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German exploitation of Irish neutrality, 1939-1945

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GERMAN EXPLOITATION OF IRISH NEUTRALITY
1939 - 1945

By

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INTRODUCTION

Modern diplomacy has, over the years, come to signify the development of external relations between the world's major powers. When one looks back upon the diplomatic history of the twentieth century, he is struck by such key phrases as "the Big Four" or "the Big Five." However, the art of diplomacy is not confined to the larger powers alone. The smaller states, particularly in wartime, have often assumed a role completely out of proportion to their relative size. Witness, in this regard, the role played by such normally insignificant powers as Serbia in 1914, Poland in 1939, Korea in 1950, or Viet Nam in 1967.

A small state need not, however, become a battleground to assume an important role in the diplomacy of nations. If it contains within its borders economic, political or military assets, a smaller power may well find itself in the limelight of diplomatic affairs. Such was the case with Ireland in the Second World War when, because of its strategical importance, it found itself the unwilling recipient of Nazi Germany's attentions.
Germany's interest in Ireland stemmed, not from any intrinsic value of that country, but rather, from Ireland's geographical proximity to Britain. Therefore, German military and political authorities never viewed neutral Eire as an end unto itself but simply as a means of striking at Great Britain. In short, Ireland became an unlocked door through which the Third Reich might enter Britain.

The German exploitation of Eire's neutrality took two broad or basic forms, political and military. Neither method, however, can be truly separated, for each served to complement the other. Politically, through the German Legation in Dublin, and the various agencies of the propaganda and intelligence departments, Nazi Germany sought to strengthen the will of the Irish government to remain indiscriminately neutral. In doing so, Nazi diplomacy directly aided the German military staffs which sought to use Eire to advantage in the Battle of the Atlantic and as a possible base of attack against Britain.

There are four examples which can be studied to ascertain the extent to which the diplomatic and military establishments of Germany used Eire, and more specifically, Irish neutrality, to accomplish their objectives. The first of these deals with the efforts made by German diplomacy to maintain Eire's neutrality, to influence the views of Eire
toward pro-British Northern Ireland, and finally, but by no means least importantly, to strengthen the minority pro-German sentiment which existed in Eire during the Second World War.

The second case deals with the German diplomatic efforts to maintain the neutrality of Irish sea ports, which assumed a position of high importance during the Battle of the Atlantic. Viewed also in this regard is the effect which the neutrality of those ports had upon the German naval campaign against British shipping.

Third, one must study the operations of the German intelligence service in Eire. The intelligence department (or Abwehr) sought throughout the war to build an intelligence network in Ireland, to use Eire as a base for espionage activities in Northern Ireland and Britain, and to bring direction to the efforts of the violently anti-British, ultra-nationalist Irish Republican Army. In so doing, the Abwehr delved into both the political and military spheres of influence in Ireland.

The final case deals with the proposed German invasion of Ireland. Although primarily a military problem, the invasion plan nonetheless had political ramifications as well.

Before turning to a detailed analysis of the four cases in point, it is necessary to submit two factors
which had a bearing on German relations with Eire. The first is the simple issue of precedent. None of the four studies was initiated by Nazi Germany. Each had been attempted either by a Germany of an earlier era, or by an entirely different country. Most importantly, the Third Reich was forced to take into account the delicate question of Irish sensibilities and Irish opinion.
CHAPTER I

GERMANY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF IRISH NEUTRALITY

German diplomats who arrived in Dublin during the period immediately preceding World War II discovered a new country, Eire, with a political position founded upon neutrality. After several centuries of British rule, Ireland, or at least the southern twenty-six counties, had become a Free State in 1921. By 1937, many of the final ties between Ireland and Britain had been removed: the king was no longer recognized as ruler in Southern Ireland; all colonial offices had been abolished; a measure of economic independence had been attained, and finally, to make clear that the country was indeed independent, the Gaelic term Eire had replaced its English equivalent, Ireland.¹

While German diplomats could, therefore, quite readily understand the nature of the new state, they no doubt had much more difficulty in discerning the nature of Irish neutrality. Generally, one can arrive at two reasons why the Irish government, in the pre-war period, came to the decision to remain neutral in the event of a world conflict.

¹ All of the above are found in the 1937 Irish Constitution.
The first stems from simple political reality in a world dominated by a few major powers. The Prime Minister of Eire, Eamon de Valera, had also served, during the 1930's, as President of the League of Nations. At League president, de Valera had been most strongly affected by the Abyssinian crisis and the inability of the League to restrain a large state. Speaking on July 2, 1936, de Valera exemplified the frustration felt by the head of a small nation in a world rapidly evolving into two great military camps:

is there any small nation represented here which does not feel the truth of the warning that what is Ethiopia's fate to-day may well be its own fate to-morrow, should greed or the ambition of some powerful neighbors prompt its destruction. . . . peace is dependent upon the will of the great States. All the small States can do, if the statesmen of the greater States fail in their duty, is resolutely to determine that they will resist with whatever strength they possess every attempt to force them into a war against their will. 3

Obviously, as a smaller nation, Eire would remain neutral in a world conflict.

In addition to political reality, there was also something akin to a moral issue involved in Dublin's decision to maintain neutrality. During the many years of struggle to regain their independence, the Irish had created a large degree of pride in their nation and its accomplishments.

2 Eamon de Valera, 1882-present. De Valera served as head of state of the Free State from 1932-1938. From 1938-1948 and 1951-1954 he was Prime Minister of Eire. He is now President of the Republic of Ireland.

3 Eamon de Valera, Peace and War; Speeches by Mr. de Valera on International Affairs, (Dublin, 1944), 54-59.
That pride could not, in 1939, allow them to join their old overlord Britain in a war against Nazi Germany. Although Germany had earlier provided aid to the Irish in their search for independence,¹ and theoretically could also aid Eire to reclaim the northern six counties still under British control, Dublin could not join the side of the Axis powers either. To join either side in the conflict would have meant an abandonment of Eire's freedom of independent actions. As a result, as the war progressed, neutrality became increasingly associated with independence.

German diplomats thus were faced with two tasks in the coming war— to urge the Irish to maintain their neutrality, and to exploit that neutrality to the benefit of their fatherland.

Wartime relations between Germany and Eire were guided, in all fields of interest, by three major considerations, the most important of which was the conduct of Anglo-Irish affairs. Ireland, the "backdoor to England," proved to be a constant problem to the policy makers at Whitehall. As a result, Anglo-Irish affairs served as an excellent barometer of German-Irish affairs; for when relations between Britain and Eire were at their worst, as was the case between 1939 and 1941, German-Irish relations were generally

¹ For details of German aid to the Irish in their search for independence, see Chapter III.
at their best.

The opinion of Irish-Americans was yet another factor which served to influence the German attitude toward Eire. In conducting their relations with Eire, both Germany and Great Britain considered the reaction among the Irish living in the United States. While this was, of course, more important before the entry of the United States into the war, it nevertheless continued to be an area of consideration throughout the conflict.

Of a more direct effect upon the relations between the two countries was the existence of pro-British Northern Ireland. Prime Minister de Valera had, when he declared that Eire would remain neutral in the event of war, based his decision in part on the fact that Britain was helping to maintain the existence of an independent Ulster. Cooperation between Britain and Eire, he stated, would be "very, very slight" as long as partition of the island remained. Furthermore, if, when war started, British troops remained stationed in Northern Ireland, Irish sentiment undoubtedly would become more hostile toward Great Britain. While Britain chose to support its sometimes bellicose ally in Northern Ireland, Germany could only gain by giving support

to Dublin. As a result, the German foreign office and propaganda ministry became increasingly vocal in support of Irish demands seeking an end to partition.

On April 26, 1939, relations between Great Britain and Eire reached a new low. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced on that day the establishment of the Military Training Bill by which military conscription was to be initiated in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. De Valera, who firmly believed that the northern six counties were an integral part of the Irish Republic, viewed the bill as an act of aggression against Eire. On May 2, he denounced the bill before the Dail Eireann (parliament) protesting "in the strongest terms the imposition of conscription in that part of our country." The Irish Prime Minister was joined in his opposition to the bill by all members of the Dail, as well as the nationalists and Catholics in Northern Ireland, and the Irish in the United States.

On May 4, Chamberlain, perhaps fearing that hostilities would once more begin between Irish nationalists

6 Neville Chamberlain, 1869-1940. From October, 1931 to May, 1937, Chamberlain served as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and from May, 1937 until 1940 he was prime minister.

7 Survey, VII, 236.

8 Round Table, No. 115, "Ireland's Vital Problems," June, 1939, 590-591.
and loyalists, announced that Ireland would not be included in the Military Training Bill. While feelings were somewhat placated in Eire, loyalists north of the border viewed the decision as being yet another surrender to Eamon de Valera.9

The German foreign ministry, while it was kept informed on the progress of events, remained silent during the incident. However, Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop10 later instructed the German Minister in Eire, Eduard Hempel,11 to inform the Irish Prime Minister (without specifically mentioning possible German aid to end partition) that "wide sympathy was felt in Germany for Ireland and the national aspirations of the Irish people."12 Undoubtedly the Reich government thought the time inappropriate for alienating the British government by more

9 The Times (London), April 29, 1939 and May 5, 1939.

10 Joachim von Ribbentrop, 1883-1946. In 1931, Ribbentrop became Hitler's personal advisor on foreign affairs, and from 1936-1938 he served as ambassador to England. Ribbentrop held the position of Foreign Minister of Germany from 1938-1945, and was hanged as a war criminal at Nuremberg in October, 1946.

11 Eduard Hempel, German Minister to Eire, 1937-1945.

12 U.S. Department of State, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, VII, Doc. No. 428, 422. Hereafter cited as D.G.F.P.
strongly supporting Irish demands.

For the remainder of the summer, diplomatic activity between Germany and Eire remained somewhat subdued. However, in the week immediately preceding the outbreak of war activity between Berlin and Dublin greatly increased. On August 24, Hempel informed Ribbentrop that Joseph P. Walshe, the Secretary General of the Irish Foreign Ministry, had contacted him on the previous day. At that time Walshe once more assured the German minister that Eire would definitely remain neutral if war were declared between the major powers. Only a definite attack, Walshe stated, would provoke Eire to change its non-belligerent position.

Three days later, Ribbentrop instructed Hempel that, in view of the deterioration of the political situation, it was necessary to make a formal declaration of policy toward Ireland. The declaration, as presented to de Valera, contained the usual assurances of good will and, in addition, a rather vague threat:

13 Joseph Patrick Walshe, wartime Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eire. De Valera, in addition to being Prime Minister, also served as Foreign Minister.

14 D.G.F.P., VII, Doc. No. 303, 311.
In accordance with the friendly relations between ourselves and Ireland we are determined to refrain from any hostile action against Irish territory and to respect her integrity, provided that Ireland, for her part, maintains unimpeachable neutrality towards us in any conflict. Only if this condition should no longer be obtained as a result of a decision of the Irish Government themselves, or by pressure exerted on Ireland from other quarters, should we be compelled as a matter of course... to safeguard our interests in the sphere of warfare in such a way as the situation then arising might demand of us.15

Hempel also informed de Valera that all Irish citizens then living in Germany would be allowed to remain there, even if war should come, and that Germany would make every effort to avoid disrupting Irish trade in the progress of the submarine war.16

De Valera, upon receiving the German declaration, reiterated that the Irish government intended to remain unimpeachably neutral. However, the neutrality of Eire, and the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, would be dependent upon a number of conditions. Ireland's close proximity to Britain, and its dependence upon trade with that country, forced the Irish government to "show certain consideration for Britain, which in similar circumstances they would also show Germany."17

De Valera further requested that Germany refrain from

15 D.G.F.P., VII, Doc. No. 428, 422.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., Doc. No. 484, 471.
violating Irish territorial waters, exploiting the anti-British Irish Republican Army, and taking hostile action against the Irish of pro-British sentiment in Ulster.  

In the years of war which followed, Eire remained well within the legal limits of its neutrality. However, Germany continually saw fit to overlook the conditions which had been established before the war.

During the first month of the war, as the Wehrmacht overran Poland and the Allies manned defensive positions in France, Eire remained untouched by continental events. Except in the sphere of naval matters, Ireland was of little or no interest to the major powers who busily watched the progress of the war in the east. The majority of the Irish themselves strongly supported de Valera in his determination to keep the country neutral, with the result that a strengthened national self-consciousness quickly arose.

Although Ireland was thus fulfilling its self-appointed commitment to neutrality, the German foreign ministry nonetheless recognized that any combination of

18 D.G.F.P., VII, Doc. No. 484, 471.

19 One curious exception to the lack of interest in Ireland was reported by the London Times on September 3: "The British in Peking . . . this morning woke to kind banners hung across the streets, declaring in English: 'Let Ireland be represented in China' and 'Ireland is no longer the slave of Britain.' A few early risers saw Chinese police of the Japanese-sponsored Chinese Government hanging up the banners . . . its object is puzzling."
the many external and internal influences affecting Eire could bring about a change in policy. The question of German-Irish relations was therefore once again brought up in October.

On October 8, Hempel reported that Irish opinion, "especially in view of the sympathy for Catholic Poland which has had a fate similar to Ireland's," was at that time largely anti-German. However, the German radio had nevertheless succeeded in prompting pro-German sympathies in the rural areas of the island. As a result, Hempel suggested that Germany continue to support "consolidation of Irish neutrality and independence on a broad national basis, which is also important in its effect on the Dominions, India, and America, as symptom of the loosening of the ties of Empire."21

During the remainder of 1939, German-Irish relations continued to be relatively good. Indeed, relations were somewhat improved in November, when the United States announced that Eire would thenceforth be considered within the combat zone in which American shipping could not operate. The Irish government, perhaps believing the announcement to be the result of indirect British pressure to abandon neutrality, sent an immediate complaint

21 Ibid.
to the American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull. The entire episode resulted in the increased determination of Eire to remain neutral and, hence, outside the Allied block.

In the period preceding the German invasion of the West, Ireland completed the motions of assuming a warlike footing. The Irish army, which had numbered 15,000 at the beginning of the war, was eventually increased to 150,000 with the addition of reservists and volunteers. A rigid censorship was initiated, as was a rather half-hearted attempt to bring the blackout to Eire's major cities.

The principal question in Ireland nonetheless remained, as it had before, the continuance of partition. Although Germany and Great Britain sought to influence the final settlement of the question, the main conflict remained an Irish one, between Dublin and Belfast. De Valera, seeking to end partition and remain neutral in the same instant, was opposed by Lord Craigavon, the Anglophile Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. Craigavon viewed

22 Cordell Hull, 1871-1939. Hull served as senator from Tennessee from 1931-1933, and as secretary of state, 1933-1944.

23 The Times (London), November 15, 1939.

24 Ibid, November 7, 1939.

25 Lord Craigavon, James Craig, 1871-1940. Leader of the Ulster Unionists who sought union with Britain, and the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 1921-1940.
de Valera's effort as yet another attempt at "black-mailing the British Government to end partition, and this at the very moment when the enemy is at our gates."

Ireland became increasingly important after Germany's successful invasion of the Low Countries and France. Popular opinion in Britain, which had previously regarded Irish neutrality as a necessary (if somewhat bothersome) evil, became more intensely outspoken in its demands that Eire discard its neutral position. Solutions to the problem of closing "England's back door" ranged the entire gamut of credibility. Some elements in Britain, quite few in number, suggested that the United Kingdom might sacrifice Northern Ireland to Eire in an effort to buy Irish participation in the war. At the opposite end of the pole came the near-hysterical plan to send the Canadian Air Force into Eire and the Polish and Czech Legions together with Charles de Gaulle's French Legion, to the border between Northern and Southern Ireland. By far the most serious possibility, insofar as Germany and Eire were concerned, was the threat of a British invasion of Ireland.

The situation reached crisis proportions when Winston Churchill, an opponent of previous concessions

26 *The Times* (London), July 1, 1940.

27 *Time*, XXXVI, July 15, 1940, 23.
to Ireland, issued a strong statement denouncing the Irish stand on neutrality and hinted at possible action to alleviate the situation. De Valera immediately announced that Eire was prepared to defend itself against any aggressor, including Great Britain.

The German foreign ministry seized the situation as an excellent opportunity to further strengthen German-Irish relations, and therefore indirectly strike at Great Britain. Accordingly, Ernst von Weizsäcker, the German State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, instructed Minister Hempel on November 13 to inform de Valera that Germany expected Eire to resist any British interference in Irish neutrality. By doing so, Eire would join in a common front with Germany and, hence, would "realise her national goals" when Britain was crushed.

While Ribbentrop's foreign ministry thus urged on Dublin through diplomatic channels, German military authorities initiated investigation into the possibility of furnishing military assistance to Ireland in the event of a British attack. On November 14, General Walter

28 *Time*, XXXVI, November 18, 1940, 26-27.


30 *D.G.F.P.*, XI, Doc. No. 333, 570.
Warlimont,\textsuperscript{31} Deputy Chief of the Operations Staff of the German High Command, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW), informed Special Ambassador Karl Ritter\textsuperscript{32} that, because Britain controlled the sea and air between the continent and Ireland, little could actually be done to prevent British military moves. However, Warlimont believed that German submarines could be deployed around the Irish ports, which Great Britain would most certain seize, and that Luftwaffe attacks could be extended to areas in Ireland occupied by the British. Until badly needed supplies were received, it would be impossible to provide further aid, such as the landing of airborne troops. The war diary of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff nonetheless noted that, "Ambassador Ritter believes that in this case the Fuehrer will demand the utmost of the Wehrmacht."\textsuperscript{33}

Ten days following the conference between Ritter and Warlimont, Ribbentrop forwarded to Hempel a top-secret, coded message instructing the German minister to contact de Valera, personally if possible, to discover the extent to which German aid might be welcomed. Hempel had earlier informed the foreign ministry that many sources in Eire, including the Minister of Justice, Arthur Boland, believed

\textsuperscript{31} Walter Warlimont, Deputy Chief of the Operations Staff 1939-1944. Transferred to OKH Command Pool in 1944.

\textsuperscript{32} Karl Ritter, Ambassador on Special Assignment.

