

## London strikes back at Clinton's Irish peace moves

by Mark Burdman

On Feb. 13, the Washington correspondent for the London *Guardian*, Martin Walker, commented: "President Clinton sees one of his prominent foreign policy achievements collapsed in the rubble of the Isle of Dogs." Walker was speaking about the Feb. 9 terror bombing, reportedly claimed by the Irish Republican Army, in the Canary Wharf/Docklands business district in the Isle of Dogs area of London. It is most unlikely that British correspondent Walker knows what the American President sees or doesn't see. But this sentence tells everything about what the real target of the bombing was: the peace policy of the American President in Northern Ireland specifically, and in other parts of the world more generally.

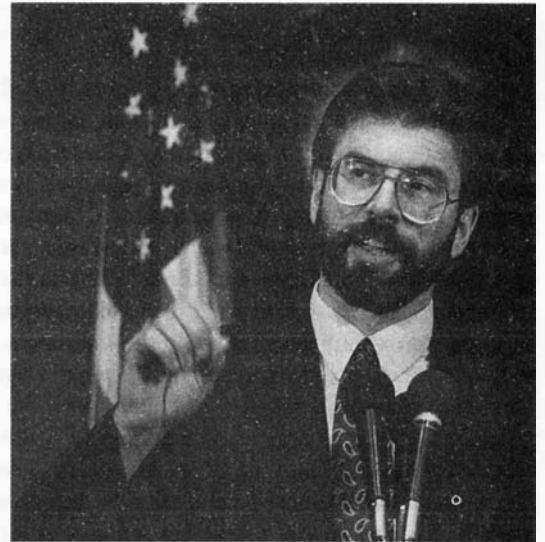
In any such dramatic development of this kind, the relevant question is, "Who benefits?" While some unit in the IRA reportedly claimed responsibility for the bombing, the fact is that over more than a quarter-century, sections of the IRA have become playgrounds for British intelligence. British secret service *agents provocateurs* are more than capable of being planted in one or another unit of the group, and of pulling off operations desired by their masters. The authors of the Feb. 9 bombing might best be dubbed the "RIRA," the Royal Irish Republican Army, acting in the service of the British Crown.

The extensive damage done by the bomb, and the killing and wounding of innocent civilians, matter less to relevant British Crown planners than the strategic issues involved in countering those tendencies across the Atlantic that are hostile to British neo-imperial interests. British elites have been in a state of apoplectic rage about Clinton's willingness to "intrude" on their "turf" to try to bring peace to a part of the world that has known horrible violence over a period of nearly three decades. Throughout the past couple of centuries, the British have always seen red at any potential for pro-American tendencies to grow in Northern Ireland, or in Ireland more

broadly. Presently, the British perceive Clinton's actions there as a leading element of a foreign policy that has upended the "special relationship" between the Britain and the United States.

In a Feb. 8 discussion, outspoken British Conservative parliamentarian Bill Cash, one of the more candid figures in British politics, raved that Clinton's foreign policy is "one of the fundamental problems" the British face now. In a recent memo to British Prime Minister John Major, Cash warned about "the damage done to British-American relations under President Clinton," and cited Clinton's "adulation of Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams" as emblematic of the problem. He recalled the late British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's assertion that the British-American "special relationship" was "one of the single greatest features of the 20th century." Cash and others worry that Clinton is reviving British-American tensions which existed between Churchill and American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1943-45 period.

Beyond Northern Ireland as such, the British Crown and its policy institutions are intent on upsetting the pillars of the Clinton administration's foreign policy around the globe. This would have the intent of either causing the President's defeat in the November 1996 Presidential elections, or of so weakening the President over the weeks and months ahead, that he loses his will to buck the British Establishment on crucial issues, particularly respecting vigorous measures to deal with the global financial and economic crisis that is certain to erupt. To the extent that the British are conceding the inevitability of a Clinton second term, they want to ensure that he is sufficiently weakened, that he has little room for independent maneuver, and can be driven out of power by a series of "Watergate"-style scandals, soon after being re-elected. As *EIR* contributing editor Lyndon LaRouche stressed in a Feb. 8 interview, the British are pursuing a "Mutt-



British Prime Minister John Major (left) and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams (above). Following the IRA bombing in London, Adams charged that "the British government must bear total responsibility for the collapse of the peace process. It has been guilty of criminal neglect."

and-Jeff" or "hard cop-soft cop" strategy toward the U.S. President.

### The new phase of irregular warfare

It is thus also critical to see the Feb. 9 bombing on the Isle of Dogs as part and parcel of a renewed *irregular warfare* offensive carried out by various assets or agents of the British intelligence services in various parts of the world. A horrible new phase of such terrorism was initiated on Jan. 31, when the so-called "Tamil Tigers" carried out a barbarous car-bomb attack on the headquarters of the Central Bank in the capital city Colombo. As *EIR* has documented, the Tamil Tigers are an integral component of a British-centered international drugs, weapons, and terrorism capability. The bombing was an attempt to undermine sensitive peace negotiations being conducted by the Sri Lankan government, and introduces a factor of instability into an Asian region already being destabilized, in particular, by the British-manipulated tensions between China and Taiwan.

