the IRA in the North, but also plans to prepare for this by infiltrating the British Army and Navy, the RUC and "B" Specials.

The document also contains plans for the infiltration of trade unions, Irish language and cultural organisations, and even religious bodies of all persuasions.

University students are to be "indoctrinated".

Most cynical of all, I understand, is the approach to religion in the plan. Sectarianism is to be encouraged with the aim of promoting religious strife and civil disorder."

I now refer to a series of pamphlets entitled "Ulster - the Facts".

The issue dated 1 September 1969 details the events of August in which bloody riots occurred in Londonderry and Belfast between the police and so-called Civil Rights protestors. The pamphlet rightly claims "The violence was all according to the plan announced in 1966."

It is significant that Miss Devlin MP is pictured on the front cover breaking paving stones to prepare them for throwing at the police in the Londonderry riots. Miss Devlin could be compared to your Miss Angela Davis as a self-acknowledged revolutionary, determined on destroying the democratic system of government.

"Ulster - The Facts" issue of July 1970 tells the story of two bloody weekends in Belfast in which many died and the security forces recovered from the terrorists in the lower Falls district over 100 assorted weapons including machine guns and over 20,000 rounds of ammunition.

"Ulster - The Facts" issue of March 1971 continues the bloody saga of violence from terrorist and subversive forces and details amongst other things the death of the first British soldier in Northern Ireland. At today's date, 1 March 1972, 55 soldiers, 11 policemen and 9 members of the Ulster Defence Regiment (our equivalent of your National Guard) have been killed in assassinations or confrontations with the IRA.

We have had a terrible toll of over 150 civilian deaths at the hands of IRA terrorists including a Unionist Senator brutally murdered in his home last December and only last week a Minister in the Government narrowly escaped death but is now lying in hospital recovering from six bullet wounds from a Thompson sub-machine gun.

I now table another pamphlet from a leading newspaper columnist in Ulster asking "Would the people of

England stand it?". I ask you, would the people of America stand it?

To illustrate and magnify that question I table a booklet "The Terror and the Tears" which shows the real misery and suffering of ordinary innocent civilians in Northern Ireland who last year alone endured 1011 bomb explosions. The bombs were placed indiscriminately and in many cases no warning was given. This booklet tells of the ghastly bomb attack at Aldershot in England last week, when the IRA blew up an army officers' mess and killed five civilian women cleaners, a civilian gardener and a Roman Catholic Army chaplain.

It is in the light of these continuing atrocities that a policy of internment without trial was introduced. Our Government was reluctant to contemplate such a draconian measure and indeed we waited until it became overwhelmingly obvious that the terrorists were using the protection of the law to destroy the democratic institution of law itself. A favorite practice of subversives.

In the month of July 1971 before internment, 1,408 lbs of explosive was used to devastate Belfast's city centre - this was three times more than the amount used in June. That year also saw the first executions by the IRA of informers, culminating recently in the murder of a bus driver - Sydney Agnew - who was to have been a Crown witness. Sydney Agnew was shot down on his own front doorstep as he tried to push his children out of the line of fire. I would ask you to think of who is going to be a witness if he thought he were liable to be found dead the next morning?

Many say that internment is a denial of the right of human liberty and I would indeed agree. It is a

denial, however, that has to be weighed very carefully against the right of a state to protect its citizens' lives and property. This is an accepted balancing at International Law. Article 15 of the European Convention of Human Rights provides for derogations "in time of war or public emergency threatening the life of the nation". Indeed many, if not all, countries have used detention without trial - the United States and Great Britain in the last War, Canada two years ago during its Quebec crisis and Southern Ireland on three occasions since 1921. In 1957 Mr De Valera, then Prime Minister of Southern Ireland, interned 206 IRA men for two years and justified this at the European Court of Human Rights after an IRA campaign in which only 1 Southern Irish policeman had died.

It should not be supposed that anyone is interned without careful legal checks. After arrest every case is considered - not by the Government but by an independent Appeals Tribunal. This is under the chairmanship of a prominent judge, Mr Justice Brown, and has two other members, one of whom, Mr Justice Dalton, is a Roman Catholic. This Tribunal considers all the evidence and makes recommendations for release. It should be emphasised that all its recommendations have been accepted by Government and Security Forces and that internees have the right to legal representation.

I now submit a memorandum on internment for the record.

Finally I would like to say that internees are not treated as criminals. They have access to all normal facilities including newspapers, books, television, radio

and hobbies materials. Apart from the restriction of liberty and the requirements about reasonable visiting hours, there are no other rigours attached to internment.

At the request of the Northern Ireland Government teams from the International Red Cross have visited the internment camps and reported favourably on conditions and the welfare of those interned.

I should also emphasise that while mistakes can always occur in any system of law, it is noticeable that of the 15 detainees that have escaped - all of them have appeared at Press Conferences in Dublin as self-acknowledged members of the IRA. While we are constantly open to any suggested modifications about internment and any alleviation of the problems internees inevitably face, it must be made clear that internment was not the cause of violence, it was the consequence. Internment ceases when violence ceases.

Internment as a policy has succeeded in removing from our midst terrorists who ^{so}intimidated the community that witnesses were unwilling to bear testimony against them in the courts.

It has also had a tragic side-effect in that the IRA now have to employ children of tender years to do their dastardly work. I table a report in the London Daily Telegraph issue of Monday this week which details the training of boys of 12 and 14 in the use of firearms and bombs. This training, the report makes clear, is carried out at special camps in the Republic of Ireland.

Finally I table a booklet "27 Myths about Ulster" which effectively demolishes many of the more outlandish claims put before this Committee in the past two days.

I believe we have seen a skilful and devilish plot unfold into the reality of a propaganda and physical subversive war the like of which has never previously been perpetrated on a peaceful and largely unsuspecting community.

I feel sure that the IRA or Irish Republican Army are part of a worldwide conspiracy in which Communism plays a large part. One could readily retitlle the IRA in Ireland as lending itself to International Revolutionary Anarchy against the peaceful and progressive ideals of democracy. I beg of you in your deliberations to consider the fortitude and steadfastness of the vast majority of citizens in Ulster in their period of trial and suffering whose only desire is to retain their British identity and live at peace with their Southern Irish neighbours.