\textsuperscript{33} D.G.F.P., XI, Doc. No. 333, 570.
that an Irish request for German aid was actually under consideration. Ribbentrop stated that if such were the case, and if a British attack came, the Irish government "could very well imagine that the Reich Government would be in a position to give Ireland vigorous support and would be inclined to do so." If Dublin proved agreeable, Hempel was to find by which ship, and into which ports, German military supplies might be sent.

On November 28, General Alfred Jodl, Chief of Operations of the OKW, reported to Ritter that both Hitler and Ribbentrop believed that, if Eire defended itself to the utmost, the expected British invasion would cause "tremendous repercussions" in many of the world's capitals. In the event of such an invasion taking place, the OKW was considering the shipment of captured British weapons to Eire. Such weapons, Jodl stated, could be easily transferred to Eire aboard Irish ships from the German ports in France.

The following day Ribbentrop instructed Hempel to approach de Valera on the subject of arms shipments. "The German Government," Hempel was to tell the Irish

34 *D.G.F.P.*, XI, Doc. No. 407, 718.


36 *D.G.F.P.*, XI, Doc. No. 416, 727. Irish ships were to travel in a circular course, entering Allied shipping routes west of Ireland, appearing to be en route from the U.S.
Prime Minister, "was naturally interested in strengthening Ireland's power to resist" a British attack.\(^37\) Germany had, as a result of the French capitulation, acquired a large number of arms abandoned by the British. These weapons could now be transferred, free of cost, to the Irish in such a way that their neutrality would not be threatened.\(^38\)

Hempel informed the foreign ministry on December 7, that, while he had not talked with de Valera as yet, he had discovered that there were many influential people in Eire who feared that Germany might fail to support the Irish if Britain attacked. Hempel suggested that Berlin reassure Eire of its intention to assist in the event of hostilities between Great Britain and Ireland.\(^39\)

The German minister, seizing upon the confusion of the moment, advised the foreign ministry that the question of Northern Ireland might then be openly broached by Germany. Neither de Valera, who sought the peaceful return of the northern six counties, nor any member of his government, had previously sought out the possibilities of active German aid in recovering Ulster. However, Hempel advised that, even if de Valera continued his


\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 466, 804.
non-violent policy toward partition, visible German participation in the restoration of Irish unity would be favorably accepted when the time came. Above all, the Luftwaffe must continue to refrain from bombing cities in Northern Ireland, due to the good effect such a policy had in Eire. In Southern Ireland it was felt that the lack of attacks upon Ulster was visible proof that Germany regarded the North as an integral part of neutral Eire.\textsuperscript{40}

A short time after Hempel issued his report, he met with Secretary General Walshe, who advised him of the then current Anglo-Irish situation. Walshe believed that circumstances had eased the threat of a British invasion, although "there was always the danger of a sudden, reckless move" by Churchill.\textsuperscript{41} British antagonism toward Eire had, according to Walshe, been somewhat tempered by the apparent determination of the Irish to resist attack. In addition, any hope which the British might hold of reuniting the two countries would also be lost if Britain took aggressive action against its neighbor to the west. Both Hempel and Walshe agreed that the primary influence on British policy during the continuing crisis was the opinion of the Irish living

\textsuperscript{40} D.G.F.P., XI, Doc. No. 466, 804.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, Doc. No. 485, 832.
in the United States. The reactions of the Irish-American community had been outspoken and effective. The British government, not wishing to endanger its relations with the United States, quite naturally respected the influence such activities could have upon the American government. The situation, as a result, was being viewed with greater calm. 42

Although the threat of invasion had therefore subsided to a degree, it nonetheless remained an important question in Berlin and Dublin. On December 19, Walshe contacted the German minister to discuss the question of the arms shipments proposed by Jodl and Ribbentrop. De Valera and the Irish Minister of Defense, Francis Aiken,43 had previously told Walshe that, because of the danger of detection, the arms could not be landed safely in Eire. If the British discovered the attempt, the entire episode would be exposed as a Nazi plot and, hence, an excellent excuse would be furnished for the invasion of Eire. The Irish government therefore abandoned the idea of importing arms from Axis sources until the British actually invaded.


44 D.G.F.P., XI, Doc. No. 523, 882. The German government was not the only Axis power of offer arms to
As 1940 drew to a close, de Valera made what had become his annual Christmas speech to the United States. He appealed to Ireland's friends in America for aid in the form of weapons and foodstuffs, for which the Irish government would willingly pay. "At no time," the Prime Minister stated, "has there been friction of any kind between us and the belligerent Governments."^45

Although de Valera greatly oversimplified the situation, the extremely tense condition of affairs between Great Britain and Eire did continue to improve in the months following his speech. The threat to the British contained within the proposed German invasion of Great Britain began to decline in 1941 as Hitler turned his attention to Russia. The war at sea continued however to prove victorious for German submarines, and the recovery of the Irish bases as a consequence remained one of Churchill's primary remedies for what could prove to be a disastrous situation.

Regardless of the still present danger from Britain, de Valera was able in March, 1944 to inform Hempel that

the Irish. Minister Hempel reported in the above document that the "Italian Caproni concern, which is represented by Edgar Brand, Paris, had offered to the Irish Minister in Rome—incidentally with the knowledge of the Italian Government—to deliver the arms which the Irish Government previously had ordered from Brand."

^45 The Times (London), December 27, 1940.
there were no signs at that time of an invasion by
the British being eminent. The threat nonetheless con­
tinued in the background, and if the situation should
change, for example by the entrance of the United States
into the war, the British might still attack. 46

When the subject of German arms shipments was once
again raised by Berlin, de Valera remained skeptical
that such German aid could reach Ireland unnoticed.
However, the Prime Minister informed Hempel that he
remained confident that "the German General Staff, even
without Irish participation, would presumably with German
thoroughness take the measures that seemed appropriate"
if a crisis should develop. Following the talks, Hempel
reported to Berlin that, although chances seemed slight,
the possibility still existed that de Valera might yet
seek German assistance. 47

Two days following the conversation between de Valera
and Hempel, Warlimont reported that the OKW was still
prepared to offer only limited aid to Eire, and that in
the form of submarine and air support. The OKW had,
however, finished gathering large quantities of arms
and ammunition which were then ready for shipment to Eire

46 D.G.F.P., XII, Doc. No. 150, 270.

47 Ibid.
if the Irish Prime Minister consented. 48

Relations between Germany and Eire, which had been strengthened by the threat from Britain, rapidly deteriorated as the summer of 1941 approached. At that time the Luftwaffe abandoned its policy of avoiding targets in Northern Ireland as a concession to the views of the South. Although the German air force had a legitimate reason for conducting air operations over Ulster, in that the British had been continuously building and strengthening their military installations in the area, the raids nevertheless had an instantly poor effect upon relations between Berlin and Dublin. As a result of the bombing missions, Irishmen on both sides of the border drew together in an equal determination to resist any aggressor. 49

The situation became increasingly tense on May 31, when for the third time the Luftwaffe "accidentally" bombed Dublin, causing 150 casualties and leaving 500 Dubliners homeless. Five days prior to the attack de Valera had, before the Dail Eireann, expressed his government's attitude of "friendly neutrality" toward Great Britain. The raid, therefore, might well have

48 D.G.F.P., XII, Doc. No. 164, 290. The arms which had been collected included 46 field guns, 550 machine guns, 10,000 rifles, 1,000 antitank guns, and necessary ammunition.

49 Round Table, No. 124, "Divided Ireland," September, 1941, 741-742.
been a reminder of what would increasingly occur if Eire sought closer relations with the Allies. Whatever the cause of the attack, its result was a momentary warming of relations between Eire and Great Britain. 50

The British initiative, which at that moment could have swayed Irish opinion to the Allied cause, was lost due to the inept time of Winston Churchill. At the end of May, Churchill again felt the need to raise the question of conscripting Northern Irish into the British army. However, on this occasion Irish opinion became quite inflamed on both sides of the border. A number of Ulstermen, who no doubt felt that Northern Ireland was already doing more than its share for the Allied cause, objected strongly to the proposed measure. As a result, in the first weeks of June, Churchill again decided to drop the matter, "although," as he stated, "there can be no dispute about our rights or the merit of the case, it would be more trouble than it is worth to enforce such a policy." 51

50 Round Table, No. 124, "Divided Ireland," September 1941, 744-745, and Time, XXXVI, June 9, 1941, 30. After the war ended the attack upon Dublin was indeed proved to have been an error. The R.A.F. admitted, in March, 1946, that it had jammed Luftwaffe radio instruments, causing them to inadvertently bomb Dublin rather than Belfast, their original target. Time, XLVII, March 4, 1946, 29.

51 Time, XXXVII, June 9, 1941. The simple case of numbers might also have influenced Churchill. Ulster, with a population of 1.3 million, could only furnish approximately 50,000 men to the British armed forces, hardly a figure worth causing untold difficulties over.
The diplomatic situation remained fluid until December, when the United States entered the war. As long as the United States had remained neutral, Britain was forced to take opinion in that country into consideration when planning moves in regard to Eire. With the voice of the Irish-American community silenced in the patriotic rush to war, a valuable source of opinion power was lost to Germany and Eire.

Immediately following its declaration of war, the United States took the lead in attempts to convince Eire to abandon its neutrality. On December 22, Roosevelt set the tone for the future when he dispatched a note to Dublin expressing his confidence that the Irish government and people "would know how to meet their responsibilities in the present situation."52

On January 26, 1942, a much more graphic example of the United States policy occurred. As previously arranged by Churchill and Roosevelt at the Acadia conference, the first contingent of American troops landed in Northern Ireland. The reaction from Dublin was immediate and strongly worded. De Valera vehemently objected to the debarkation of troops on what he considered territory belonging to the Irish Republic and protested that he had not been consulted or forewarned of the decision. Fear that the American

forces might be employed to forcibly retake the Irish ports and, hence, bring about an end to Irish neutrality, led to a strengthening of the internal security of the island. 53

Roosevelt quickly moved to placate the feelings of the irate Irish. Publically, he referred to de Valera as an old friend, and one who would always have a standing invitation to the White House. Privately, Roosevelt confided in his Secretary of State Cordell Hull, that "if only he (de Valera) would come out of the clouds, we would all have a higher regard for him." 54

Opinion in Germany viewed the incident as yet another Allied diplomatic blunder, and one which could quite possibly improve the always fluid German-Irish situation. Dr. Joseph Goebbels, 55 the Reichsminister for Propaganda, noted that the incident had caused a "great sensation" in Germany. De Valera's reaction to the landing of American troops, which Dr. Goebbels viewed as an English-sponsored plot to intimidate the Irish, was stronger than had been anticipated in London and Washington. Whatever the motivation for the


54 Ibid.

55 Dr. Joseph Goebbels, 1897-1945. In November, 1928 Goebbels was placed in charge of Nazi propaganda, and held the same position until the end of the war.
incident, Goebbels observed that the United States action "offends the Irish more than it enlightens them."\textsuperscript{56}

The strain between Ireland and the Allies was not allowed to abate. On February 26, further contingents of United States troops landed in Northern Ireland, causing de Valera to once again send a strongly worded note to Washington. The United States was, in his opinion, furthering the partition of Ireland by such moves, which was "as indefensible as aggression against all nations which is the avowed purpose of Britain and the United States in this war to bring to an end."\textsuperscript{57}

In answering the Irish note, President Roosevelt was not as conciliatory as he had been the previous month. The American message contained within it the same method of persuasion employed by the United States later in the war to pressure neutral states into joining the Allied fold:

\begin{quote}
At some future date when Axis aggression has been crushed by the military might of free peoples, the nations of the earth must gather about a peace table to plan the future world on foundations of liberty and justice everywhere. I think it only right that I make plain at this time that when that time comes
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Survey}, VII, 246.
the Irish Government should be associated with its traditional friends, and, among them, the United States of America. 58

If the Allies had hoped that the Irish would become more responsive toward their cause as a result of the American action, they were proven to be mistaken. De Valera, pointing out that the American action was a threat to national security and to Ireland's independence, used the incident as a means of further strengthening the government's position on neutrality. In Berlin, Goebbels gloated that, while the United States had hoped that Eire would join the Allied side as soon as troops landed in Northern Ireland, it had obviously overestimated the situation. "De Valera," Goebbels stated, "isn't thinking of yielding to such a psychological squeeze." 59

German-Irish relations, which had reached an apex during the period from July, 1940 to June, 1941, steadily decreased in importance in the latter stages of the war. Three major reasons are responsible for the decline: after June, 1941, with the initiation of Operation Barbarossa, the attention of Hitler was turned irrevocably upon the east; by the end of 1941 any hope of invading


59 Goebbels, March 6, 1942, 114.
Britain had slipped beyond the pale of reality; and finally, the Battle of the Atlantic was, by 1943, considered lost by the German naval command.\(^{60}\) As a result, Ireland became of nuisance value only to the crumbling Third Reich in the final years of the war.

While Ireland was no longer of direct import to Germany, it nonetheless did indirectly aid Berlin by hampering Allied diplomatic maneuvers and causing embarrassment in London and Washington on several occasions.

One such incident occurred in February, 1944, when Roosevelt and Hull, fearing that their European invasion plans would be divulged through Dublin, demanded that Eire expel all Axis diplomats. Britain, perhaps because it was more familiar with Irish reactions to such affairs, was less enthusiastic in its acceptance of the plan but nevertheless followed the United States lead in the demands.

The American note, received in Dublin on February 21, complained that Irish neutrality had "operated and in fact continues to operate in favor of the Axis powers and against the United States."\(^{61}\) The presence of the German legation and Japanese consulate, the American note continued, provided excellent subterfuge for Axis

\(^{60}\) See Chapter II, 61-62.

agents who could use the missions as a means of forwarding important information to their respective governments. After requesting the recall of the Axis diplomats, the American note quite openly confessed that "we would be lacking in candor if we did not state our hope that this action will take the form of severance of all diplomatic relations between Ireland and those two countries." 62

On the following day the British note was sent to Dublin. The United Kingdom representative in Dublin, George Maffey, 63 presented the note which concurred with the American message and added that: the British government "warmly welcomed" the American initiative in the matter.

De Valera reacted with understandable swiftness. On the same day the American note was received in Dublin, the United States Minister in Eire, David Gray, 64 was informed that it would be impossible to comply with any of the Allied demands. In reaction to what was considered in Dublin to be a serious threat, Eire's tiny army was placed on


63 Diplomatic relations did not exist between Eire and Britain, and as a result, Maffey was appointed at the beginning of the war to the rather vague position of Britain's "representative" in Eire, the only link between London and Dublin.

64 David Gray, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, February, 1940 to April, 1947.
the alert, leaves were cancelled, bridges mined and all strategically important positions guarded.  

Eire's formal, and lengthy, denial of the United States request was received in Washington on March 10. After reaffirming his previous refusal, de Valera reminded the American president of the long history of Irish-American relations. Eire throughout the war, de Valera stated, had scrupulously abided by its neutral position, and had instituted rigid security and censorship measures which guaranteed that no vital information would pass out of the country. Finally, the Irish Prime Minister, in speaking of the British note, reminded Roosevelt that opinion in Eire toward Great Britain had greatly improved because that country had not violated Ireland's neutrality.

The Irish government finally consented to strengthen its security measures, and on May 17 Roosevelt agreed to let the matter rest. The Axis representatives nonetheless remained in Dublin.

The occasion of Eire's next snub to the Allied powers arose on October 9, 1944 when the United States requested that Eire refuse asylum to Axis war criminals. Once again, de Valera upheld Eire's right to remain as indiscriminately neutral as it wished. The Irish government, de Valera

stated, could give no assurance which would hamper its right to grant asylum, "should justice, charity or the honor or interest of the nation so require." The Prime Minister also pointed out, rather soundly, that there was no precedent in international law to cover the American request. Furthermore, Eire had, since the beginning of the war, denied entrance to any alien who might prove at variance with national interests, and it would continue to do so. As in the previous case, this issue was also allowed to rest without the Allies gaining Irish compliance to their demands.

The policy of neutrality, which had become something of an obsession in Eire, was carried out to the final moments of the war. De Valera, upon hearing of Hitler's death at the beginning of May, 1945, personally called upon the German legation, presenting to the German representatives the official condolences of his government. While de Valera might simply have been carrying out his diplomatic duties, the event was viewed by most people, including the Irish, as an insult directed at the Allied governments.

68 Ibid.
69 Survey, VII, 252.
Eduard Hempel and his assistants were still at their posts in Dublin when World War II ended. The mere fact of their presence was a signal victory for German diplomacy, for it served as an indication of Eire's indiscriminate neutrality until the very end of the war. While German diplomacy had sought throughout the war to maintain that neutrality, the Wilhelmstrasse was not the agency which gained the most benefit from Eire's neutral position. The German military establishment, rather than the diplomatic corps, made the most use of the various opportunities which became available as a result of Irish neutrality. The most important opportunity which the Nazi military seized was the neutrality of the Irish sea ports and bases.
CHAPTER II

THE GERMAN SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN, THE IRISH SEA PORTS, AND THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

The Irish bases first came to the attention of the major powers during World War I. At the beginning of the war the British, while unquestionably the masters of the sea, were ill-prepared for the newest and most successful weapon in the German naval arsenal, the submarine. During the first months of the war, German submarines made several attacks upon the poorly organized defenses of the fleet headquarters at Scapa Flow, causing the ships in port to put to sea hurriedly. The raids upon the naval base prompted Admiral Viscount Jellicoe, commander of the Atlantic fleet, to seek a more secure headquarters.

Admiral Jellicoe, after an intensive study, decided upon the use of Lough Swilly, on the northwestern coast of Ireland, as the main base for the fleet. The Lough proved to be an easily defended port, in that its narrow entrance could be readily obstructed. In addition, the water in the Lough

1 Admiral Viscount Jellicoe, John Rushworth, 1859-1935. In 1910 Jellicoe was appointed Vice-Admiral in command of the Atlantic fleet, and in March, 1915 he became commander of the Grand Fleet. In 1916, because of his performance at the Battle of Jutland, he was created First Sea Lord.
was quite shallow, thus making it extremely difficult for German submarines to slip through while submerged. Accordingly, on October 23, 1914, the first contingents of the British fleet, the 1st and 4th Battle Squadrons, arrived at Lough Swilly. During the next months, until Scapa Flow was once again ready for use, the Lough remained the main base for the British Atlantic fleet. Admiral Jellicoe later stated that, as a result of the transfer of the fleet to Lough Swilly, "for the first time since the declaration of war the Fleet occupied a secure base... The relief to those responsible for the safety of the Fleet was immense." 