Then, two days after the Isle of Dogs bombing, Algiers, the capital of Algeria, was hit by two car bombs, killing dozens and wounding hundreds. These were among the most deadly of terrorist attacks in a domestic conflict that has seen horrible brutality over the past few years. The Clinton White House had been a consistent voice for moderation in Algeria, and for talks between the Islamist opposition and the government, as a "flank" on its diplomacy on the Arab-Israeli front.

A parallel process is also seen in the Balkans, with the suddenly heightened profile of the Bosnian Serb criminals, cutting off contact with the IFOR peace-implementation force and threatening to up-end the Clinton administration-mediat-

ed Dayton peace agreements, ostensibly in protest against the Bosnian government's apprehending of Bosnian Serb military officers suspected of being involved in war crimes. The Bosnian Serbs have consistently been used by the British as a factor of geopolitical destabilization in the Balkans. That, plus curious Greek-Turkish tensions in the Aegean, forced U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke to carry out diplomatic mediation efforts in former Yugoslavia and on the Aegean front. When Holbrooke criticized the passive attitude of European governments toward these crises, the British Foreign Office released a highly unusual statement, authored by Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, dismissing Holbrooke's comments as "utter nonsense." It is extremely rare for the Foreign Office to publicly criticize American policy in such violent terms.

### Undermining Washington's diplomacy

The political preconditions in which an IRA terror bombing could be presented as "credible," were created by the obstructionism of the British government vis-à-vis the Northern Ireland peace process. It then became "plausible" to activate a "frustrated wing of the IRA," or, as some reports have it, a "rogue unit" that would announce an end to the 17-month IRA cease-fire, and take credit for a major terror bombing. This is the same *modus operandi* by which the British manipulate, or control, certain elements in the militant Palestinian Hamas group, which opposes the Palestine Liberation Organization-Israeli peace accords. A Feb. 11 London *Mail on Sunday* report of a death threat to Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams by "IRA militants," calls to mind the frequent threats to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat; both are accused of "trea-

son” by the “militants.”

British obstructionism on the Northern Ireland front had reached the point in recent weeks, that all parties involved in the peace negotiations, from officials of the Irish government to the various parties in Northern Ireland itself, were traveling to Washington to seek help from the Clinton administration. Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring was on his way back to Dublin from Washington on Feb. 9, just as the bombing occurred. Spring was promoting the Irish government’s proposal for “proximity talks” involving all the parties, modelled on the 1995 agreements reached for Bosnia in Dayton, Ohio. That idea received a setback, of course, with the bombing, since the British can now claim that Sinn Fein should not be allowed at the table until the IRA reaffirms its “cease-fire.”

As the accompanying timeline shows, the Clinton administration has, for the past couple of years, been the main driving force behind progress in bringing an end to the Northern Ireland bloodshed. In significant part, the President has worked through the political-diplomatic machine of the Kennedy family in pursuing this diplomacy. The President’s own commitment to this process, and the positive cultural and psychological effect his intervention was having on the population of Northern Ireland, was seen in the emotional welcome he received in his Nov. 30 visits to Londonderry and Belfast.

The main vehicles for further progress being promoted by the administration include the work of the international body headed by former U.S. Democratic Senator George Mitchell, for overseeing the “decommissioning” of weapons by paramilitary organizations, and the launching of “all-party” talks.

By contrast, the British have exploited whatever stalling mechanisms have been available. The main one has been to demand the immediate “decommissioning” of arms by the IRA—without a corresponding decommissioning from “Protestant” paramilitary groups—as the central issue, before which no substantive negotiations could take place. One well-informed Northern Ireland political figure, himself involved in peace diplomacy, had warned *EIR* several months ago, at an early stage in the negotiations, that the British would in fact use this tactic. The undisguised aim of the British, he said, then would be to radicalize the IRA, force it back into terrorist action, and thereby discredit the whole process.

In recent days, the British government has added a new twist. Suddenly, and without prior consultation with the Irish government, British Prime Minister John Major proposed that general elections for a “Northern Ireland Assembly” be held prior to further peace talks. This was done, in part, as a sop to the Ulster Unionist political party, the support of which Major desperately needs to keep his bare majority in the British House of Commons.

It is more than interesting, in this light, that the Isle of Dogs bombing occurred virtually on the eve of a scheduled visit to Washington by the ultra-anglophile Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble. Because of the situation created by the bombing, President Clinton decided to sit in on a Feb.

12 meeting that had been previously scheduled with Vice President Al Gore. Trimble also met with Senator Mitchell, and with U.S. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake. According to the British press, he took a defiant “I told you so” attitude, demanding that the Clinton administration put back the former controls on U.S. visas and fundraising for Sinn Fein. But the Feb. 13 London *Guardian* says Clinton has refused, saying that he wants to remain “actively engaged” with Sinn Fein leader Adams, and that he believes Adams, who says he was caught offguard by the bombing.