As the war progressed, the submarine continued its role as the primary weapon in the strategy of the German naval high command. Newer, better armed submarines, capable of staying at sea for longer periods of time, began to make an appearance in the well-traveled waters off the southern coast of Ireland. For a number of years the German U-boats were allowed to operate with comparative unrestricted ease.


3 Ibid, 146.

4 For a complete description of the convoy routes around Ireland, see Archibald Spicer Hurd, The Merchant Navy, (London, 1921).
in the area, due largely to the inadequate number of British anti-submarine forces. It was not, in fact, until the United States entered the war that the vital area around Ireland was properly defended.

The first American military aid received by the Entente powers was directed toward reinforcing the anti-submarine campaign. The United States and Great Britain had previously reached an agreement by which the American navy would be allowed to stations ships at Queenstown and Berehaven in southern Ireland. On May 5, 1917, the first contingent of American naval forces, six destroyers, arrived at Queenstown, and two months later a total of 34 destroyers were based at the Irish port.\textsuperscript{5}

The Queenstown area comprised 25,000 square miles of water south and west of Ireland, and "up to this time had been badly protected. In the zone, which was so vital a focus of trans-Atlantic shipping, the United States Navy thus at once began and continued to render, a most needed service against the U-boats in British waters."\textsuperscript{6}

The naval base at Berehaven, while it played a more minor role in the anti-submarine campaign, nonetheless became increasingly important during the later stages of the

\textsuperscript{5} Thomas G. Frothingham, \textit{The Naval History of the World War}, (Cambridge, 1927), 36-37.

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid, 82.
war. In 1918, as the result of an Allied fear of the reappearance of the German High Seas Fleet, three of America's largest capital ships, the battleships Utah, Nevada and Oklahoma, were sent to Berehaven. When it became apparent that the High Seas Fleet was no longer a threat, the battleships were employed on convoy duty, guarding American troop ships against attack as they approached the British Isles.  

By the end of World War I, the ships based at Queenstown and Berehaven comprised fully one-fifth of the total American forces in European waters, and Queenstown had developed into the second largest United States naval base in Europe, exceeded only by Brest, France.  

Following World War I, the Irish ports were returned to the complete control of Great Britain. For the next twenty years they were a point of contention between the representatives of Britain and the newly arising Republic of Ireland.  

After five years of conflict (referred to in Ireland as the Anglo-Irish war, and in England in somewhat less imposing terms), an accord was reached between England and its rather quarrelsome neighbor to the west. By the terms  

7 Frothingham, 245.  

8 For details of the number of American ships stationed at Irish ports, see Appendix.
of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, Ireland was granted, for the first time in nearly 700 years, a measure of independence from Britain.

However, the independence gained by Ireland in 1921 was not complete. Three important restrictions were placed upon the new Irish Free State: the British retained their right to control Irish policy in external affairs; the northern six counties (known collectively as Ulster) were allowed to remain outside the Free State in a close union with Great Britain, and finally, for purposes of defense, the British retained the right to maintain and garrison the three Irish ports at Queenstown, Berehaven and Lough Swilly.9

In the seventeen years following the Anglo-Irish Treaty the questions of partition and Ireland's external association with Great Britain remained in the forefront of Irish demands upon the British government. The issue of the Irish ports, and the British personnel stationed at those ports, slipped into the background of Anglo-Irish affairs.

In 1938 the growing tension on the European continent moved, for reasons of security, the Conservative government

of Neville Chamberlain to seek closer relations with the Irish Free State. As a result, talks were begun in London by Chamberlain and the Irish Prime Minister, Eamon de Valera.

Chamberlain, no doubt remembering previous difficulties with Ireland during wartime, came to the conclusion that the possibility of having a friendly Ireland at England's back would be improved if he acceded to some Irish demands. For his part, de Valera arrived in London with one thought uppermost in his mind—to seek an end to partition. The question of the Irish ports was still of only secondary importance at the beginning of the discussions.10

The discussions became immediately deadlocked over the question of partition. Chamberlain had no desire to coerce the staunchly pro-British Northern Ireland into effecting a union with the South.11 De Valera was equally adamant in his demand that the northern six counties be included in the Republic of Ireland. As the talks reached an impasse,

10 Bromage, 263.

11 Survey, VII, 233. In a general election held on February 10, 1938, during which time partition was a main issue, Northern Ireland had reaffirmed its determination to stand by Great Britain rather than effecting a union with Southern Ireland.
the two prime ministers, in an effort to salvage something of the meeting, agreed to drop the partition issue and turn instead to the question of the Irish ports then held by the British.

The two powers, after some months of debate, reached an accord in April, 1938. By the terms of the new treaty Great Britain agreed to transfer to the government of Eire, as Southern Ireland was then called, all Admiralty and property rights at Lough Swilly, Berehaven and Cobh (the name Queenstown had been replaced by the Gaelic Cobh). In return, de Valera promised that Eire would deny the use of the ports to any foreign power in the event of war.  

Chamberlain's willingness to abandon the naval bases met with the approval of most members of the British government. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Halifax, declared that the safety of the British people was "not diminished, but immeasurably increased, by a free and friendly Ireland." The Chiefs of Staff also concurred

12 Bromage, 263.

13 1st Earl of Halifax, Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, 1881-1959. From 1925 to 1931, Halifax served as the Viceroy of India, and from 1935 to 1937 as Lord of the Privy Seal. In February, 1938 he became Foreign Secretary and remained in that position until December, 1940 when he became Ambassador to the United States.

14 Round Table, No. 116, "Disunited Ireland," September, 1939, 798.
with the decision, noting that if Britain were in wartime to secure the ports for naval use, a division of troops might be needed at each base to guard against a possibly hostile population. The Royal Navy was of the opinion that, with France as an ally, adequate protection could be given Britain's shipping routes without the use of the Irish ports.  

Amid the general acclamation of the treaty, one voice was raised in protest. In the House of Commons, Winston Churchill, then not a member of the government, vehemently protested the signing of the treaty. Churchill pointed out that if in the event of war de Valera decided to remain neutral, England's vital supply lines would be gravely threatened through the loss of the ports. The British government was "casting away real and important means of security and survival for vain shadows and for ease."  

The coming months were to prove Churchill's opinion to be the most accurate.  

In Germany, Britain's loss of the ports went unnoticed by those members of the Third Reich who were to command the German submarine offensive. In January, 1939, Admiral Karl Doenitz, then in command of Germany's submarine forces,  

15 Survey, VII, 234.  
16 Ibid.
complained of the problems which the German navy would have to face in the coming war. Due to the increased efficiency of the enemy air arm, he stated, German naval forces could no longer reach the Atlantic supply routes unnoticed. In addition, even if the German forces could reach the British shipping lanes, they would be faced with further difficulties:

whereas the enemy had at his disposal ports and dockyards on the west coasts of the British Isles (including Ireland), that is, on the Atlantic itself, where any damage and loss of fighting power sustained in action could be made good, any crippled ship of our own would be compelled to undertake the long and hazardous journey back through the North Sea . . . before it could reach the comparative safety of German waters.

Doenitz failed to realize, at that time, that Britain would be denied the use of the Irish bases on the Atlantic, or that Germany would itself acquire Atlantic ports after the fall of France.

When the European struggle began on September 1, 1939, Prime Minister de Valera reiterated his long-standing

17 Karl Doenitz, born September, 1892. After serving in the submarine service during World War I, Doenitz played a major role in the formation and training of the submarine command to be used by Germany in World War II. In 1942, he was promoted to admiral, and the following year he became Grand Admiral and given supreme command of the German navy following Admiral Erich Raeder's resignation. From May 1-23, 1945, after Hitler's death, Doenitz served as head of state and commander in chief of the German armed forces. He was imprisoned by the Allies from 1946-1956 in Spandau prison.

intention to maintain Eire's unequivocal neutrality toward all powers. Combined with the declaration of neutrality was the automatic denial of the use of the Irish ports to all belligerents. To allow any of the opposing powers to use the ports would have meant an instant abandonment of neutrality and a threat to Eire's security.

In Britain, the lack of foresight exhibited by the Admiralty in 1938 was still in evidence at the beginning of hostilities. Britain's loss of the Irish ports in wartime had not been foreseen, with the result that convoys were still routed around the southern coast of Ireland, an area where anti-submarine forces were woefully inadequate. It was not until September 5 that Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, issued his first directive concerning the matter. The directive instructed the First Sea Lord, in rather caustic terms, to study the problem and submit a report on the questions arising from the "so-called neutrality of the so-called Eire." Churchill took note of two possible problems arising from Irish neutrality and the loss of the ports; (1) that Irish malcontents, who were at that time conducting a terrorist campaign in Britain, might supply fuel and provisions to U-boats on the west coast of Ireland, and (2) that the efficiency of the British destroyers might be decreased due to the additional radius of action brought about by the lack of bases closer
to the shipping lanes.¹⁹

The value of the Irish ports became apparent in the early stages of the war when, immediately after the beginning of hostilities, the German Naval High Command, Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine (OKM), began operations against British shipping. Admiral Doenitz, a firm advocate of submarine wolf pack tactics, had been forced by inadequate numbers to send single U-boats into the Atlantic shipping lanes.²⁰ Accordingly, his first order called for the assignment of individual areas of operation off Ireland's western coast. After the first month of the war, German successes led the submarine command to issue orders for the intensification of submarine activities in the operational areas south and west of Ireland which, in Doenitz's words, had "so far shown itself to be our most profitable area."²¹

To insure that the Irish ports would remain free of British anti-submarine forces, the German foreign office, during the period of the "phony war," sought to reassure


²⁰ Doenitz had earlier stated that Germany, if it was to win the Battle of the Atlantic, needed at least 300 U-boats. However, at the beginning of the war he had only 57 in his command, of which only 20 were operational at one time.

²¹ Doenitz, 109, passim.
Dublin that the Reich government would religiously respect Irish neutrality—provided that Eire returned in kind. In November, 1939 the German Minister in Eire, Eduard Hempel, informed Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop that German policy had succeeded to the point that Great Britain, and not Germany, was thought to be the main threat to Irish security. To further strengthen the Irish in their determination to remain indiscriminately neutral, Hempel suggested that German naval forces around Ireland refrain from attacking ships of Irish registry, or neutral ships bound for Ireland. Following the minister's suggestion, German U-boats, while taking advantage of the lack of anti-submarine forces, nonetheless avoided attacking Irish ships. Vessels bound for Ireland were stopped, and, once their identity was proven, were allowed to continue on to their destination unscathed.

During the time that Germany was thus carrying on a successful campaign against British shipping around Ireland, negotiations were begun between London, Belfast and Dublin in an effort to find a solution to what was rapidly spreading problem.

22 D.G.F.P., VIII, Doc. No. 401, 466.
23 Round Table, No. 117, "Neutral Ireland," December, 1939, 147.
becoming a serious threat to British security. In all the negotiations the Irish government remained adamant; de Valera would not consider a change in the status of the Irish ports until the partition question was finally settled.24

To compensate for the loss of the ports in Eire, new bases were established at Belfast and Londonderry in Northern Ireland. The German submarine campaign, while it was somewhat hampered by the new bases, was not seriously restricted. Both bases were found to be too far from the waters where the escorts were most needed. In addition, neither site had previously served as a naval base, and thus required a period of transition before they were ready for use. The British Admiralty soon found that even with the acquisition of the new bases in Northern Ireland, outgoing and incoming convoys could only be escorted to a point 200 miles west of Ireland.25 German submarines could therefore operate in comparative safety in all the convoy routes except those immediately adjacent to Britain.

As the period of the "phony war" drew to a close.


25 Captain S.W. Roskill (R.N.), White Ensign; the British Navy at War, 1939-1945, (Annapolis, 1960), 42. Hereafter cited as White Ensign.
some British authorities were inclined to look back upon the 1938 Anglo-Irish Agreement as a "disinterested but short­sighted act." General Sir Edmund Ironside summed up the attitude of the British military when he complained in March, 1940, "here we are fighting for our lives and, although Ireland is presumably in the Empire, we cannot use her western harbours for our destroyers. They would save us 200 miles each war. Is there any other nation that would tolerate in a life-struggle being denied something vital."

The German direction of World War II, and particularly the Battle of the Atlantic, reached its apex during the period from July, 1940 to June, 1941. It was during that period that France fell before the German Blitzkrieg, thus giving Germany much needed bases on the Atlantic and allowing Hitler to issue the orders for Operation Sea Lion, the invasion of Britain. Dönitz's submarine command, with its main base located at Brest, was also able to greatly intensify the attack upon convoys destined for Britain.

26 White Ensign, 42.

27 General Sir Edmund Ironside, 1880-1959. Serving as a brigadier, in 1918, Ironside was on the General Staff to the Allied expedition in Archangel, and in 1920 he led the British military expedition in Hungary. Between September, 1939 and May, 1940 he was Chief of the Imperial General Staff. He retired in July, 1940 after serving two months as Commander in Chief, Home Forces.

In July, 1940, as a result of the German possession of bases in the Bay of Biscay, use of the convoy approaches around the southern coast of Ireland was discontinued. From that time until the final months of the war, convoys used what became known as the northwest approach. Ships leaving North America rendezvoused at Greenland and proceeded to Britain on a northerly route, entering British waters around Northern Ireland. Those convoys which came from South America, the Mediterranean, and around the Cape of Good Hope, followed the African coast and, upon entering the North Atlantic, widely skirted western Ireland and used the northwest approaches to reach their British ports. With the change in the convoy routes, Cobh, on the southwestern coast of Ireland, lost its importance as a possible base. However, Lough Swilly and Berehaven remained of interest as possible bases of anti-submarine and escort forces.

Doenitz had anticipated that with the change in the convoy routings ships destined for Britain would for defensive purposes become widely scattered. The submarine command was pleasantly surprised when, because of inadequate escort forces, the convoys continued to stay within the well-defined shipping lanes in the northwest approaches.

While the submarine command was thus aided by Britain's

adversity, Doenitz was nevertheless still hampered by an old problem; the lack of sufficient air reconnaissance. The U-boats, which throughout the war gained successes far out of proportion to their numbers, could not fully accomplish their mission unless they could first find the enemy. In the years prior to the outbreak of war, Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, commander in chief of the German navy, had attempted to promote an independent naval air arm, but had met with the stubborn resistance of Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering who, in addition to his other positions, was also commander of the Luftwaffe. Goering, whom Doenitz described as taking the attitude that "everything that flies belongs to me!" refused to allow the creation of a rival air force, but did consent to transfer a small number of air reconnaissance craft to the navy. The submarine command found these

30 Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, 1876-1960. Raeder entered the German navy in 1894, and by 1922 was a Rear Admiral. In 1939 he was named Admiral of the Fleet, the first since Tirpitz. He resigned in 1943 after several altercations with Hitler. Raeder was imprisoned from 1946 to 1956 by the Allies.

31 Hermann Goering, 1893-1946. When Hitler came to power in 1933, he named Goering Reichsminister, commissioner for air, Prussian Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. In 1935 he became Reichsminister for Air and Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe, and the following year he was placed in charge of the Four Year Plan. In 1939 he was name Hitler’s successor, and the next year received the exclusive title of Reichsmarschall. In 1945 he was expelled from all offices, and the following year committed suicide while a prisoner of the Allies.
additional forces to be meagre in the extreme. So acute was the lack of air craft possessed of necessary range, that it was only now and then that one solitary machine was made available to fly one solitary sortie—and then only over the areas southwest of Ireland.\(^{32}\)

The submarine command was thus unable to carry out reconnaissance on the well traveled areas off northwestern Ireland. However, scattered reports reaching Brest from flights over southwestern Ireland did prove to be of value. During July, 1940, German U-boats sank 38 ships of 196,000 tons, including the troop transport *Mohammad Ali el Kabir* which, because of the lack of bases in Eire, was escorted by only one vessel at the time when it sank off the Irish coast.\(^{33}\)

Although the submarine arm of the German navy was still hampered by a lack of sufficient numbers,\(^{34}\) it nonetheless operated with considerable success during the summer of 1940. In the period from May to October, 287 Allied and neutral ships were sunk, of a total 1.5

\(^{32}\) Doenitz, 132-134.

\(^{33}\) *The War at Sea*, I, 349.

\(^{34}\) In the year between September, 1939 and September, 1940, 28 new U-boats had been added to the original fleet of 57 submarines. However, in the same period 28 were also lost, leaving Doentiz with a command as small as at the beginning of hostilities. Doenitz, 109.
53

million tons. By far the most successful month in the period was October, when the U-boats accounted for the loss of 63 ships, including the Canadian Pacific liner *Empress of Britain* (42,348). The *Empress* was torpedoed and sunk by the U-32 on October 23, two days after it had been bombed and set afire while 70 miles west of Donagal Bay, Ireland. Captain S.W. Roskil (R.N.) attributes the death of the ship, the only one of the "giant liners" to be sunk during the war, to the fact that once again sufficient escorts could not be sent to the stricken ship before it was torpedoed.

During the same period relations between Berlin and Dublin became somewhat strained following Luftwaffe attacks upon a ship of Irish registry, the S.S. *Kerry Head*. The German foreign office admitted the attacks on August 30, and expressed regret over the incident. Unfortunately, Hermann Goering's Luftwaffe was, at times, prone to make the same mistake twice. On October 22 German planes once again attacked the *Kerry Head* while it steamed off the coast of Cork in southern Ireland. The second attack was more successful, resulting in the sinking of the ship and the loss of all hands.

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35 Doenitz, 108.

36 The War at Sea, 351-352.

37 Round Table, No. 121, "Ireland in the Vortex," December, 1940, 118-119.
Relations between the two countries had, as a result of the Kerry Head incident, reached a delicate stage by the end of October. However, at the beginning of November the situation was entirely reversed, when German-Irish ties became firmer than at any other period during the Second World War.

The stimulus for the improvement in relations came not from Ireland or Germany, but from Great Britain. On November 5, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, speaking before the House of Commons, denounced de Valera for his stand on the question of the ports, pointing out that, "the fact that we cannot use the south and west approaches of Ireland . . . and thus protect trade by which Ireland, as well as Great Britain, lives, that fact is a most grievous burden and one which should never have been placed upon our shoulders, broad though they may be." Churchill also implied that German submarines were being supplied with fuel and provisions in Irish ports.38

De Valera viewed Churchill's comments as something akin to a causas belli. On November 7, speaking before the Dail Eireann, the Prime Minister alerted his nation to the threat posed by Churchill's speech:

38 *Time*, XXXVI, November 18, 1940, 26-27.
I want to say to our people, we may be facing a grave crisis. . . . There can be no question of handing over these ports so long as this country remains neutral. They are ours and within our sovereignty . . . any attempt by any of the belligerents—Great Britain—would only lead to bloodshed. So long as this Government remains in office we shall defend our rights in respect of these ports or any part of our territory whosoever may attack them. 39

De Valera concluded by stating that Eire had never harbored or supplied German submarines. 40

In the three weeks following Churchill's November 5 speech, a number of notes were exchanged between the German Minister Eduard Hempel and Ribbentrop, discussing the increasingly tense situation.

On November 29, following discussions with the Irish Secretary General for Foreign Affairs, Joseph Walshe, Hempel advised his foreign office that there was fear in certain circles of the Irish government that the British, "reckoning on the impending loss of their position in Europe and the Mediterranean . . . would attach special importance to having possession of Ireland when the new

39 The Times (London), November 8, 1940.

40 The only reason, during this period of the war, that German submarines were known to have landed in Eire was to debark survivors of torpedoed ships. Round Table, December, 1939, 147.
order is established." The question of the ports might be used as an excuse to accomplish this task.

Hempel further stated that the Irish had started preparations for the possible defense of their country. The Irish army, consisting of 150,000 men including reservists, was prepared to carry on the defense of Eire by employing guerilla tactics or by launching an attack upon Northern Ireland. If German military aid was sought, as Hempel assumed it would, that assistance would probably come in the form of early effective action by the Luftwaffe. However, military aid was not to be the only type of support given Eire. Keeping in mind the always delicate partition question, Hempel suggested that,

of at least equal importance to the early arrival of German [military] aid in the event of an English attack is in my opinion a simultaneous German declaration . . . that we will champion the complete independence of a united Ireland from England at the peace negotiations to come. The Irish determination to resist would thus be greatly strengthened from the outset by us too.  

De Valera, while expressing appreciation for the offer, declined to accept any such assistance until Britain made an actual move to forcibly reclaim the ports.

42 Ibid.
While the diplomatic maneuvers were being carried out in the background, the German submarine command was successfully conducting the blockade of Britain, which had originally prompted Churchill to make his House of Commons address. In November, British food imports dropped below one million tons for the first time since the war began. This was again due to the serious lack of protection for the convoys, resulting from the loss of the Irish ports and the ever-decreasing number of destroyers available for escort duty. The situation grew worse as the threat of invasion by Germany continued, causing the Admiralty to withdraw still more destroyers from convoy and anti-submarine duty and place them in defensive positions in the areas directly threatened by invasion.

After Churchill's direct approach to de Valera had failed, he turned to other, more indirect, sources of persuasion. The United States, with its large population of Irish-Americans, was in an excellent position to bring pressure to bear upon Eire. Churchill felt that President Franklin D. Roosevelt could, while maintaining his country's neutrality, contribute more toward the successful conclusion of the Battle of the Atlantic. In a telegram

to Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Churchill had earlier complained that Roosevelt had not as yet given any practical aid, such as destroyers, planes, "or by a visit of a squadron of their Fleet to Southern Irish ports. After the fall of France the United States had, indeed, given 50 destroyers to Britain, but in December, 1940, few of those ships were in seaworthy condition.

Churchill wrote Roosevelt in December that, as a result of the overextension of British flotillas, the continued export to Eire of 400,000 tons of foodstuffs and fertilizers would be halted. "Perhaps," wrote Churchill, this may loosen things up and make him [de Valera] more ready to consider common interests. . . . you will realise also that our merchant seamen, as well as public opinion generally, take it much amiss that we should have to carry Irish supplies through air and U-boat attacks and subsidize them handsomely when de Valera is quite content to sit happy and see us strangle.

Throughout the winter, the British Prime Minister continued to seek additional American assistance for the protection of the Atlantic convoys. Such protection could, Churchill theorized, be immensely more effective if the


45 Thompson, 183.

46 Churchill, I, 606.
United States could acquire bases in Eire for the duration of the war. If such a case was impossible, the good offices of the United States, as well as its considerable influence, might be used to exert pressure on Eire to change its position.\(^47\)

The resultant pressure which was brought to bear upon Eire caused the Irish Minister to the United States, Robert Brennan, to explain that Eire could not consider the cession or lease of the ports to either side, since such a move would undoubtedly bring the war to Ireland:

The Irish didn’t fight 700 years for their survival as a nation in order now to embark upon a policy which would invite annihilation . . . . the map clearly shows that the ports would be useful to Britain. Could it not also be used to show they would be useful to Germany, and will anyone contend that Germany would be (equally) justified in demanding them on the grounds of their usefulness.\(^48\)

Germany, however, had no intention of forcibly taking the Irish ports. It had already been seen that the ports, in the hands of an indiscriminately neutral Eire, were of inestimable value to the operation of the submarine command in the Atlantic. Therefore, Germany continued on the whole to respect Irish neutrality and avoid trouble with Dublin.

\(^47\) Churchill, I, 563.

\(^48\) Time, XXXVI, December 2, 1940, 6.
The year 1941 served as a turning point in the operations of the German military, and subsequently, in the relative importance of Ireland and the Irish ports. The emphasis on the Battle of the Atlantic decreased with the beginning of the Russian campaign, the entrance of the United States into the war, and the growing importance of the North African campaign. However, for the first six months of 1941 the area around Ireland nonetheless remained a major focal point for the German naval command.

Doenitz, early in 1941, had transferred a number of his available U-boats from the North Atlantic to the Freetown, Sierra Leone region. When submarine activities in that area met with considerable success, the British reduced Freetown shipping to a bare minimum, with the result that Doenitz once again recalled the U-boats to the North Atlantic. Operating south and west of Ireland with increased air reconnaissance, the German submarines were able to exact a heavy toll on shipping en route to Britain from the Mediterranean.49

The lack of bases in Eire, while it still aided the German submarine campaign in the waters south of Ireland, was beginning to have less effect in the north. German submarine commanders operating in the northern approaches,

49 Doenitz, 177.
where air reconnaissance was still not available, began to encounter increased opposition by the Royal Air Force. Submarine command discovered that the U-boats, if and when they could find a convoy, were frequently driven off by planes flying from bases in Northern Ireland. By mid-1941 the R.A.F. had established a "safe" area, extending from the coast of Ireland westward for 400 miles, wherein the convoys could travel with relative security. In July and August, 1941, the effect of the increased air cover was felt to the extent that submarine command reported the sinking of only 45 ships.\textsuperscript{50} As the R.A.F. acquired newer aircraft of a longer range, the "safe" zone was extended to the point that acquiring bases in Southern Ireland was not the problem it had been during the first two years of the war.

The period between the autumn of 1941 and spring of 1943 was marked by the steady deterioration of the U-boat phase of the Battle of the Atlantic. The advanced efficiency of the R.A.F. anti-submarine measures, the addition of a great number of escort vessels due to the entrance of the United States into the war, and the increased use of radar and other technical advances prompted Doenitz, in May, 1943, to confess that Germany had lost the Battle of the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{50} Doenitz, 273.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
Although the Battle of the Atlantic was considered lost in 1943, U-boat activities did not cease. Indeed, the production of newer, more deadly submarines enabled the German U-boat command to harass the efforts of the Allied merchant fleets until the last days of the war. As a result, Dönitz continued to send individual submarines into the waters surrounding Ireland—waters which could not be called completely safe due to the denial of the Irish ports to the Allies.

The United States, after its entry into the war, had taken the lead in attempting to coerce Eire into relinquishing its ports. In 1943, Roosevelt's secretary of state, Cordell Hull, once again raised the question of acquiring the Irish bases. Hull believed that "without question the air and naval facilities in Ireland would be of considerable usefulness to the United Nations' war effort," but hesitated about the course to take to acquire the bases. The secretary of state, perhaps thinking of the reaction among Irish-Americans, believed that the matter should be handled in a

52 In 1943 plans were begun for the construction of two new U-boats, the Type XXI, with a submerged speed of 25 knots, and the Type XXIII, a smaller craft with a submerged speed of 12 knots. Although a few were made ready before the end of the war (see page 65), they were not scheduled to become fully operational until 1946. Dönitz, 354-356.

53 Cordell Hull, 1871-1955. Hull served as senator from Tennessee, 1931-1933, and Secretary of State, 1933-1944.

quiet, diplomatic fashion. To take strenuous action against Eire might appear, in some circles, that the United States was taking the side of Britain against the Irish and, hence, that the United States was once again "pulling British chestnuts out of the fire."55

The matter was eventually turned over to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were to conduct a study of the military importance of the ports. The Joint Chiefs came to the conclusion that, while the value of the bases on the United Nations overall war effort could not be exactly foretold, their possession would prove a definite aid in future strategic planning. Consequently, Hull decided that de Valera might be induced to lease the bases to his country's ancient friend and ally, the United States. Before approaching the Irish Prime Minister, Hull first sought out British opinion on the matter. The British Foreign Secretary, Sir Anthony Eden,56 advised that de Valera would never agree to leasing the bases, and that stronger action "would likely give rise to acute difficulties."57 Hull eventually concurred with Eden's opinion,

55 Hull, II, 1356-1357.

56 Anthony Eden, born 1897. In December, 1940 Eden was named Foreign Secretary. From 1951-1955 he served as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, and became Prime Minister in 1955, serving until 1957.

57 Hull, II, 1357.
and in December, 1943, the matter was dropped. The question of acquiring the Irish ports was not raised again for the duration of the war.

Throughout 1944 the U-boat campaign was carried out in much the same manner as in the previous years. While the measures taken against the submarines continued to achieve success, the U-boats did score periodic victories which proved costly to the Allies. The situation became increasingly more difficult for the submarine command when, after the Allied invasion of Europe and the subsequent liberation of France, the German navy was once again denied direct access to the Atlantic.

After the German-occupied French ports had been reclaimed by United Nations' forces, the Allies concluded that it was once again safe to resume the use of the southern approaches to Britain. Ships en route from the Mediterranean and Freetown could therefore use the shorter, more direct route through the waters off Southern Ireland to reach such British shipping centers as Portsmouth, Plymouth and Liverpool.

The German submarine command also realized that traffic in the southern approaches would be resumed and accordingly transferred a number of boats to the area south of Ireland and in the Irish Sea. The first months of 1945 were, as a consequence, more successful than any
In the first days of January, U-boat command transferred 20 submarines to the southern approaches. By the end of the month 39 were in the area, including the first of the Type XXIII boats (U-232½). The Royal Navy, as a result of the resumption of trade in the south, was forced to withdraw some of its forces from the north, with the result that submarines were able to operate in the North Foreland for the first time since the second year of the war.

During the final months of the war German efforts were centered in the Irish Sea. Despite heavy concentrations of anti-submarine forces in the area, the U-boats gained a volume of sinkings serious enough to cause concern in the Admiralty. Among the most successful of the submarines was the U-1055 which, between January 9-11, sank three ships. The U-1302 also succeeded, on March 2, in sinking two ships in a single convoy.

The European war ended with Lough Swilly, Berehaven and Cobh still firmly in Irish hands. It is difficult to estimate, in the strict limitations of weeks and months,

58 See Roskill, III, 291-195.
59 Ibid., 291-292.
60 Ibid., 295.
to what extent the Allied possession of the ports would have shortened the war. However, it is nonetheless safe to assume that, had the Allies been able to station the same number of anti-submarine forces in Ireland that they possessed in the First World War, the efforts of the German submarine command would have been greatly hampered, and the Battle of the Atlantic would have been lost much sooner.
CHAPTER III

THE ABWEHR IN NEUTRAL EIRE

I

On the morning of May 23, 1947, Major Hermann Goertz, Germany's most successful agent provocateur in Ireland, committed suicide while he awaited deportation to his native Germany. The death of Goertz marked the final entry in the history of Nazi Germany's attempts to establish an intelligence network in Eire and a liaison with the "dark forces," as Churchill called them, of Ireland's underground nationalistic militia, the Irish Republican Army. Although the story thus ended in post-war Dublin, one must look much farther back than the Second World War to find its beginning. Indeed, to discover the roots of the question, it is necessary to study the era wherein Europe was dominated, not by Hitler's Germany, but by the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

In 1914, military and foreign affairs officers in Germany, faced with a war they had not started and enemies on both their eastern and western borders, sought ways in which they might diminish the power or number of their adversaries. Ireland presented such an opportunity.

Ireland in 1914 was a country on the brink of civil war.
The long-sought Home Rule Bill was about to become a reality, but not without the stubborn resistance of many elements in Ireland. The Protestants of Ulster Province, who advocated union with Britain, were prepared if necessary to offer armed resistance to inclusion with the rest of Catholic Ireland as a autonomous state. Republican factions in southern Ireland were equally disenchanted with anything less than complete independence and the formation of an Irish Republic.

As a result of the existing conditions in Ireland, many circles in Berlin advocated giving active support to the Irish. The advocates of German-Irish cooperation falsely speculated that Britain, faced as it was with rebellion in Ulster and continued republican agitation throughout the rest of Ireland, would be in no position to sustain a continental war at the same time.\(^1\)

During the period preceding the outbreak of war, Germany showed itself to be indiscriminate in its aid to the Irish, supplying material to both royalist and republican alike. On April 24, 1914, German gun runners landed a shipment of 35,000 Mauser rifles for the Ulster loyalists at Larne, County Antrim.\(^2\) In June, Captain Eamon de Valera,  


in command of E Company, Dublin Brigade of the republican Irish Volunteers, received orders to march his men north of the city, where they were to receive a shipment of Mauser rifles from Germany. Similar cargoes were also landed south of Dublin.³

Throughout the summer preparations for the forthcoming hostilities continued among both factions in Ireland, and it was not until September that the situation noticeably changed. On September 14 royal consent was at last given to the Home Rule Bill. Unfortunately, due to the European war which had begun the previous month, enactment of the measure was temporarily postponed. A year later the British government suspended the bill for the duration of the war.⁴

The passage and subsequent postponement of the bill created spontaneous reactions among the Irish. Although the postponement of the measure alleviated some fears of the Ulster loyalists, they were nevertheless in no way pleased that Home Rule had been placed in the statutes of Great Britain. Among the republicans, the bill as it stood represented little more than a mere "scrap of paper."⁵ Even before the passage of the measure, on


⁴ MacArdle, 118 and 133.

⁵ Ibid, 118.
September 5 during a meeting of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the decision had been reached militarily to rise against British rule. The postponement of the Home Rule Bill therefore served only to increase an already inflamed situation.

The position of the republican military arm in any conflict with Britain was, at the least, extremely tenuous. It therefore became imperative to seek outside assistance. Of the various sources available, two were more important than any others: the Irish in the United States, who had organized into various nationalistic organizations prepared to render aid to their former homeland, and Imperial Germany, which could offer not only military assistance, but also political recognition and financial aid.

While a link was being formed between the I.R.B. in Dublin, the Clan na Gael in New York and the Imperial government in Berlin, yet another factor was added to the already confused situation. In October, 1914, Sir Roger Casement, an Irish patriot knighted for his humanitarian

6 Irish Republican Brotherhood, (I.R.B.) the forerunner of the Irish Republican Army.

7 Clan na Gael, the strongest of the nationalistic Irish organizations in the United States.

service in Africa, sailed from New York for Germany. Casement's self-appointed mission consisted of the search for a clear agreement with Germany in which the Imperial government would supply material to the Irish in their struggle with Great Britain. Sir Roger, whose ideas were shared by many in Irish republican circles, took the view that:

Ireland has no quarrel with the German people or just case of offense against them . . . . there is no gain, moral or material, Irishmen can draw from assailing Germany. The destruction of the German Navy or the sweeping of German commerce from the seas will bring no profit to a people whose own commerce was long since swept from land and sea . . . no Irishman fit to bear arms in the cause of his country's freedom can join the allied millions now attacking Germany in a war that, at the best, concerns Ireland not at all, and that can only add fresh burdens and establish a new drain, in the interests of a another community, upon a people that has already been bled to the verge of death.9

Sir Roger sought specifically, during his seventeen month mission to Germany, to gain an official German statement of its support and friendship, raise a brigade from among Irish prisoners of war, and secure military assistance for the struggle against Britain. His success was limited to an official announcement by the German government, in the November 20, 1914 issue of Norrdeutsche


10 ManArdle, 127-129.
Allgemeine Zeitung, that it held a friendly attitude toward the Irish people and hoped for success in their struggle for independence. Beyond this statement, however, Casement's mission failed. The Irish p.o.w.'s proved unwilling to abandon their British and French comrades-in-arms, and as a result, the Irish Brigade numbered only fifty-two men when Casement left Germany. In addition, the Imperial government proved hesitant to provide the 200,000 rifles, artillery pieces and ammunition, together with German "advisors," that the Irish nationalist requested.  