### ‘Throwing petrol on to a fire’

British policy has come in for strong attack, in the wake of the Isle of Dogs bombing. While strongly condemning the bombing and insisting that he would not talk to Gerry Adams until the IRA reaffirmed the cease-fire, Irish Prime Minister John Bruton charged Feb. 11, that British policy was like “throwing petrol on to a fire.” He said that Britain’s insistence on elections to a Northern Ireland Assembly as supposedly the best way forward, was a “serious mistake.”

In a Feb. 12 commentary in the London *Guardian*, Adams wrote that “the British government must bear total responsibility for the collapse of the peace process. It has been guilty of criminal neglect. Sinn Fein has repeatedly pointed out that the peace process could not stand still. If it was not moving forward, it was in grave danger of moving back.”

While expressing “disappointment and regret” over the IRA-claimed Feb. 9 bombing, Adams charged that the British government and its Ulster Unionist allies “erected one obstacle after another, to frustrate every attempt to sit down around the negotiating table. . . . The cumulative evidence points damningly to a British government strategy locked into a psychology of war. . . . We have witnessed bad faith and dishonesty, new preconditions, stalling, negativity and provocation. British bad faith and dishonesty . . . which was so barefaced that it surprised even those of us with a healthy cynicism about British intentions. . . . One thing is clear: It is not possible to have peace in Ireland, unless the British government is committed to that objective.”

Adams praised the views of Senator Mitchell and his colleagues expressed in a report released last month: “If the focus remains on the past, the past will become the future, and that is something that no one can desire.”

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## A Chronology

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**March 1993:** President Clinton appoints Jean Kennedy Smith as U.S. ambassador to Ireland, in preparation for launching the peace process.

**December 1993:** After a year of intensive behind-the-scenes negotiations by John Hume of the Social Democratic

and Labor Party of Northern Ireland, and Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein, with British officials, British Prime Minister John Major and Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds sign the Downing Street Declaration which outlines a plan for a peace settlement in Northern Ireland.

**January 1994:** President Clinton directs that a waiver be granted, allowing a conditional visa to be issued to Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams, so that he could attend a one-day seminar in the United States on prospects for peace in Northern Ireland.

**Aug. 31, 1994:** Irish Republican Army announces a cease-fire.

**Sept. 20, 1994:** John Hume, head of Northern Ireland's Social Democratic and Labour Party, meets U.S. President Bill Clinton.

**Sept. 21, 1994:** Despite heavy pressure from London, Clinton issues an order directing that an unconditional visa be granted to Adams and two other Sinn Fein members, allowing them to come to the United States, without restriction, to travel and hold meetings on Capitol Hill.

**Oct. 3, 1994:** United States lifts ban on official contact with Sinn Fein.

**Oct. 13, 1994:** Pro-British Protestant paramilitary groups announce cease-fire.

**Nov. 1, 1994:** Clinton announces a package of measures to include economic development planning, "to ensure that

peace brings to Ireland new opportunities for job growth and economic prosperity."

**March 7, 1995:** Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary Patrick Mayhew details British demand that peace talks cannot be held unless IRA surrenders ("decommissions") its weapons.

**May 24-26, 1995:** White House Conference on Trade and Investment in Ireland brings together 1,000 U.S. and European businessmen and Irish public officials.

**Sept. 5, 1995:** The Irish government postpones its summit talks with Britain, rejecting British insistence that the IRA disarm before peace talks can be held.

**Nov. 30, 1995:** Clinton visits Belfast and Londonderry.

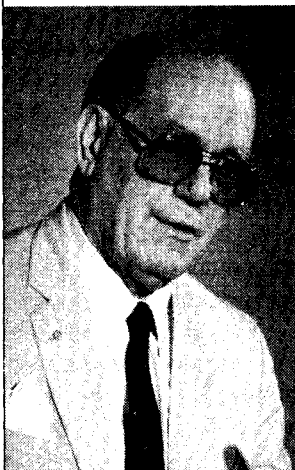
**Dec. 15, 1995:** International commission under former U.S. Senator George Mitchell begins work on trying to get Britain to agree to peace talks, instead of blocking talks by demanding IRA disarmament first.

**Dec. 19, 1995:** Sinn Fein holds first talks with Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary Mayhew under twin-track process.

**Jan. 24, 1996:** The Mitchell commission proposes all-party talks alongside a phased surrender of guerrilla weapons. Major immediately blocks the Mitchell commission plan, demanding elections be held in Northern Ireland to qualify those who can sit at any peace talks.

**Feb. 9, 1996:** A reported IRA statement says it is abandoning the cease-fire, and a bomb explodes in London.

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Buenos Aires . . . . .	1900	Pittsburgh . . . . .	1700
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