During the period that Sir Roger Casement was in Germany, the Irish Republican Brotherhood had completed plans for the rebellion against British authority to begin on Easter Monday, 1916. To help equip its forces, the I.R.B. requested, through its representatives in the Clan na Gael, that Berlin send arms and ammunition to Ireland. The German government consented, and on April 9 the steamer Aud, disguised as Norwegian, left Luebeck with a cargo of 20,000 rifles and ammunition. The Aud, after successfully avoiding British patrols, arrived at its destination in Tralee Bay in southwestern Ireland. Unfortunately, the ship reached the bay two days before its

11 MacArdle, 127-129. Casement's proposal to form an Irish Brigade was not particularly unique. Detachments of Irish troops had previously taken part in most continental wars, and as late as 1898 an Irish Brigade had been formed to take part in the Boer War—on the side of the Boers.
agreed arrival time. While awaiting the arrival of Irish crews to unload the weapons, it was discovered by elements of the Royal Navy. To keep the weapons from falling into British hands, the German crew scuttled the ship before it could be searched at the Queenstown Naval Base. As a result, Irish revolutionaries, particularly in the area outside Dublin, were badly in need of arms and ammunition when the Easter Rising began.\textsuperscript{12}

The leaders of the Rising were well aware of their unstable position and hence had little hope of an ultimate military victory. They did, however, hope to hold the British off long enough to raise the patriotic ardor of all of Ireland, proclaim the Republic, declare war on Britain, and hence be recognized as a belligerent power under international law (not that the British needed to be reminded of Irish belligerency) and entitled to take part in the peace conference to follow the European war.\textsuperscript{13} In their estimates of the military situation at least, the Irish leaders were correct. Six days after the tri-color had been raised, the last Irish insurgent surrendered to the British.

The Rising, which had never taken hold outside the city of Dublin, might well have gone down in history as

\textsuperscript{12} Holt, 118.

\textsuperscript{13} MacArdle, 156-157.
yet another abortive Irish attempt at gaining independence had it not been for the violent British reprisals which followed. General Sir John Maxwell, in command of the British forces and soon to be known as "Bloody Maxwell" by the Irish, dealt with dispatch in the matter of the revolutionary officers who had surrendered. After a peremptory court martial, each was executed by a British firing squad.

Chief among the charges brought against the leaders of the Rising, including Casement (who had been captured after his return to Ireland a few days prior to the rebellion) was their supposed connection with Germany. In Britain, as well as in certain circles in Ireland, it was believed that Germany had played a major role in the uprising. Among the Irishmen condemning the insurgents for their association with Germany was John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Redmond, in describing the Rising, stated that "Germany plotted it, Germany organized it, Germany paid for it." Although a gross overestimate of the extent of German aid, Redmond's statement


15 MacArdle, 185.

16 John Redmond, 1856-1918. Leader of the I.P.P.

17 Holt, 118-119.
nonetheless had a semblance of truth to it. By the time of the Easter Rising, everyone in Ireland had become familiar with Casement's mission to Germany. In addition, the leaders of the rebellion had not been silent in their appreciation of German aid. In the proclamation which established the provisional government of the Republic, issued on Easter Monday, they stated that the rebellion had begun with the support of Ireland's "children in America and by gallant allies in Europe."\(^{18}\) The presiding officers at the British court martials and civil trials which followed Easter week had little doubt to whom the "allies in Europe" referred.

Maxwell's efforts to repress the Irish nationalists, which at times took on an inquisition-like aura, caused opinion in Ireland to become fused into one policy as it had never before. Public sentiment, which had been lacking during the Rising, became inflamed to the point that a war of rebellion erupted throughout Ireland.

Germany did not neglect to maintain ties with Ireland's underground forces. On several occasions, submarines were reported to have landed on the Irish coast, and as late as April, 1918, the British discovered German "plots" in Ireland. On that occasion, one Joseph Dowling, an ex-

\(^{18}\) "Proclamation of the Irish Republic" cited in MacArdle, 168.
corporal in the Connaught Rangers and a member of Casement's Irish Brigade, had been captured off the coast of County Clare. It was shortly thereafter discovered that Dowling had acted under orders of the German General Staff, which wished to find out the prospects for yet another uprising in Ireland. Although the Irish republicans apparently knew nothing of Dowling's mission, the British used the occasion as a ready excuse to re-arrest revolutionary military and political leaders who had escaped death after the Easter Rising.\(^1\)

German-Irish underground relations continued during the period following World War I. In 1920, Robert Briscoe, the representative of the Irish Republican Army\(^2\) in Germany, succeeded in purchasing arms from non-official sources. Shipments of small consignments of arms ensued, and as late as 1921 a ship of German registry, the Frieda, was stopped by German authorities and, after being searched, its cargo was found to be arms intended for the I.R.A.\(^3\)

Although all German contacts with Irish underground forces were seemingly broken after 1921, one event was yet to occur in the pre-World War II period in which both would participate. The Spanish Civil War had in 1936 aroused

\(^1\) MacArdle, 253-254.

\(^2\) By 1919, the Irish Republican Brotherhood had assumed the name Irish Republican Army.

\(^3\) MacArdle, 400 and 539.
the interest of all Europe, but particularly Germany and Italy. Germany, and in part Italy, was inclined to look upon the struggle as a ready means of testing recently acquired military machines. In Ireland, where sentiments are always easily aroused, volunteers came forward for both sides of the Spanish conflict.

One of the more noted of the Irish volunteers was Frank Ryan. Ryan was leader of the left-wing Congress Party (which had previously broken from I.R.A. ranks) and editor of the republican weekly newspaper, An Phoblacht. Shortly after the outbreak of the civil war, Ryan joined the Lincoln-Washington Brigade, made up largely of Irish-Americans, and by 1938 had risen to the rank of Acting Brigadier of the Brigade. In the summer of that year, while taking part in action in the Ebro Valley, he was wounded and taken prisoner by Franco's Italian allies. Two years later, Ryan still languished in a Spanish jail after all efforts to secure his release had failed.22

Ryan was not, however, the only Irish political-military leader to take part in the Spanish Civil War. General Eoin O'Duffy, who like Ryan had at one time been connected with the I.R.A., was a prominent member of the Irish political scene. After the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty,

O'Duffy had broken with the I.R.A. and had followed the pro-treaty party of William Cosgrave. In 1933, he was placed in command of the National Guard, a fascist organization also known as the Blue Shirts, which had been formed to counter the power of the "red" Irish Republican Army. With the coming of the civil war in Spain, O'Duffy raised a 700 man force of Irish Volunteers which, under the name of the 15th Bandera, became part of Franco's forces on the Madrid front. Following six months of fighting, O'Duffy's troops were recalled to Ireland after Eamon de Valera, then Prime Minister and president of the League of Nations, had proclaimed Ireland's non-interventionist policy toward Spain.

During the subsequent war years, both Ryan and O'Duffy were to play important roles in the efforts of the German intelligence office to create an espionage system in Ireland.

By the beginning of 1939, the German Abwehr (intelligence service), under the direction of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, had become an extensive organization employing

23 William Cosgrave, born 1880. Head of state of the provisional government, 1922-1932, opposition leader during World War II.

24 Stephan, 28.

25 Adm. Wilhelm Canaris, head of the German Abwehr, 1934 until the time of his death in 1944.
agents in most European countries. However, due largely to Hitler's belief that Britain might yet be convinced not to oppose German moves, the Abwehr had not begun operations in Ireland. The situation drastically changed when, in January 1939, the Irish Republican Army issued a "declaration of war" against Great Britain. The Irish ultimatum, signed by Sean Russell, the I.R.A. Chief of Staff, warned that unless all Crown agencies and forces were immediately withdrawn from Northern Ireland, terrorist operations would begin in Britain itself. When the British government made no move to comply with the I.R.A. demands, sporadic bomb explosions were heard throughout England.

The Abwehr office was not slow to discern an advantageous situation. Regardless of the foreign office ban on all intelligence activities in Ireland, Abwehr II, under the direction of Lt. Colonel Erwin Lahousen,

26 Sean Russell, Director of Munitions, I.R.A., 1921-1922, pre-World War II Chief of Staff, and hence, the leading figure in the I.R.A. Died in 1940, while en route to Ireland from Germany.

27 Foreign Policy Reports, XXX, 1939, 279-280.

28 Abwehr II was primarily concerned with espionage activities and the maintenance of contacts with discontented minority elements in other countries. Stephan, 26.

29 General Erwin Lahousen, chief of Abwehr II, 1939-1943. Appeared as a prominent prosecution witness at the Nuremberg trials following World War II. Died in 1955.
prepared to dispatch its first agent to Ireland. The German agent, Oscar C. Pfaus, was to proceed to Ireland via the normal transportation routes and establish contacts with the I.R.A. If the I.R.A. proved agreeable, an Irish agent was to be sent to Berlin to begin formal discussions concerning possible German aid to the underground army.30

Pfaus arrived in Dublin on February 3, and immediately sought out the only person in Ireland known to the Abwehr, General Eoin O'Duffy of the Irish fascist Blue Shirts. Although O'Duffy most certainly was not pleased with the prospect of aiding Pfaus to establish contacts with the I.R.A., a group which he considered closely tied to the Bolsheviks, contacts were nonetheless made. A short time after his arrival, Pfaus met with a number of the I.R.A.'s leading members, including the chief of staff, Sean Russell. After he had received Russell's willing agreement to send a representative to Berlin, Pfaus returned to Germany. He was destined to be the only Nazi agent sent to Ireland that succeeded in eluding capture by the Irish authorities.31


Later in the month, the I.R.A. representative, James O'Donovan, arrived in Hamburg and sought out Pfäus, who in turn sent him on to Captain Friedrich C. Marwede, the Director of Office I West in Abwehr II. Lengthy discussions between Marwede and O'Donovan followed. During the talks the two men analyzed the I.R.A.'s role in the future conflict and the formation of links between the agents of the Abwehr and the I.R.A. Following the meeting, O'Donovan returned to Ireland to place the German proposals before the I.R.A.'s military counsel.32

While communications were thus being formed between Berlin and the underground army in Eire, the I.R.A.'s terrorist campaign in Britain continued. At the beginning of March, elements of the I.R.A. planted bombs on aqueducts in the Grand Union Canal near London and the Birmingham Navigation Canal near Staffordshire.33 Although neither attack succeeded in destroying the aqueducts, the threat of severe flooding no doubt raised the ire of many an Englishman.

Although the I.R.A.'s terrorist activities thus far had been confined to Great Britain, de Valera nonetheless moved to restrict the power of the republican army in

32 Stephan, 38.
33 Ibid.
Ireland. On March 7, the Dail Eireann passed an Offenses Against the State Bill by a 78-12 margin and introduced, from the committee stage, the Treason Bill which called for the death penalty in cases of treason.34

Shortly after the legal restrictions against the I.R.A. were passed in Ireland, a second and much more threatening measure was taken in Britain. In the last week of April the Roman Catholic hierarchy of England and Wales officially threatened excommunication to any of its church members taking part in the terrorist campaign. The church hierarchy in Eire, however, refused to be drawn into the matter. Although the Irish church officials deplored the I.R.A.'s tactics, they nonetheless publicly approved of its ideals.35

On April 26, James O'Donovan made his second brief journey to Germany. Once again he and the Abwehr officials discussed the possibility of forming more solid ties between the two, of sending German weapons to Eire and of furnishing the I.R.A. with a wireless set with which it could remain in closer contact with Berlin. Although O'Donovan left without receiving definite assurances of German aid, he did reach an agreement by which a courier

34 The Times (London), March 8, 1939.
35 Time, XXX, May 1, 1939, 55.
communications system would be established with Berlin. 36

In the meantime, the I.R.A. campaign continued. On May 30 the I.R.A. staged a massive demonstration in Belfast against the British presence in Northern Ireland. The Belfast police department, as a result, was forced to call out all of its reserves and use armored cars to disperse the demonstrators. Less than two weeks later, on June 11, the Voelkischer Beobachter reported that "the most extensive to date of the Irish attacks on English soil" had occurred the previous night. Thirty bomb explosions had taken place in post offices throughout England, seventeen of which occurred during a single two hour period in London, Birmingham and Manchester. 37

The increased ferocity of the campaign caused both London and Dublin to take additional measures against the I.R.A. On June 23, the government of Eire declared that the Irish Republican Army, under the Offenses Against the State Bill, was an unlawful organization and "one which ought in the public interest to be suppressed." 38

The most stringent measures against the I.R.A. were taken in the British House of Commons where, on July 24,

36 Stephan, 40.
37 Ibid, 41.
38 The Times (London), June 24, 1939.
Home Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare called for the passage of extraordinary measures to halt the terrorist campaign. In posing his case, Sir Samuel stated that 127 bomb incidents had occurred since the previous January, with over fifty taking place in London alone. In addition, British police had uncovered an I.R.A. plot (much in the spirit of Guy Fawkes) to blow up the houses of parliament. The most serious point, however, was that the campaign was "being closely watched and actively stimulated by foreign organizations." There could be little doubt as to which "foreign organizations" the Home Secretary referred.

The British populace had only to wait two days for the I.R.A. rebuttal. Republican bomb warfare, which had previously been conducted without the purposeful taking of human lives (only one death had occurred as a result of the previous 127 bomb incidents), now took a drastic turn. On July 26 the I.R.A. perpetrated two bomb outrages, "the brutality of which aroused great horror and did considerable damage to its reputation." Both bombs were placed in suitcases and left in the baggage rooms of the King's Cross and Victoria stations. The explosions resulted in the death of one man at King's

39 Sir Samuel Hoare, British wartime Home Secretary.
40 Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCL (1939), 1049.
41 Stephan, 43-45.
Cross, and in severe injuries to five others at the Victoria station. The following night the I.R.A. made three further attacks in Liverpool, one of which caused the collapse of a bridge and halted barge traffic until the wreckage could be cleared.  

The I.R.A. terrorist "war" reached its zenith during the last month of European peace. On August 25, a time bomb, hidden in the carrier basket of a bicycle, exploded in the busy Broadgate market street of Coventry. The explosion resulted in the death of five people and left fifty others seriously wounded. The British authorities, armed with the Prevention of Violence Bill which had been passed as a result of Sir Samuel Hoare's speech, quickly arrested a number of suspects, two of whom, Peter Barnes and James Richards, were tried and convicted of murder. They were later sentenced to be hanged in February of the following year.

As the European war began, the I.R.A. continued its campaign of terror and violence in Great Britain. As a result, the British military and police personnel who stood guard at England's vital bridges, tunnels and communication centers, did so not to protect against German attacks, but rather, against the attacks of Irish saboteurs.

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42 Stephan, 43-45.


The British had good reason to fear the continued efforts of Irish saboteurs. Shortly after the beginning of the war, Colonel Lahousen's Abwehr II office had formulated plans calling for the use of both Irish and Welsh malcontents in Britain. The German plan, consisting of two general measures, called for the shipment of explosives to Irish and Welsh "sympathizers" in Britain, the purpose being to conduct sabotage attacks against British aircraft and munitions plants. The second part of the plan foresaw the shipment of explosive charges to neutral ports, such as Antwerp, where Irish and Welsh dockers could then hide them aboard British and Commonwealth ships bound for Britain. The charges would then be set to explode while the ships were at sea.45

While Lahousen was thus attempting to forge a workable espionage ring in Britain, the German foreign ministry, with its usual pessimism, was taking a dim view of any and all efforts to take advantage of the Irish nationalist movement. In a message to the foreign office on October 14, Minister Eduard Hempel urged restraint in all dealings with the I.R.A. which, in his opinion, was "hardly strong enough for action with promise of success or involving appreciable damage to England and is probably

45 Charles Weighton and Gunter Peis, _Hitler's Spies and Saboteurs_, (New York, 1958), 209. Hereafter cited as Weighton and Peis. The work is based on the war diaries of Lahousen.
also lacking in a leader of any stature." 46

The Abwehr II office was not inclined to agree completely with Hempel, although it too was growing rapidly disenchantment with the I.R.A. activities. By the winter of 1939, the I.R.A. campaign had sunk to the level of useless attacks upon "cinemas, telephone kiosks, letter boxes, and markets." 47 The I.R.A. might nonetheless prove to be a useful weapon in the German intelligence arsenal if it were placed under proper direction. As a result, the Abwehr II war diary noted, on November 28, that discussions had begun with the Naval Operations Division as to the possibility of landing an agent in Ireland by U-boat. The purpose of such a maneuver was to contact the I.R.A., with the idea of convincing it to follow more closely German direction. 48

A month later the I.R.A. briefly awoke from its lethargy to achieve its most spectacular success of the war, the "Christmas Raid" on the Irish Army's Phoenix Park Magazine Fort in Dublin. The December 23 raid, which marked the beginning of I.R.A. activities in Eire itself, was


47 Stephan, 60.

48 Ibid. The book is based on the Abwehr II war diary and selected testimonies by Abwehr agents.
completely bloodless in character. The I.R.A. raiding party, consisting of 150 men in thirteen lorries, succeeded in easily overpowering the regular army guards at the fort, and made off with no less than 1,080,000 rounds of ammunition and numerous weapons. The effects of the raid were immediate, and were felt as far away as Berlin.

The I.R.A., which had in the interim finally obtained a transmitter, immediately radioed the Abwehr office to inform it of their success. Kurt Haller, a section leader in Abwehr II, noted in the organization's war diary that, although the German intelligence service would have preferred that such efforts were directed against the British rather than the Irish, "nevertheless, as a result of the raid the opinion gained strength that despite its weakness the I.R.A. was an element to be taken seriously."

The German determination to send an Abwehr agent into Eire was thus strengthened by the I.R.A. coup. The need to reestablish communications between the I.R.A. and Berlin provided yet another incentive for the plan. The I.R.A. transmitter, which for a number of weeks had been sending largely irrelevant reports to Berlin, was seized by the Irish police before the end of the year. The Abwehr agent, Ernst Weber-Drohl, was therefore charged with the

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49 Time, XXXV, January 15, 1940, 27.

50 Stephan, 68.
task of delivering another wireless transmitter to its allies in Eire. In addition, the Abwehr instructed Weber-Drohl to deliver $15,000 to help finance I.R.A. efforts, to arrange for the sending of another I.R.A. representative to Germany, and to attempt to convince the I.R.A. executive counsel to "limit themselves to important objectives and avoid wasted effort."  

On January 28, 1940, the U-37 departed from Wilhelmshaven with Weber-Drohl and his equipment aboard. Less than three weeks later, on February 15, Abwehr II received word that the agent had been safely landed in Ireland. The valuable radio equipment was, however, lost when the boat taking Weber-Drohl from the submarine to shore overturned. After landing, the agent immediately sought out James O'Donovan, who in turn placed him in contact with the I.R.A. executive and provided a hideout for the visitor. On March 27, the Abwehr II war diary noted that messages from Hempel indicated that the agent had succeeded in making contact with the I.R.A.  

Unfortunately, the success of the German agent proved to be short-lived. A short time after he made contact with the I.R.A., Irish secret police arrested Weber-Drohl. the ensuing trial, which took place on April 24, proved to

51 Stephan, 75-76.

52 Ibid.
be an excellent example of the laxness in the Irish judicial system during the early stages of the war. Although clearly a violator of the Aliens Act, Weber-Drohl received only a £3 fine for his offense. After being detained for a short time by the secret police, the German agent gained his freedom.\textsuperscript{53}

In the interim, the Irish government had moved to curb the power of its own "fifth column," the I.R.A. On January 5, the Dail debated and passed the Emergency Powers Bill. The bill gave the government the extraordinary power to intern without trial all citizens suspected of treason. As a result, Irish jails quickly became filled with over 600 I.R.A. suspects.\textsuperscript{54}

Although the I.R.A. bomb campaign was severely restricted by increased security measures in both Great Britain and Ireland, it nonetheless made one final effort on the British mainland. In mid-February, Peter Barnes and James Richards, convicted of murder in connection with the Coventry raid of the previous August, were hanged in London. While the British populace viewed the pair as wanton murderers, in Ireland they immediately became martyrs in

\textsuperscript{53} Stephan, 82-85.

\textsuperscript{54} The Times (London), January 5, 1940, and Bromage, 276.
the cause of Irish freedom and unity. As a consequence, numerous I.R.A. bomb explosions occurred throughout Britain. The most serious explosion was reported in Liverpool, where the new Belfast steamer, the S.S. Munster, sank after a bomb exploded on board as it entered the harbor. 55

The February attacks proved to be the last successful efforts of the I.R.A. in Britain. British wartime security, plus the mass arrests and deportation of suspect Irishmen, quickly brought a halt to the terrorist campaign. The I.R.A. thereafter confined itself to operations in Northern and Southern Ireland. James O'Donovan, who not only had served as the I.R.A. representative in Berlin, but also had trained youthful I.R.A. bomb-throwers and drawn up the plans for the English campaign, was quite critical of the I.R.A. "war" in Great Britain. O'Donovan stated that because the I.R.A. had not waited for substantial German aid or the occurrence of an event such as Dunkirk, the campaign had "brought nothing but harm to Ireland and the I.R.A." 56

The I.R.A., nonetheless, continued its efforts in Ireland. In February, elements of the I.R.A. attacked the


56 Stephan, 38.
British military depot at Ballykinlar in County Down, Northern Ireland. After overpowering the guards, the republicans raided the arsenal, and seized over 200 rifles and assorted ammunition. De Valera, who was himself an I.R.A. veteran, angrily denounced the nationalist activities on both sides of the border. "Instead of being patriots," he stated, "they (are) behaving as nothing but traitors."57

The end of the I.R.A. campaign in Britain concluded the first phase in Germany's attempts, operating in conjunction with the I.R.A., to establish an intelligence-espionage network in Ireland. The second phase, which continued for approximately one year, until June, 1941, was marked by the frenzied efforts of the German Abwehr to bring some direction to the I.R.A.'s rather haphazard activities in Ireland. To accomplish this task, the Abwehr employed a number of agents in Eire, the most important being the tragi-comic figure of Captain Dr. Hermann Goertz.

Captain Goertz, like most of his compatriots sent into Eire, had little or no knowledge of Ireland or Irish affairs. Indeed, his primary recommendation for the

mission seemed to lie in a previous arrest for spying in Britain. Nonetheless, in May 1940, Abwehr II found itself in dire need of establishing a reliable agent in Eire, and Goertz was chosen.\(^5\)\(^8\)

Goertz, who received his orders directly from Admiral Canaris, later explained to the Irish secret police that he had had a threefold mission in Eire. Goertz was to support, whenever possible, those elements in Ireland which sought the maintenance of Irish neutrality and hence the denial of Irish harbors to the British. Such a situation was viewed by the German navy as "very satisfactory and . . . entirely in our interests that there should be no change in this position."\(^5\)\(^9\)

Secondly, Abwehr II instructed Goertz to exploit and direct the efforts of the "national revolutionary group" in its activities against the British enemy. Finally, as the Abwehr II agent stated, "I was to try to stir up a partisan war in Ulster."\(^6\)\(^0\) Admiral Canaris forewarned Goertz that, in fulfilling his mission, the agent could utilize only the intelligence resources to be found in Eire. Believing the I.R.A. to be well armed after the

\(^5\)\(^8\) Stephan, 88ff.

\(^5\)\(^9\) Ibid, 98-99.

\(^6\)\(^0\) Ibid.
raid on Phoenix Park, Abwehr II informed Goertz that German weapons and advisors would be forthcoming only after a general revolutionary movement, directed against the British in Northern Ireland, seemed eminent.61 

By the first week of May the German intelligence department had come to the decision that Operation Mainau, the code name of Goertz's mission, could begin. Consequently, on May 7, the Abwehr agent parachuted into Eire. After several days of hiking, during which time he had neither food nor shelter, Goertz came to the first of his prearranged contacts. Goertz's contact, a Mrs. Stuart, was the wife of an Irish author who at the time was serving as an advisor on Irish affairs in Berlin. After some time Goertz met with James O'Donovan, who took the German agent to his own home in Shankill, a suburb of Dublin. During his three day stay at Shankill, Goertz met several members of the I.R.A. executive council, including the new chief of staff, Sephan Hayes.63

61 Stephan, 98-99. The Abwehr office was apparently not aware that three-fourths of the booty from the raid, or 800,000 rounds of ammunition, had been recovered by the Irish police.

62 Francis Stuart, the husband of Goertz's contact, was an Irish author of some note who, during World War II, served as a lecturer on Irish literature at Berlin University, an advisor on Irish affairs, and made several broadcasts to his countrymen from Germany.

63 Stephan, 99. Stephan Hayes became chief of staff when Sean Russell made a prolonged visit to the U.S. in 1939.
Following his stay in Shankill, Goertz moved to his permanent hideout in Eire, the home of Stephan Carroll Held. The Irishman was no stranger to either Goertz or the Abwehr office. During the previous month, Held had visited Berlin as the representative of the I.R.A. In addition to the usual requests for weapons and financial aid, Held had also brought with him Plan Kathleen (known in Germany as the Artus Plan), the proposed invasion of Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, the I.R.A.-sponsored plan proved to be childishly unfeasable. as a result, the General Staff immediately disavowed any possibility that it might be carried out successfully. 64

During the two months that he stayed at the Held residence, the Villa Konstanz on Templeogue Road, Dublin, Goertz conducted several meetings with Hayes and other I.R.A. officers. At each meeting the Abwehr agent attempted to convince the I.R.A. to abandon its fratricidal war against de Valera's government in Eire, and turn instead to the more important task of expelling the British from Ulster. The I.R.A. leadership, however, proved unable to control its own forces, and the useless, sporadic fighting continued. 65

64 Stephan, 107-108.

65 Ibid, 122ff.
Striking without warning, on May 23, elements of the Irish secret police converged, en masse, upon the Villa Konstanz. Captain Goertz, who had been warned by his host, managed to escape, but Held and one other suspect were taken into custody. Among the items found by police at the Villa, were an opened German parachute, a Luftwaffe cap, German uniform insignias, German World War I decorations, a radio transmitter, detailed maps of Irish bridges, harbors and airfields, a box containing $20,000 in U.S. currency, and Plan Kathleen. The repercussions from the raid, needless to say, were quick in coming.

Prime Minister de Valera, in a torrent of righteous wrath reserved normally for the British, denounced both Germany and the I.R.A. for their roles in the affair:

It took 600 years to get Britain out of this country. We don't want them or any others to come in here again . . . Unfortunately there is a small group that appears to be meditating treason. I tell them . . . that such a state of affairs will not be tolerated.

On May 24, Minister Hempel informed the foreign ministry about the Villa Konstanz raid. Hempel, who had no knowledge that German agents were operating in Eire, remained incredulous that Brandy (the name given Goertz by Held) was indeed an Abwehr agent. In fact, Hempel

66 Time, XXXV, June 3, 1940, 39.

67 Ibid.
believed the affair to be nothing less than a British plot. The so-called Brandy was not a German agent, stated Hempel, but was in fact a British agent. Hempel believed that Brandy had gained the confidence of the unwary Held in an effort to embarrass the German Legation in Dublin "in order to destroy Irish neutrality." The raid on the Villa was, in short, "an act of aggression . . . against me and Held." 68

While the foreign office busily sought to smooth the ruffled feelings of the Irish Prime Minister, Abwehr II resignedly discarded Operation Mainau as a failure. The Abwehr II war diary noted that, although Goertz had escaped capture, he could be of no further use. "Even if he is not captured in the near future," the entry read, "his further activity is rendered impossible in consequence of the discovery of the transmitter and money." 69

On June 1, Hempel finally received notification from the Director of the Political Department of the Foreign Ministry, Ernst von Woermann, that Goertz (Brandy) was indeed a German agent. Hempel was therefore confronted with the difficult task of trying to restore de Valera's confidence, which, to quote the minister,

69 Stephan, 129.
"has been shattered" by the Held case. Six weeks after the arrest of Held, the foreign office still had made little progress in restoring friendly relations. In desperation, Ribbentrop rather falsely informed the Irish government, on July 11, that it was "an utterly unreasonable suspicion that we might have the intention to prepare to use Ireland as a military base against England through a so-called 'fifth column', which besides does not exist."

Shortly after the arrest of Held, the foreign office requested that the Abwehr department momentarily cease operations in Ireland. However, Abwehr I chose to disregard the pleas of the Wilhelmstrasse, and continued in its efforts to establish a network in Eire.

In June, Abwehr I, in charge of operational reconnaissance, sent two more agents into Eire. The two agents, Walter Simon and Willy Preetz, were to land by submarine at different times in Dingle Bay on the western coast of Ireland. Both agents received identical assignments. They were to transmit the movements of British convoys for use by Admiral Doenitz’s submarine command, and were to send urgently needed daily weather reports for use by the Luftwaffe. Abwehr I ordered that they avoid all contact

70 D.G.F.P., X, Doc. No. 79, 89.
71 Ibid, Doc. 149, 184.
with the I.R.A.\textsuperscript{72}

Willy Preetz, whose passport bore the name Paddy Mitch­ell, landed at Dingle Bay in the beginning of June. After reaching Dublin, Preetz established himself in a shop by the harbor area and proceeded to send daily reports to Berlin. For several weeks the agent operated with little difficulty. Eventually, however, his neighbors became suspicious, and as a consequence, Irish police promptly arrested the agent.\textsuperscript{73}

Walter Simon, whose cover name was Karl Anderson, had even less fortune than Preetz. Landing in Dingle Bay on the night of June 12, he made his way to Tralee where he hoped to board a train for Dublin. Unfortunately, Irish detectives were also at the railway station, and on the morning following his arrival in Ireland, Simon found himself in an Irish jail. A jury later found the German agent guilty of illegal entrance into the country, and sentenced him to three years' imprisonment.\textsuperscript{74}

In July, 1940, Abwehr II transferred all espionage activities from France to Britain. In connection with the increased emphasis on Great Britain, Abwehr II sent three more agents into Ireland. During the first week of July, three agents, Dieter Gaertner and Herbert Tributh

\textsuperscript{72} Stephan, 138-139.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 144.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, 142.
of South Africa, and Henry Obed of India, arrived via cutter in Baltimore Bay on the southern coast of Eire. The Abwehr office had instructed the three men to separate upon landing and individually find transportation to Britain, where they were to carry out espionage activities. 75

The two Germans and one very dark-skinned Indian quickly aroused suspicion among the local inhabitants. As a result, Irish police immediately arrested the agents. When the police searched the three men they found eight incendiary bombs, four tins of explosives and £850 in Bank of England notes, all of which prompted the Special Criminal Court, on August 17, to sentence the agents to seven years' penal servitude. 76

Due to the Abwehr's disillusionment with the I.R.A., all agents sent to Ireland after the arrest of Held had been instructed to avoid contact with the underground army. The I.R.A. nonetheless remained a force which, if brought under effective control, could be of inestimable value in the struggle against Britain. As a result, Abwehr II made one final effort to exploit the situation.

At the end of January, 1940, the German consul-general at Genoa received word that Sean Russell, the I.R.A.'s ex-chief of staff, would shortly arrive from the United States. 77

75 Stephan, 150.

75 Round Table, No. 121, "Ireland in the Vortex," December, 1940, 118.
Russell, through his envoy John McCarthy, made it known that, if Germany were prepared to do so, he desired to return to Ireland aboard a German submarine.\textsuperscript{77} The Abwehr proved more than willing to provide the necessary transportation.

An immense opportunity presented itself in such a mission. Although Russell, because of his absence the previous year, had lost much of his former influence, he nevertheless was one of the few men who could weld the I.R.A. into an effective force. Abwehr II therefore took an immediate interest in the Irishman.

The primary weakness of all bureaucratic systems, duplication of purpose and procedure, became manifest during the four month period of negotiations which followed. It soon became evident that the Abwehr was not the only department interested in Sean Russell. The foreign ministry had also seen the importance of the I.R.A.'s ex-chief of staff, and had agreed with the Abwehr's estimation of Russell's value. However, the always cautious Wilhelmstrasse feared the reaction from Dublin if Germany landed Russell in neutral Eire. Consequently, Ribbentrop demanded that his office be allowed to take a hand in the matter, and that restraint be taken in all operations.

\textsuperscript{77} D.G.F.P., VIII, Doc. No. 562, 693.
involving the Irish nationalist.\textsuperscript{78} When Russel arrived in Genoa he was therefore met by two representatives of Hitler's German, Dr. Franz Fromme of Abwehr II and Dr. Edmund Veesenmayer of the foreign office.

On July 13, a second event of good fortune occurred for the Abwehr. Admiral Canaris, through personal contacts with the chief of the Spanish secret police, secured the release of Frank Ryan who had spent the previous two years in Spanish jails.\textsuperscript{79}

The acquisition of Ryan's release proved to be of at least equal value to the plans involving Russell. Due to his role in the Spanish Civil War, Ryan had gained the sympathy and respect of Irishmen from all walks of life, including de Valera who had personally written General Francisco Franco in an effort to secure a pardon for the Irish patriot.\textsuperscript{80} Germany could therefore obtain a diplomatic, as well as intelligence, coup by successfully landing Russell and Ryan in Eire.

Operation Dove, the return of Russell and Ryan to Ireland, began in earnest on August 8, 1940. Russell, the leader of the two-man team, had not been previously given specific instructions as to his mission. The Abwehr

\textsuperscript{78} D.G.F.P., VIII, Doc. No. 605, 760.

\textsuperscript{79} Stephan, 157.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 185ff.
and foreign office no doubt believed that any move the
two men took in relation to the Irish nationalist move­
ment would be of value to Germany. The Abwehr simply
informed Russell that future instructions would be passed
on to him by a prearranged signal. However, General
Lahousen later contradicted the nonchalance of the Abwehr
planners. In an interview with newsmen following the war,
he stated that Abwehr II’s plans for Russell actually
included the organization of an uprising in Ireland timed
to coincide with Operation Sealion, and the establishment
of a base of sabotage operations in that country.

Whatever the instructions might have been, they were
to no avail, for neither man was destined to return to
Ireland. On August 14 Sean Russell, who had suffered
from an unknown illness since the beginning of the voy­
age, died from what was later surmised to be a burst
gastric ulcer. His body was wrapped in a German war
ensign and buried at sea, 100 miles west of Galway, Ire­
land.

Frank Ryan, who had no knowledge of any operational
instructions for the mission, returned to Germany. Ryan
hoped that the German authorities would organize a second,
similar mission. The foreign office and Abwehr were,

81 Stephan, 185ff.
82 Survey, 243-245.
83 Stephan, 164.
however, faced with the task of finding an explanation for Russell's rather mysterious death. As a result, Operation Dove was not attempted again. Ryan remained in Germany, where he became an unofficial advisor on Irish affairs. On June 10, 1944, he died in Dresden after a six month illness. 84

The death of Russell, and the subsequent cancellation of Operation Dove, caused a lapse in the Abwehr's attempts to infiltrate agents into Eire. It was not, in fact, until the following year that another Abwehr agent landed in Ireland.

On March 12, 1941, Gunther Schuetz parachuted over what he though was Newbridge, a city located fifteen miles west of Dublin (due to pilot error he was actually sixty miles from his intended landing place). Schuetz brought with him to Ireland a radio transmitter, on which he intended to make daily reports to the Abwehr on weather conditions, convoy movements, and economic production in Northern Ireland. However, Schuetz never had the opportunity to use the transmitter. Barely twelve hours after his landing, Irish police arrested the German agent. 85

84 Stephan, 285.

85 Ibid., 208.
The ignoble failure of Schuetz's mission proved to be the final lesson needed to convince the Abwehr of the futility of such operations. As a result, the intelligence service refrained from sending German agents into Ireland for the duration of the war.

The Schuetz mission ended the second phase in the operations of the German intelligence in Ireland. The third and final phase, lasting from 1941 to 1945, was marked by the formation of Irish and German military units for use in Ireland, and the continued efforts of Captain Goertz to bring cohesion to the I.R.A. campaign.

Following his narrow escape from capture during the raid on Held's Villa Konstanz, Goertz resolved never again to accept I.R.A. "protection." As a result, during the remainder of the time he continued at liberty, Goertz created his own system of hideouts. From his various bases, the agent could conduct his operations without fear of investigation by the Irish secret police which continued its raids on known I.R.A. meeting places.86

Primarily because the Irish authorities had discovered his presence in Ireland, Goertz concluded that his original assignment had changed. He now was faced with two major

86Stephan, 130. The following is taken from Goertz's testimony to the Irish secret police and articles which he wrote following the war, cited in Stephan's work.
concerns, "to learn as much as possible about the true situation in Ireland," and to forward that information to the Abwehr in German. 87

The first of Goertz's self-assigned missions proved the least difficult to accomplish. Through his contacts with the I.R.A. executive, as well as numerous friends in all walks of life in Eire, the agent succeeded in remaining abreast of all new developments in Ireland. However, the forwarding of this information to Germany proved to be a much more difficult task. Because his radio transmitter had been confiscated during the raid on Held's villa, Goertz was forced to rely upon a number of communication methods. At various times the German agent attempted to smuggle messages out of Ireland via neutral seamen, by Falangist couriers from Spain, by sending a message over the German Legation wireless, and, on several occasions when the information appeared to be vital, Goertz attempted to deliver the message personally by leaving Ireland in numerous and assorted types of craft. None of the methods proved acceptable. 88 They were either too slow, extremely dangerous, untrustworthy, or failed completely.

The most obvious means of communications was via I.R.A. transmitter, but Goertz found the idea to be even more un-

87 Stephan, 178-179.

88 For a description of Goertz's attempts, see Stephan, Chapter 14.
acceptable than the others. To use the I.R.A. facilities, which were quite poor, would have required the subsequent use of the I.R.A. intelligence system, which Goertz described as being "as primitive as that of children playing cops and robbers." 89

The I.R.A. nevertheless proved to be of value. In late spring, shortly before Schuetz's abortive mission, Goertz received a wireless set and an operator from the underground army. To Goertz, the receipt of the radio and operator was "the only valuable help which I received from the I.R.A." 90 The German could thus send regular reports to his superiors in Berlin. In several cases those reports were believed to have concerned military intelligence gathered by the I.R.A. in Northern Ireland.

In addition to his other duties, Goertz also continued in his thankless attempts to convince the I.R.A. leadership that they were accomplishing nothing by their useless campaigns. On one occasion, when the chief of staff, Stephan Hayes, boasted that 5,000 Irishmen were active members of the I.R.A., Goertz lost what little patience remained to him. Stating that with 500 disciplined troops he could successfully march on Belfast, he

89 Stephan, 196.

90 Ibid., 198.
exclaimed that by such action "these relatively few men would have done more for Ireland than five thousand talkers who argued about the legality of the second and third Dail." 91

Goertz's spirit rose when, in November, 1941, an incident occurred which could well have proven to be the agent's most valuable contribution to the German war effort. During the first weeks of the month Goertz was contacted by officers of the Regular Irish Army. Following months of futile conversations with the I.R.A., Goertz found, much to his pleasure, that the officers completely concurred with his estimation of the Irish situation. Furthermore, the Irish army officers informed the agent that they were prepared to confront de Valera and his government with definite proposals regarding the acceptance of German aid in alleviating the border problem. The German agent, who had not been empowered to make definite proposals or agreements of German aid, would in the interim contact his superiors to place before them the Irish plans. The two parties agreed that Goertz should travel, via Irish army plane, to the German headquarters in France and there seek aid for the project. 92

91 Stephan, 196.

92 Ibid, 227-229.
Unknown to Goertz, other German representatives in Eire had also been contacted by elements of the Irish military. The Counselor of the German Legation, Henning Thomsen, had carried on several conversations with a "well known Irish officer," who was prepared to declare himself in favor of German-Irish military collaboration.93 In addition, Minister Hempel had also reported earlier in the year that he had had conversations with a high ranking officer who, for security reasons, was referred to as "L". As in the previous cases, the officer informed Hempel of the attitudes and personalities then prevalent in the military and government.94 On all three occasions, the German representatives refused to divulge the identity of the Irish officers.

However, the contacts with sympathizers in the Irish military never became developed. On November 23, elements of the Irish secret police, while in the process of raiding a suspected I.R.A. meeting place Blackheath Park, Dublin, paused to investigate an adjoining house. Inside they found, and arrested, Hermann Goertz.95

Goertz had succeeded in remaining at liberty in Eire for nineteen months, longer by far than any of his fellow

93 Stephan, 231.
94 D.G.F. P., XII, Doc. No. 79, 152.
95 Round Table, March, 1942, 267, and Stephan, 229.
agents. There are three possible reasons for his success. The first, and most likely, is that the Irish secret police simply failed to find him. Secondly, the possibility exists that the secret police knew of his whereabouts during the entire period, and allowed him to remain free so that they could legally arrest all I.R.A. suspects that came in contact with him. Finally, the de Valera government may have allowed Goertz to remain at liberty for use as a possible liaison in the event that Germany appeared on the verge of winning the war. In connection with the last two points, one may also surmise that Goertz's freedom became too much of a threat when he was contacted by elements of the Irish army—elements that supposedly represented the government and its policies. Whatever the reason, it is an undeniable fact that during the long period of his service, Goertz provided the Abwehr with its only reliable source of information in Ireland.

During the same period that Goertz operated in Eire, Abwehr and foreign office officials continued to seek ways in which the situation in Ireland could be used to advantage. One such plan was Operation Osprey.

96 Stephan, 230.
Operation Osprey involved the landing of a paramilitary force in Ireland. Because the program remained in various stages of preparation for a period of two years, it quite frequently changed in character and outlook. As originally proposed, shortly after the fall of France, the operation called for the recruitment of a brigade from among Irish prisoners of war. The mission of such a force involved sabotage operations in Britain and Northern Ireland, or, in the event of an Anglo-American invasion of Eire, the organization of guerilla operations in Southern Ireland. 97

In the spring of 1941 a special camp for Irish p.o.w.'s was established at Friesack, Germany. Three men, Helmut Clissman and Dr. Jupp Hoven of Abwehr II, and Frank Ryan, began the arduous assignment of selecting volunteers. However, they met with even less success than their World War I predecessor, Sir Roger Casement. By the following year the three men had selected a "Brigade" of ten Irishmen. The twenty-four months of preparation for the mission came to nothing when, shortly after the force began actual training, the foreign office and Abwehr department decided to abandon the project. The maintenance of Eire's neutrality was found to be more im-

97 Stephan, 235-237.
portant than the landing of a small force of saboteurs, which might in some way upset the Irish political equilibrium.98

A second, and less extravagant, proposal for Operation Osprey was made in August, 1941, when it appeared that a British attack on Eire might be eminent. The second plan called for the infiltration into Eire of a three-man mission, made up of Ryan, Clissmann and Bruno Rieger, a radio operator. The three men were to act as a military "listening post," to gather and send back to Germany information on British operations during the invasion. When the British attack failed to materialize, the Abwehr cancelled the plan.99

The most ambitious proposal for Operation Osprey was made at the beginning of 1942. Walter Schellenberg, Director of Office VI of the Reich Security Headquarters, proposed that in the event of an Anglo-American occupation of Ireland, the Abwehr department be relieved of all but technical responsibility for Osprey. In its place, the foreign office and S.S. were to carry out all necessary arrangements.100 The Schellenberg Plan, as this phase of Operation Osprey became known, called for the formation of an independent force, the No. 1 S.S. Special Service Troop. The S.S. force, armed with armor-piercing

99 Stephan, 221-223.

100 Ibid., 234-235.
weapons, was to be divided into small detachments and sent into Eire to work among the I.R.A. and partisan forces which chose to resist the occupation. The Special Service Troop, which eventually numbered 100 volunteers, received its training at the Totenkamph (Death's Head) Barracks in Berlin. Helmut Clissmann once again became part of the operation, being placed in charge of training the troop in the use of British weapons and in sabotage operations. Unfortunately, the training provided by Clissmann was once again wasted. When it became apparent that no Anglo-American force would invade Eire, this, the final proposal for Operation Osprey, was also discarded. 101

In the years of war remaining, only two intelligence missions occurred which involved either Ireland or Irish nationals. In midsummer, 1942, General Lahousen approved a plan by which an agent would be dropped by parachute into Great Britain. The agent, an Irishman whose name remains unknown, received intensive training in industrial sabotage at the Abwehr training center in Berlin. His mission involved the perpetration of sabotage attacks upon British aircraft industries, aluminium works and hydro-electric installations in the Glasgow area. Although he successfully parachuted over Scotland, it is

101 Stephan, 234-235.
not known whether his mission met with success or failure. 102

The final attempt by the Abwehr to send men into Eire occurred in 1943. In December of that year two Irishmen, John Kenny and John O'Reilly, parachuted into Ireland. They were to transmit information back to Berlin concerning the Anglo-American military build-up prior to the Normandy invasion. As was the case with their German predecessors, both men were immediately captured by the Irish police. 102

The eight German agents sent into Ireland after the beginning of hostilities spent the remainder of World War II in Athlone Prison Camp. On September 10, 1946, they were contacted by a member of the Irish Ministry of Justice and given the choice of returning to Germany or receiving asylum in Eire. Seven of the eight agents chose to remain in Ireland, only Walter Simon, alias Karl Anderson, returned to Germany. 103

During the following months the ex-agents succeeded in establishing a degree of personal life and security in Ireland. 104 However, in April, 1947, the western

102 Weighton and Peis, 279.
103 Stephan, 278-279.
104 Ibid, 290ff.
105 Ibid. Hermann Goertz, in February, 1947, became secretary of an Irish relief organization for German children, and the remainder of the Germans either established them—
allies demanded the return of the seven to Germany for interrogation purposes. De Valera, who was at that time attempting to reestablish the diplomatic life of Eire, complied with the allied request. All the agents, except Goertz, consequently returned to Germany. Goertz, for reasons known only to himself, chose suicide instead.

There is an old Gaelic slogan and war cry which proclaims that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity!" The German Abwehr and the Irish nationalists might well have employed that slogan during World War II to gain their individual objectives. However, both failed to grasp the initiative in what was an extremely advantageous circumstance.

The history of the German attempt to gain a footing in Ireland is marked by a singular lack of success. Few, if any, of the Abwehr agents sent to Ireland had any knowledge of the land or people. Individually, the German agents no doubt were intelligent, competent men. However, even the most intelligent man will fail when he is faced with a situation that is completely alien to him.

selves in business or found jobs. The most successful of the group proved to be Gunther Schuetz who started an extremely profitable business dealing, ironically, in surplus British war materials.

106 Stephan, 290ff.
The poor preparation of the Abwehr agents was not the only cause for the miscarriage of Germany's intelligence designs in Ireland. There existed in the Third Reich a basic dichotomy of interest that served to subvert the best laid plans of Berlin. The Abwehr viewed Ireland and the I.R.A. as simply a medium through which it could conduct intelligence, espionage and sabotage missions against Britain. However, the foreign office regarded Ireland in an entirely different light. To the Wilhelmstrasse, Irish neutrality was not only an accepted fact, it was also highly desirable. Therefore, Ribbentrop's foreign office cautioned restraint whenever it was in a position to exert its influence.

If Germany somehow had managed to correct its own internal problems, its efforts in Ireland would, in all probability, still have failed. To achieve success in Ireland, the Abwehr needed the complete and active support of the Irish Republican Army. At no time during the war did the Abwehr have that support.

By 1939 the I.R.A. had disintegrated into a mere shadow of the organization that had literally torn Ireland from the grasp of Britain following World War I. Disunited, largely purposeless, and without proper leadership, the I.R.A. could do little to help itself without the additional burden of helping someone else. Hermann Goertz best summer-
ized the utter frustration felt by all those Germans who attempted to bring cohesion to the I.R.A. When, in 1941, he told Stephan Hayes' aide-de-camp:

You (the I.R.A.) know how to die for Ireland, but how to fight for it you have not the slightest idea.107

107 Stephan, 196.
CHAPTER IV

THE PROPOSED GERMAN INVASION OF EIRE

Throughout World War II, Nazi Germany chose to utilize Eire in a rather oblique fashion. The previous chapters have dealt with Germany's "indirect" use of Ireland through diplomatic channels, with Dönitz's use of a neutral Ireland to strike at Britain's convoy routes, and with the Abwehr's use of Eire to conduct operations against the British in Northern Ireland and Britain. However, there is yet one final direct, or active, means by which Ireland entered into Nazi strategy during the Second World War—the proposed German invasion of Southern Ireland.

The concept of invading Ireland as a means of striking at Britain did not originate in the mind of Hitler or his strategists. As in the previous cases of Berlin's relations with Eire, Nazi Germany simply carried on, or borrowed from, well established precedents. Indeed, attempts by various European powers to invade Ireland had periodically occurred since the sixteenth century.

The first of the more prominent invasion attempts, discounting the largely ineffective sojourns of the Vikings, occurred in 1580 by Phillip II of Spain. Phillip established during his invasion, a number of precedents which
were to appear in all the succeeding attempts. For one, the invasion was timed to coincide with a rebellion of the native Irish against their British overlords. The various invasion attempts which followed also took place at a time when the Irish were actively rebelling, or when a significant portion was prepared to rebel.

Secondly, the Spanish commanders found, much to their chagrin no doubt, that they could not rely upon the support of the Irish rebels. The independent Irishmen were loath to accept orders of their "liberators," be they Spanish, French, German, or whoever. Closely coordinated campaigns were therefore out of the question. In addition, once the rebellion had begun and the European troops landed, the Irish exhibited a ludicrous desire and capacity for fighting amongst themselves rather than against their British enemy. Every rebellion in Ireland, including the successful 1916-1921 rebellion, ended in a struggle involving Irishmen against Irishmen, rather than Irishmen against Englishmen. Such a situation was hardly conducive to a workable cohesion between the European powers and their Irish allies.¹

¹ During the period crowned by the efforts of Phillip II and the Tudors, Irish internal strife normally involved clan warfare, wherein one or more clans, such as the O'Neill or the O'Donnell clans, would attempt to gain hegemony over all others. Since that time, such wars have taken on a religious tendency, Catholic vs. Protestant.
The most important precedent set by Phillip II was failure. A short time after the Spanish landed in Ireland, the British surrounded the invaders in an Irish castle. The debacle which followed resulted in the death of seventy-five percent of the force and imprisonment for the remainder. Although hardly a happy precedent, it was nonetheless one which would be inflexibly followed by all Phillip's followers.

The most energetic efforts made toward invading Ireland took place during the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire. In April 1796, the Directory proposed invading Ireland with a large-scale force of 20,000 troops. Unfortunately, the plan remained in abeyance until, in 1798, rebellion erupted in Ireland. The Directory immediately proposed that the original invasion force be sent to support the rebels. Once again, the mission met with difficulty. Napoleon's Egyptian campaign at that time absorbed the interest of the French populace and the resources of the Ministère de Marine. As a result, the invasion force which sailed from Rochefort on August 6, 1798, comprised only 1,200 men. As in the previous cases, the French could not gain the support of the Irish revolutionaries. The force surrendered on September 8, less than three weeks after it had landed in

Ireland.\(^3\)

Nor did Napoleon himself have better fortune in Ireland. In 1804, while the emperor busily devised ways in which he might defeat his country's arch-enemy, Great Britain, the proposal was once again raised to invade Ireland. As the year progressed, the planned invasion "passed definitely from a demonstration to a resolve."\(^4\) The expedition, comprised of 18,000 men, met with little success. Like Napoleon's plan to invade Britain, the Irish invasion proposal came to naught when the British gained command of the seas at the battle of Trafalgar.

Hitler was therefore well aware, not only of the obvious advantages to be gained by invading Ireland, but of the far more numerous disadvantages that had been illustrated by previous attempts. The Fuehrer, driven by desperation, chose to disregard those lessons and as a result, came dangerously near to beginning an operation that could have only ended in abject failure.

During the first months of the war, few German military strategists gave thought to Ireland as a possible

\(^3\) Capt. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, (Boston, 1895), I, 347 and 379.

\(^4\) Ibid., II, 124.
invasion site. For the moment, France and Britain were the sole objects of German attention, the European continent and the Atlantic the only arenas of warfare.  

Much of the same attitude was taken in Eire itself during the first year of war. An invasion by Germany seemed in many quarters to be a vague, far distant threat, hidden, as it were, behind the Siegfried Line. For the moment, the main threat to Eire came from its ancient enemy Britain and what few defensive measures that were taken were aimed primarily at Britain. On May 23, 1940, Eduard Hempel wrote Ribbentrop that the Irish Army, together with the "nationalist population," were prepared to carry on "guerilla warfare against an English attack." As an after thought, Hempel advised the foreign minister that German intervention would most likely be greeted in a similar manner.

Germany's Blitzkrieg through the Low Countries and France served to awaken the blissfully lethargic attitude of Dublin. Hempel reported on June 21, the day that France surrendered, that in a previous discussion with de Valera,

5 Again, disregarding the significant part Ireland played in the Battle of the Atlantic.

6 D.G.F.P., IX, Doc. No. 310, 422.

7 Ibid.
the Irish Prime Minister had confessed that "with Germany's closer approach anxiety had increased . . . concerning possible German intervention to use Ireland as a base for attacks on England." The rapid succession of German victories during the first year of the war had convinced de Valera that it was futile for a small nation to attempt to repel the aggressive designs of a major power. If Britain attempted militarily to secure its western flank by invading Eire, the Prime Minister was convinced that Germany would send a force to halt such a plan. Obversely, if Germany intended to use Eire as a base for attack against Great Britain, the British would most certainly move to obstruct such designs. In either case, Ireland would become a battleground and join the long list of small states that had fallen prey to the machinations of larger states.

Throughout the summer of 1940, the Irish government continued preparations for the attack, by either belligerent, which had become increasingly imminent. Believing that only internal strength could convince Eire's adversaries that invasion would prove too costly, de Valera had previously approved a £5,500,000 budget for the purchase of capital equipment. With the money, the govern-

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8 D.G.F.P., IX, Doc. No. 506, 637.
9 Ibid.
ment built airfields and an ammunition factory and created a small navy and air force.\textsuperscript{10} De Valera's minister of defense, Frank Aiken, also began the task of expanding the 37,000 man army (which included reservists). In addition to the expansion of the country's military potential, the various defense committees and agencies of Eire also took down all road signs, manned coastal defenses, maintained a strict surveillance of all German diplomats, and the amazingly effective secret police curtailed the efforts of German agents sent into Ireland.\textsuperscript{11}

The Irish were not alone in their fear of an invasion of Eire. In Britain, several supposedly intelligent people fell prey to rather hysterical reports regarding German designs upon Ireland. One such report, investigated by the Invasion Warning Sub-Committee, stated that "German soldiers in civilian clothes are embarking at Naples for Spain, whence they will be sent from Cadiz for an attack on Ireland."\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Time}, XXXVI, June 10, 1940, 37-38. The Irish navy comprised six torpedo boats purchased from Britain. There are no statistics on the air force.

\textsuperscript{11} See Chapter III.

A far more realistic view was taken by General Sir Edmund Ironside. The former Chief of the Imperial General Staff, in a report to the Chiefs of Staff on June 30, put forth his views on Operation Sea Lion, the impending German invasion of Britain. Sir Edmund pointed out that due to Britain's long coastline and Germany's possession of ports in France, Norway and the Low Countries an invasion force could land at almost any point in Great Britain. "They may," stated Ironside, "even take Ireland first and so extend the possibility of landing still further west . . . ." In addition, the main landings would be supported by parachute drops, involving up to 20,000 men, "anywhere in the United Kingdom or Ireland."  

Less than a week later, after Sir Edmund had further studied the matter, he estimated that the major German invasion forces would land at Kent and East Anglia. All other landings, including in Ireland, would be diversionary in nature, to force the British to divide their defensive forces.  

General Ironside's estimate of the situation proved to be the most accurate. The military strategists in

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14 Ibid.
Berlin had indeed given Ireland a secondary role in their plans for Operation Sea Lion. After the invasion of Britain began, a small expedition of ships was to depart from Brest for the invasion and, hopefully, the conquest of Ireland. The main Wehrmacht invasion force would then be supported by "a large scale" parachute drop, sent to demoralize the Irish in the rear. In consequence of the invasion plans, a force of five or six divisions not included in the regular invasion forces began amphibious training off the west coast of France.

In addition to the actual invasion plans, Ireland was also included in the German occupation plans. The Military Economic Staff, Wehrmilitärwirtschaftsstab England, proposed that Great Britain be divided into six Military Economic Commands, based at London, Birmingham, Newcastle, Liverpool, Glasgow and Dublin.

While Germany planned and Britain prepared, Eire continued with its own defensive measures, still not sure

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17 Fleming, 262. Although the author gives a description of the training of the invasion forces, he nonetheless believes the invasion of Ireland to be merely a deception.

18 Ibid.
where the invasion would come from. On July 9, Prime Minister de Valera stated that if Eire were attacked, it was prepared to resist—no matter what nation chose to invade. De Valera at the same time once more sought to end partition and reclaim Eire's "Hibernia Irrendenta." Using the highly credible premise that Ireland could better defend itself whole and undivided, the Prime Minister invited the north to join in defensive measures with the south. Unfortunately, he insisted that neutrality be used as the basis for unification, a proposition the pro-British Protestants of Ulster could not allow. 19 Three days later, the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Lord Craigavon, definitely rejected de Valera's offer. The question of a united defense against invasion was thereafter closed. 20

Measures to increase Eire's military potential also increased as invasion became more of a threat. Frank Aiken reported on July 15 that 120,000 men had volunteered for the army during the preceding six weeks, with 25,000 joining in the previous week alone. 21

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19 *The Times* (London), July 9, 1940.

20 *Ibid*, July 12, 1940.

autumn of 1940, the Irish army had expanded to well over 200,000 men. Insofar as modern military statistics are concerned, these are not impressive figures, particularly when compared with the millions of men that both Germany and Britain commanded. However, Eire had two distinct advantages that the occupied minor states of Europe had not possessed. First, Ireland's geographical position made invasion by any major power, particularly Germany, an extremely questionable enterprise. Germany would find no mere borders or frontiers to cross in invading Ireland. Instead, an invasion force would be confronted, even with the acquisition of Atlantic ports, with a dangerous voyage before reaching its target. Once there, long communications and supply lines would have to be established and maintained—lines which would prove easy targets for the Royal Navy.

The second advantage held by Eire concerned the martial qualities of the Irish themselves, which stepped far beyond simple élan. Ireland in 1940 was "presumably still supreme mistress of the art of guerilla warfare."

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22 Round Table, No. 121, December, 1940, 120.


24 Ibid.
Nurtured during seven centuries of guerilla fighting, including the more recent "Anglo-Irish War" and the "Time of Troubles" in the 1920's, the Irish were by far the most experienced guerilla fighters in Europe. Ireland, as a nation and as a people, had grown accustomed to living in more-or-less constant warfare. Germany would therefore be faced not only with the hard-core military, in the form of the Irish Army and the I.R.A. (estimated at numbering between 5,000-7,500 activists and 15,000 "fellow travelers"), but also with virtually an entire nation that presumably was ready to resume its old life under conditions of guerilla warfare.

As each day passed during the autumn of 1940, the opportunity for a successful German invasion of Britain became more remote. The two key factors in such an invasion, command of the air and of the seas, could not be wrested from Britain. The superiority of the British Home Fleet had gained the melancholy recognition of the German strategists, including Hitler, at the beginning of the war. However, the invasion could still have become a reality of Hermann Goering's Luftwaffe had gained control of the skies over Britain. By November, the Battle of Britain had begun to turn in the favor of

25 *Time*, XXXVI, June 10, 1940.
the hard-pressed R.A.F. As a consequence, Operation Sea Lion met with frequent postponement.

On November 14, Hitler, who was less willing than many of his commanders to abandon the operation, ordered that Sea Lion be revived. "Each branch of the Armed Forces," he stated, "is to exert itself strenuously to improve its position." In addition, the November 14 directive outlined the need to find alternative invasion plans if Operation Sea Lion should prove impracticable.

Hitler believed that Germany might gain political or military advantages by invading Britain via the indirect route through Southern Ireland. The Naval Staff was therefore ordered to study the means by which such an attack could take place.

Military authorities in Britain had also recognized the danger of an invasion through Ireland and had acted accordingly. The commander in chief of the Home Fleet, Admiral Charles M. Forbes, had earlier agreed to transfer his main forces to a more advantageous position if a German invasion fleet appeared prepared to cross the North Sea. The Admiralty followed with a suggestion


27 Ibid.
that two battleships be based at Liverpool where they could easily intercept any invasion forces en route to Eire. In addition, a large British force had been gathered in Northern Ireland, seemingly ready to cross the border "after the first shot had been fired at a German."29

On December 3, three weeks after Hitler had issued his invasion directive, Admiral Erich Raeder presented the findings of the Naval Staff. His report to Hitler was plainly pessimistic. The Admiral noted that the greatest danger to Britain lay not in invasion, but rather in the destruction of its industry and harbor installations by the Luftwaffe and the disruption of its overseas supply lines by Dönitz's submarine command. Furthermore, Raeder warned that Germany could ill afford the loss of prestige which would follow an unsuccessful invasion attempt. Such an event "would tend to prolong the war and would, above all, create a strong impression in the U.S.A."30 Finally, Raeder once more put forth what had become his favorite plan; Britain could be weakened by striking, with Germany's Italian ally, in

28 Roskill, I, 251.
29 Time, XXXVII, January 20, 1941.
30 U.S. Navy Department, Fuehrer Conference on Matters Dealing with the German Navy, December 3, 1940. Hereafter cited as F.C.G.N.
the Mediterranean theater of operations.\textsuperscript{31}

To support his arguments, Raeder brought forth a lengthy study made by the Naval Staff. The primary necessity of any invasion of Ireland was naval supremacy. This the German navy did not have, and it "could never be attained" due to the strength of the British Home Fleet.\textsuperscript{32} In addition, the element of surprise, which had been well employed in Norway, would be missing in any invasion of Eire. Because of Ireland's proximity to Britain, any invasion fleet sent by Germany would be quickly discovered by British patrols.\textsuperscript{33}

Ireland's geographical position would also complicate invasion plans by forcing Germany to create long supply lines which would instantly become easy prey for Britain's vastly superior navy. Raeder further stated that even the weather would make invasion an impossibility. Mindful perhaps of the Duke of Wellington,\textsuperscript{34} Raeder pointed out that Ireland's prevalent weather conditions—heavy rainfall, low clouds, and generally "very frequent" damp and foggy weather—made effective air operations an

\textsuperscript{31} F.C.G.N., December 3, 1940.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34} The Duke of Wellington once described Belgium as a "dreary, dismal place, somewhat like the better parts of Ireland."
impossibility. Luftwaffe operations would be further restricted by the need of flying from bases in France through an area strongly contested by the R.A.F. 35

Hitler had previously stated that "the occupation of Ireland might lead to the end of the war." 36 The Fuehrer was therefore reluctant to abandon the idea of invading Eire. Agreeing that invasion could not occur under the present conditions, he nonetheless continued to believe that success might be achieved if de Valera could be persuaded to seek German aid. As a result, even after Directive 21 (the invasion of Russia) had been issued on December 18, 37 Hitler continued to regard the invasion of Eire as a possibility.

Throughout the first part of January, 1941, the German radio continuously warned the Irish that "Britain is to invade Eire through Ulster . . . in such a case, Berlin is determined to react in the same manner as in the case of Norway and Belgium." 38 The Irish government no doubt feared the possibility of a British attack. However, the prospect of being treated in the same manner

35 F.C.G.N., December 3, 1940.
36 Ibid.
37 Alan Clark, Barbarossa, (New York, 1965), 25.
38 Time, January 29, 1941, 39.
as Norway and Belgium doubtless was looked upon as being hardly a desirable alternative. Consequently, de Valera maintained Eire's neutral position, and no request for aid was made to Germany.

Although preparations for Operation Barbarossa had already begun, Hitler still toyed with the idea of invading Ireland. On January 23, during a meeting with German air officials, Hitler brought forth the idea of invading Ireland by air. The German Fuehrer believed that by holding Eire he could "quickly strangle Britain by cutting her Atlantic lifelines and destroying (its) terminal on the west coast." In conjunction with Hitler's airborne invasion plan, Hermann Goertz received several Abwehr messages instructing him to "report immediately about Irish defence forces. Order from the highest authority." It is not known whether or not Goertz carried out his orders, for after the 1940-1941 winter the proposal to invade Eire was completely abandoned.

The opportunity for a German invasion of Eire was lost after the start of the eastern campaign. Although the threat of a British attack remained, by 1942 most Irishmen could rest assured that "so long as Hitler is

39 Fleming, 296-297.
40 Ibid, 181-183.
preoccupied in Eastern Europe, this island will remain outside the war."41

Hitler's original views toward Ireland, either as a deception for Operation Sea Lion or the main focus of an invasion, were basically sound. The possession of Ireland might well have altered the outcome of Sea Lion, and hence the outcome of the war. However, the tactical possibilities for a successful invasion were practically nil.

In frustration Hitler began, after the feasibility of Operation Sea Lion waned, to reach for the most improbable plans. Ireland had become, as one author points out, a part of the "complex Hitlerian extravaganza."42 Had Hitler decided to carry out his various invasion plans, he would have met with a fate similar to his Spanish and French predecessors—abject failure.

41 Round Table, No. 128, September, 1942, 496.

CHAPTER V

IN RETROSPECT

The wartime relations between two states, like all other aspects of diplomacy, are normally judged by two well defined standards—success or failure. However, it is a practical impossibility to draw a conclusion as to whether Nazi Germany definitely succeeded or failed in its aims regarding Ireland. Because Germany ended the Second World War as the vanquished power, one can with some validity surmise that the loss of the war signifies a subsequent failure of policy. While many of the Third Reich's plans regarding Eire did indeed fail, there was also a measure of success which cannot be overlooked. It therefore becomes the duty of the historian to balance the degrees of failure or success to determine the final outcome of that policy.

German diplomacy failed to create, or expand, pro-German sympathies and support for the German war effort in Eire. The opportunities which existed in Ireland, particularly the partition issue and the natural antagonism toward Britain, were such that Irish support for the German cause could well have become a reality. How-
ever, because of the effect of outside influences, such as the United States and the Vatican, as well as the sensibilities of the Irish themselves; the large majority of the population in Eire remained morally in support of the Allied cause throughout the war.

Due to Hitler's inability to provide adequate resources, Admiral Doenitz's submarine command failed completely to exploit the neutrality of the Irish ports and their subsequent loss to the Allies. Had Doenitz been provided with the number of submarines he considered necessary, the Battle of the Atlantic and hence, World War II, might well have ended differently.

The efforts of the Abwehr must also be described as failures. With the possible exception of Hermann Goertz, no German agent ever achieved the success that Berlin desired. No espionage network was ever successfully created in Eire. No German direction was ever brought to the Irish Republican Army. In short, the history of German intelligence in Eire is one marked chiefly by failure and a remarkable ineptness.

Finally, the proposed German invasion of Eire was also a failure. In addition to the obvious fact that the invasion never took place, one may also justifiably surmise that had invasion actually occurred, it too would have failed. The Irish most certainly would have resisted
a German invasion to the utmost of their ability and strength. The British would have blocked the occupation of a country so close to their homeland. The United States, with its large minority of Irish-Americans, might also have been moved to enter the fray much sooner then it actually did. Hitler’s invasion of Ireland would have proven to be a disaster equalled only by the invasion of Russia.

Such were the failures of German policy toward, and exploitation of, Eire. There was, however, one success which German policy achieved in Ireland—the maintenance of Irish neutrality. Despite frequent crises, German diplomats succeeded, with the aid of ineptness in London and Washington, in placating Dublin each time relations became strained to the breaking point.

The benefits which Germany received from Eire’s neutrality have already been cited, but a word might yet be said concerning the possible effects of active Irish participation in the war. Had Eire joined the Allied side in the conflict, the Irish ports would have been opened to the Allies and hence Germany’s efforts to halt British shipping would have been seriously hampered. Eire could have furnished more than a quarter of a million men to the Allied armies, and additional sites for training and debarkation of Allied operations. The
United States would most certainly have sponsored the creation of Irish war industries which would have helped supply and equip Allied military forces. Finally, Great Britain would have been assured that no German invasion would come from the west.

Nazi Germany would have received no such benefits had Eire joined the Axis powers in the war. Eire had no natural resources which could be used by Germany in the same manner that it used the resources of Russia, the Balkans, and Norway. Irish manpower could not be safely transported to the Continent through waters and air largely controlled by Great Britain. In addition, an Ireland allied with the Third Reich would have become a prime target for an Anglo-American invasion and would, therefore, have required the protection of large German forces which Berlin could hardly afford.

A neutral Eire was, therefore, of a far greater benefit to Germany than any active Irish participation would have been. Germany succeeded in maintaining and exploiting that neutrality—a success that far outweighs its other failures.
APPENDIX

American naval vessels actually present in European waters at the cessation of hostilities in World War I.

Queenstown
   (2 tenders, 24 destroyers, 30 sub-chasers, 3 tugs) 59 ships
Berehaven
   (3 battleships, 1 tender, 7 subs, 1 tug, 1 oiler) 13 ships
Brest 85 ships
Cardiff 57 ships
Gibraltar 45 ships
Genoa 2 ships
Azores 12 ships
Grand Fleet 5 ships
Murmansk 1 ship
Mine Force 13 ships
Southampton 4 ships
Plymouth 39 ships
Corfu 37 ships
Liverpool 1 ship

total - 373 ships

In addition to the naval forces stationed in Ireland, the United States also began, in 1917, the use of aircraft in anti-submarine warfare. By the time of the armistice there were 26 naval air stations in Europe; 16 in France, 5 in Ireland, 3 in England and 2 in Italy.*

* The preceding information was issued by the Office of Naval Intelligence, cited in Frothingham, 261-262 and 285.
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Of the other primary materials, there is little of value if one wishes to find an understanding of the diplomatic views of Germany toward Eire. By far the most im-
Important source for an understanding of the German side of the Battle of the Atlantic is Admiral Doentiz's *Memoirs*, for a general view of the overall German naval attitude, Admiral Raeder's autobiography is very good, although he pays little attention to Ireland. De Valera's *Speeches*, although they were originally given in the pre-war period, present an interesting glimpse at the reasons for Eire's wartime neutrality. The *Memoirs of Cordell Hull* are quite good for presenting highlights of American policy during the war, and for gaining an understanding of Roosevelt's attitude. Of practically no value were the memoirs and diaries of such men as Weizaeker, von Papan and Ciano which, in most cases, became simple statements of a self-apologist.

Because relatively few primary source materials covering the World War II period have as yet been made available, it is necessary to fall back upon secondary sources, of which several are quite good. Among the best for a study of German-Irish relations are Ansal's *Hitler Confronts England*, Bromage's *De Valera and the March of a Nation*, McInnis' six volume work *The War*, and *Goering*, by Charles Bewley (Ireland's pre-war minister in Berlin). In studying naval matters, one cannot pass Roskill's numerous works which, although written from a British viewpoint, present an excellent account of naval warfare between
1939-1945. Also good, but not as rewarding for this study, was Admiral Ruge's *Der Zeefriege*.

The major source for studying the role of German intelligence in Ireland is Enno Stephan's *Spies in Ireland*. Stephan bases his work upon the unpublished *Abwehr* war diary, personal interviews, and Hermann Goertz’s testimony to the Irish secret police—all of which are unavailable in any other work. Also important for this subject is Weighton and Peis’ *Hitler’s Spies and Saboteurs*, which although it does not concern Ireland directly, nonetheless presents an interesting account of General Lahousen's views toward Great Britain.

Of course, when studying World War II, Winston Churchill's *The Second World War* cannot be forgotten. Unfortunately, after reading Churchill's six volumes, in which he seldom refrains from making his opinion known, one begins to feel that the Prime Minister dislike three individuals more than any others; Satan, Hitler and de Valera (not necessarily in that order).

Of the other materials used, the *Round Table*, the magazine of the British Commonweath, is by far the best, giving accounts and views not only of the European war, but of all phases and areas concerned in World War II. The *London Times*, while taking an imperialist viewpoint, nonetheless proved to be of some value, as was the equally
prejudiced *Time* magazine.

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